



Introduction

Think spam and we think 'pork'. And then, *why* pork? Any association might seem rather tenuous, until we recall other incongruities in life. How, for instance, the wolf and the Chihuahua are members of the same species occupying two ends of the canine spectrum. Contrast the characteristics of the two breeds. In 'keeping the wolf from the door', we are warding off hunger. Whereas 'keeping the Chihuahua from the door,' suggests warding off something closer to a 'slight craving'.

Similarly, we may feel less threatened by 'a Chihuahua in sheep's clothing'. If anything, we may be more guarded against a sheep in Chihuahua's clothing.

We invest in a meat's flavour by curing ham, for example, or by hanging beef for 28 days. With spam, the investment is an industrial process employing a recommended procedure close in practise to the disposal of nuclear waste. In both instances, the material is encased in metal – tin in the case of spam; lead in that of

radioactive by-products. But here spam veers off the path of recommendation.

Instead of expediting its burial safely deep underground as we do with radioactive waste, we opt to eat it.

Spam is then a kind of dog meat for human beings to enjoy. A foodstuff that is appreciated easily as much as its type-of-email-message namesake.

Eggs, sure as eggs are eggs, are eggs.

Now, if we think of 'spam *and* eggs', we invariably think of 'sperm and eggs' and form some very interesting connections.

Imagine the scene. A man and woman sit across from each other at a restaurant table. A waitress steps up and hands them a menu, which they duly open. The only 'choice' listed inside is spam and eggs. The man orders and is asked how he likes

his eggs. He says he is not fussy. 'How ever they come,' he adds. He is interested only in filling the space that occupies his belly. If the yolk is hard this time or the white undercooked and congealed, perhaps they won't be the next. He is the more likely of the two to pay the restaurant a visit on another occasion. To become a patron, even. His partner, on the other hand, is insistent on choosing the best variety of spam available. When she asks to see the 'Specials Board', the waitress explains that 'specials' in relation to spam is an oxymoron. She has a University degree. Her studies have prepared her for this job. Instead, she points to a board that lists all of the different varieties. It is a pleasant surprise to the diners – or at least a surprise – that spam actually comes in 18 different flavours. There is Spam Teriyaki, for instance (see www.spam.com/varieties for confirmation). Spam Cheese, Spam Macadamia Nuts even. If she had her way, the female diner would request a

more superior egg accompaniment – pancetta perhaps – but the fact is that spam is the only other ingredient on offer.

We deduce from this that the man is fixated on combining his spam with as many eggs as possible. The woman, in contrast, is particular in her choice of spam. What we have not realised until now and what is revealed in the book series, *Sperm & Eggs*, is that it is the strategies of sperm and eggs that dictate the behaviour of their respective hosts. So we see that the splattergun or blunderbuss tactic of the sperm – the quick fix, throw-everything-at-it approach – is mirrored by man's general attitude to situations in life. Take a look at his bedroom, if you are able to shift the clothes-drift stopping the door. Or observe the way in which he goes about buying forgiveness from a transgressed partner. In response to the shop assistant's question what type of chocolates, or what kind of blooms the lady

prefers, he will ask, 'What do you think?' then before she can answer, 'Oh, alright, the biggest ones,' and slaps down his credit card in payment.

It may come as a surprise to learn that we have all studied sperm at some point in our adult lives. Or rather, we have recorded its distribution. Then acted decisively to sleep on the side of the bed with the drier sheets. Hence we are aware that it is the male gamete's strategy to actively make a mess (and occasionally to fertilise an egg). Again we see how this impacts on the behaviour of the sperm-carrier. The male is thus pro-active in finding a partner, which explains the need for chat-up lines, excessive drinking, Polo Mints and aftershave that is cheap, though not so cheap that it induces a migraine in an enclosed space larger than a barn. A so-called 'bloke' is kept moving because that is what his sperm wants him to do. The bloke is renowned for going off without really knowing the reason why. He will

tend to head off down the public house, for instance, just because it's somewhere to go. In time he will realise it's also somewhere he can share the same experience with other members of his gender who equally don't know why they are down there, because going down the pub is a sperm thing. Typically, he greets a fellow drinker at the bar with, 'So she let you out, then?' But it could just as well be an acknowledgement, a conspiratorial nod of the head and the suspicion softly mouthed, 'Sperm?' What happens thereafter would depend very much on the fellow-drinker's level of misinterpretation and his alcohol consumption.

Blokes are vectors for sperm. The sperm says 'get me close and I'll take care of the rest', though getting close to a female is harder than sperm thinks (particularly when it becomes cold and congealed). Only two options are open to the vector. One is to demonstrate the quality of subtlety, and certain characteristics such as

nobility and strength – despite the fact that he’s a bloke. The second is to use ‘charm’ or to tell lies to get what he wants, working on the basis that women are unaware of a distinction between the two. Whichever option he goes with, the male needs to impress because the female will run a means test on his resources in order to rate him somewhere in a mental league table of potential carriers of DNA worth mixing with her own. The female is falling in with her cautious egg strategy, since once she’s made a choice of partner, that’s her out of the DNA market for at least the next nine months, while he is able to function again as soon as he regains consciousness. Hence, men fall asleep immediately after they’ve had sex so that they can market their particular brand of genes again at the earliest available opportunity – which in an ideal situation is as soon as they’ve smelt fried bacon. When they’ve decided they’re ready to wake up.

Although sperm and egg strategies collaborate with genes in identifying a good investment in the initial attraction phase (the subject of this book, *Sperm & Eggs – Attraction*), and again in the sexes making contact (covered in the second book, *Sperm & Eggs – Interaction*), they are less helpful in protecting that investment at the relationship stage (the subject of *Sperm & Eggs – Relationships*, the last book in the series). A man will feel the urge to play the field. Or, in the case of Norwegian men who entertain multiple partners living in communities distributed along high-sided sea inlets, an urge to play the fjord. And so, there is potential for the male to abandon his role in an established relationship. One in which he is expected to share the responsibility of nurturing the offspring he has invested with his genes. Thus, there is a disharmony that exists between human genes and their genes' transmitters, sperm and eggs. The problem is that the gamete strategies are

ancient ones we share in common with lower forms of animal life. Such animals' sperm-carriers are akin to the tradesmen who promote their services boldly in the Yellow Pages telephone directory. There they crow in irresistible-speak, 'Forget the rest if you want the best' and in their own strutting yellow-and-black, self-contained advertisement panel. If contracted, however, they will at best attend to the plumbing and knock off early. Leaving a mess behind them and the egg-carriers with recourse neither to a guarantee nor an after-sales service after completion of the job.