

# Grandma's filth could threaten baby Tomorrow's horoscope

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

**Dear Annie:** I am expecting my first child. My mother is a wonderful, intelligent 68-year-old woman. She is also bipolar and seems incapable of keeping herself physically healthy and her house clean. I know her poor health almost certainly stems from the fact that her living conditions are filthy. She also has a sour smell about her that makes me worry that she is lax about her personal hygiene.

I have tried many times over the years to help her keep her house clean, but inevitably it returns to a state of extreme disarray. The only visible floor is the pathway through piles of junk. The kitchen and bathroom are moldy biohazards. Eventually, I came to the realization that nothing I say or do is going to make her start taking care of herself. I can't afford to hire a caregiver to help her, and I'm past the point of trying to make a dent in the perpetual filth myself.

My main problem is that when my baby is born, I know Mom is going to want to spend time with her. I don't feel comfortable allowing my infant child to be exposed to the unhealthy conditions of her house. I am ashamed to say that I also don't feel comfortable placing

## Annie's Mailbox

Creators Syndicate Inc.

Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar



my baby in the care of a woman who seems incapable of caring for herself.

How can I tell my mother, the woman who raised me, how to live? This is a conversation I never wanted to have. Is there any way I can avoid breaking her heart and embarrassing her? — *A Concerned Daughter and Mom-to-Be*

**Dear Concerned:** We sympathize, but your child's welfare will soon become your first priority. This will make it easier for you to talk to Mom. Tell her you love her and understand that her level of cleanliness and hygiene is her choice, but it is not appropriate for your child. Explain that visits with the baby will take place only in your home, under your supervision. She will promise to do better, but that is not a guarantee. So, also say that you hope this will spur her

to seek professional help to make her life healthier for herself and everyone around her. Her doctor can refer her. If she is heartbroken and embarrassed, that should not change the parameters you have set up for the care of your child.

**Dear Annie:** "On the Outside Looking In" complained that at holiday gatherings, four of the female relatives go into another room to laugh, excluding the other three women and the men. The others should plan something they can enjoy together with or without the other four.

Plan ahead, and make sure everyone knows you have a game to play, a funny gift exchange, a skit to perform or a tale to tell of holidays past in which each person is expected to speak for one minute. Have a bonfire and roast marshmallows. Be silly and lighthearted, forget your troubles and play games with the children.

Turn these gatherings into a celebration for all of you, instead of a party for the clique and a whining session for the rest. Whether they join in or not, you'll have fun, and your children will remember that for a lifetime. — *Been There*

**Dear Been There:** We couldn't have said it better. Thank you.

**ARIES (March 21-April 19).** There's a mood jumping off of you, and everyone around you can see what it is. Is it what you want to project? If not, make adjustments accordingly. You have the power!

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20).** You have trepidation about what could happen today, but that won't stop you. The upside of fear is that it gives you an adrenaline rush — just what you need to be brave, which takes a lot of energy.

**GEMINI (May 21-June 21).** Your ambitions of the day are social — they depend on other people for their realization. That's why it's important to understand what the other people need and want before you make your move.

**CANCER (June 22-July 22).** While trying to understand and predict the behavior of others, it's natural to use shortcuts and assumptions. But in order to truly know someone, you must let go of preconceived notions and see this person as though for the first time.

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22).** Self-awareness and introspection don't always lead to figuring out what you want to do and how to stay motivated long enough to accomplish it. It's time to stop pondering and join a group.

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22).** A competitive mood prevails. Go over the rules of the game in your head to make sure you stay in line. If there are no rules (perhaps because this is not officially a game), then make some up for yourself.

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23).** You may not be a part of the main action going on around you, but your influence over what happens will still be quite strong. Your opin-

ions and example will change how people think and behave.

**SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21).** Because you are able to work quietly and alone for long periods of highly focused time, you are perfectly suited to a certain well-paid job. Put your name in the hat.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21).** You want to provide opportunity and guidance for future generations, specifically the next one behind you. Someone in this crew has been watching you every move lately.

**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19).** You prefer your interactions to be purposeful and cheerful. Nothing irritates you more than people who seem to have no problem wasting time or sharing their apathetic mood.

