

## Surviving infidelity

Marital monogamy isn't what it used to be. Nowadays, judging by the headlines, it seems like everybody is getting a little something on the side – whether it's sports figures like uber-golfer Tiger Woods, celebrities like Jesse James, or politicians like South Carolina, USA Governor Mark Sanford. Is it just a coincidence that the world is seeing a spate of high-profile infidelities in recent months, or are affairs really more common than they used to be? And, if so, what does this mean for the state of our marriages?

Though it's tough to get reliable infidelity statistics—who really wants to admit cheating to a researcher?—there is evidence that the landscape of marital fidelity is changing somewhat.

But it is clear that infidelity is still one of the biggest roadblocks a marriage can face. Ruth Houston, founder of *infidelityadvice.com* and author of *Is He Cheating on You?* (Lifestyle Publications, 2002), estimates that approximately half of all marriages affected by adultery don't survive.

What determines whether a couple does—or should—stay together after an affair? Experts are reluctant to generalise. The decision is “very personal, based on many factors,” says infidelity researcher Kristina Coop Gordon, PhD, associate professor of psychology at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville. There are often other issues that come into play, from money concerns and religious beliefs to the oft-used rationale “for the sake of the kids.” And there are many different types of affairs, from the one-night stand to a long-term relationship.

Joan Raymond

Still, experts agree that there are some transgressions that are hard to overcome. If other issues compound infidelity like alcoholism, physical and emotional abuse, drug addiction, and even sex addiction, that can cause seemingly insurmountable problems for couples. Another common relationship wrecker? Sometimes, a partner may stray and believe he or she has fallen in love or found a “soul mate.” “Emotional affairs are tough for spouses to accept,” says Houston.

How can you know if an affair is worth ending a marriage over? One of the first things to do is to ask if, and why, it happened. Though the cheating spouse may be hard-pressed to be honest initially, a conversation about the reasons for the affair may be able to jump-start the healing process. It's also important to try and deal with the range of powerful emotions like shock, rage, and depression that often come with learning that a spouse has cheated, and to take time to reflect on the situation before taking actions you might regret later.



If you opt to try and save your marriage, experts say both of you need to make a commitment to the union and, of course, the affair—whether it's a one-time fling or a series of one-night stands—has to end. Next comes the difficult task of re-establishing trust and intimacy. “Marriages don't end overnight and they can't be repaired overnight,” says Houston.

Houston recommends seeing a licensed counsellor, someone trained in marital therapy. A therapist typically won't make the decision for the spouse on whether to stay or go. That decision is entirely up to the couple, Gordon says. But therapy, while it can be time-consuming and painful, often helps couples who want to stay together deal with the issues they must overcome in order to move forward.

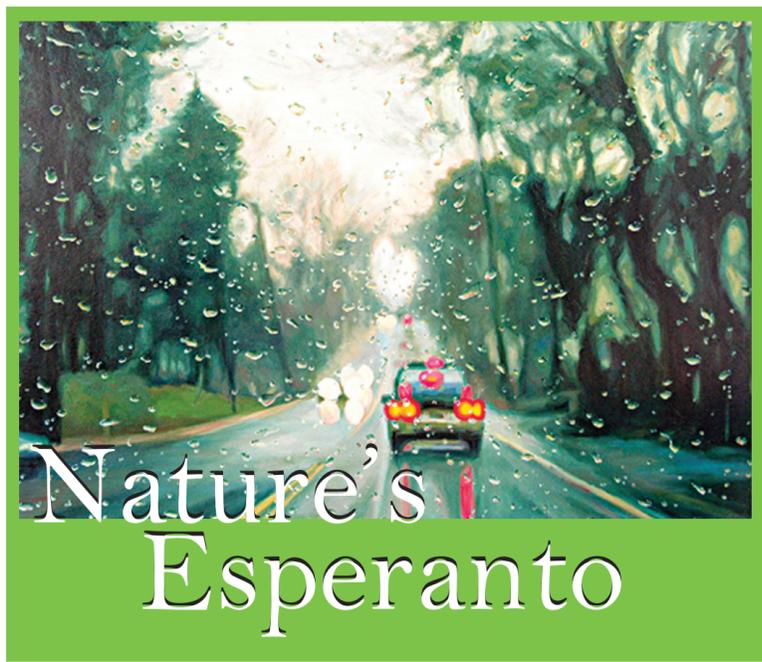
Of course, it's a lot less painful to try and prevent an affair in the first place. Houston recommends having a regular relationship check-up. “Every month we do a breast exam—why don't we do that with our marriages?” she asks. That means having an honest talk about the relationship, in terms of where it stands now and what your hopes are for the future. It's also important, she says, to establish what constitutes cheating. Is looking at porn okay? What about internet chat rooms? While some people may view sex as the only definer of infidelity, others may believe that internet friends or emotional attachments with an old flame are markers of infidelity. It's important to discuss what's acceptable and what's not early on in the relationship, so you don't learn the hard way.

