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**Yvonne:** Hi, this is '6 Minute English' with Yvonne Archer and joining me today is Callum Robertson. Hello Callum!

**Callum:** Hello Yvonne.

**Yvonne:** Thanks for joining me. Now today, we'll hear a report about some research which might help to explain some of the mysteries of love - such as why we fall in love. But first, I've a question for you – as usual. Are you ready?

**Callum:** Oh yes!

**Yvonne:** Good. In 1991, Minnie Munro became the world's oldest bride aged 102. But how old was her groom – the man she married? Was he:

- a) 97
- b) 80 or
- c) 83

**Callum:** This is just going to have to be a guess; she's 102 - I'll say he was 97.

**Yvonne:** OK – we'll find out later on whether you're right or wrong later on.

Larry Young is a professor of neuroscience – that's the study of the structure of the nervous system, how it works and the diseases that can cause it problems. Professor Young, based at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia in the United States, used prairie voles to find out why people fall in love. But what are 'prairie voles' Callum?

**Callum:** Well, a 'vole' is a very small animal which looks like a mouse but it has smaller ears and a short tail. And 'voles' usually live in fields near rivers but the ones from Professor Young's study live on 'the prairies' - large areas of flat, grassy land in North America. So they're known as 'prairie voles'.

**Yvonne:** Okay. Now for some scientific language. What is meant by 'surges of chemical'?

**Callum:** A 'surge' in something is a sudden, great increase in it - so 'surges of chemical' are large, sudden increases in the amounts of a chemical.

**Yvonne:** And finally, what is 'a compound' in terms of chemistry?

**Callum:** Well that's a substance – something that contains more than one element. So if there are two or more chemicals in a substance, it's 'a compound' substance.

**Yvonne:** Thanks, Callum. Now it's time to hear that report from the BBC's Science Correspondent, Pallab Ghosh. As we listen, try to find out why Professor Young decided to study prairie voles to help with his research.

### **PALLAB GHOSH**

His studies on prairie voles which like humans, form lifelong relationships, has led him to believe that this most powerful of human emotions is governed by surges of chemicals, including a compound called oxytocin.

**Yvonne:** So Professor Young believes that the love we feel is 'governed' or caused by great and sudden increases in the amount of oxytocin in us – a chemical. But why did Professor Young study prairie voles to help with his research, Callum?

**Callum:** Well, because they're like human beings in their relationships. They stay with the same partner throughout their lives, so they form 'lifelong' relationships – just like married people.

**Yvonne:** Ahh...

Now in the next part of today's report, we'll hear how Professor Young believes that there's a possibility that the chemical oxytocin could also be used in two other ways. Firstly, 'an antidote' for the broken hearted. Unfortunately, most of know what that means, but what is meant by 'an antidote', Callum?

**Callum:** 'An antidote' is usually a drug or a chemical which lessens or reverses the bad effects of something or stops something bad from happening to us. For example, the antidote to a snake bite could stop someone dying from the snake's poison. And an antidote for the broken hearted could help those people feel less tearful and sad.

**Yvonne:** We'll also hear how Professor Young believes that a 'genetic love test' could also be developed 'to determine' – to find out - who has 'a pre-disposition to a happy married life'. Callum, in a nutshell – what's meant by that?

**Callum:** Well, a genetic love test would basically tell us who was born with the qualities and personality that people really need to be a great husband or wife!

**Yvonne:** Hmm – so an antidote for the broken hearted - plus a love test to find out who's really suited to marriage. But who would use a genetic love test?

### **PALLAB GHOSH**

Professor Young believes it would equally be possible to develop an antidote to love for the heartbroken and he says there's even the prospect of a genetic love test where matchmaking agencies would attempt to determine a person's pre-disposition to a happy married life.

**Yvonne:** So Callum, who does Professor Young think would use the genetic love test?

**Callum:** Matchmaking agencies – companies that charge people money to help them find their perfect partner - a husband or a wife.

**Yvonne:** Hmph! Well, I certainly look forward to any further developments with interest! But now, today's big question! In 1991, Minnie Munro became the world's oldest bride at age 102. But how old was her groom? And what was your answer, Callum?

**Callum:** Well, I had a guess at 97.

**Yvonne:** Eeee... He was actually 83.

**Callum:** Oh right, so nearly twenty years' difference!

**Yvonne:** And Minnie may have found her man a little sooner if a genetic love test had been available, don't you think?

**Callum:** Ummm - possibly!

**Yvonne:** Anyway, that's all we've got time for on today's "6 Minute English". Do join BBC Learning English again for more!

**C/Y:** Goodbye!