

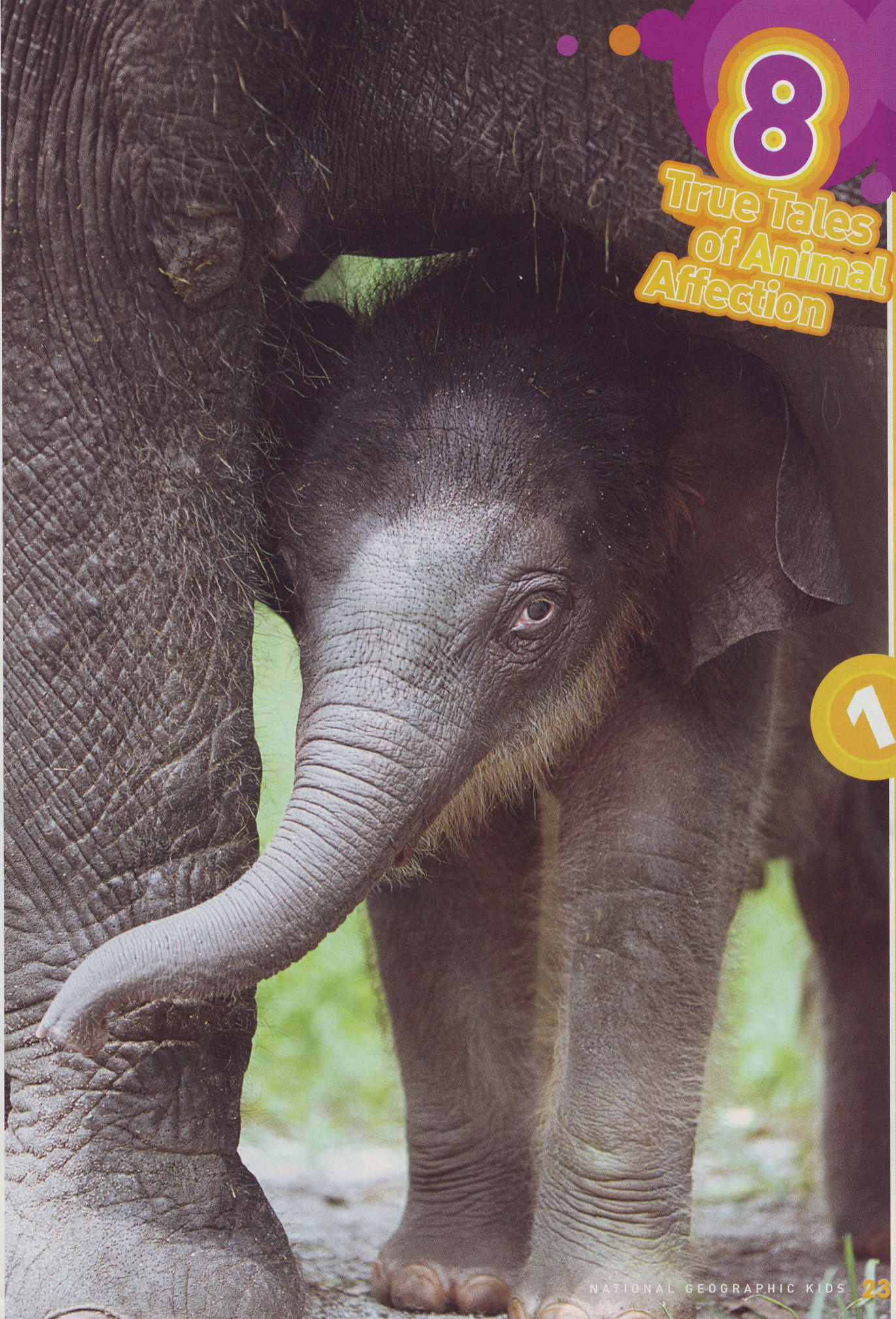
BY ALINE ALEXANDER NEWMAN

DO ANIMALS LOVE EACH OTHER?



