

I Beg Your Pardon, You Promised

By Art Buchwald

Dear Jerry,

By the time you find this note I will be gone. I don't know how to tell you this, but the honeymoon is over. I guess I should have known it wouldn't last forever, but I didn't think it would end so soon.

How could you do it, Jerry? I believed everything you told me. We were so happy together, and I was so proud when people would point us out and giggle, "They're on their honeymoon."

What a glorious month we had. As far as I was concerned, you could do no wrong. I hung onto every word you said. After my bitter breakup with "you-know-who," I thought you were different. He lied to me and cheated on me and treated me like a fool.

I said I would never fall in love again. And then

you came along with your honest face and strong jaw and sincere smile and damned if my heart didn't go flip-flop.

I said to myself you were special. You knew right from wrong, and you would never be swayed by a lot of rhetoric and double talk. Jerry, you promised me you wouldn't do anything until justice took its course. You told me under the stars as we held hands that the long nightmare was over and we would love each other forever and ever.

Oh, Jerry, what made you change your mind? What happened to all those dreams you had for us?

I know you tried to explain it to me. You said you had to forgive "you-know-who" as an act of compassion because he had suffered enough. But he hasn't suffered half as much as we have, Jerry. We'll never know all the things he did to us. Even now he refuses to admit

in the Rose Garden

Capitol
Punishment

that he did anything wrong. He keeps talking about mistakes in judgment. They weren't mistakes in judgment, and you know it. They were criminal acts and you had no right to forgive him before we knew what they were.

I'm sorry I sound bitter, Jerry. I don't want to. I guess anyone who's been on a honeymoon and then discovers his mate is not a knight in shining armor would feel the same way.

Sunday, after you told me what you were going to do, I decided to go see Evel Knievel jump over the Snake River in his steam rocket. I thought this would make me forget. But it did just the opposite. As I stared at the red, white and blue Sky Cycle, I thought of us going off into space together.

I could see us flying across chasms and mountains sharing the danger and thrills that had been so much a part of our honeymoon.

But then as the rocket filled with hot air and the steam built up and the vehicle started lifting off the ramp, something happened. Before it got off, a parachute opened and, instead of streaking out across the canyon, the rocket nose-dived and floated head first, crashlanding on the rocky bank of the Snake River.

At that moment, Jerry, I broke into tears. I wasn't crying for Evel—I was crying for us. The rocket more than anything symbolized our honeymoon. It looked so beautiful on the pad with all that steam coming out of its nozzles, its nose pointed toward the sky as if to say, "Here I come world, ready or not."

The only trouble, Jerry, with Evel's rocket and your rocket on Sunday about "you-know-who" is that neither one of them would ever fly.—A.B.

P.S. Don't try to find me.