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18).** Don't let your support system weaken from disuse. Let your team know you need them. Do things together that will require help from all. You're not the only one who benefits from uniting the group.

**PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20).** Social risks will pay off, especially the hardest one: being the first to approach a stranger and strike up a conversation. The potential for new friendship and/or romance is definitely there.

**TUESDAY'S BIRTHDAY (April 7).** In your experience, the super-luck doesn't come to mild-mannered wishful thinkers, and that's why you work like crazy to make your own opportunities this year, a strategy that will make you happy, prosperous and well-connected. You'll sign a deal in May. June shows you entertaining and rising in political status. Aquarius and Taurus people adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 6, 45, 13, 21 and 14.

### FRANK AND ERNEST



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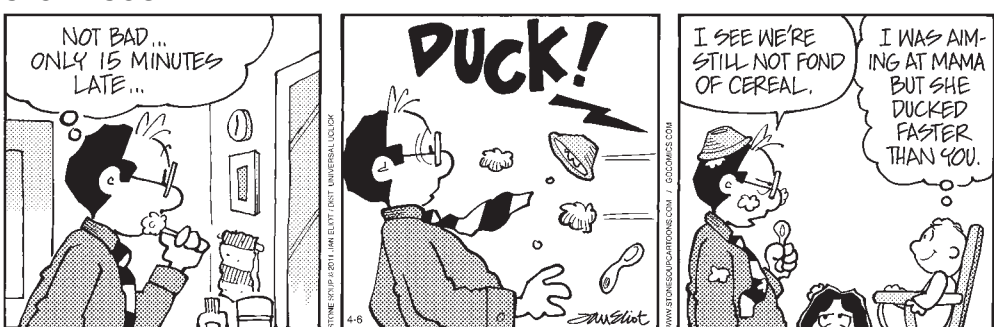
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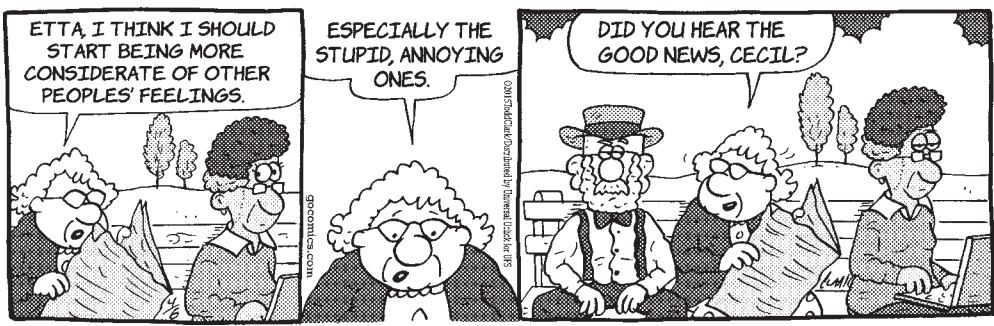
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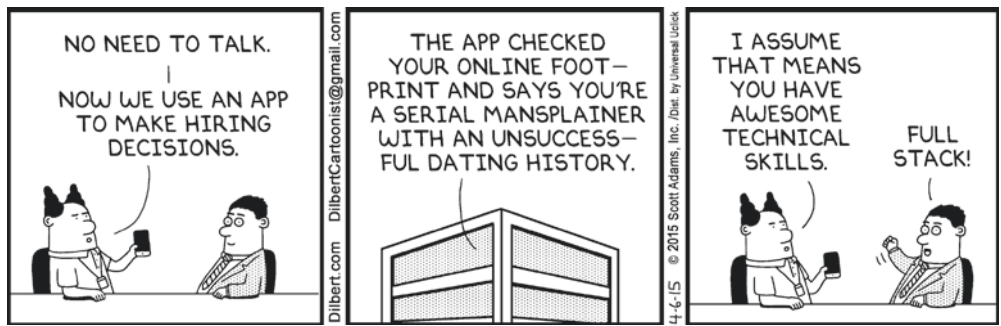
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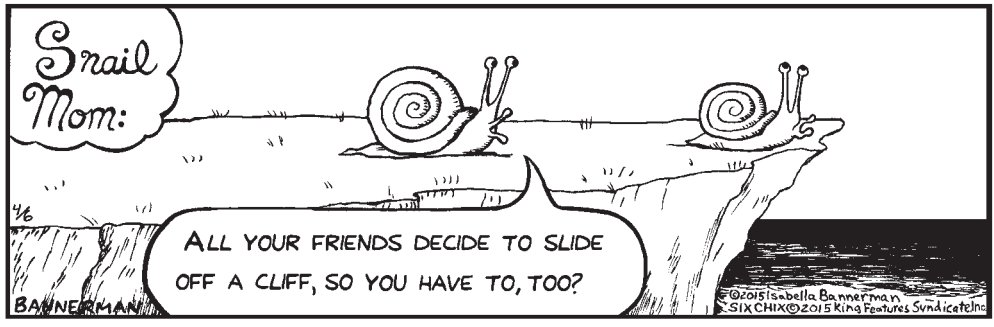
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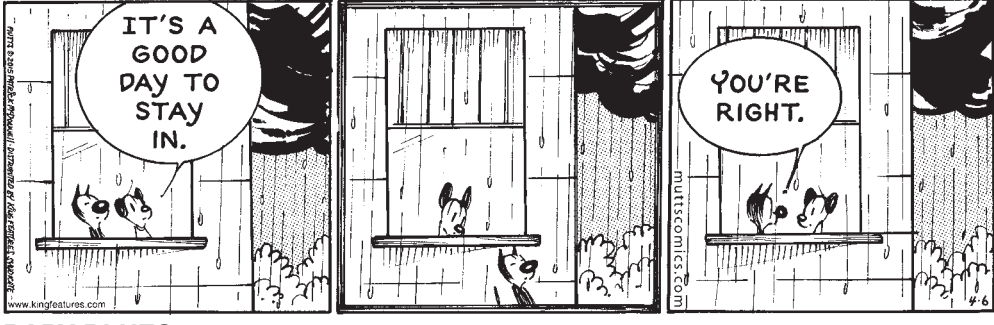
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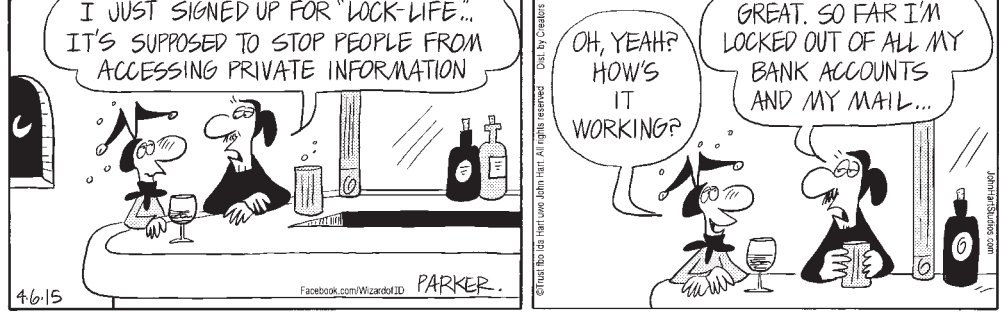
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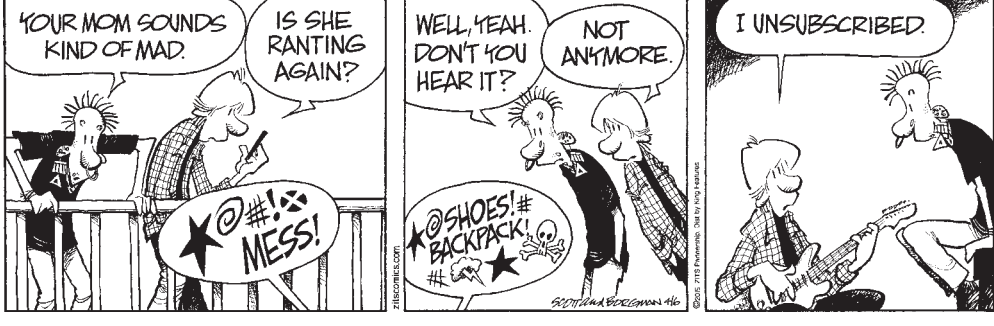
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