

Should stepmom stay away?

Dear Annie: My husband of five years has just learned that his daughter is engaged, and I am already stressing about the wedding.

My husband was married when we met. I didn't intentionally date a married man, but he pursued me, and I told him that if he wanted to date me, he must leave his wife. It only took three months, so he was obviously ready to go. Still, I'm the "other woman."

I have tried to be considerate, avoiding the places where his ex shops. He has lunch regularly with his daughter, but the only time his daughter sees me is for a short, awkward time at holidays. His daughter came to our wedding, but didn't stay for the reception. I don't blame her. I'd hate me, too.

I don't want to go to her wedding. I feel it would stress her out, and I don't want to ruin her special day. I think the focus should be on her, not on people whispering about the woman who broke up her parents' marriage. I've been the butt of bitter comments already. I also don't want to confront her mother.

If the bride wanted me there, I would go, but I am pretty sure



she doesn't. Should I go and wish them well, then leave? Should I stay away altogether? My husband would have a better time if I were with him, but it's not his big day. Please tell me what to do. — *Somewhere in California*

Dear California: You are wise to understand the situation, and considerate to put the bride first. Your husband should ask his daughter directly if she wants you there. If she says no, then stay away. If she says "yes" or she doesn't care, it might be best for you to attend only the ceremony, and your husband should remain for the reception. But keep in mind that you are now married to Dad and in order for the situation ever to normalize, you will need to endure these encounters so that, over time, they won't seem so unusual or stressful.

Dear Annie: I am continually fascinated at the people who are quick to criticize retired husbands for not taking on 50 percent of the household chores.

Why do these stories never include the expectation that the wife will wash the cars, mow the lawn, repair the broken shades, change the air-conditioning filters, clean the gutters and on and on?

Everyone is quick to yell at the husbands for not doing the dishes, but why shouldn't the wives be sharing the other tasks? — *Mike*

Dear Mike: We agree that the wives who are retired should pick up some of the slack on the other end, but these are not exactly equal chores. Dishes, laundry and housecleaning have to be done every day. Mowing the lawn or cleaning the gutters is seasonal and periodic. You could count up the hours spent doing each of these if you are determined to make it "equal," but we don't believe household chores should be tit-for-tat. You might be better at some things and your wife at others, and it's fine to focus more on the work you do best. And the rest you should do because you love each other and these things still need to be done, retired or not.

Tomorrow's horoscope

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). There's a time to extend your arms and a time to retract them, hugging your own soul. This is your pulling-back time. Go where you feel surrounded by comfort and safety.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). As per usual, the healthiest thing is not the easiest thing. However, doing the healthy thing enough times makes it an automatic choice — just part of who you are. The hardest part is the first 20 times.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). There are people in your life who are best loved from a distance. When they are in your daily life, you'll find yourself constantly enforcing boundaries. It's not fun.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). There's a lot you could accomplish with a little more self-control. Willpower takes more energy than you think. The way to get more of it is to figure out what's draining your energy and plug that drain.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Time seems to be getting away from you. Get organized. Clean up. Make lists. Declutter your life, and suddenly your relationship with time will seem more amicable.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). You're used to a certain amount of social risk, but things are about to get more intense. Whether this is about being more vulnerable to one person or to many, you've got the courage for it.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Intuition is vying for your attention in the form of a voice in your head — or not a voice exactly, but more like the idea that comes before you speak. Nothing bad will happen if you don't act on this immediately, but do take note.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). You elevate simple matters to the level of an art form. Others who don't take it quite so far will be impressed and inspired once they get past being jealous.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). The formerly blurred lines between friendship, family, love, business and other social matters are now coming into sharp focus. Everyone knows what the bottom line is and where the power lies.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). The exertion you think will make you tired actually makes you stronger, calmer and happier. So get into the mess that's going to have you sweating. If you're angry with someone, bonus: You'll work harder.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Your instinct lines up with another person's logic — brilliant. This might not work in the other direction, but you can worry about that later. For now, take this win and go forward with shared plans.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). In the early stages of a relationship, everything seems significant. Precedence is set. You know everything that happens means something, even when you're not sure what exactly.

SATURDAY'S BIRTHDAY (Oct. 10). This year is marked by invention, the main one being the invention of the new you. Other innovations will fall under the category of usefulness. December brings money and assistance. Your love life is rich in 2016. You'll be paid a bonus in January and May. An investment in your family will benefit all. Cancer and Scorpio people adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 9, 2, 14, 28 and 17.