Houston points out that many spouses who cheat say they are in happy marriages. (Of course, respondents on marital surveys could be lying.) “So, talking about a relationship in good times and talking about infidelity, what it would mean if it happened in your marriage, is smart,” says Houston. “Talking early on can help save a lot of pain [later].”

It is not in a woman's nature to remain silent and listen, but these days, I am making an exception. The rains have returned like an old friend carrying a knapsack of tales from faraway lands. The rains not only beat on the roof, but also drum an insistent tattoo on one's heart, part memory, part desire, a nebulous, half-awakened consciousness of time passing by, the mortality that awaits implacably at the end of this road. So, I listen to the language of the rains, that which is Nature's Esperanto, a universal second language that bridges divides. In its gentle or hurried cadences, I can sense the presence of ghosts, pieces of souls, voices unsung, thoughts repressed and love unrequited...

They say the best thing to do when it rains is to let it rain. Rain is Nature's way of telling us who is the boss, and how there is nothing much we can do about it. Rain is the great leveller, causing the humblest pony cart and the sleekest luxury car to get stranded on streets swirling with muddy water. There is great comfort in knowing you are not being singled out for the wet treatment; that you are all in it together for the long haul. And even if your intellectual level is of one who reads only the comic strips, you are still able to figure out, during the rains, that God never promised days without pain and sun without rain. And that you need both the sun and the rain to magically coalesce in that moment when a rainbow is born, which takes your breath away. I think no one is so jaded, so cynical, that he can entirely escape that tiny little gasp in his soul when he watches that fairytale band of colours span the earth and sky.

It is also ironic that the rain, which confines us indoors or wreaks havoc on our schedules, also sets us free. At that moment when silver raindrops are sliding off trembling trees and a grey, melancholy shadow falls over the earth and the sky, all at once you are set free from the gridlock of the present and the shackles of your external identity. Your mind floats along the breeze of memories, the breeze that gently wafts you to the farthest reaches of a lost childhood, when you remember the peal of thunder that made you bury your head in your mother's lap, the dripping umbrellas on the hall of your lost home, the wet hair of that unknown girl you stood with for an hour under the college bus shelter, your heart too full for words. Waiting for the shower to turn to a drizzle, you find the time from this mad rush of living, to be just yourself, to renew your acquaintance with the real human being inside you—the one who dreams, who hopes, who doesn't care a fig about political correctness or climbing any ladders, the one who hums old Kishore Kumar



songs, while the outside you obsesses over your investment portfolio. It is that real, genuine you, that perpetual wide-eyed innocent that exults in the smell of the wet earth and the emerald rejoicing of every leaf and blade of grass. It is that you, concealed all along, who traces the name of a loved one on a misted car window, who enjoys the squelchy sound of his ruined shoes and salivates about piping hot pakoras spiced with wicked chillies and onions. But today, perhaps it is only the fortunate few who house a real person within. So many of us are today just full of bluff and bluster, parading our degrees and career profiles, riding the highway of life with eyeballs glued to some destination where the streets are paved with gold. That is why we have so many phrases in popular usage which make it clear that people regard rain merely as an annoyance, an inconvenience. Phrases like “don't rain on my parade,” “save it for a rainy day,” “rain out,” “raining cats and dogs...” These seem trivial when we consider that rain is a universal metaphor of life, an exultant supreme creative power, dispenser of divine grace and plenty. And like so many other phenomena of Nature, the rains also have a duality, an ambivalence that forces us not to take it for granted. It stands as much for life and nourishment as for death and de-

