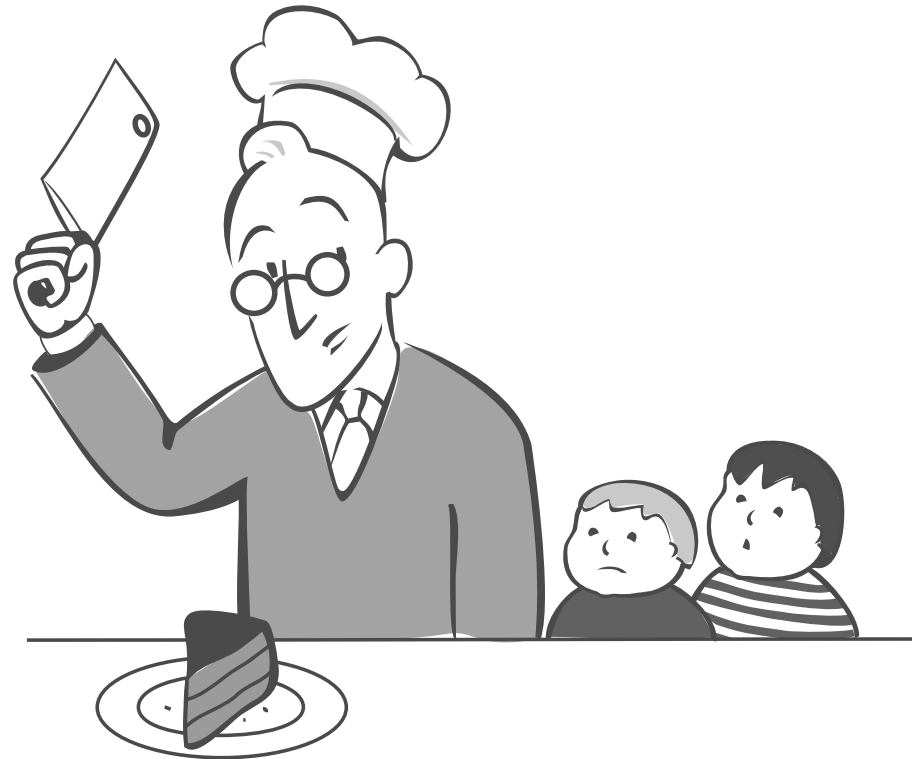


THE MORAL RELATIVIST



I am a student at a prestigious Northeastern university. In spite of the strict Dining Services policy, my roommate often takes food out of the dining hall. Many a time have I returned to find Ziploc bags of tofu scrambler, gallon jugs of “Good Season” Italian House salad dressing, and several pints of waffle mix preserved throughout my dorm room. My closet space is crammed with 700 packets of Instant Apple Cinnamon oatmeal. Our Yaffa blocks have been replaced by an industrial toaster. He has stolen so many Del Angelo plums that we have a fruit fly colony worthy of a genetics lab living on the windowsill. By now my question should be self-evident: is it morally permissible to hide dead rats in my roommate’s bed until he gets the point?

—A.K., CT

Ah, the klepto roommate. As much a part of the college experience as the unexplained hair clogs in the shower or the budding alcoholic down the hall. There are several approaches you can take. One is to have a heart-to-heart talk with your roommate, explaining to him how uncomfortable it makes you feel to live in a Food Emporium. Gently tell him that his behavior makes a mockery of the dining hall rules. However, I do not recommend this method. Your roommate will think less of you, sabotage your relationships with your friends, and spread rumors that you are gay. A better method would be to mercilessly tease your roommate about his food habits until he develops an eating disorder. You’d be surprised to see how quickly a little anorexia will dry up those secret stashes! (Caution: avoid triggering bulimia, as this will not resolve the problem). As an extra bonus, your roomie’s new-found slimness will probably cause others to question his own sexuality, enabling you to catch more tail. In the advice column biz, that’s what we call a “win-win!”

I am a high school student employed for the summer at a sex toy factory. The managers often overestimate the number of people they’ll need for a given job—they just can’t seem to realize that it only takes four employees to run the electric vagina machine—and end up sending the extra workers home. Do I have a responsibility to volunteer to leave early if I know that the other workers need the additional money more than I do?

—Larry Stern, NV

As an employee yourself, you should not have to bear an extra burden because of unfair managerial practices. This choice should truly fall on the oldest and fairest of decision makers: natural selection. However, since I’m assuming you don’t have the millions of years necessary for the complex Darwinian processes to take place, I would recommend boiling it down to a few rounds of old-fashioned fisticuffs. I prefer bare-knuckles boxing, but the specifics are up to you. When the final bell tolls, the last employee left standing has won the right to earn the extra cash—and the irregular dildos that are the perquisite of any sex toy factory worker.

—COHEN-WADE and KAU

I AM A MOTHER OF TWO, and a bit of a softie. When Grandma whips up her signature Double Chocolate Devil Delight Layer Cake, my two little angels occasionally bicker over who gets the last slice. You should see them, waddling about, smeared in chocolate, playfully biting and gouging each other for the last little crumb. It’s adorable! Sometimes, however, I wish they could share the cake. After all, they’re growing boys, and they need to eat. Any suggestions?

—Sally Mae, SC

Your concerns are dead-on. It’s important to cultivate a competitive spirit, but not at the expense of the uniquely American pursuit of childhood obesity. But how to make sure that little Tommy and Timmy get their just desserts? I often find that the best place to turn for insight into ethical decision making is the Holy Bible. Think of King Solomon, who faced a similar situation: two women arguing over the custody of a baby. You should follow his example and ask your kids if it is fair to slice the cake in half and give each child an equal portion. Whichever kid assents to this solution gets no cake—because he loved it less! Isn’t religion inspiring?

I am a business executive who enjoys frequenting the local brothel. While settling my bill after my last “appointment,” I spied my brother-in-law there as well. I am almost positive that he was soliciting prostitutes! I feel the need to tell my sister the truth about her husband’s whore-mongering, but I’m sure that it would ruin their marriage. What should I do?

—Michael P., Detroit, MI

The question of whether or not “to tell” is a complex ethical dilemma. On the one hand, our society functions on the presumption of truthfulness. However, your desire to keep your sister blissful through ignorance is perfectly valid. After much introspection, I believe that I have devised the perfect solution for this pickle: group sex. What better way to clear your own conscience—while simultaneously exploring new sexual horizons—than a hot, hot orgy? If you have any questions regarding ménage à trois, quatre, or even cinq, write to the address below, care of The Moral Relativist.



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