

Former in-law wants money Tomorrow's horoscope

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

Dear Annie: My son's marriage broke up after 10 years. Twice they attended counseling because his wife wanted to see other men. The third time, she was actually dating another guy. He and "Mandy" share custody of their three children.

Mandy had a troubled upbringing. Her mother neglected her, and she ended up in state care. At 18, she lived with a cousin in exchange for baby-sitting. This only worked until the cousin discovered Mandy was sleeping with her husband.

Mandy has a college degree, which she obtained while married to my son, but even while he paid alimony, along with her rent and utilities, she never made any effort to find work. She then took the money she received from my son's retirement account and moved to another state to live near some guy she met on the Internet, leaving the kids with their father. The children were devastated. My son now works 12-hour days while his current girlfriend (a saint) watches the children.

Mandy is now emailing our relatives, claiming my son beat her and the girlfriend is beating the children. She says she is broke and suicidal, has autism and PTSD and cannot live a decent life. If that's true, however, she would be eligible for disability

Annie's Mailbox

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benefits, but she refuses to apply or seek counseling.

Mandy drinks and smokes pot and obviously has some mental health issues. She threatens to sue for sole custody so my son will have to pay her child support. She has alienated her entire family and most of her friends. She has no one other than the current boyfriend, who lives with his mother and has no job.

Should we send her money? How do we protect our son? — *Worried Mom*

Dear Worried: Your son needs to document every instance of Mandy's erratic behavior and keep copies of her harassing emails in case she follows through with her threats. Do not send her money as a consequence of her blackmailing efforts. It will only reward her negative behavior and ramp up the demands. Instead, if you choose to do so, you could offer to

pay for therapy sessions (sending the money directly to the therapist after verifying credentials). This would be for the benefit of your grandchildren, who need their mother to be stable and loving.

Dear Annie: I disagree with your advice to "Too Many Grandmas," whose mother doesn't want her ex-husband's fiancée, "Kitty," to be called "Grandma Kitty."

While bitterness and a grudge may play a part, the bigger issue is that "Kitty" did not give birth to or raise these children. It is inappropriate to give her the title of "Grandma." To do so is a discredit to the biological grandmas.

Grandma Edna should not be expected to share the honor of the title with her ex-husband's fiancée, because it is hurtful to her. They can find another term that shows respect but doesn't take away from those who have earned the title. — *Rapid City, S.D.*

Dear Rapid City: It is counterproductive to put so much emotional weight on a title. Kitty has known the granddaughter just as long as Edna has. The girl loves both of these women and shouldn't be stuck listening to Grandma Edna cry over Kitty. If "Too Many" chooses to have her daughter call Kitty something else, that's up to her. It's not up to Edna.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Everyone is different. Even twins have different likes, strengths, qualities and destinies. Your efforts to see people as they are and not as you believe or want them to be will be rewarded with a truer bond.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Your eyes are as wide open as your heart today. Random observances will move you in unexpected ways. With whom will you share your observations? Choose your audience carefully.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). If you stopped believing in it, would it go away? If not, it's called reality. This litmus test might help you determine which problems are really worth taking on today.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). If you don't feel brave enough to slay the dragon today, put your armor on anyway and start walking, sword extended. Pretending to be courageous is quite often just as good as the real thing.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Problems bring about inventions. If there were no problems, there would be no progress. You'll love the funny little problem that comes this afternoon, mostly because it inspires your creative solution.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Your inherent truth-detector is turned on. When someone's body language and words do not match, you'll wisely believe the body language and react accordingly.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). What you think is a mess in your life, another person envies. Sharing keeps things in perspective. Tonight, take credit for what you come up with, or someone else will.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). You want to say "no," but you don't know how. Keep it brief — that's the secret. They'll ask for an explanation, but you don't owe that. You have a right to your decisions and mysteries.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). When you're not happy, the more sensitive people in your life can really feel it. The not so sensitive people feel it, too, though more subconsciously. You happy equals everyone happier.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Congestion isn't just a traffic situation. A Sagittarius or Pisces is the perfect friend to help you open up your mental windows and let the air through for some psychic cleansing.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). The idea that's left on the table wasn't left there because it was bad. It was left there because no one else at the table knew what to do with it. "From a fallen tree, all make kindling." — Spanish proverb

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Take a chance tonight. If you win, great. If you lose and lose with grace, it's even better. That will spark your creativity. Inspired folly connects us to our humanity.