## 3rd eye

Indrani Raimedhi

We may have staged rain dances and seeded clouds to bring in rainfall, but we are still clueless about how to stop them from coming.

In Hawaiian mythology, it is believed that when a great soul leaves for heaven, the skies rain tears in a thundering deluge. Many monsoons ago, when I was a girl, I was reading a true account about an American family which settles in Hawaii and how a tropical storm salutes the death of a noble chieftain. The mood of the book was in perfect tandem with the gusty squall of that Shillong twilight. Suddenly, our postman, struggling manfully with his rebellious umbrella, arrived at our door. He was carrying a letter from my maternal aunt. The letter had taken a week to reach us from Upper Assam and carried sad tidings. Our beloved great grandmother, who was almost hundred, had passed away. We wept at the memory of the beautiful honey-skinned woman and her steadfast love for us. We remembered the butter soft, loose folds of her arms and the delicate lace work of her thousand

wrinkles. We would never hear the high octave of her girlish voice. But, in that moment of grief, I was suddenly aware of the rain outside and the Hawaiian myth. A strange feeling of comfort came over me as I felt Nature was raising a toast to her.

The rain also has two other associations with members of my family. In the mid seventies, my brother was a schoolboy. We had newly relocated to Guwahati and we, the kids, had to manoeuvre our way home through strange new streets. One afternoon, a storm was brewing and my mother was beside herself with worry. I had reached home but my brother hadn't. The skies were dark, the wind blew, the thunder growled. And there was brother dear, plonking down the road in his adorable curls and schoolbag. As lightning flashed, he quickened into an alarmed trot. I still see my mother on the porch, her arms stretched out, and he rushing forward, with an advancing silver curtain of rain close on his heels. I still remember her laugh of sheer relief when he was in her arms and the feeling that all was right with the world. Amazingly, in a surreal moment of *deja vu*, this little mother-son drama was played out two decades later. This time it was again a sudden evening storm. This time it was I who stood in the

balcony, eyes strained towards the road, trying to get my first born cycle home from tuition through sheer force of my will. My panic mounted as the wind rose and then, just as the first plops of warm rain were falling off an overladen sky, my boy, satchel on his back, was pedalling home like a battle weary veteran back from the front. In that moment, I understood exactly how my mother had felt all those years ago, and like her, I sent up a humble prayer of thanksgiving.

But not everything about the rains is so poetic. Rains tickle my funny bone in a number of ways. Have you noticed how panicky people get when it starts to rain? Drivers slam their feet on the accelerator, commuters try to burrow into already overloaded buses, people flee from the sidewalks, and I have actually seen a lively quarrel end midway as the two adversaries ran helter-skelter in the squall. Why are *homo-sapiens* so scared of getting wet? Other animal species don't display such obvious signs of panic. Is it a residue of our atavistic fear, as our ancestors cowered in the caves and bowed down everytime lightning flashed, as a terrified acknowledgement of some angry God? Of course, lightning still strikes hapless people, but scampering around in a mild shower as if they were on the brink of catastrophe is ridiculous. Not to say unbecoming of an uber-cool been there, done that 21st century race. But the rains are an occasion not just to laugh at other people, but also at myself. One monsoon morning, a sea of water on the streets impeded my entry to office. I convinced an auto driver to drive me through waist high water. We crawled through, the water gushed in, the engine sputtered and I was alone with a very indignant man who openly questioned the logic, or lack of it, behind my foolhardy decision. Just then, a city bus stopped by the side of our auto. I am hopeless in maths, but even I could deduce that the height of the bus would render me more safe from the swirling water. I paid up quickly, grabbed my bag, and feeling very Lara Croftish, stepped onto the bus step straight from the auto. After this death defying stunt, I sauntered into office with cool nonchalance. Ten minutes later, with a little sick feeling, I realised I had left behind a beloved Truman Capote novel and my brand new umbrella in the auto seat. So much for my stunt. Every time it rains, I still feel a pang for the Capote. I don't miss the umbrella, though. It would only have prevented me from experiencing the sweet pleasure of getting drenched.

