

Manipulative girl causes tension Tomorrow's horoscope

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

Dear Annie: My fiance and I have been together for three years. "Justin" shares custody of his 13-year-old daughter, "Chrissie."

The problem is, Chrissie will not sleep in her own bed. Until recently, she used to sleep on the floor in our room, but two months ago, Justin started sleeping in her bed. I couldn't take it, so I went back to live at my place. Now that I am no longer in Justin's house, Chrissie sleeps with him in his bed. This bothers me.

Justin and his ex-wife tried sending Chrissie for therapy, but she told them it wasn't working, so they stopped. We have discussed this, but he continues to allow her in his bed. He doesn't believe there is anything wrong with it and also says he doesn't know what else to do. Chrissie is quite manipulative, conniving and sly. Even her hugs are fake. She is obviously competing with me for her father's attention.

I feel guilty not liking this girl. I understand that divorce is hard on children, but this is ridiculous. — *Soon-To-Be Stepmom*

Dear Soon: Chrissie may be manipulating her parents out of insecurity and because she can get away with it. But her parents are the real problem. They are allowing Chrissie to control the family dynamic. This is terribly unfair to everyone, but especially to Chris-



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sie. She desperately needs her parents to be in charge, and instead, they have given her the reins. All of them should be in family counseling together so that Chrissie cannot claim it's "not working," and so that Justin and his ex understand how much effort and consistency are required for their daughter's sake. If you intend to marry Justin, insist on this.

Dear Annie: I read your answer to "Grandma-To-Be" regarding a baby shower for a child born of a surrogate. Why did you say, "Of course, it is better if the shower is given by friends and not immediate family"? I thought baby showers were supposed to be given by the aunts. Has this changed?

Also, what about "sprinkles" — those baby showers for second and third kids? This is a very sore subject for those of us who have been on the receiving end of the invitations. Unless there are several years between babies, or the new baby is from a different mar-

riage, it is asking too much of friends and family.

Today's generation thinks nothing of asking people to dish out money over and over. What a greedy world we have become. — *Also a Grandma-To-Be*

Dear Also: Baby showers (also bridal showers) generally should not be given by immediate family members, because they, too, benefit from others giving gifts. Hosting it then seems self-serving. (There are exceptions to this rule.) Aunts, cousins, sisters-in-law, etc., however, are not immediate family and, of course, can host showers.

"Sprinkles" are fine if there is a big age gap and the new baby has fewer hand-me-downs, or if the couple has moved to a new city. Otherwise, they are OK only for close family and extremely close friends, or for those who didn't attend a previous shower. As you said, it is unkind to keep burdening the same people with gift-giving over and over.

Dear Annie: In my 70 years of living in New Orleans, I've been called honey, sweetie, sugar and baby by clerks and waitresses, always with a helpful air of appreciation and never in a condescending way. Maybe it's a southern thing, but I like it. Why would I be rude to someone who is focused on helping me? I hope that charm never goes away. — *Happy in NOLA*

ARIES (March 21-April 19). You'll become an expert at expressing the love in your heart so others can really feel it. As a result, your relationships will be uplifting, surprising and fulfilling.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Your passion will be renewed. Those who resisted your efforts in the past will have reason to agree with you and even sponsor your future efforts. Thanks to you, a family member will soon reach an important milestone.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). If you try cramming activities into a short span of time, you won't enjoy any of it. Do less, to leave room for exploration. Give yourself time to complete things at a leisurely pace.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). You were given a gift you didn't want. It was weird. But now you are open to a different direction. You feel free to change and grow. Trade it in for something new.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). In order for you to have the thing you desire, you must first convince others that they will profit, too. If you can make them believe this (and hopefully it is the truth) they will badly want the same results you do.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Attention is like water, always moving and flowing and easily susceptible to influence. You'll like the powerful feeling you get when you walk into a room and control the way attention changes it.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). A lot of people like the thing that you don't. So? It's not a problem unless you make it a problem. Dig deep. Is this enough of an issue to make a stink over? Probably not.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). You are 100-percent accountable for the things you do. Someone will remind you — maybe a dog — and that being is as important as anybody. Anyway, you will recognize the significance of a witness.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Your financial picture is looking up, and you'll have some new choices about what to do with your money. The afternoon brings the fulfillment of a promise.

