

Brother upset about bombshell

Dear Annie: My only sibling has stopped speaking to me. My brother had a son 26 years ago. He claims he knew nothing about the child until I told him six months ago that he should take responsibility for his oldest son. We had words, and he texted me not to contact him, ever, and to have a great life.

I did call and left a message wishing him and his wife a Merry Christmas, but I never heard back. He's holding me responsible for "keeping a secret," while I am quite sure he knew all along that he had a son out there. He said some nasty things directly to me and has told outright lies to other people about me.

But Annie, he is my brother. Do I just go away? Or do I send him birthday wishes next month? — *Grieving Sister*

Dear Sister: You can send any kind of wishes you like, but we can't promise he'll respond. Are you sure he knew about this child? If no one had ever spoken of it before, it's possible he was truly unaware and angry that you kept the secret. Or, if you

Annie's Mailbox

Creators Syndicate Inc.

Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar



mentioned the son in front of his wife, it's possible that he didn't want her to know, and reacted by claiming ignorance. And of course, he could simply be ashamed that he has not financially or emotionally supported his son and, like many guilt-ridden people, became defensive.

You can try apologizing, sincerely, for bringing up a subject that he wasn't prepared to deal with, and then ask him how you can make things better. You also can try going through his wife to see if she will act as an intermediary on your behalf. The rest, sorry to say, is up to him.

Dear Annie: Every day I do word scrambles and "spot the six differences" puzzles with two great people. But

now I'm annoyed and upset. One time — just once — I started the puzzles before they arrived and now they keep calling me "cheaty pants" and refuse to give me the newspaper until they have already started.

I don't know whether I should confront them about it or leave it be. I think they should be fair, not rude. I know I shouldn't start the puzzles until they can be there, but sometimes I get so impatient with them. I think they should be nice about it, too. — *Very Frustrated*

Dear Frustrated: All of you should be nice, which means name-calling is off-limits and no one starts the puzzles before everyone shows up. We recommend that you make the first move to put things back on track: Apologize for your original faux pas and ask them to please stop rubbing it in your face so you can start fresh. But if they keep acting like the mean girls in high school, bring your own newspaper and then you can do your own puzzles in peace.

Tomorrow's horoscope

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Your dedication to a worthy purpose will be a source of great happiness, though not right away, and not after a week or even a month. Dedicate yourself anyway. You'll understand in time.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): You are not a chameleon borrowing your color value from your environment. There's something in you that won't change to match a hue you feel is wrong for you. You'll stand as you really are.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21): You'll use every resource you have to solve the day's problem. If the problem is about getting more fun and excitement in your life, that's a trouble as worthy of attention as any of them.

CANCER (June 22-July 22): Is joy really a sustainable emotion? It's arguable, and yet, who will waste time in debate? Only a fool would spend precious energy on anything other than joy when joy is there for the taking.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): In order to preserve what you have you'll need to make a few rules regarding the use of it. This will include at least two other people. Communicate as specifically as possible and you should do just fine.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): When you command yourself to do something, it can go either way. Sometimes you rebel. Not now. You'll see the wisdom in what your higher mind is laying out.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23): Intelligence has less to do with success than tenacity. Usually you have both, though your current concentration on an attractive proposition could temporarily cloud your thoughts. Don't let that slow down your mission.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21): Some of the poets and philosophers have suggested that happiness occurs exclusively in the memory. You can prove them wrong by being happy in the moment and noticing it, too.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Don't think that just because you're on someone's good side you're impervious to that person's bad behavior. Whatever they do to the others, they'll do to you, too.

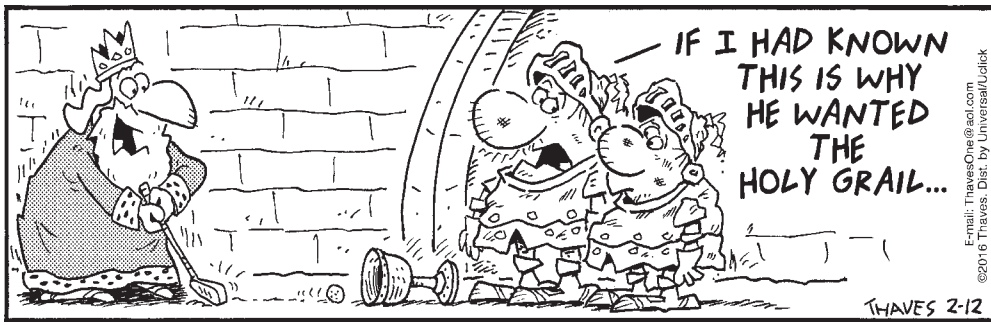
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): You've built on the person you were when you were younger. You may not even remember how. That's why those who remember what you were like are invaluable assets in your self-discovery process.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): It doesn't matter if the group operates dysfunctionally. What matters is that it's a group and it operates. If you can accept that and have a good attitude about it, you'll win.

