

As the Bat Cave Turns

by Con Chapman

A study has determined that in bat species noted for female monogamy male bats have small testes and big brains, while in species noted for female promiscuity males have testicles five times as big, but smaller brains.

The

Economist



As she hung upside down in her cave, Irma's mind was beset by doubts. Rex, her husband of two years, was a good provider, bringing home a stomach full of insect delicacies every night when he returned from work. She had always been faithful to him, but she felt that there was something missing in her life. Rex wasn't bad-looking; an African yellow-winged bat who still had most of his fur, he stayed in shape and didn't have a paunch like some of the other males she knew. He was just a little *too* intellectual.



Every day he would hang there, reading his Gibbon or Thucydides, sometimes flitting down to the entrance of the cave to work out some piece of doggerel that he would recite when he rejoined her on the ceiling.

*There once was a bat with big balls,
Whose wife would take other men's calls.
She was quite a hussy
Who wasn't too fussy
The slut had him climbing the walls.*

She would give out a polite little laugh when he was done, and say "Where you come up with these things I'll never know!" Then she'd close her eyes and imagine what life would be like with a *real* man around the house.

Someone like Kowalski, the big-eared Rafinesque bat who liked to hang from the railroad bridge down the street. True, he wasn't the brightest bulb on the scoreboard, but his balls were a "whacking 8.4%" of his total body weight according to an article she had read in *The Economist*, one of the magazines Rex subscribed to. Which raised the question--what in the hell was a writer for a high-toned British rag doing measuring bat's balls? She dismissed it from her mind and returned to her reverie. Perhaps some morning, if Rex were running a little late, she'd fly over to Kowalski's and ask to borrow a cup of mosquitoes, chat him up, see if he shared her feelings.

She decided to drop down to the cave entrance for a breath of fresh air--the smell of guano was getting to her, she convinced herself.

As she hid in a pile of leaves, she saw Kowalski at the bridge, all crude mesomorph, snoring away. Maybe if she threw herself at him, just went right up and kissed him, he'd take a liking to her.

She turned off her echolocation and, closing her eyes, hurtled towards the bridge where she plowed into Kowalski, stunning him into wakefulness.

"Hey, what gives?" he asked when he saw the little homebody sprawled across his belly. "What's a nice girl like you doing throwing yourself at a bum like me?"



"Oh, I don't know," she said shyly. "Haven't you ever thought of settling down with a wonderful homemaker who could transform a dank bat cave into a cozy little bungalow for two?"

"Sure I have, but how do I know you're not like all the other dames? I give 'em a bug and off they go into the night, screwing every hoary bat in sight."

"I can be *very* faithful-to the right male."

Kowalski considered this proposition for a moment. He *was* growing tired of the nightlife. The dames with their yellowish-to-mahogany hair, all of them so cynical, ovulating and breeding as if that were all there was to life as a small flying mammal found in the temperate and tropical regions of both hemispheres.

"Well actually, this railroad bridge isn't exactly my dream home. I'd like a big stalactite to hang from on weekends. Two, three or four offspring every year unless we're hibernating, you know . . ."

"Then come with me," she said. "We can start a new life together, build a home, start a family."

Kowalski looked over at the hussy he had gone to bed with the night before. True, she had a nice wingspan, but the leafy membranous appendages hanging from her nostrils and ears, which had seemed so striking the night before, now seemed merely cheap.

"All right, babe--it's you and me kid from now on. Let's scam." And off they flew, as only the only flying mammals can fly.

When Rex returned to his cave and found Irma gone, he was curiously emotionless, a common reaction among big-brained bats of his acquaintance. He hooked his sharp, curved claws into the ceiling of the cave and, with a puckish grin on his face, composed a rueful poem about his predicament before turning in for the night:

*A bookish male bat named Rex
Had miniscule organs of sex.
His wife flew the coop
Throwing him for a loop
That he could not resolve with a text.
Moral: She may love your mind, but she still needs your body.*

