

A Functioning Relationship

They had been married for over forty years. Their friends were astonished they'd stayed together so long. They were two strong-willed people who argued constantly about everything under the sun. But Jim and Marjorie Greenslade were convinced that their adversarial bouts prevented their relationship from sinking into a blancmange of blandness.

They were watching the news on TV when, as usual, Jim made a provocative statement. Marjorie immediately took the bait,

"Jim, are you really saying you agree with the Japanese Olympics chief who's just resigned."

"Absolutely, I think women do talk too much in meetings. In my experience they are nowhere near as focused and succinct as men. It's a no-brainer."

"Wow! Even for you that's a blatantly sexist thing to say."

"How can it be sexist if it's true?"

"It's not true and you know it. It's just another example of your blinkered male chauvinism."

"Well, you're as bad my love. You characterise all rugby players as Neanderthals and all footballers as brain-dead."

"Jim, you must admit that both those statements are a damned sight more accurate than your usual totally bigoted comments."

"Like what?"

"God, I could fill a book with examples. For a start, what have you got against red hair or Geordie accents...or cyclists for that matter. You have a pathological hatred of 4 by 4's or Chelsea tractors as you sneeringly call them. Your illogical intolerances beggar belief."

"You are just as bad. You have a thing about burqas and you shudder when you see tattoos or piercings. You hate afro hairstyles for no reason and you can't stand men with beards. Oh, and you detest the French with a passion. Mind you so do I but that's not the point I was making..."

Marjorie smiled at that and decided it was time to stop scoring points and sprinkle a little oil on troubled waters,

"OK Jim, let's call it quits for tonight and change the subject."

"Fine by me. Anyway, I wanted to talk about Juno and how pleased I was that she got a place at the university she wanted. Our very first grandchild to enter the groves of academe and one of the top groves at that."

Marjorie smiled contentedly,

"Yes, I'm thrilled as well because she really deserved it after working so hard. But Ella's been picked for the under-eighteen county netball team which is very gratifying. I don't think she'll be outshone by her sister."

Warming to the theme Jim said,

“Yes, and our number one son has just been promoted to Marketing Director. He was so chuffed when he told me and I said I was delighted that he and the girls were doing so well.”

Marjorie couldn't resist,

“Probably more to do with my genes than yours, don't you think.”

She waited for Jim's totally predictable response,

“Nonsense, you know I'm the brains of the family and am much admired for my athleticism.”

Marjorie thought,

“The intermission is over, time to put the gloves back on...”

500 Words

Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen