



CAROLYN HAX

## Don't be a pawn in friends' relationship games

Adapted from a recent online discussion:

**Dear Carolyn:**  
A good friend who lives out of town worked in my city over the summer and dated another good friend of mine. Fun for all of us. At the end of the summer, Friend A moved back home. While Friend A is hoping to keep a long-distance relationship going, Friend B is happily dating other people. A visits B often. They hang out, sleep together, A goes home, B breathes a sigh of relief and goes back to enjoying the single life. A is frustrated that there is no talk of a commitment. B is more than content with things the way they are. Friend A occasionally asks me for reports on what B is doing with whom. B occasionally asks me to lie to A about same.

At what point am I allowed to be upfront with them about their conflicting motivations?

Tell me more, tell me more

That point already whizzed by your ear: When B asked you to lie, the answer was "No."  
And when A asked for reports on B, you should have said, "Ask B." It sounds as if you'll get other chances to try these. And since B is possibly putting A's health at risk, and since B is a close enough friend to confide in you, please also tell B that what s/he's doing stinks.

**Dear Carolyn:**  
Well... it's not like I haven't done what you've suggested more than once. At first I did a really good job of staying out of it. Then I found out sometimes A would float seemingly innocent questions my way ("So what did you do this weekend?") in order to confirm/deny B's reports. I have no plans of knowingly playing agent to either one, but you're right that B is seriously playing around with A's emotional and physical health. Are you saying "If you don't tell A, I will" is the right move here?

Tell me more, tell me more (cont'd)

So you've said point-blank, "I'm not going to lie for you," and B still asks you to lie? And A is pushing for commitment that clearly isn't coming?  
Bad relationships do have a way of bringing out the worst in people, don't they? But if B is still trying to use you against your friend, that makes B a special case.  
Either way, if you plan to remain close with both, I suppose you're due for an, "If you don't set A straight, I will."  
But there's an argument to be made for washing your hands of both of them till they resolve this. Not severing ties, just okay-whatevring. When A asks questions, either answer or don't for your own reasons; it's not your job to divine A's motive. And when B asks you to lie, tell B you're going to answer A truthfully or default to "Ask B."  
I suggest this because it isn't just B playing games; A gets what B is up to, and is trying to drag you into it instead of just facing it. If you make a point of being transparent, you can't be used to shield anyone else.

Read the whole transcript or join the discussion live at noon Fridays on [www.washingtonpost.com/discussions](http://www.washingtonpost.com/discussions).

Write to Tell Me About It, Style, 1150 15th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20071, or [tellme@washpost.com](mailto:tellme@washpost.com).



NICK GALIFIANAKIS FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

## THE STYLE INVITATIONAL

### REPORT FROM WEEK 863

Our perennially popular contest to "breed" any two names on a list of 100 thoroughbreds eligible for this year's Triple Crown races and to name the "foal" (even though virtually all the horses are male): Upon reading the almost 3,000 entries to this contest from 349 people — good thing we put in that limit of 25 entries per person — the Empress realized with a certain dismay that only 2,700 or so were not very clever, funny or distinctive. So to give the Losers their virtual due, and to amuse the readers who'd like to puzzle out even more of these names, she has posted a supplement of more honorable mentions at [washingtonpost.com/styleinvitational](http://washingtonpost.com/styleinvitational).

- 2 the winner of the itty-bitty Stonehenge model:  
Preamble x Kollege = Us the People (Mark Hagenau, Derry, N.H.)
- 3 Shrimp Dancer x Crisp = Fried Astaire (Cy Gardner, Arlington)
- 4 D' Funnybone x Lethal Combination = MansLaughter (Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn)

### THE LOSERS' CIRCLE: HONORABLE MENTIONS

**Alcindor x Switch = Kareem of the Crop** (Jan Brandstetter, Mechanicsville, Md.)

**Wow Wow Wow x Prizefighting = Ow Ow Ow** (Kathy Hardis Fraeman, Olney)

**First Dude x Stay Put = Impalin** (Jonathan Paul, Garrett Park)

**Nextdoorneighbor x Biloxi = Near Miss.** (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

**Beethoven x Lethal Combination = OD to Joy** (Steve Price, New York)

**Call Shot x Odysseus = Trojan HORSE** (\*John Winant, Arlington)

**Chief Counsel x Super Saver = Clearance Darrow** (Cy Gardner)

**Chief Counsel x Excessive Passion = Law and Ardor** (Lois Douthitt, Arlington)

**Dublin x Liquidity Event = You're A-Peein'** (\*Trevor Kerr, Chesapeake, Va.)

**Colonel Mustard x Liquidity Event = Dijon the Baptist** (Kurt Stahl, Frederick)

**Enclosure x Overcommunication = Pen & Teller** (Ellen Hill, Rockville)

**Endorsement x Enclosure = Okay Corral** (Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.; Russell Thompson, Cary, N.C.)

**Excessive Passion x Close to the Edge = Lust Horizon** (Christopher Lamora, Arlington)

**Fenway Faithful x Ice Box = Ted's Head** (Mike Hammer, Arlington; Ellen Raphaeli, Falls Church)

**First Dude x Switch = The Twig Lebowski** (\*Sharon Disque, Frederick)

**Backtalk x Deep Darkness = Lip Styx** (Steve Shapiro, Alexandria)

**Make Music for Me x She Be Wild = My Feral Lady** (Susan Thompson, Cary, N.C.)

**Tiny Woods x Make Music for Me = Copse on the Beat** (Malcolm Fleschner, Palo Alto, Calif.)

**Tiny Woods x Scuba Diver = Tiger in Your Tank** (Mark Eckenwiler, Washington)

**Johore x Worth a Buck = Jo Mama** (M.C. Dornan, Scottsdale, Ariz.)

**Odysseus x Liquidity Event = Penelope Pitstop** (Andrew Hoening, Rockville)

**Overcommunication x Marching Tune = 2Much in Formation** (David Smith, Santa Cruz, Calif.)

**Preamble x Walking the Beach = Constitutional** (\*Christopher Jones, Vienna)

**Call Shot x Odysseus = The Babe's Homer** (Roy Ashley, Washington)

**Privileged x Kollege = Misspelt Youth** (John Murphy, Herndon)

**Prizefighting x Chief Counsel = Boxers and Briefs** (Kathy Hardis Fraeman)

**Prizefighting x Raging Wit = Joke LaMotta** (Larry Yungk, Arlington; Kathy Hardis Fraeman)

**Radiohead x Nacho Friend = Marconi and Cheese** (Russell Beland, Fairfax)

**Saw Perfection x Canthavehim = She Settled for Me** (Craig Dykstra, Centreville)

**Silenced x Black Snowflake = Unspeakable Filth** (Tom Kreitzberg, Silver Spring)

**Stay Put x Beethoven = Don't Roll Over** (Laurie Brink, Cleveland, Mo.)

**Noah's Dream x She Be Wild = Land Ho** (\*Jennifer Birs, Glenwood, Md.)

**Spangled Star x Ashore = Francis Scott Quay** (Rick Haynes, Potomac)

**Twirling Candy x Nacho Friend = La Dolce Velveeta** (Jay Shuck, Minneapolis)

**\*A First Offender**

**Next week: Oonerspisms, or Switchcraft**



Worth a Buck x Switch = Susan Be Anthony (Pam Sweeney, St. Paul, Minn.)

### THIS WEEK'S CONTEST



BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

## Week 867: Back in the saddle

Right on Derby Day, as we bring you the results of our 16th annual foal names contest, it's also time to milk another contest from it for our seventh annual "grandfoals" challenge.

Given that we don't have as much space on this page for entries as we used to, we're going to expand the field a bit, as suggested by Horse Name Obsessive Russell Beland, who suggested the grandfoals contest to begin with.

This week: "Breed" any two of the "foals" in today's results — OR one foal with one of the actual horses used in today's entries (either in this column or in the Web-only supplement; this gives you more than 100 names to work with) — and name the "grandfoal." Once again, the name cannot exceed 18 characters, including spaces, and your entry shouldn't come close to duplicating any of today's results. Once again, we're limiting your personal field to 25 entries. And they will not be single-spaced unless you want the Empress to give up on them.

Winner gets the Inker, the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place gets a large yellow terry-cloth bath duck-motif mat that (we think unintentionally) looks like either a squashed bath toy or a baby bird rolled on by a tractor. Donated by the ducky Denise Sudell of Washington as the non-Loser price of admission to the Losers' holiday party.

Other runners-up win their choice of a coveted Style Invitational Loser T-shirt or yearned-for Loser Mug. Honorable Mentions get one of the lusted-after Style Invitational Loser Magnets. First Offenders get a smelly, tree-shaped air "freshener" (Fir Stink for their First Ink). One prize per entrant per week. Send your entries by e-mail to [losers@washpost.com](mailto:losers@washpost.com) or by fax to 202-334-4312. Deadline is Monday, May 10. Put "Week 867" in the subject line of your e-mail, or it risks being ignored as spam. Include your name, postal address and phone number with your entry. Contests are judged on the basis of humor and originality. All entries become the property of The Washington Post. Entries may be edited for taste or content. Results to be published May 29. No purchase required for entry. Employees of The Washington Post, and their immediate relatives, are not eligible for prizes. Pseudonymous entries will be disqualified. The revised title for next week's results is by Kevin Dopart; this week's honorable-mentions subheads are by Christopher Lamora (below) and John O'Byrne (the Web supplement).

Online discussion Have a question for the Empress or want to talk to some real Losers? Join the Style Conversational at [washingtonpost.com/styleconversational](http://washingtonpost.com/styleconversational).

## Rick Mather sculpts an artistic addition to a Richmond museum

### ARCHITECTURE FROM C1

England is formidable and should have earned him a blue-chip American commission long before now. Last fall, Mather attracted wide acclaim for his expansion of Oxford's Ashmolean Museum, the first university museum in the world — and sacred cultural ground. Miraculously, Mather managed to double the gallery space in the landlocked building, make it all flow together sensibly, and give light and airy expression to the Ashmolean's larger ambition to modernize its academically balkanized presentation of art and cultural history.

The Richmond museum is Mather's first significant American project and given its serene good sense, it should be the first of many. The new 165,000-square-foot building is the latest in a series of expansions to the VMFA's prim 1936 building, a brick-and-limestone pile in the Georgian style, fronted by a classical pediment and an entryway that immediately requires visitors to ascend a pompously overscale staircase. Later additions include flanking brick wings to the 1936 building, and expansions on the back and side of the core structure in 1976 and 1985.

Mather's addition replaces the space added in 1976, which put the museum's main entrance behind the building and near the parking lot. The new wing places the parking under a strikingly canted sculpture garden, reclaims the old parking lot for a landscaped back yard (complete with a reflecting pool), and situates the main entrance on the side of the building, where it beckons visitors from the street. The old entrance, in the slightly schoolmarmish 1936 building, still functions, which is becoming a rarity in off-enlarged public buildings. Too often, the old front door becomes a useless ornament after a new one is added; this is to a building what neutering is to a bull.

But the major accomplishment is the new wing's fine temper. Like Mather's addition to the Ashmolean, there is a meditative quality to the space. Its dark gray stone floors, white walls and large expanses of glass make you want to take off your shoes, put on a robe, then slip into a tub of warm water. His new wing, which adjoins the old museum along a building-wide and sunlit atrium, grounds the visitor. This long, wide corridor provides an axis of Zen in the midst of a highly artificial experience: the contemplation of art from every century, continent and culture that can be crammed into a typical museum visit.

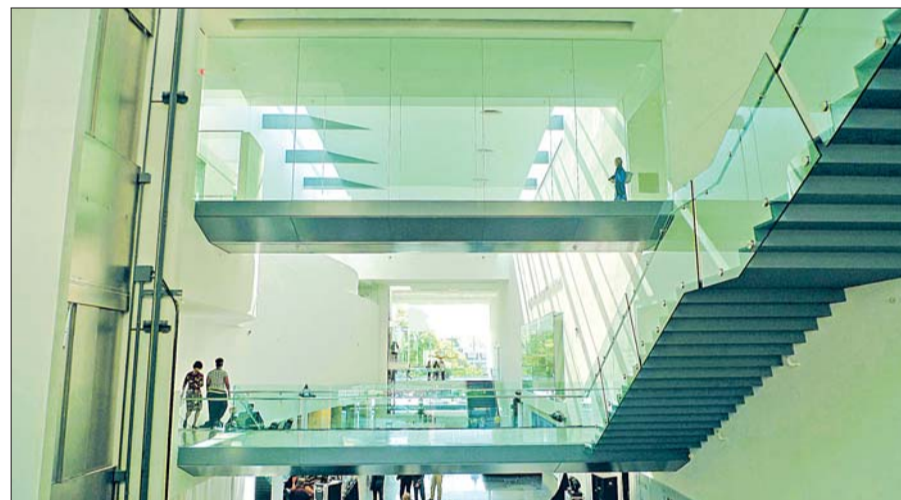
The new space is carefully configured to intersect old sightlines and create new vistas through the larger museum complex. Elevated bridges in the atrium connect Mather's galleries with the older spaces, and give the visitor multiple per-

spectives on the reconfigured interior and exterior landscape. Above, the ceiling seems to float, tethered by finlike dark metal supports. Along one wall, a large interior window lets visitors to see into a room dominated by a Roman sarcophagus carved out of marble in the second century.

The rational lines and rectangular profile of the museum's exterior are punctuated with a little humor. At night (if the shades aren't drawn), the large ventilation tubes of the conservation shop are visible through a window, like a strange hose creature from the deep suspended in a vitrine. Outside, near the entrance, an 1850 country home that should be wildly out of place on the museum grounds has been cleverly landscaped to look like a little jewel box or folly. Inside the new wing, there's more humor: walls that curve slightly along one side of the atrium, like peeling off a fruit, and a staircase that carves some appealing negative space out of the large gallery reserved for special exhibitions. But these are wry gestures, not laugh-out-loud jokes.

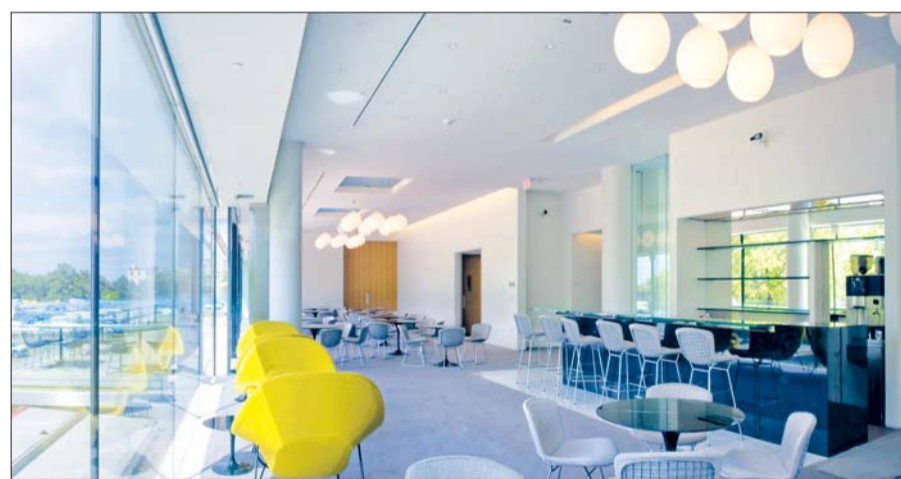
Mather's aesthetic continues a strange but apparently inevitable trend in the history of museum design. Once upon a time, museums were cluttered spaces, with walls loaded chockablock with paintings from floor to ceiling. As the museum experience became more pseudo-sacred, as art climbed the existential ladder from image to fetish object, design priorities shifted. Wall colors became more neutral, paintings and sculpture demanded more space, more air between them. And a strange anxiety crept into the visitor, who became increasingly uncertain about how to look at, absorb and think about art.

It's not accidental that the most appealing design details in the new wing of the VMFA seem as if they're borrowed from a high-end spa. Art museums have grown, expanded their collections, stuffed their vaults with stuff, without quite explaining



TIPPY TIPPENS

JOINED: Elevated bridges in the atrium connect the old and new structures.



TRAVIS FULLERTON/VIRGINIA MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

APPEALING: Amuse is a restaurant in the museum's addition. Rick Mather's design allows customers to enjoy the sculpture garden during their meal.

to the public what it is one actually does at an art museum. It's not clear that the people who run art museums know the answer to this question. And so the trend in museum design is to provide appealing spaces where one doesn't have too worry too much about the expectations and disappointments of looking at art.

Mather's building, which includes new galleries for American, pre-Columbian, South Asian, Native American and 21st-

century art, is also a pressure valve, with places to sit, connect to the museum's Wi-Fi network, and have a drink. Its success, as architecture, lies in how well it balances these terrestrial pleasures with the seriousness of its new galleries and how easily it connects with the existing buildings. Museum directors considering expansion projects may want to study his accomplishment.

[kennicott@washpost.com](mailto:kennicott@washpost.com)

### DOONESBURY BY GARRY TRUDEAU