SATURDAY'S BIRTHDAY (May 1). This year will give you bragging rights. Take your camera along for the play-by-play. In the next six weeks, there will be a reunion. You'll improve some aspects of your environment either to prepare for the event or as a result of the event. Your expertise puts you in the spotlight in July. September brings a financial bonus. Gemini and Virgo people adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 1, 14, 33, 49 and 16.

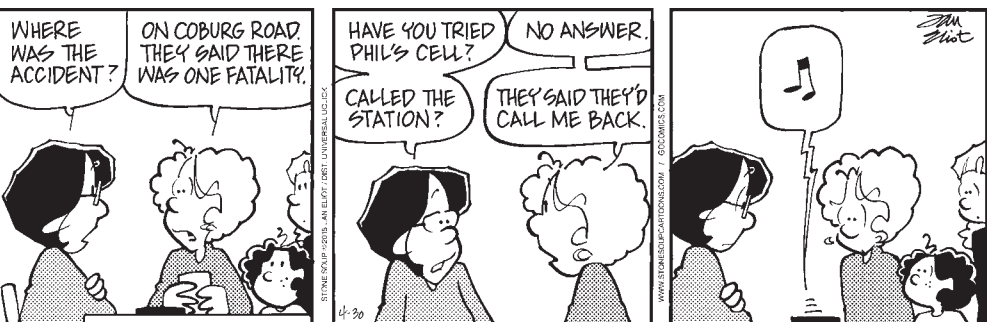
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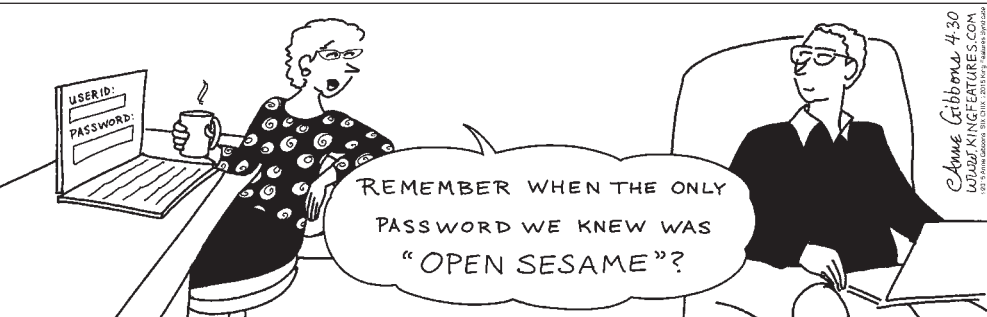
