

Animal Love: Only for the Wealthy

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Jacob and David discovered love in the expansive, digital realms where souls meet in texts and avatars—far from the invasiveness of lascivious snapshots often punctuating online courtship. Dick pics.

A gossamer thread of communication had once bound them across cyberspace, yet fate ordained a silence until one serendipitous night. Jacob, buzzed with the effervescence of spirits and a longing that craved more than mere touch, stumbled upon David's digital footprint once more.

Six months—a mere blink in the cosmos—had done little to cool the simmering potential of their connection. They collided again in a dance of words, a ballet of the mundane which, to the casual observer, might appear banal, but to them, it highlighted the essence of their burgeoning bond.

Their inclination to meet sparked not an inferno but a heartening glow, a lantern in the darkness showing the way to something deeper.

When queried by a comrade about his nascent romance, Jacob could only muse to anticipate fireworks would be to yearn for the transient, while they, they were sculpting something lasting.

Upon their first meandering promenade, Jacob confided in David with a sincere gravity, **“My vow to you is this:** I shall wield my heart with such care it shall never wittingly be the cause of your pain. Should temptation beckon, its siren song will find no harbour in me. Our foundation will not be shaken by fears nor doubts. Should you find storm clouds gathering in your soul, seek solitude, let calm wash over you, and return to me – we have a love to cultivate.”

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It was a covenant as unique as the souls it bound, a tacit understanding their intertwining lives would defy the mundane.

In the lull of time's passing, the affection between them grew with the deliberate grace of a snail, a testament to the notion that true connection—resilient, earnest—renders the thrill of the chase a pale shadow.

Mindful hearts, take note: their May-December love defied the chronicle of seasons—23 years apart, yet together they wove an arras of shared existence. As Jacob's career lent them a veneer of comfort, allowing them to treasure future dreams of laugh-filled diners and passport stamps, David grappled with the puzzle of his freshly-minted degree in a jigsaw world.

In their second year together, a colleague of Jacob's shared the irresistible images of a kitten rescued from the streets—the epitome of adorable.

Jacob's heart swayed as David repeatedly implored,
“Can we? Can we? Can we?”

They did, and so Hana, a bundle of whiskers and warmth, was welcomed into their lives. Jacob traveled a mere 30 kilometers, yet what a journey it was—to fetch Hana, so tiny she nestled comfortably in his palm. She gazed up at him on the way home, delicate mews escaping her, weaving threads of an unbreakable bond. Deeply.

Time etched forward, like a snail's measured tread, and their affection for their four-legged daughter flourished.

Once, Hana's malaise meant a vet visit, where the greeting wasn't a 'hello' but a flat “that'll be \$595.00.” Such is the costly comradeship with veterinary doors, comically expensive whether you're a pet owner or a passerby seeking the time.

Fortunate to afford it, Jacob and David would do anything – figuratively – for their precious Hana. Her spirits lifted swiftly; she returned to her routine of purring atop Jacob’s chest during his siestas.

As Jacob neared the steadfast milestone of 60, his company, lurking behind the murky veil of the pandemic, orchestrated his replacement with the cold efficiency of youth, seeking a less costly successor.

Yet, the callous calculus of corporate maneuvering could never quell the resilient swell of their love. With each adversity weathered, the roots of their bond only burrowed deeper into the fertile soil of their shared lives, transforming every challenge into the nourishment that strengthened their connection.

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As the seasons waxed and waned, a relentless stress clung to Jacob like a spiteful shadow. It vaulted to vertiginous heights, as if trying to escape through the ceiling, where, in some cosmic jest, Lionel Richie serenaded the absurdity of it all. Side by side, Jacob and David bore witness to their life savings withering like autumn leaves in a fiscal frost, their investments crumbling like ancient ruins forgotten by time, and their credit swelling to a suffocating crescendo of maxed-out despair.

Luckily, Jacob was no amateur with words; a prolific writer, he now tells you this tale, using 'Jacob' as a nom de plume. 6

As financial woes loomed, and the threat of homelessness stalked them monthly, Jacob's resourcefulness led him to apply for every job available—even pushing dead bodies at a local hospital, though he never got a call back.

Jacob couldn't shake the ghostly suspicion his application had been quietly shuffled to the bottom of the pile, discarded in favour of fresher faces unblemished by the phantom of age.

In the ethereal theater of his imagination, he witnessed them contemplating the trajectory of his existence—a potential future wherein his vim and vigour could dwindle into a mere whisper, where he might find himself gliding silently through sombre corridors in a wheelchair, a spectral presence weaving through the vibrant thrum of youthful vitality. The very thought sent shivers down his spine, a phantasmagorical vision of an ethereal Jacob pressing on the spectral gears of the recently deceased Jacob, navigating the labyrinthine shadows of institutionalized care.

It was unsettling imagery, as unnatural as a burger stripped of its succulent meat, leaving behind a vacant, soulless bun.

Still, the proverbial snail inched on.
But is the snail a fitting emblem for such enduring affection?
Absolutely. Jacob will tell their story his way.

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The moral inevitably surfaces: their love, resilient amidst life's tempests.

A gesture of kindness came – in the form of a \$260 grocery gift card from their friend Gary. 9
Bless his soul.

Previously, Jacob scorned those with pets in penury. Now, as poverty knocks, Jacob finds solace in Hana's embrace, her purr a balm to his weathered spirit. "Visit. Visit. Visit," he whispers, his troubles momentarily quelled.

Yet, as Hana developed a worrying lesion above her nose, their affection intensified in the hope it might spur healing – a vain hope.

Love couldn't mend the cut; nor could it pay for vet's fees. They felt they'd failed as Hana's guardians.

Desperation struck when Hana's condition worsened. No longer could they delay. At the vet, on the brink of financial defeat, Jacob pleaded against the absurd 'entrance fee.'

Luck, it seemed, was compassionate; the fee was waived, leaving them with a hope that Hana, now hindered from grooming by an (\$13.95) Elizabethan Collar, might be healed by their undying love in the face of hardship.

This narrative illustrates a stark, sorrowful reality – empathy, care, well-being, should not be luxuries gated by wealth, yet the world increasingly minds that principle.

Shouldn't all, regardless of stature, be able to nurture and be nurtured by our animal companions?

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Jacob learned love knows no financial bounds, and love, as tenacious as a snail's pace, finds a way.

Mewl.

This tale traces back to Jacob and David's earlier years. Jacob, 23 years David's senior, never let their age difference define them. They were two souls in sync; age was merely a number.

David, fresh from university, sought his place in the world. Jacob, comfortably established in his career, conjured a life together – abundant, unworried, enriched by the promise of tomorrow. And so, with hearts brimming with hope, they embarked on a life journey with Hana, their cherished furry child – their love story inked, unending, on the pages of life.

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