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Al Moon & Scott

SARGE! IT'S BAD MANNERS TO LICK YOUR PLATE!

SLURP!

IT WAS BEETLE'S PLATE

GREG! MORT WALKER

6-25

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6-25

Monte Marzelle

HERE YOU ARE — ICE CREAM, CHOCOLATE SYRUP, WHIPPED CREAM AND A CHERRY!

WELL?
AREN'T YOU GOING TO EAT IT?!

NO, I'D KINDA LIKE SOMEONE TO PAINT A PICTURE OF IT BEFORE I EAT IT!

CANDY BLAUDE

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SO, GRIMM, WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN DOING SINCE OBEDIENCE SCHOOL?

OH, YOU KNOW, I'VE UM... I'VE...

...BEEN WORKING IN THE SPACE PROGRAM.

WOW.

YOU KNOW, THAT SPACE BETWEEN THE SOFA CUSHIONS WHERE YOU FIND THE CHEETOS?

THAT'LL BE ALL. THANK YOU, RALPH.

JEFF SMITH
6/25

WATCH ME WIN YOU A STUFFED ANIMAL, SWEETIE!

PLEASE, NO, DAD...

EVERY TIME YOU TRY TO KNOCK DOWN THE BOTTLES, YOU WIND UP BRAINING SOME POOR CARNY.

HEAR THAT, CARNY? HAND OVER A PRIZE OR SOMEONE MIGHT GET HURT...APPARENTLY.

I'M GONNA GO SOMEWHERE ELSE.

6-25

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DOC, YA GOTTA KNOCK ME OUT FOR THIS! I WANT GAS, NOVOCAINE, SODIUM PENTOTHAL, EITHER! EVERYTHING YA GOT!

AAA A! I'M THE PAIN! I'M DYIN' IN HERE! SOMEONE HELP MEEE! OW! OW!

WAITING ROOM

WELL, MR. FOOTBRIDGE, I'M DONE. BUT I FOUND SOMETHING

A CAVITY?

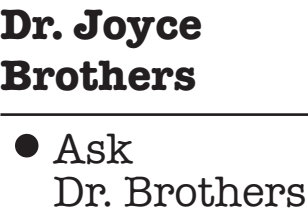
NO. I FOUND THAT WHEN IT COMES TO ANNUAL TEETH CLEANING... T-REXES ARE BIG BABIES

IS... IS THIS THE AFTER-LIFE? I SAW A BRIGHT LIGHT!

YEAH, ABOVE YOUR CHAIR

6-25

ROBERTS

[illegible]

Dear Dr. Brothers: This sounds sort of funny, but believe me, it's not. My way of self-comforting has always been to go shopping. I figure it was cheaper than a shrink – I never spent too much. But now that the economy is bad, my husband has told me I have to cut up my credit cards ... which means no more shopping! I don't know what to do! – B.T.

Dear B.T.: Your plight doesn't exactly sound funny, but it does sound like one of those Catch-22s we all run into occasionally. I wish there were an easy answer, but you are going to have to be creative and see if you can fool yourself into behaving less harmfully. Any solution you can come up with and stick to will have to be good for your financial status as well as your psyche. And by the way, your problem isn't too unusual.

Since you realize you are using your shopping to regulate emotions but are not going to have much to spend, it might be a good solution to try to get your shopping thrills on the cheap – volunteer at a thrift shop, or switch to Salvation Army stores, where you will be contributing to a good cause without spending much of anything. Regardless of how useful it may be to invest in a therapist, I think this kind of solution would be better than you turning to drugs or alcohol. Just keep your habit in check so you are in control.

Dear Dr. Brothers: When the last of our kids left home last year, little did I know that my wife would take the advice of all the women's magazines and get a hobby – which would take over the whole house! She has gotten into all sorts of crafts, and there are bags of beads and blocks of candle wax and frames and soap pieces in every nook and cranny. At least the kids had their stuff behind closed doors! What can I do to get this stuff out of here, or do I have to flee? – S.S.

Dear S.S.: It sounds as though the empty nest doesn't have room for the fledglings to come back and visit, so I hope none of them lose jobs or spouses and want to move back home! Seriously, it is a good thing that your wife has thrown herself into activities and isn't sitting around the house being lonely and sad because she is missing her kids – or made it her business to organize every minute of YOUR day, now that she has nothing else to do.

But perhaps you are feeling a bit left out. If so, think about why your wife has taken on all these hobbies. Has she long ago given up on doing things with you as a couple? Did one or both of you drop out of the dynamic-duo scenario so that you are both now more or less flying solo when it comes to your daily lives? Why not suggest some things you can do together, out of the home that don't need a lot of stuff to succeed? Then you can start to live a more balanced lifestyle, where you function again as a couple.

South dealer.
Both sides vulnerable.

NORTH	
♠	7 6 4 3
♥	A Q 8
♦	A J 6 2
♣	6 3

WEST
 ♠ 10 9 8
 ♥ J 9 5 2
 ♦ 10 9 7 3
 ♣ 8 4

EAST
 ♠ A K Q 5 2
 ♥ K 10 6 4
 ♦ Q 5
 ♣ 9 7

SOUTH
 ♠ J
 ♥ 7 3
 ♦ K 8 4
 ♣ A K Q J 10 5 2

The bidding:

South	West	North	East
5 ♣	Pass	Pass	Pass

Opening lead — ten of spades.