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## Kick-Ass

Cast: Aaron Johnson, Nicolas Cage, Chloe Moretz  
Director: Matthew Vaughn

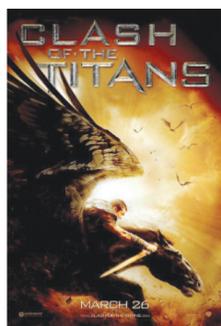


Mark Millar's violent comic tale of wannabe superheroes is adapted by writer-director Matthew Vaughn, with this Marv Films production. Aaron Johnson stars as a teen who steps out of his house one day with a mask and a painted baseball bat, and starts to fight crime—even though he has no superpowers. Lyndsy Fonseca co-stars as the character's object of desire, with Nicolas Cage also appearing as an ex-cop whose hatred of a drug lord forces him to train his daughter to be a lethal vigilante.

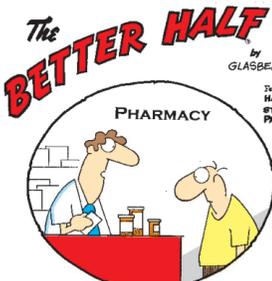
## Clash Of The Titans

Cast: Sam Worthington, Liam Neeson, Ralph Fiennes  
Director: Louis Leterrier

Based on the 1981 film of the same name, written by the late Beverley Cross, *Clash of the Titans* is directed by Louis Leterrier. *Clash of the Titans* is the ultimate struggle for power which pits men against kings and kings against gods. But the war between the gods themselves could destroy the world. Born of a god, but raised as a man, Perseus (Sam Worthington) is helpless to save his family from Hades (Ralph Fiennes), vengeful god of the underworld. With nothing left to lose, Perseus volunteers to lead a dangerous



mission to defeat Hades before he can seize power from Zeus (Liam Neeson) and unleash hell on earth. Leading a daring band of warriors, Perseus sets off on a perilous journey deep into forbidden worlds. Battling unholy demons and fearsome beasts, he will only survive if he can accept his power as a god, defy his fate and create his own destiny.



"One for cholesterol, one for diabetes, and one for anything else your doctor hasn't found yet."



"I put lima beans, peas and corn into medicine bottles. He'll eat them if he thinks they're prescriptions."



"I didn't check the labels. I just assumed the blue pills are for me and the pink ones are for you!"



"While using this cholesterol medication, do not operate heavy silverware."



"They ran out of new names for prescription drugs, so they had to invent some new alphabet letters."

## FORECAST

APRIL 26 - MAY 2, 2010

**ARIES (MAR 21-APR 19)**  
At the start of the week, rather than viewing a situation from your perspective, consider how the other person sees things. If Wednesday and Thursday are a bit slower than you'd like, don't let your ambitions get the best of you. Aggressiveness is great, but you won't make significant progress until Friday. The good news is that the strides will last through the weekend, when you'll be charting new terrain. People will discuss building statues in your honour. On Sunday, be the early bird.

**TAURUS (APR 20-MAY 20)**  
Not a lot has changed. The only thing that separates Monday and Tuesday from last week is your attitude. Wednesday is super-weird, both from an emotional and a monetary perspective, and the weirdness takes on more weight and dimension on Thursday. Friday's a party. Saturday and Sunday find you in a philosophical mode, challenging your assumptions and asking good questions.