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True Tales
of Animal
Affection



A PURR-FECT PAIR

Nobody had ever seen anything like it. The two stray cats were always together. Not only that, one led the other wherever they went, with their tails entwined. How come? Unable to get close to them

because they were so wild, a woman who looked after stray cats trapped the pair. That's when it was discovered that one cat was blind. A cloudy film covered his eyes. His sighted brother acted as his guide, hanging onto his tail and always stepping a bit ahead.

The rescuer named the blind one Tommy and his brother Tyson. To get them off the street, she took them to Best Friends Animal Sanctuary, in Kanab, Utah. There the two lived in a big enclosure with a screened-in porch and high rafters to climb on. "It was perfect for them," says Elizabeth Doyle, a sanctuary worker. Tyson was devoted to his brother for life.



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DEVOTED DUO

It was love at first sight. When huskies Misha and Maria first met, Misha

leaped over another dog's head to reach Maria. Then they took off—playfully chasing each other round and round Elizabeth Marshall Thomas's living room.

Misha's owners, who lived nearby, finally pulled him away to go home. But he didn't stay. An hour later, Misha found his way back. He tunneled under the fence surrounding the Thomas's backyard and let Maria out. The two of them "eloped," embarking on a 24-hour honeymoon walking tour of Peterborough, New Hampshire.

"It's not often that dogs get to choose their own mates," says Thomas. But these two did, and their bond was strong—so strong that when Maria had puppies, Misha acted like a wolf daddy.

"Male wolves go hunting, come back, and vomit up food to feed the pups," says Thomas.

Which means? It may sound icky, but in the canine world, throwing up for the pups is a sign of true devotion.

JEFFREY SILVESTER / TAXI / GETTY IMAGES (CATS); MARCO CORSETTI / TAXI / GETTY IMAGES (DOGS); © DOUG PERRINE / SEAPICS.COM (DOLPHINS, PHOTO DIGITALLY ALTERED); © JOHN WATERS / NATURE PICTURE LIBRARY (MONKEY)



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FAMILY LOVE

The baby dolphin was trapped! He'd been caught by mistake in a mile-long nylon net set out by Richard O'Barry, a marine

mammal specialist from Miami, Florida. The net was intended for catching adult dolphins to train for a TV show. O'Barry didn't realize at first that the newborn was snared. But the calf's mother sure did.

She and two other adult females rushed over to help. "They tried to push that baby out—at the risk of tangling up their own fins," says O'Barry. The frantic females were unable to free the baby,

so O'Barry finally dove in himself and cut the net. The mother guided her limp, gasping calf up to the surface to breathe. Even she was exhausted from the long ordeal trying to free her baby. For a while, the other females held up both of them. After the mom recovered, all the adults took turns keeping the baby afloat. In a few hours, the calf had recovered and all the dolphins swam away.



MONKEY PALS

Captive Diana monkeys once had a just-for-fun vending machine in their enclosure. Like bored teenagers, they'd drop a token into a slot to get a snack. All of them could do it, except for Beulah. "She would drop tokens alongside the slot or throw them against the wall," says Hal Markowitz, professor of biology at San Francisco State University, in California. "She never managed to insert them on her own."