When a contract depends solely on the favorable distribution of a suit or the success of a finesse, all you can do is hope that the fates will be on your side. But in some hands that appear to depend on luck, the luck element can be reduced or eliminated entirely by good play.

Take this case where South is in five clubs and West leads a spade. East wins and continues with a spade, ruffed by South.

Declarer starts with an excellent chance of making the contract. He can draw trumps, lead to the king and another diamond, and finesse the jack. If the finesse wins, he is home. But even if it loses, his prospects are still good. The diamonds may divide 3-3, or, failing that, the heart finesse may work.

All these chances added together make South a strong favorite to bring in his contract. Yet, as the East-West cards lie, South would go down if he followed this line of play. He would lose the diamond finesse, and later the heart finesse, and suffer a one-trick defeat.

However, declarer can improve his chances if he varies his play slightly. After drawing trumps, he should cash the ace and king of diamonds rather than attempt a finesse in the suit. In the actual case, this safety play succeeds, since East was dealt the doubleton queen.

Note that playing the diamonds in this fashion does not harm South one bit. Had East held the x -x of diamonds instead of Q-x, declarer would still make the contract by next leading toward dummy's J-x and establishing the jack as a trick on which to discard a heart.

The diamond finesse is thus not necessary even if West has the queen, and so should not be taken. The recommended approach allows South to make the contract whenever West has the queen, whenever the diamonds are divided 3-3, and, most importantly, whenever East has the doubleton queen, which adds significantly to his chances.

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3				5				
	4				9	3	1	
		9			2		8	
						2	3	
9								1
	6	5						
	8		6			4		
	5	7	8				9	
				3				5

Difficulty Level ★★ ★ 6/25

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This is a logic-based number placement puzzle.

4	8	2	6	3	1	9	7	5
7	6	3	9	5	8	4	1	2

This is a logic-based number placement puzzle.

The goal is to enter a number, 1-9, in each cell in which each row, column and 3x3 region must contain only one instance of each numeral.

The solution to the last Sudoku puzzle is at right.

4	8	2	6	3	1	9	7	5
7	6	3	9	5	8	4	1	2
5	9	1	7	4	2	3	8	6
3	4	9	2	8	6	7	5	1
8	1	5	3	9	7	6	2	4
6	2	5	1	4	8	9	3	7
9	7	5	4	8	2	3	1	6
2	3	6	1	7	9	5	4	8
1	7	8	4	6	5	2	3	9

Difficulty Level ★★★

6/24

HV DG FV CD XW TK NS XW C

WDNE XM NBS CNHM HXCD G

F V S L M G S S N H W E V U X G K C L

XC DGW G USNUBW TNUBW

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHAT WOULD YOU
CALL PLAYS, PAINTINGS AND LITERATURE
THAT'S INTERESTING TO DADS? POP CULTURE.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: C equals T

ACROSS	38 Manhattan Project scientist	DOWN	24 A mere handful
1 Serve tea		1 Tower city	25 Census statistic
5 Nibble away at	40 Lindbergh book	2 "My bad"	26 New Year's Eve mess
9 Once around the track	41 Musical show	3 Hexagonal state	27 "Where America's Day Begins"
12 Teensy bit	43 Piece maker?	4 Mixture	29 "How Dry —"
13 Easy gait	47 Cistern	5 Merri-mont	30 Resort
14 Swelling aid	48 "Lucia di Lammermoor" composer	6 "To be or — ..."	35 Aachen article
15 Trattoria order	51 Performance	7 Likely	37 Myth
17 Support system?	52 First victim	8 Odd	39 Speeder's worry
18 Off the boat	53 Midday	9 Musical texts	40 Oz VIP
19 Harder to find	54 Muumuu	10 Farm fraction	41 Elliptical
21 Celeb-oriented magazine	55 Mob accessory	11 Bartlett, for one	42 Wear a rut in the rug
22 Tin star	56 Woman of the knight?	16 Day pts.	43 Leave at the
24 Datum		20 Past	
27 Solidify		22 Playwright	
28 Elevator		Ugo	
		23 Sheltered	

Solution time: 25 mins.

M	I	S	C	L	A	M	A	P	S	E
A	N	T	E	A	L	I	C	H	A	T
S	C	A	L	A	W	A	G	T	O	R
S	H	R	I	L	L	H	E	R	N	I
			A	B	E	T	R	E	E	
P	O	M	A	A	S	H	A	S	T	I
D	I	A	L	S	I	R	E	S	A	K
A	L	I	E	N	S	I	M	E	T	G
			N	A	I	L	L	A	P	
C	O	D	D	L	E	A	T	E	A	S
O	G	R	E	M	I	X	E	D	B	A
A	L	A	R	S	O	D	A	L	S	O
L	E	G	S	O	N	E	D	L	E	S

Yesterday's answer 6-25

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8		9	10	11
12					13					14		
15				16						17		
18								19	20			
			21			22	23					
24	25	26			27				28		29	30
31					32					33		
34			35		36				37			
			38		39			40				
41	42						43			44	45	46
47					48	49	50					
51					52				53			
54					55				56			