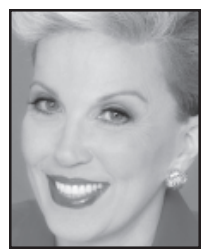


Baby deserves top priority in woman's life

DEAR ABBY: I am 21 and have been going out with an older man (17 years older) I'll call "Sherman" for about a year. He and I are having a baby together in three months. I don't know if I want to be with Sherman anymore. He keeps telling me that if I want to be with someone more my age — which I do — I should break off before things get worse. He says he'd rather be heartbroken now than have me tell him later that I have found someone else.



Abigail Van Buren

Dear Abby

turn out to be every bit the man — and father — that your husband is.

DEAR ABBY: I'm 13, and please don't get me wrong. I'm grateful to be living in my parents' house with my family. I know everyone isn't as lucky as I am.

My room is sort of a problem, though. There isn't enough room in my closet to hang anything. My dresser, which holds clothes that don't fit me anymore, was made in 1956 and is falling apart. My bed looks like a crib and holds my sisters' old bedding. I also have a desk that looks as if the hutch is about to fall off. It used to belong to my sisters, too. My bed and desk are white, but the dresser looks like oak. The walls are white because Dad never wanted to paint them. Dad built our house three years ago — but he didn't buy me a proper bedroom set like my sisters have.

During Christmas when I was in the sixth grade we all got computers. They got theirs in their room, but mine is in the study and is used by everybody, which means if someone wants to use it, I have to stop. I always get the last choice of everything, and I am sick of it.

DEAR OVERLOOKED: It's hard being the youngest child and the last in line for hand-me-downs. My suggestion to you is to ask an adult — a relative to whom you can confide your feelings, or a friend of the family — to speak to your parents on your behalf. I'll keep my fingers crossed.

DEAR ABBY: I live in Canada, so I may not be familiar with all of your etiquette customs in the U.S. I was visiting relatives in the states recently, and my hosts invited a friend over who came with a bottle of Irish Cream liqueur. The friend knew that this was the hostess's favorite drink.

After having a few glasses together, the hostess was told by her daughter that "good manners dictate that the hostess give back the half-empty bottle to the guest when leaving the party." Can you please advise me if such a rule of etiquette exists?

DEAR CURIOUS: If one exists, I have never heard of it. Traditionally, when someone brings food, alcohol, etc. to someone's home, it is considered to be a "hostess gift," and once a gift is given, it belongs to the host or hostess to do with as they wish.

DEAR ABBY: I lost my husband, "Jon," in 2003 after 14 wonderful years of marriage. He left behind not only a wife who adored him, but also our three children, who were 4, 8 and 12 at the time of his death.

When making announcements, I would like to recognize Jon as their father and as my former husband. How should they be worded? If I say, "The former Jon and Karen Jones," I'm afraid it will sound like both of us died. Also, I would like to — hopefully — remarry one day. How would an announcement be worded then?

DEAR WORRIED MOM: From my perspective, you don't need to change a thing. With all due respect to Dr. Dobson, your husband is already a manly role model to your son. He is teaching the boy important survival skills that will be invaluable when he is older. With luck, your son will

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