**GEMINI (MAY 21-JUN 21)**  
You may feel overwhelmed at the start of the week. Giving a small project to someone else could not only free up your energy for other tasks, but it could also communicate a certain level of trust in this other person's skills. Wednesday and Thursday are more about strategic moves than tactical ones—you're thinking, rather than doing—but Friday, you're a go-getter. You're a deal maker, a ring-leader, a star. Saturday and Sunday, to get what you want, use tact. Preaching only makes things tense.

**CANCER (JUN 22-JUL 22)**  
The truth is, Monday and Tuesday won't be the smoothest days you've ever encountered. You'll have some hills ahead of you, and for every up, there's a commensurate down. The best you can do is throw your energy into the projects at hand. Wednesday and Thursday won't be the right days for signing paperwork. On Friday, as much as you think you'd like to kick up your heels, you'll be happier taking off your shoes and resting on a pile of pillows. Play some music. Forget your obligations this weekend. Daydream.

**LEO (JUL 23-AUG 22)**  
You're tidy in all things at the start of the week. You're careful to make sure your new purchases are carefully unwrapped. You feel good, and that feeling is going to last even through Wednesday, when you suspect that someone has impure motives. Thursday is admittedly a self-centred day, and on Friday and Saturday, an explosion of romance alters your emotional landscape. On Sunday, just enjoy the experience.

**VIRGO (AUG 23-SEPT 22)**  
Life is a swimming pool on Monday. Jump in. Make a lot of waves. Splash around. This feeling of immersion is utterly joyful. You may be so caught up in the fun of it that on Tuesday, you buy something on impulse, something you don't really need. On Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, your intellectual curiosity leads you to an unexpected place. You have big plans for the weekend, but almost none of them are possible, what with your family obligations.

**LIBRA (SEPT 23-OCT 22)**  
Could Monday and Tuesday be any better? It's unlikely. First of all, love is in the air. It's in every step you take—you have a lift, a bounce, magic. The attention you receive from others is flattering, but it's almost too much to handle. You may even find yourself turning inward on Wednesday or Thursday as a means of deflection. Rarely have you felt as idealistic as you do on Friday, and the more you discuss your ideas this weekend, the more inspired you feel.

**SCORPIO (OCT 23-NOV 21)**  
Monday and Tuesday, giving in to someone else's decision is the best thing to do, even if that involves admitting a small amount of defeat. On Wednesday and Thursday, you're surrounded by a kind of magic halo and no one sees you in anything except the most flattering light. On Friday, or sometime this weekend, let a friend take you somewhere, whether it's to the mall or on a road trip. Whatever the plan is, say yes.

**SAGITTARIUS (NOV 22-DEC 21)**  
You find yourself in large gatherings on Monday and Tuesday. On Wednesday and Thursday, your mental energy is spent on trying to assemble the big picture, which is a task perhaps best done alone, with classical music in the background. On Friday, friendship and joviality are once again the order of the day. Your incredible confidence propels Saturday and Sunday.

**CAPRICORN (DEC 22-JAN 19)**  
You have almost no time to ask for anything on Monday and Tuesday, what with all that everyone else is asking of you. On Wednesday, a trusted pal comes to the rescue. Thursday is a fine day to make a decision, and Friday, the fates conspire to leave you feeling optimistic, idealistic and happy. Saturday and Sunday, your big plans may not seem plausible (for this or that small reason), but keep going.

**AQUARIUS (JAN 20-FEB 18)**  
The person you connect with most deeply on Monday isn't whom you expect to be. On Tuesday, deepen this newfound friendship by confessing something personal, and see what kind of response you get. Wednesday and Thursday aren't very noteworthy in the social realm because of pressing work matters. Friday finds you taking an organisational role among your friends. Maybe there's a party at your place this weekend?

**PISCES (FEB 19-MARCH 20)**  
The challenge that faces you at the start of the week is particularly tricky, because it involves someone who's been at your side when you've dealt with challenges before. Wednesday and Thursday find you taking a stand with others as well—and, again, the more you keep it on the up-and-up, the easier it is. Whatever happens, give people the benefit of the doubt on Friday and through the weekend. Luck is on your side.