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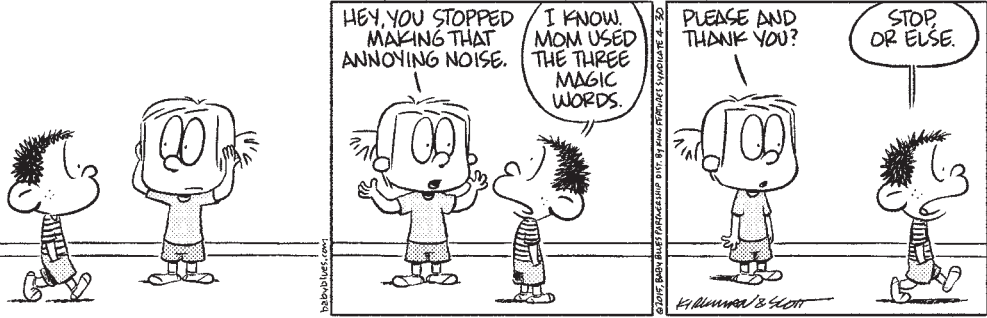
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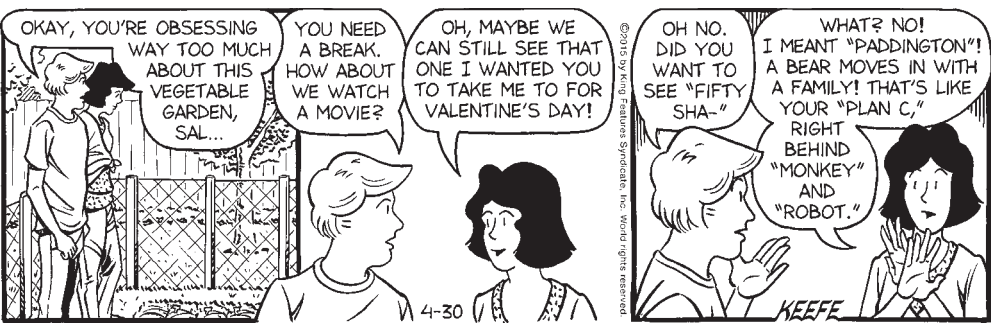
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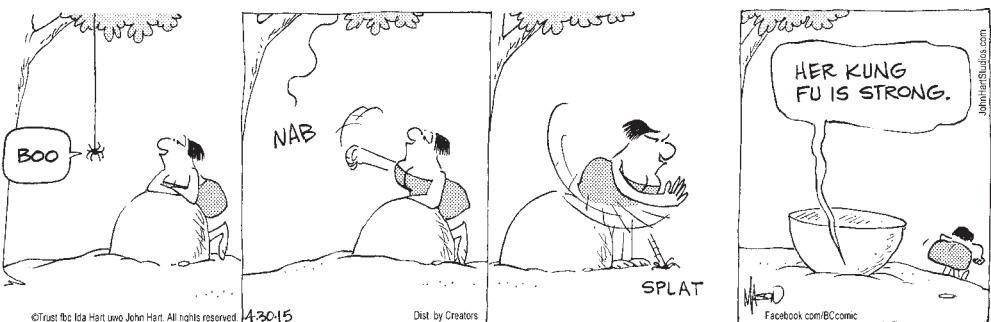
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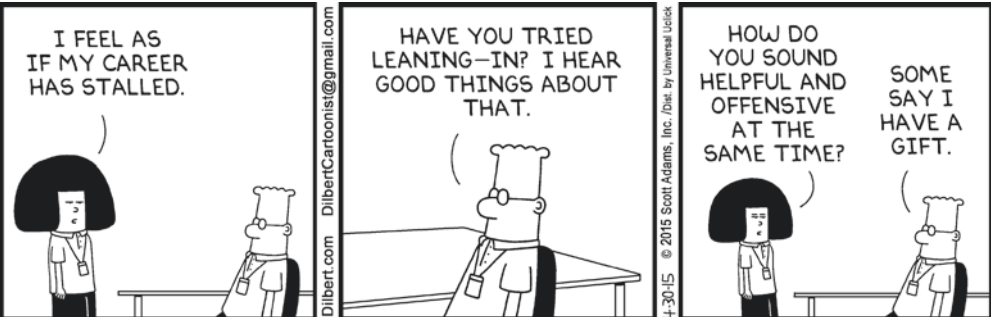
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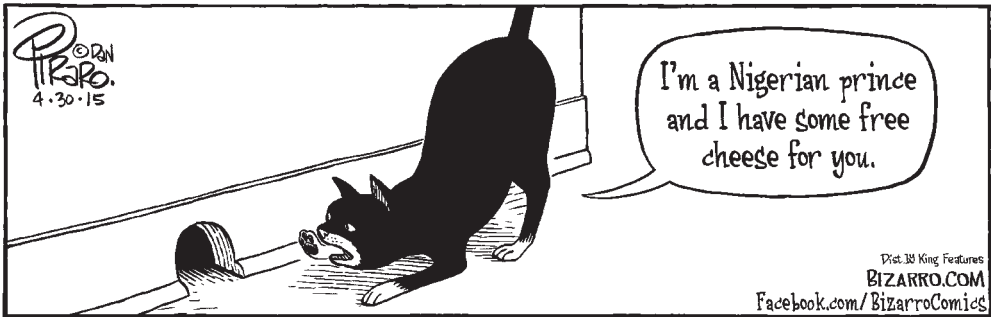
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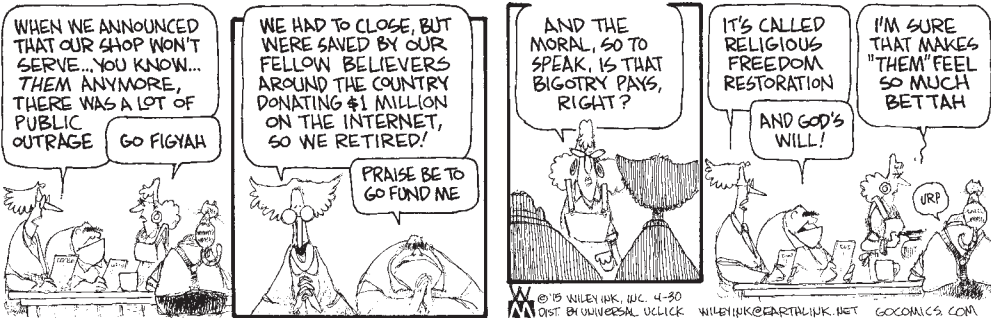
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