

Father and daughter are package deal



abigail van buren

• dear abby

DEAR ABBY: I'm engaged to marry "Kurt" in August. He has a 3-year-old daughter, "Krystal," from his first marriage. We didn't meet until a month after his wife, "June," left him, so I'm not a home wrecker. I moved in with Kurt several weeks after we began dating and have been cleaning his house, taking care of Krystal when she's here, doing his laundry, cooking for him —

just like a wife would do.

Abby, June doesn't want Krystal. She remarried six weeks ago and has asked us to take her. June's husband is loud, mean and abusive, so I don't think it would be safe for Krystal to stay there.

My problem is I can't stand Krystal. She's a spoiled brat. I don't want to be a full-time mother, although at some point I'd like to have

a child of my own.

I haven't told Kurt how I feel because I'm afraid he'd kick me out. Now I'm wondering if I should tell him I'm leaving before he sends me on my way. I don't think we can work this out because he loves Krystal, and I don't think he'd understand why I don't want to be her stepmother. What should I do? — UNWILLING STEPMOTHER IN NEW MEXICO

DEAR UNWILLING: Level with Kurt, the sooner the better. Unless you can accept that he and Krystal are a package deal and learn to love her, to marry him would be a mistake and a disservice to all of you. That

little girl has already struck out once in the mother department. Kurt needs a wife who is ready to embrace not only him, but also the child who will always be a high priority in his life.

DEAR ABBY: Our 20-year-old daughter was suspended from a small private university. We offered her tutors, lessons or a transfer to any number of other schools around the country to help her find the right field of study. She refused. She can do the work; she was just not motivated.

She now wants to attend a large university in another state to be near her boyfriend. We suspect that they want to live together. He smokes

dope and lives on welfare, and this is unacceptable to us.

She says she's finally finding her backbone and becoming independent. We told her that being independent means assuming financial responsibility for oneself, and that we will no longer provide anything beyond medical and dental coverage for her. She thinks we're cutting the purse strings on her new "college lifestyle" because we don't like her boyfriend, which is true.

Are we being unreasonable? Also, any advice on the fastest way to get that oaf out of the picture would be appreciated. — MAD-AS-A-HORNET MOM IN VIRGINIA

DEAR MOM: Refusing to subsidi-

dize her "live-in" lifestyle is not being unreasonable. It's your money, and you can spend it — or not — as you see fit.

Let her know that as an adult, her choices are her own. If she chooses to get a job and work her way through school in order to be close to her boyfriend, that is her choice. It would be nice if she had a self-supporting, upwardly mobile love interest — but since she doesn't, and she's determined to live with him, she must pay the price.

As to the fastest way to get "the oaf" out of the picture, here's what NOT to do: Do not bad-mouth him. It will only make her defensive and drive them closer together.

Table with columns: SATURDAY EVENING, MAY 8, 2004. Rows include channel, time, and program details.

Table with columns: SUNDAY EVENING, MAY 9, 2004. Rows include channel, time, and program details.

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Table with columns: MONDAY EVENING, MAY 10, 2004. Rows include channel, time, and program details.

Saturday and Sunday Movies. SATURDAY MORNING 11:09 35/31 FMC Movie "The Sand Pebbles" (1966, Adventure) Steve McQueen, Richard Attenborough. Multiple Oscar nominations went to this tale of a cynical sailor's experiences on an American gunboat in 1926 China. Directed by Robert Wise. PG-13.