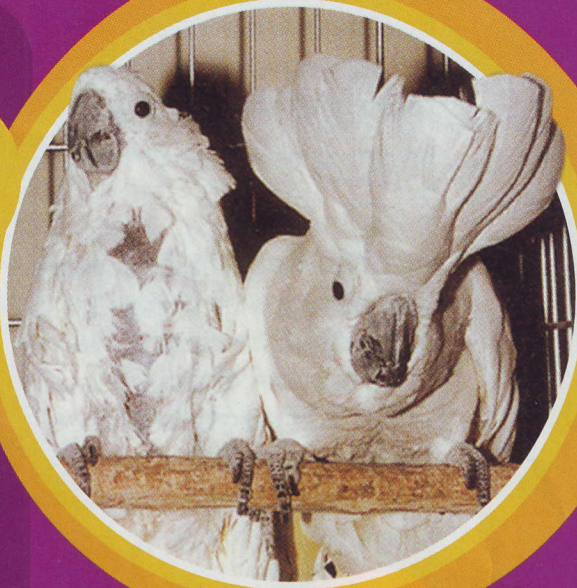
Maybe Beulah was a slow learner. Or perhaps she was a flirt who just wanted to be pampered. Either way, she attracted the attention of her mate, Rocky. After watching her drop the same token again and again, he decided to come to her rescue. He picked up her token and put it into the slot himself. But he let Beulah eat the treat!

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BEAUTY AND THE BIRD

Looks aren't everything. Take Caesar, a picky cockatoo (right, at right). His owner, Mattie Sue Athan, a parrot rescuer in Denver,

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Colorado, was aware that parrots live in groups in the wild. So she decided to purchase another cockatoo to keep Caesar company. "She was gorgeous—in full feather," says Athan. "But Caesar completely ignored her."

Two weeks later, Athan took in a half-bald, old female bird (right, at left). Like a kid who chews her fingernails, Athena had chewed off her feathers. But Caesar didn't care. The minute he spotted her, Caesar began climbing around his cage, trying to get close. Within days, the unlikely pair was snuggling on a perch, feeding and preening each other. It came as no surprise when their baby bird hatched.

"I can't say Caesar loved Athena," says Athan, "but he obviously preferred her to another bird."

And why not? Beauty is only skin deep—even for cockatoos.

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LAST GOODBYE

Babs the gorilla lived a good life. For years, she was the top-ranking female in her clan. But when the elderly gorilla became sick, Babs bedded down in her night quarters—and stayed there. It appeared she was at the end of her long, happy life. Concerned keepers at Chicago's Brookfield Zoo began leaving an inside door open so that other apes could visit. And they did, often touching her gently.

That's why, after Babs died, her keepers gave them one last chance to visit. Having laid Babs's body on the floor with her arms at her side, they opened the door. One by one, gorillas filed in to touch and sniff her body. Then, like mourners in a funeral home, they sat down beside it. Except for Bana, Babs's grown-up daughter.

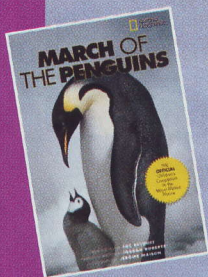
Bana curled up beside her, with her head on her mother's arm and her arm across Babs' chest. "For five minutes, Bana snuggled with her mother as she had as a youngster," says lead keeper Craig Demitros. Then, content, she padded away to resume her own good life.



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MATTIE SUE ATHAN (ATHENA AND CAESAR); JIM SCHULZ / BROOKFIELD ZOO (BANA, BABS); © BRUCE DAVIDSON / NATURE PICTURE LIBRARY (GORILLA GROUP); © E. HUMMEL / ZEEFA / CORBIS (PENGUINS); JÉRÔME MAISON (BOOK COVER)

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LOVING PARENTS

If animals got awards, the male emperor penguin would certainly take the prize for Best Dad. Not many males among animals take an active role in hatching and raising their young. Emperor penguins do, and in some of the harshest conditions on Earth. For two months the father penguin holds his precious egg on top of his feet. If it rolls away, the egg will freeze, killing the growing chick inside. The attentive dad endures the Antarctic winter, including temperatures

that dip to minus 76 degrees Fahrenheit, blizzards of blinding snow and wind, and 24 hours a day of total darkness. He won't leave the egg to eat, so a male penguin loses up to half his body weight. Even after the egg hatches and the male's mate returns from her long journey to the sea for food, he continues to dote on the chick. The devoted pair takes turns watching over their chick, keeping it warm and feeding it until it's strong enough to stand on its own.