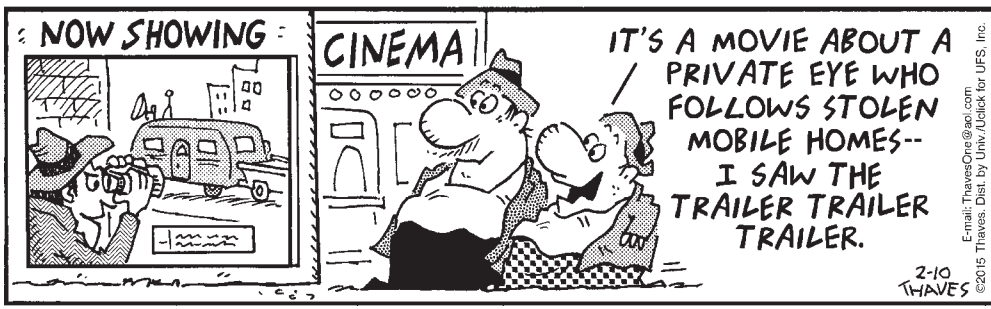
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). The experience of being your friend is special. That's why there are so many people around you trying to get closer. You don't give your attention indiscriminately, though.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You don't live to work; you work to live. That's why you have to say "no" to someone's professional request of you. It's simply going to be more trouble than it's worth.

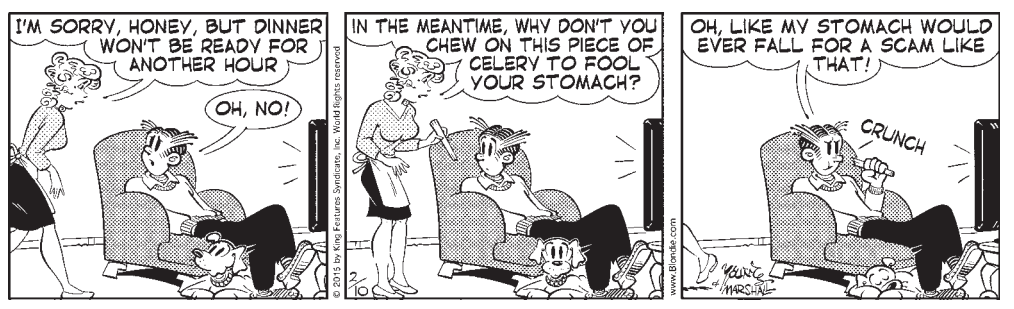
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Many stressed people cope by shopping, but that usually only makes for more stress, as owning things (and paying too much for them!) comes with its own set of problems. You'll find a better way to soothe yourself.

WEDNESDAY'S BIRTHDAY (Feb. 11). You give others the support and space they need to be themselves, and for this they will be truly grateful. Money comes easily to you in the next six weeks — all you have to do is ask. April ends a conflict and begins a new professional chapter. Health improvements in May add to your overall mood and appeal. Aquarius and Aries people adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 40, 2, 14, 39 and 45.

