Now she has had this epiphany, she wonders if the exisitance of this unnoticed hole in her soul whilst she had been growing up is the reason why she had been so keen to absorb from others things that seemed to be missing in her. Things like their wants and desires, their reason for being, their world view.

Mostly she had taken from James, and he had been more than willing to give, but it had been hard to see the world as he had seen it. It had been to Sophie a totally grotesque world, a world full of selfishness, barren of any real feeling towards anything other than yourself. Which is crazy because James is the most passionate and caring person she's ever met, yet so many times in the past, she has sat with him and had him argue her to tears as he'd decimated her attempts to prove that things like altruism.

Eventually, she had submitted her head to it and accepted that every act of kindness is motivated by either aversion to the unpleasant feelings of guilt or a predilection to the feelings of well being that accompany the act. She had even allowed her head to accept that there is no mystical component to love, that it is just, as James had argued, complete mutual empathy directed at someone whom your body has told you, via the release of chemicals into your brain, that you are biologically compatible with and that your subconscious has told you, based on years of social conditioning, is a suitable match.

As Sophie's body sits in the examination room being poked, prodded, and measured by James, her mind is able to see him so clearly sitting on the green green grass, under a blue sky, watched by a yellow sun, being so excited as he explains to her how the complete mutual empathy of being in love means that when you make love not only do you just feel every quicken of your partners heart but that they feel you feel it and that you feel them feeling you feel it so a feedback loop ensues. You are happy which makes them happier, them being happier makes you happier still and the two of you spiral ever higher till you reach nirvana.

Sophie had accepted all this with her head, but not with her heart. Secretly she had believed in altruism, secretly she had clung to her mystical romantic notions of love, so vague compared to the

clarity of James' chemically motivated feedback inducing empathy. She had believed that people do kind things because they are kind, not because they selfishly crave the warm glow they get from it or fear guilt if they do not do it. Secretly she had known why her heart had clung to this belief: it had seemed to her that if she had accepted that kindness is purely selfish then it would nullify the pleasure of doing a good deed. Sophie had kept this thought in her heart though, for she had known that her head would scream out that she was just proving the point.

Sophie looks at James and is pretty sure that his sermons on sex and love weren't drawn from experience. Yet, the way he had spoken about love (even if he hadn't liked calling it that) and the way he had looked at her as he'd said the things had had seemed to bear the hallmark of authenticity. Sophie supposes that premarital sex is such an extreme taboo it is conceivable that, if he had been in love someone, if he had of made love to someone, he would have hidden it even from her. But, even if he had, he couldn't have hidden the tell-tale signs: the overcompensating when trying to avoid looking at this girl, the girls surprising occurrences in conversations due to half his mind thinking of nothing but her, and the other hundred and one little things he would have done if he had been in love with someone, if he had made love with someone.

However, even if the way James had talked about sex had been from a theoretical point of view, more than anything it had rung true for her, theoretically speaking. For this had been how she had felt. She had wanted to pleasure people. She had wanted to make them happy. She had known nothing in the world would make her happier.

Back in the present, Sophie's body is lying on the cold earth, all happiness has left it. James' body gives it heat. His hot breath fills its lungs making it breathe, but nothing he can do can make it wake because her mind is still in the hospital between the worlds reliving what happened a decade ago.

Sophie is almost delirious with happiness. She has been completely convinced by the little voice inside her head that believes that when