

Shame on bitter grandma

Dear Annie: I am a 29-year-old married woman with a 14-month-old son. My husband and I live one hour away from his father and stepmother, "Gladys," and two hours away from my parents. We all get along great.

When I decided to go back to work, both my mother and Gladys volunteered to watch my son two days apiece. I pay a neighbor to watch him the remaining day, especially since she has two kids of her own and I want my son to have some socialization. It's a perfect set-up, and everyone is happy except for my husband's mother, who lives in another state. She is furious that I allow Gladys to watch my son, stating that she is "not related" and "not really his grandma" and that "she will never love him like a real grandma should."

My mother-in-law wants me to have the neighbor watch my son for the two days Gladys is now taking, and she even offered to pay my neighbor so it would not come out of my pocket.

My husband has a close relationship with his mother and a polite one with Gladys. (His mother never allowed him to get close to his stepmother, even though she didn't come into the picture until years af-

Annie's Mailbox

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ter the divorce.) He's on the fence about this arrangement. But, Annie, I love Gladys. She is a retired kindergarten teacher who is wonderful with my son.

My MIL is giving me a headache over this. I always thought we had a good relationship and her demands really blindsided me. Now she's angry that I have allowed Gladys to have a relationship with our son altogether. I haven't mentioned any of this to Gladys, but I'm sure she'd be heartbroken. She truly loves our son and he loves her. What should I do? — *Caught Between Two MILs*

Dear Caught: Shame on your mother-in-law for being so jealous and bitter that she would interfere in your child-rearing decisions and prevent your son from having a loving relationship with Gladys. We hope your husband has the gumption to tell his mother that these are not

her decisions to make, and that if she cannot accept your child's relationship with Gladys, she could benefit from counseling. Enough already.

Dear Annie: My 21-year-old daughter, like many of her peers, has spent a lot of time wishing she were thinner, taller, smarter, more attractive, etc. She is now in college, studying nursing. For one of her classes, she spent time looking at photos of birth defects. Afterward she called me to say, "From now on, I want to wake up every day being thankful that God made me just the way I am."

I do not believe defects are inflicted arbitrarily by a capricious God on an unlucky few, but I am glad that my "normal" daughter finally understands how fortunate she is to be just the way she is. — *Glad Dad*

Dear Dad: Thanks to relentless media pressure to be more physically attractive according to whatever standards are current, it is difficult for both men and women to feel satisfied with their appearance. We are glad your daughter found a way to accept herself as is. (And we'll skip wishing to be "smarter," which can often be achieved through education and experience, and which has nothing to do with physical appearance.)

Tomorrow's horoscope

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Those who lack a supportive relationship with their own minds will seek constant external validation. Is it your job to provide this? If you take it on, just know that it will be an exhausting job.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). What about when the conversation flattens like a rug? Instead of marching across it to the door, you'll try to zap it with your magic and offer the others a carpet ride.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). There are some things you have to do just to prove to yourself that you can. They're not posted on your social media. They're between you and you and whoever is close enough to you to know.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). You'll be more fun at the party if the party in question is not yours. Sure, you're the ideal host. That's why you should give it a break and go relax in someone else's care. Bonus: You'll get inspired.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). You hate to see anyone bored, even the dog. With the sun just moments away from leaving your sign, seize this wonderful opportunity to entertain anyone and everyone. The spotlight loves you.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Flaws can be strengths, too, so don't be too quick to discount them as useless. Often flaws are the very things you should build on to create success. Embrace your nature.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). The omens suggest you hide your displeasure and withhold your opinion for now. Also, vent the steam in private. You'll gain power through emotional control and strategy.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Being in a very selective mood, you are unlikely to fall for just any interesting offer that comes along. You have rules that qualify your rules. All of this selectiveness can't play well every day, but today it works for you.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). You make your way through this day like you make your way through a concert crowd — not by pushing and pulling, but by courteously moving through open spaces.

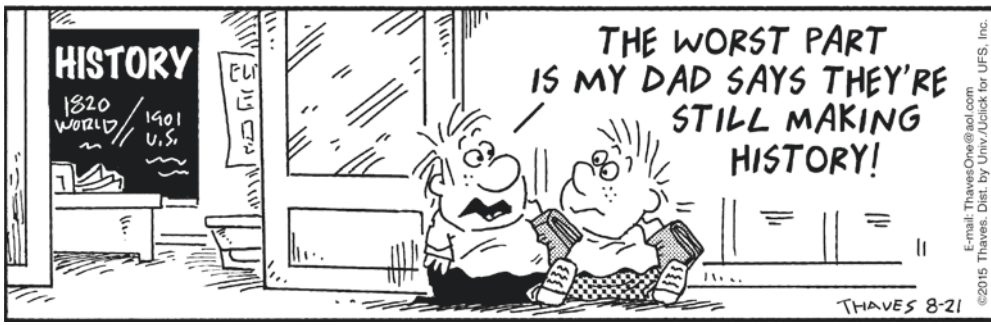
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). The road to victory is a labyrinth. You're good at mazes and enjoy puzzles of all kinds, really. Think of this afternoon's social discourse as part of the game — it is.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You still need a better platform from which to shine. Dream and scheme. What would your fantasy project be? It's a perfect night for brainstorming with friends.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Extenuating circumstances of late have caused you to slip on a few matters that are important to your health and well-being. It's now time to get back to taking good care of yourself.

