

'Danny's Navel Adventure'

by Toni Bryan

Chapter 1: Questions get you into trouble

Coming from that great garden of social delinquents, ne'er do wells, scoundrels, and general miscreants, the working class, I don't suppose I gave the subject of the fairer sex or love much thought. Which for a man, born into humble and Neanderthal origins, that's neither surprising or that unusual if the truth be known. However, and I say this sheepishly and in a hushed whisper so my fellow brethren won't catch it, that behind every brilliant, or otherwise, man there's a genius of a woman if we're being truthful about it. Not for one moment would I ever tell a woman that, although they like to keep reminding us of the laws of nature.

The laws of nature, according to women, are that men are endowed with two brains and if it wasn't for women neither would get much use. If I'm being honest again, which for the male species is a bit of an oxymoron, I don't suppose that they're that far from the truth. As you can probably guess from the tone of the conversation so far, well it's not a conversation really given that I'm actually sitting here talking to myself, I'm having a few doubts about this and that. For reasons beyond a man's logic, most women complain about this because you prefer talking to yourself rather than them. But sometimes you need to talk to yourself because it's the only way the world makes any sense, and based on my own experience I'm in no doubt that a woman's world, on the whole, makes absolutely no sense at all. But women never tire of telling you that their world makes perfect sense, whilst your world is just utter nonsense. Whose side you're on depends, largely, on whether you're wearing a skirt or trousers. And as women wear both whenever it suits them, I guess the odds are largely stacked in their favour.

Anyway I digress from what I was thinking about sitting in this old, much beloved, battered armchair of mine, which was the subject of love. In biological terms I suppose the idea of creating man in

Available online at *«<http://fictionaut.com/stories/toni-bryan/dannys-navel-adventure>»*

Copyright © 2010 Toni Bryan. All rights reserved.

evolutionary terms was to create a hairy body that would keep him warm when he got thrown out of the cave after an argument with the wife. What the argument was about in the beginning I think men have forgotten about in the mists of time. But to my knowledge women keep reminding us of it, but because it happened a long time ago, and men having a notoriously short attention and memory span, men don't have a clue what their women are going on about so they just agree with her, if only to keep the decibels down to a decently low level. This makes the woman feel superior to the man. The man, meanwhile, then believes he's inferior because he couldn't put forward an argument that had any useful meaning to it. That's on account he doesn't have a clue what the argument is about. But the woman does so therefore it makes perfect sense to her but no sense to him.

I know that I'm digressing but looking at your naked navel makes you think all kinds of weird and wonderful things, which are totally irrelevant to what you were thinking about in the first place, love. For a man I know that I'm in real danger of falling flat on my face, after all love is like the splitting of the atom; get it wrong and all hell is let loose. But then being a man reckless stupidity is one of our finer points. All you know is that love is there but you can't see it, which puts it on a par with wind, which men are naturally inclined to share. Of course on St. Valentine's Day it's no coincidence that the Beaufort scale rises in direct proportion to be the amount of wind being expelled in the name of love. Personally, I think it'd be a great idea if February 14th was declared a global public holiday and everyone had to spend the day in bed with their beloved, whether that be the wife, girlfriend, boyfriend or five-finger Grace, which if you're unsure about and have never been a confirmed bachelor, it's your hand; right or left doesn't matter so long as it's a snug fit. In a perfect world women would also make every man responsible for getting up to make breakfast, but I can see the problems with that if you're gay. Which man would make breakfast? And if you're a lesbian there isn't a man to do it. If you're a man alone is breakfast all that important? And if it is you'd probably be wishing that that

there was a woman next to you as she'd probably take care of it. And if you're a woman on your own, you're probably glad that you don't have to get out of that very nice, warm, comfortable bed and can have a decent lie in. On reflection it's probably a stupid idea, especially if you have kids who think the parents have gone completely demented because instead of the normal arguments and inane insults flying around the kitchen table, there are two love sick animals lying in bed who should be put out of their misery and shot. Have you ever noticed how pre-teenagers think you're being naughty if you show any kind of love and affection, whilst teenagers think that you should be shot for being so disgusting because you're way past the age of love and sex; teenagers think sex is something they've discovered and can't cope with parents who ruin their street cred.

And whilst I'm at it I'd outlaw the likes of Hallmark and all those bloody rose growing companies on the 14th. They just make men look guilty when they forget it's Valentine's Day, or letting their women folk think that it's the only day of the year when men are supposed to be in love with them.

But you have to agree that love is something that you can't really explain. I mean when you say "I love you" in English the woman looks at you all gooey eyed, and then in the next moment thinks you've been up to no good and guilty of something akin to murder. Maybe it might be a damn sight easier if we were to learn it in Spanish "Yo te amo". Then at least, being English, it'd have an exotic, romantic, feeling that love is supposed to have. Of course you'd probably end up being worse off. As a woman's logic would likely be that you're uttering something that's not what it's meant to be, but some form of devious code for calling her a stupid idiot. I don't suppose men can win either way.

Here you have to envy women because they seem to have love sussed out. Cynics out there might say that's because women are genetically programmed for love, which doesn't really explain why Ma Barker loved her sons but was equally happy with murdering people. Others might add that love is a woman's thing, that's on a

par with the monthly period. Men know it happens but want to avoid it like the plague; others might happily conclude that women lead men to think love is sex, because foreplay has something to do with making love. But thinking about it, and if I'm being really objective about it, women do have a better understanding of what love is, or supposed to be. Of course men have a vague idea of what it is but no great understanding of what it really is; apart from it being three useful words in the beginning of a relationship that opens the way to a woman's knickers. And much later on, three words that lead to problems because you've forgot to say it with the same feeling as you did in the beginning, or you forget to say them with any kind of spontaneity later on.

