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Selfish Love

by Garf Collins

Still half asleep Neil wondered where he was until, recognising the tiny blond hairs on the arm next to his face, he realised he was in Joanne's flat. With a surge of desire he reached around her slim body as he kissed her neck. She moved away.

"Not now Neil. I don't feel like it. I think my tummy is a bit upset."

Neil was a professor of evolutionary biology and Joanne one of his students. She had often approached him with questions after a lecture. Invitations for coffee to discuss the topics further had soon developed into an intense relationship.

He cupped his hands around her breasts as he pulled her against him. She thrust his hands away and wriggled free of his embrace.

"Neil. I said no. I don't want it. I'm going to shower and get ready. I'll see you in the lecture theatre."

As Neil walked back to his rooms he worried that Joanne had been quite cool of late. However, he decided that it was probably caused by anxiety about the fast approaching exams.

Neil's course was popular not just with the biologists so the lecture theatre was well occupied.

"Today's lecture is about the evolutionary purpose of love," he announced. "Consider our development through primates to modern humans. A progressive increase in brain size allowed the increasing intelligence which created our growing success. The birth canal couldn't accommodate this, so progeny had to be born earlier and nurtured for longer as the full facility of the brain developed."

As he was talking, Neil scanned his audience for Joanne. Finally he saw her near the back. The boy sitting close to her seemed to be paying more attention to her than the lecture. Despite his concern he tried to concentrate on his theme.

“So for the benefit of the species what we now call love evolved in females. This was a mutual attachment that ensured the mother looked after the helpless new-born which in turn was bound to her. In some apes the female was not accessible to a male until she had weaned the infant. This resulted in infanticide. The evolution of male love allowed for protection for both the female and the baby. The genes endure so love is after all a selfish thing.

As he continued, Neil noticed Joanne and her companion slipping out. After finishing his lecture he phoned her many times before he got through. A sleepy voice answered.

“Joanne where are you. What’s the matter are you ill?”

“Neil I’m sorry. I meant to tell you but I couldn’t get the words out. I am with Anton now. We are in love and I can’t see you any more.”

“But Joanne you can’t end it like this. I thought that WE were in love. Let’s meet and talk it over.”

“I’m so sorry Neil, I can’t do that. My mind is made up. As you said in your lecture, love is after all a selfish thing.”