

The Invention Of Sex

by Mark Hibbett

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A living room with a sofa 385 million years ago.

ANNOUNCER Meanwhile, three hundred and eighty five million years ago...

Enter PETER, a small armoured fish.

PETER (calling) Hello? S'me!

DAWN (off) Just a minute.

Peter sits down.

PETER Good day?

DAWN (off) Not bad. Just got in myself. You?

PETER Yeah. Swam about a bit. Brachiopod lava for lunch. Talked to some trilobites.

DAWN, another small armoured fish, comes in, kisses him on the head, then joins him on the sofa.

DAWN Hello!

PETER You smell nice. Is it mollusc?

DAWN Well. Thought I'd make an effort.

PETER Ooh, what for?

Dawn glares at him.

PETER What?

Dawn raises her eyebrows.

DAWN Are we not spawning tonight then?

PETER Oh no, sorry - I forgot.

DAWN Lovely.

She shifts away from him.

PETER Sorry, it's just een a bit hectic. Another night?

DAWN We can't just let it... drift off. We didn't spawn last week at all.

PETER Well, we did have your mother.

DAWN She was here for three days, I hardly think that's an excuse.

PETER No, I know.

DAWN Then your cousin.

PETER Oh God! Did he actually evolve in the end?

DAWN No idea. Went onto dry land, haven't heard since.

PETER Typical. You're right though, we shouldn't let it slip.

DAWN Well, only if you want to.

He shuffles along towards her again.

PETER Course I want to! Who wouldn't want to spawn with that fully armoured body?

DAWN Hmm. My fins are sagging.

PETER Your fins are lovely. Come on.
He stands up and rubs his hands together.

PETER Let's do it!

DAWN Romance!
She gets up too.

PETER You know it! I tell you what though - say no if you want -

DAWN What?

PETER There's this thing we could try, you know, like you said last time. Keep it interesting.

DAWN Are you bored of my spawning now?

PETER No, it's just you did say we should try stuff, and there's this new thing I heard about.

DAWN New thing?

PETER It's called "Sex".
Dawn looks unsure.

DAWN Sounds pervy.

PETER It's not pervy, it's just new.

DAWN Who told you about that then? Was it them trilobites?

PETER No, no. It's just - well, look. I've got this.
He spreads his leg and a small appendage descends. They both look at it.

DAWN What's that?

PETER It's an L-shaped appendage.

DAWN I can see that. Where did you get it?

PETER I don't know. I must have evolved it.

DAWN Without talking to me first?

PETER You evolved your thing.

DAWN What thing?

PETER That bony structure. The one on your bum.

DAWN Oh, so I've got a bony bottom now have I?

PETER Well... yes. We're placoderms. We're a genus of armoured fish-like creatures pretty much made of bone.

DAWN I suppose so.

PETER I thought that maybe I could use it to transfer sperm. Directly. Into you.

DAWN That's definitely pervy!

PETER Maybe. Tidy though?
Dawn mulls this over.

DAWN I suppose.

PETER Look, if you don't like it I can just shoot my sperm into the ocean like normal and you can swim through it.

DAWN No no, you're right, we should have a go. But don't get any ideas, all right?

PETER Course not. Cuddles first though?

DAWN Cuddles first.
They hug.

DAWN Go on then, how do we get started?

PETER Well, I think... hang on. If we sort of sidle up to each other. Like ...

DAWN Side on?

PETER Yeah. Side on.
They slide side to side.

PETER And then I - take my -

DAWN Little evolution.

PETER Little evolution - thank you - then. I can't get hold of you properly now though.

DAWN Use your claspers.

PETER Good idea.
They clasp each other.

PETER All right?

DAWN It's not exactly rocking my Palaeozoic world just yet.

PETER Shall I stop?

DAWN No, it's fine. We're doing it now. What's next?

PETER Right, so next I dock with your genital plates...

DAWN Such a smooth talker.

PETER And... ah!

DAWN Is it working?

PETER Yes, it's - oh.

DAWN Oh?

PETER I think that's it.

DAWN Oh.

PETER Shall I?

DAWN Yes please.
They unclasp.

PETER What do you reckon?

DAWN Well, it's definitely tidier.

PETER And it definitely counts.

DAWN Oh yes, we've definitely done it. It's all keeping the romance alive isn't it?

PETER Sure is.
He kisses her.

DAWN Well done us.

PETER Yeah. Well done us.
They kiss again.

DAWN Shall we?
They sit back on the sofa.

PETER Thanks for having a try.

DAWN Thanks for thinking of it Back to spawning next time though?

PETER Yeah. I think so.
They shuffle together into a cuddle.

DAWN I mean, it was all right, doing the - what did you call it?

PETER "Sex".

DAWN "Sex". Yeah, OK. But I think we'll leave it for now.

PETER Yeah. Give it a few more million years.