

B 30 Jane of the Jungle Discovers Choices

Setting: The other side of the jungle.

Characters:

Jane: Wife of Tarzan, the Ape Man. She wears a rather dowdy sarong and stirs an open coconut shell with a wooden spoon. She is exasperated.

Gorilla: He is wearing a gorilla suit and peeling a banana.

Jane: Tarzan. Tarzan. Tarzan.

Gorilla: Jane, you've got to put the focus on yourself. It's not healthy to obsess about Tarzan all the time.

Jane: I think he's drinking again. He came home all battered and bruised. He was swinging on a vine, and he hit a tree.

And that Tarzan yell—he does it more frequently now. Before dinner. After dinner. During dinner. There's no telling what will set him off. It scares me.

Gorilla: Have you talked to anyone else about this? Or is his drinking the “elephant in the living room?”

Jane: Oh, there are plenty of elephants in the living room. There's no point in talking to them. I'll tell you: they haven't been much help. They only want to party. But when it's time to clean up, you can't find an elephant in the room anywhere.

Supposedly an elephant never forgets. But it seems like they only remember what's convenient for them. When I ask them, “Where was Tarzan for the last three days?” there's not an elephant who remembers anything.

I used to trust them. But I don't anymore. Sometimes I don't think I trust anyone anymore.

Gorilla: Have you thought about attending Al-Anon meetings?

Jane: You know, it's hard for me to get out. It's not easy taking care of Boy. Tarzan's never there for me. I'm the only one responsible enough to take care of Boy. And Boys will be Boys. But I'm concerned that he may be hanging out with the wrong crowd.

Gorilla: What are his friends like?

Jane: They're all a bunch of chimpanzees. What else is there to say? They're completely irresponsible. At least Boy brushes his teeth. That's at the top of my gratitude list.

[*Gorilla cups his hand in front of his mouth and smells his own breath.*]

Gorilla: Well, I.....

Jane: I don't even know where Boy came from. How did I ever get into this mess?

Gorilla: That's what I'm telling you. You've got to take some time to take a look at yourself.

Jane: I'd like to have some peace of mind. But I still love Tarzan. Is there any hope that he'll change his ways?

Gorilla: I don't know. You can't control that. You've got to put your focus on yourself. Listen to this: It's from *Discovering Choices*, the new Al-Anon book on recovery in relationships:

“Those of us who have lived with the effects of alcoholism can become obsessed with the behavior of others. We spend time analyzing behavior, figuring out motives, and identifying what we deem is wrong with the people in our lives. In Al-Anon we learn that excessive scrutiny of others can be counter-productive. From the first meeting, we are reminded to keep the focus on ourselves, not the alcoholics in our lives. We soon discover that we can't build healthy relationships until we know who we are.”

That's from the chapter called “Creating Balance within Ourselves.”

Jane: I've never heard anyone say anything like that before.

Gorilla: You would if you went to Al-Anon meetings. The book is full of sharings from Al-Anon members who talk about how they applied the Al-Anon principles to all of their relationships: spouses and partners, parents and children, co-workers and friends.

If you understand yourself better, then you'll have a different perspective on Tarzan. You can change yourself and your own attitudes.

The book is called *Discovering Choices* because there are many ways you can make your life better, and they don't depend upon Tarzan. You've got more choices available to you than you realize. It's not about Tarzan. It's about you, Jane.

Jane: Me, Jane?

Gorilla: You, Jane. Let's be honest: Tarzan isn't the first King of the Apes that you've been with. And he won't be the last, unless you take a closer look at yourself.

Jane: I love Tarzan, but I want him to be different.

Gorilla: I know. But if you love him, why not accept him as he is? Or do you want to spend the rest of your life suffering because *he* won't change?

Jane: How do you know about all this stuff?

Gorilla: It's a jungle out there and I've been around. My father was just like Tarzan. If you want to hear about "King of the Apes," let me tell you about my dad. We Al-Anon members have been there. We understand. That's why you could benefit from going to Al-Anon meetings.

I'd like you to take keep this copy of *Discovering Choices*. It will give you a feeling for what it's like to go to Al-Anon meetings.

Jane: What if Tarzan sees me reading this book? What will he say?

Gorilla: Tarzan, Tarzan, Tarzan. What does he ever say? [*Beats chest and imitates Tarzan yell. Then shrugs and rolls his eyes.*]

Our Al-Anon group is organizing a workshop on relationships, based on *Discovering Choices*. We're all working on these issues. There's a lot of help we can give each other.

Jane: What about Boy?

Gorilla: Have you heard about Alateen? There are plenty of other boys whose fathers are kings of the apes. He'd really feel good to know that he's not the only boy in the jungle.

Jane: I'd like him to avoid making the mistakes that I made. I think I will go to that workshop. Where will you be sitting?

Gorillas: Well, as you know, gorillas sit anywhere they want. I won't be hard to find.

Jane: How long have you been in Al-Anon?

Gorilla: Just one day at a time. You can do it, too. I'll look for you at the workshop on *Discovering Choices*.

Jane: Thank you very much.