

Marriage ? Problems ?

By John MacLean

Two of the major problems characteristic of many marriages are the almost constant closeness and scrutiny that are both religiously and, strangely enough, privately sustained. A lifelong screening process and the proximity associated with it are force enough to create a knotted mess of psychological tangles. Tangles, indeed, ranging from very subtle forms of Nietzschean revenge, to very brutal power struggles, endorsed by the spirit of Hobbes himself.

Of course there is, on the other hand - when characters are not clashing - the overly habitualized behaviour of so many married people; sometimes, sorry to say, it almost looks like boredom. Physical, mental, or a combination of both, it may very well be something he or she was not expecting.

And then, after realizing you have been gypped in the trade of our randomness for a blasé experience known as happiness, what do you do? There is no moral escape - or at least there never used to be.

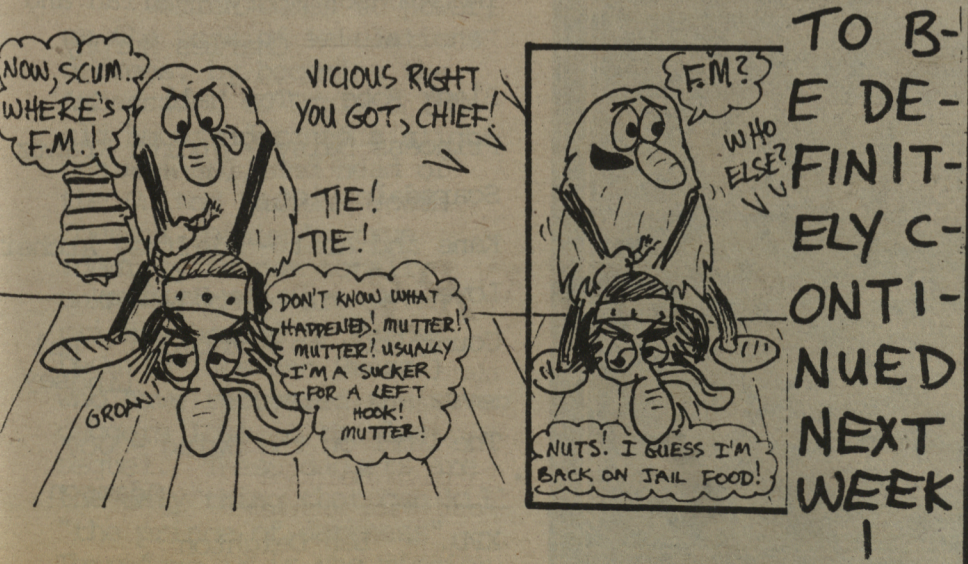
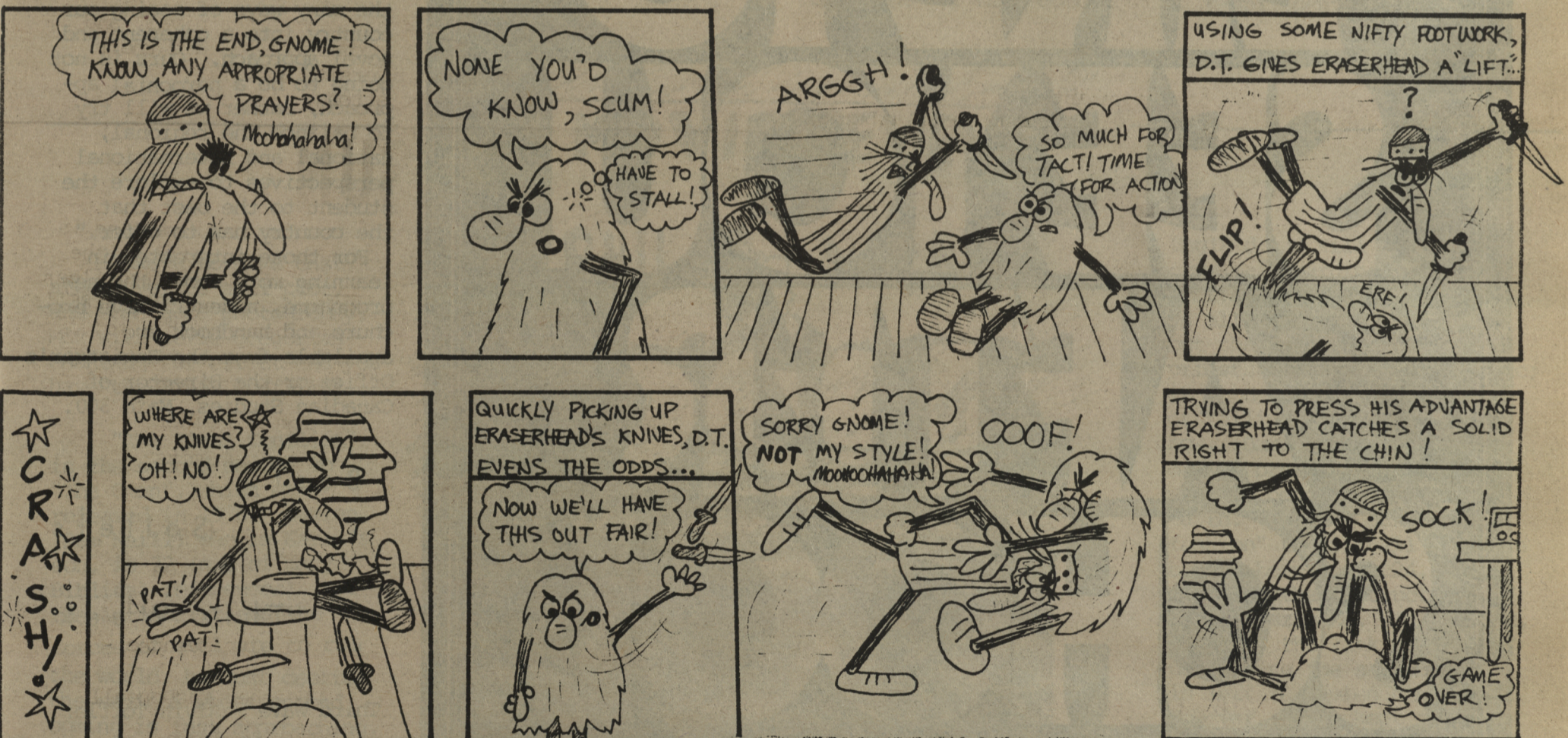
In looking at how tarnished marital experiences can be, one might want to ask, "Why do people get married?" If people experience these ongoing horrors, then marriage must be nothing more than a cultural curse. One might also, however, argue that boredom and love tusseling, of one kind or another, are the inevitability of conjugality. To some extent, yes. But rather than rationalize these problems away as pure functionalism, one should really consider

