

The Poignant Platypus and Other Misadventures in Online Dating

By Andrew Lane

So, it had come to this, had it? The realization of what he was about to do had come down upon the platypus hard. Here he was at two years old, the peak of development for his species, and the platypus was alone. He couldn't comprehend where he had gone wrong. The platypus had done everything he was supposed to do his entire life.

He was an adept fisher, his coat was thicker, fuller than most, and his tail, his tail rippled with muscle. He was an amalgamation of the best features of several animals. All of their strengths, none of their weaknesses, with venom thrown in for good measure! His species laid eggs! Sure it was a bit unnerving to witness firsthand, but an effective ice breaker nonetheless at any social get-together. He had seen the way the beavers' wives eyed his thick coat.

The blasted beavers! Don't get him started on the damn beavers. Despite their ignorance and audible mouth breathing—a consequence of that ridiculous overbite no doubt—even the beavers were all married. They were happy and the platypus hated them for it all the more.

Sure, he had been in love. He had his fair share of romantic escapades. He doesn't want your pity. He had paddled beneath the full moon with ducks. He had swooned a swan. He had even fathered a litter of illegitimate children with another platypus while her husband was away on business. Her husband was always away on "business." This business was usually down in the other river across the railroad tracks.

The humans had built the railroad dividing the once united river, both literally and figuratively, which left each side spiteful of the other. It was a well-known fact that the other side of the river was for loose females and even looser morals. As far as the platypus was concerned, anyone going over to that side of the river deserved to be cuckolded.

There was also that drunken night with a peacock, but that isn't really an appropriate story, for this forum or any situation really. But yes, the rumors about peacocks, they are all true.

However, as always, these rolls on the hay, at the nearby farm, had to come to an end. The husband would return, the parent's would disapprove, a pregnancy scare would erupt, the list went on. These events all led to his present state. Disgusted, he turned to the last frontier that he could think of for love: online dating. He closed the shutters and sat with his back to them—just in case a stiff breeze should blow them open, revealing to a pedestrian his present state of shame. Chai in hand, he sank heavily into his chair and set about the task, also at hand, the other hand.

He needed a tagline. This appeared to be some sort of a marquee, a catchphrase if you will, that would beckon females to him through their computer screens. But what one sentence summed up his being? How to describe the depths of his soul, his longing to be held by the mother of his children? "Well off, thick coat, large burrow. Equal opportunity employer, if you know what I mean." Well, this is like advertising he thought to himself, they would discover the other things after they got to know him. This witty introduction pleased the platypus.

He still continued to check over his shoulder, just in case his cleaning mouse had decided to start her shift seven hours early. He could imagine her there, sitting in the shadows, basking in his humiliation: she would no doubt request a raise as payment for her silence. He calmed when he remembered she was still just a mouse. No one would notice if she went missing. He could always get another one. They were constantly coming over across from the Borders. The humans had built a built one along with the railroad and the mice found the woods behind it an ideal home. They all looked alike anyway, no one would notice.

The hours passed as the platypus sat typing and then re-typing what he hoped would be the right combination of words to express himself. The scotch began to appear after the third revision of his hobbies. He kept the empty glasses stacked next to the laptop to track his progress. Should he include his fondness for collecting human coins he found while swimming for food? He thought it would show his keenness for

aesthetic beauty. After all, he wasn't just swimming, he was hunting for art and the world was his museum! But would this give the wrong impression? After all, a beaver would certainly never admit to collecting shiny baubles. There was still a buzz in the community from that year the platypus had rented a room to that loose-lipped weasel. The platypus thought this over deeply and repeated the mantra he always used when these thoughts came up: nothing happened, more scotch. He decided a general statement about his appreciation of the arts would be best. Satisfied with his penmanship he poured another glass.

The hazel color of his cocktail reminded him of another summer. His first true love was a house cat from the nearby human neighborhood. Oh, she was amazing! Almond shaped green eyes, a beautiful black coat, and a silver tongue that could silence a mockingbird. An intriguing specimen no doubt! This brought back all the hushed mutterings and sneers from the judging eyes as they strolled along the banks of the river. Yes, she is a black cat. "What of it?" He would scream, white with rage! He scolded himself for succumbing to these racist thoughts.

But what if she really was bad luck? While he was on a date with her, the tide actually rose so high it washed away his burrow! And the whole nine lives thing? He was open minded but, come on, reincarnation? "My goodness!" He looked around to make sure there were no black cats in the room who might have overheard his careless mutterings. He decided to proclaim out loud that it "was her personality," just in case.

It was now approaching 2 AM or was it 4 AM? It was becoming hard to tell after all of those scotches. No matter, his masterpiece was near completeness. Before him were several categories of 1000 characters or less describing his greatest attributes, his triumphs, his legacy. Now, it was time to submit. With one click his humiliation would be made public. Would the dawn bring forth his future wife or would an acquittance find him and snicker at the depths to which he had fallen? Would the others smile at him as he swam by in the river, relieved at knowing their lives were pathetic, but at least they didn't have to resort to online dating? The platypus didn't care anymore. He had come this far and was not about to turn back now. The platypus finished the last of his scotch, closed his eyes, and clicked. It seemed that in the end his fate would be determined by a mouse after all.



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