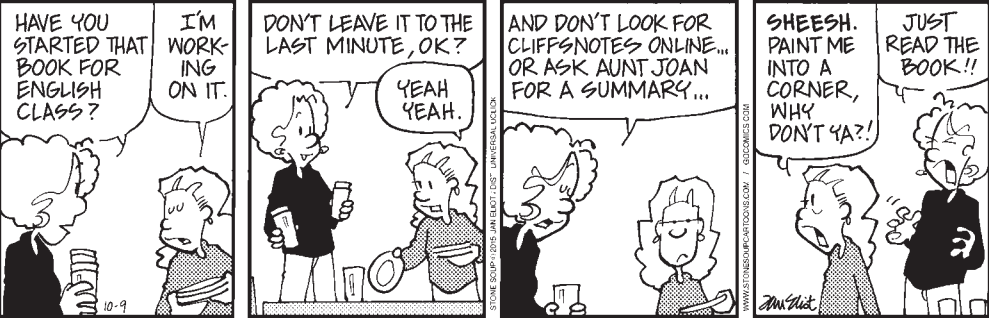
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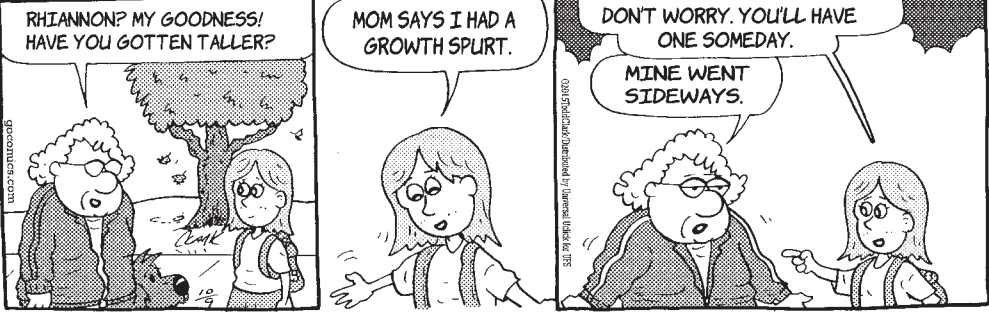
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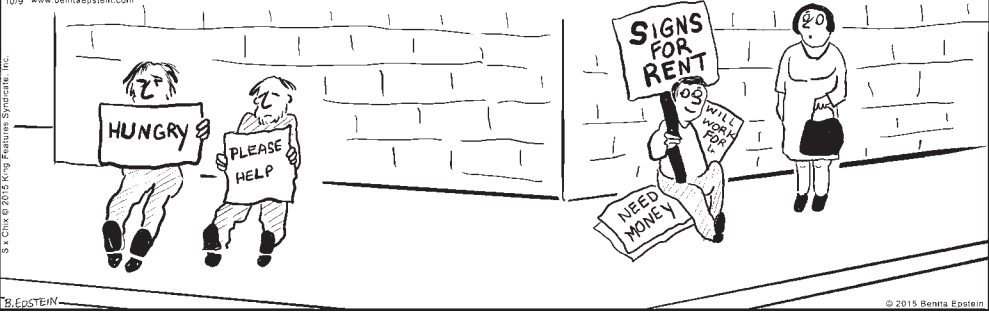
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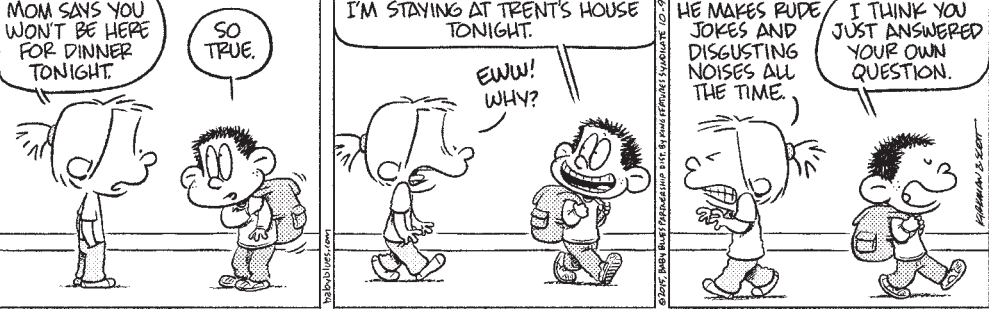
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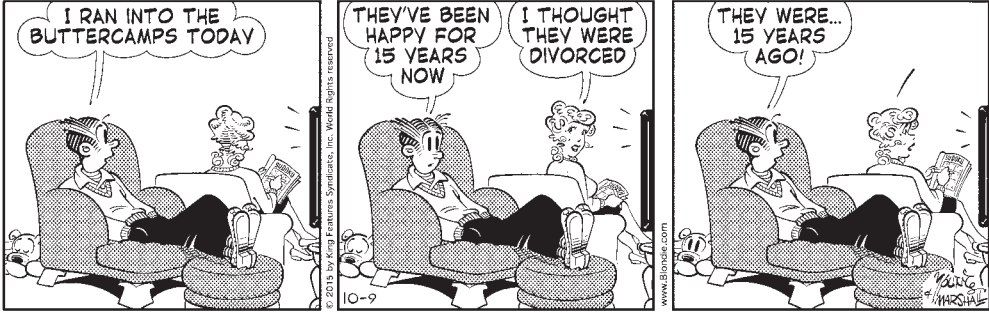