FRANK AND ERNEST



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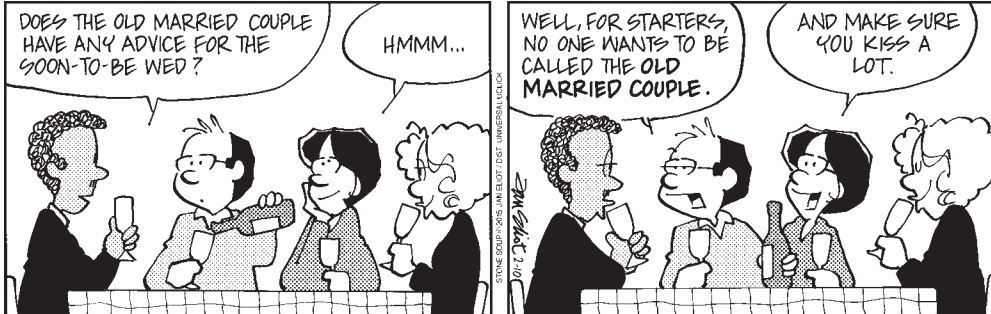
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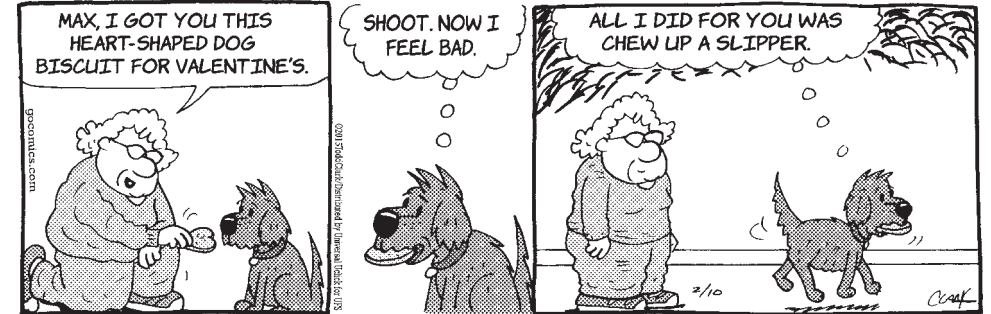
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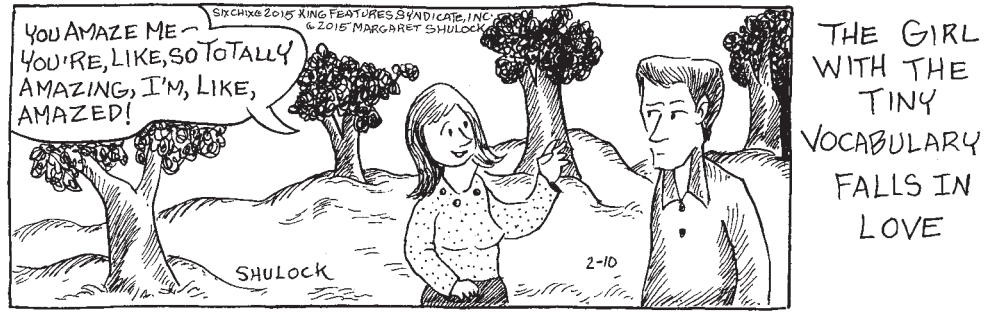
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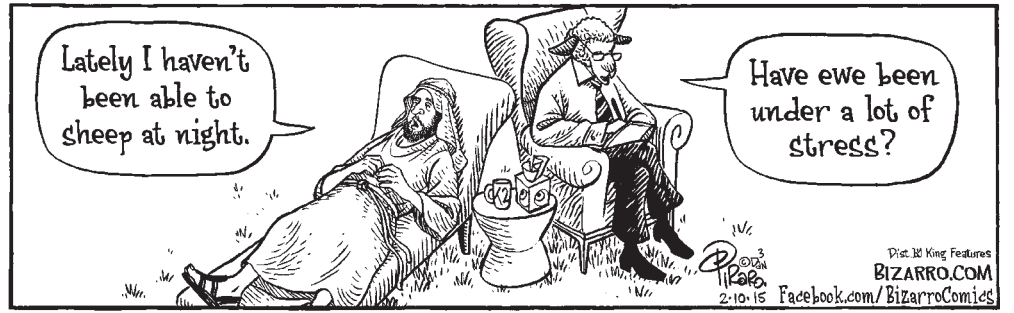
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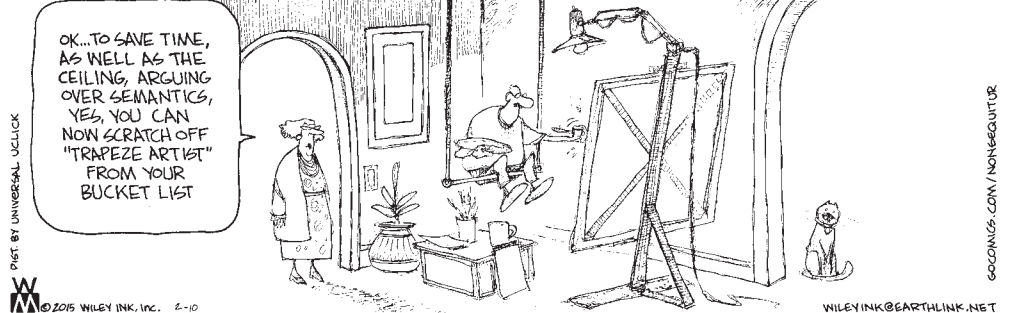
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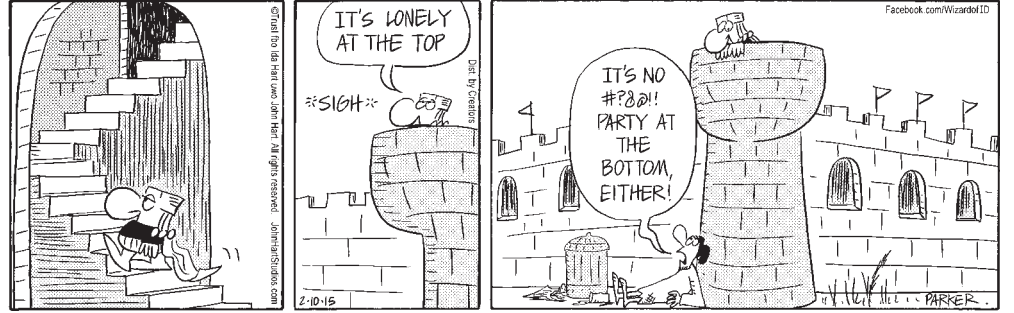
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