SATURDAY'S BIRTHDAY (Aug. 22). The beauty you bring to your home will transcend it. A secret aspiration for your personal life will come to be in September. You'll adventure with a special someone in October. Loyalty matters to you. When friends go through changes in 2016, you'll be right alongside them. Bonus money will come in May. Aries and Gemini people adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 10, 33, 28, 36 and 41.

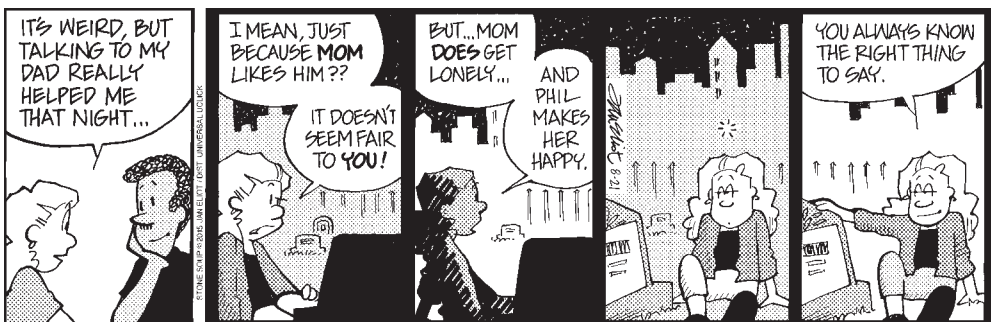
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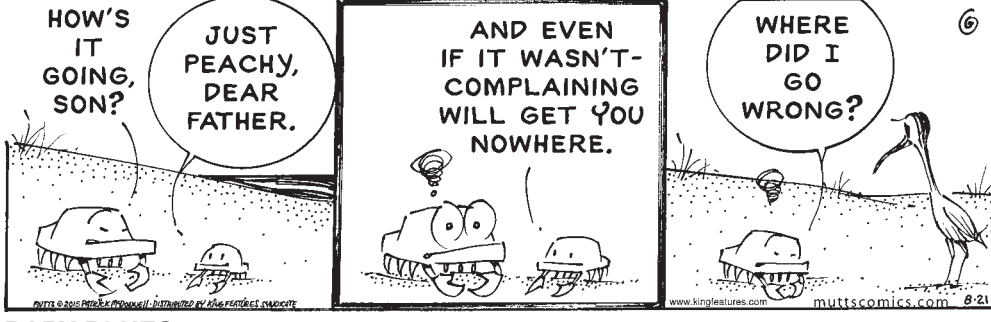
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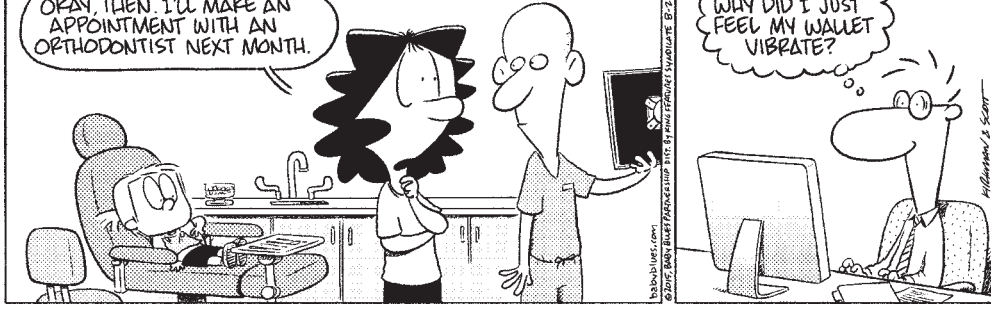
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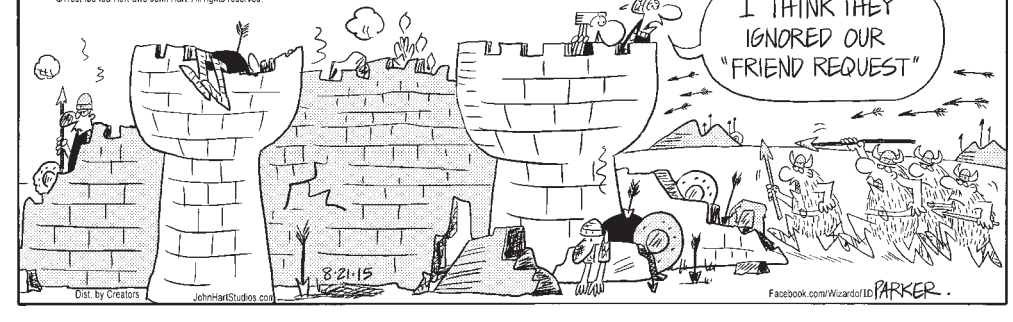
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