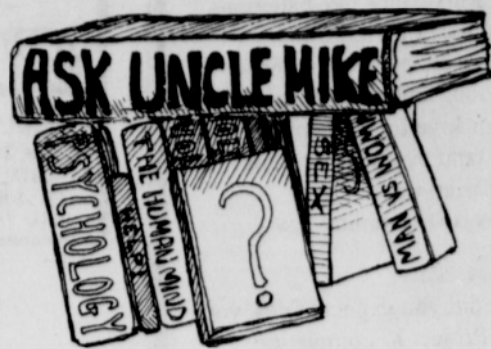


Dear Uncle Mike,

Here's a question for you. How do you stop falling in love with the wrong woman? Over and over again. I always start out thinking this is the one I've been waiting for. I always end up dealing with somebody I only thought I knew who has habits that drive me crazy or gross me out. Is there part of this I'm not getting? I know the kind of woman I want. Why can't they be what they seem? Maybe it's me. But if love is blind, how do people stay together?

Confused in Eugene



# THERAPY PAGE

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Dear Uncle Mike,

My ten year old son wants a pet tarantula. I like to encourage his interests but, to be honest with you, the things give me the creeps. Do spiders make good pets? How much space do they need? What do you feed them? Can they be de-fanged? The guy at the pet store says tarantulas are really interesting and no trouble at all. Have you ever been around one? Am I being phobic?

Chris L., Portland

Dear Chris,

A commonly overlooked fact about phobias is that they're firmly grounded in good sense. Fear of heights comes from a knowledge of gravity and the truth that there's nothing between you and the ground but thin air. Fear of pit bulls comes from an unwillingness to be torn apart and eaten by something with more teeth than brains. Fear and loathing of spiders is the racial memory of having one jump onto your face.

Do spiders make good pets? Not unless you enjoy living with a nightmare. It takes a special sort of person to watch Seinfeld with a tarantula curled up on his lap. With luck, your son isn't this far gone. Do they need much space? Like anything else, spiders will take as much space as they can get. If you're smart, this will be no larger than a small aquarium with a large rock on the lid. As far as diet is concerned, your spider will eat anything it can pick apart with its ghoulish mandibles. Given sufficient appetite, you and your son will fall into this category. Can tarantulas be de-fanged? Absolutely. The proper tool is a large mallet.

Dear Uncle Mike,

My boyfriend and I are have a question we need settled. Who was it who said, "Let them eat cake"? He says it was Madame Pompadour, I say Marie Antoinette. Do you know?

Rebecca in Astoria

Dear Rebecca,

It's usually attributed to Marie Antoinette, but she didn't say it either. Nothing even close, in fact. Uncle Mike suspects it was Sara Lee.



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