



THE FITTEST



In the long history of humankind those who learned to collaborate and improvise most effectively have prevailed.

—Charles Darwin

The young male sea lion lay alone on the desolate Pacific beach. He bore the fresh flesh wounds of a battle with an older, larger male sea lion. The two had just recently fought over the older sea lion's harem.

An outcast, the defeated, younger sea lion seemingly had nothing but despair to show for his foray. His solitary, sandy presence made the few human onlookers feel for the seemingly lost and despondent beast. He had no harem and no buddies with whom to cavort before his next battle with the older bull male. He lay motionless, only occasionally blowing sand from his whiskered face.

He quite literally did not have even one thin dime to his sea lion name. Even if he did have that dime, he had no pocket in which to put it.

Your author, perhaps lost in the moment or possibly seeking to commiserate with the crestfallen creature, opted to find a spot in the sand next to the wild animal.

In response, the animal violently raised his fleshy torso and charged. His great, ivory-colored teeth were like spikes joined by a barking war cry. Your author narrowly avoided the flopping lunge of the beast and immediately realized the transgression.



The Bachelor

Although the beast seemingly had nothing, he did, in fact, have his self-respect and a few square meters of sand to call his own.

He fully intended to do everything in his power to defend both. His property was not for the taking. Even forlorn, he may have had visions of the next battle and one day having a harem to call his own. (The bachelor sea lion had ignored Confucius' warning about being careful what he wished for.)

Not far away from our bachelor protagonist, a mother sea lion had given birth to her pup. The pup was only minutes old and the mother was completely exhausted. She could not even muster the strength to whisk the flies from her face.

Nonetheless, she selflessly made her demands known. To the few humans present, she bellowed, "Stay away." The pup was hers and she would do anything within her temporarily diminished ability to protect it. The pup's very survival depended on the older generation's foresight and assistance. The newborn could not do for itself what the mother could do for it. One day in the near future, that pup will mature and make self-sacrifices for its own pup.

These beasts are a lot like mankind; willing to act aggressively to protect their pups, their spot on the beach.



Mom meets Pup