exactly how much of this stuff one wants to enjoy for the rest of one's life.

And ah - yes, there might lie the real problem: the inability of humans to determine what they really want, and when they want it. Decisiveness and honesty are part of the blast that shattered Thomas Hardy's mirror; and they are part of what eventually breaks up uncoordinated marriages as well. As a result of irresoluteness, marital experience becomes nothing more than sacrifice to a sliding will. Or to put it more metaphorically, the victimized married person may end up like poor Jacob Marley, moaning relentlessly, chained to all those decisions that could and should have been made for the betterment of himself and all those people with whom he dealt. Days, months, years, however long one wants to suffer, the pain may be reduced slightly if one realizes the problem with an uneven premarital square root.

Maybe too much time has been spent on the importance of properly identifying and defining what one wants. Any degree of nobility may very well be what utilitarian J.S. Mill advocates as "a very tender plant easily killed". But, is it yet to be seen exactly how big a dosage of decisiveness and honesty the human condition can handle? Hopefully though, at some point in a premarital situation, one will, even just for a second, consider Plato's world of forms. Granted, perfection can never be met, but how much more sacredness can be drained from marriage before it goes dry?

DEXTER T. GNOME



TO BE DEFINITELY CONTINUED NEXT WEEK!



NORTON JEWELLERS
Your Charlottetown Family Jeweller
Growing to Serve Islanders Better
REPAIR and ENGRAVING SERVICES AVAILABLE

117 Kent Charlottetown, P.E.I.
 Phone 894-3922