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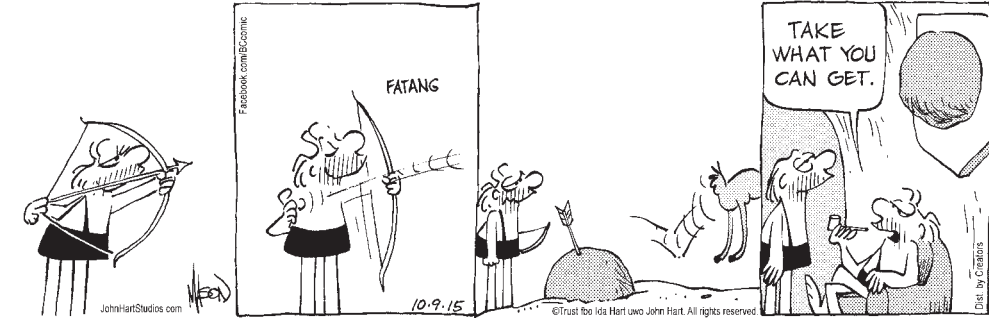
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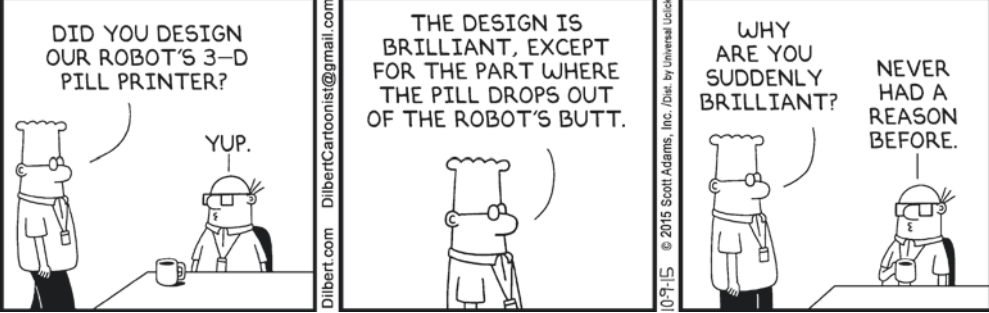
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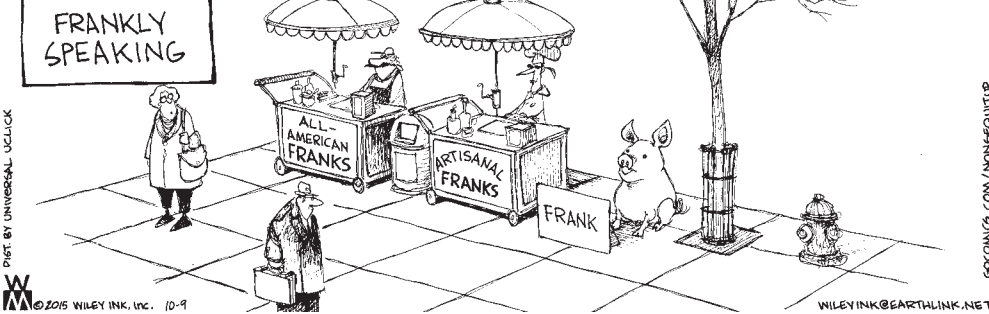
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