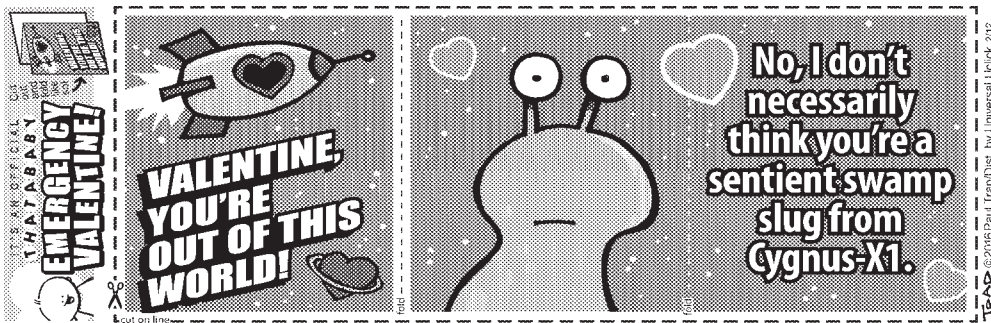
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Everyone needs a witness. That is why even if all you are doing is "picking up" what another person is "putting down," it's a service more valuable than you might have suspected.

SATURDAY'S BIRTHDAY (Feb. 13): You'll enjoy the tremendous luxury of being left to your own devices in March. This means you can finally break out on your own. By April, the new direction will be something worth bragging about, but don't. Keep working and in July you can cash in (to some degree) and buy all the supplies you need. Cancer and Sagittarius adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 7, 49, 24, 39 and 35.

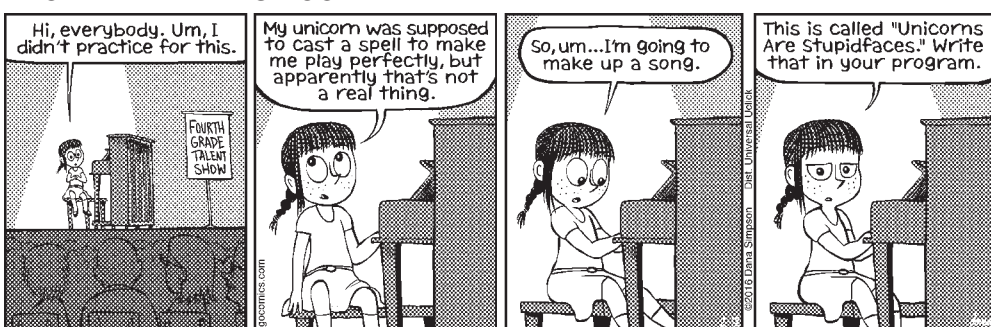
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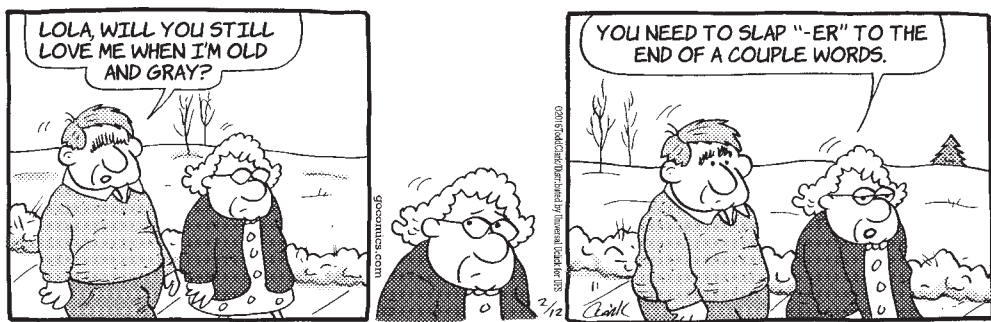
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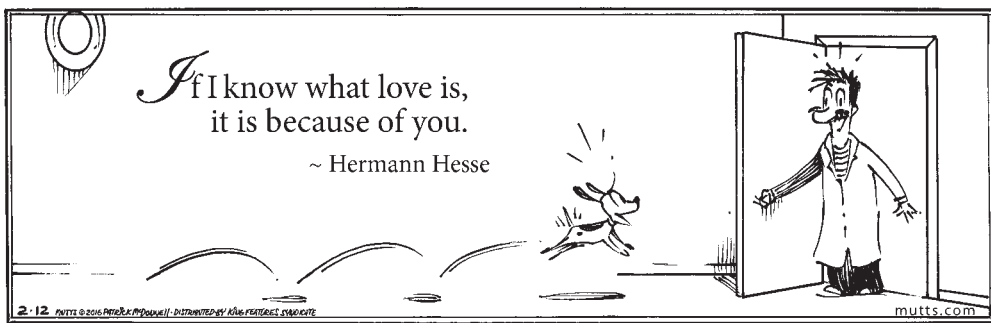
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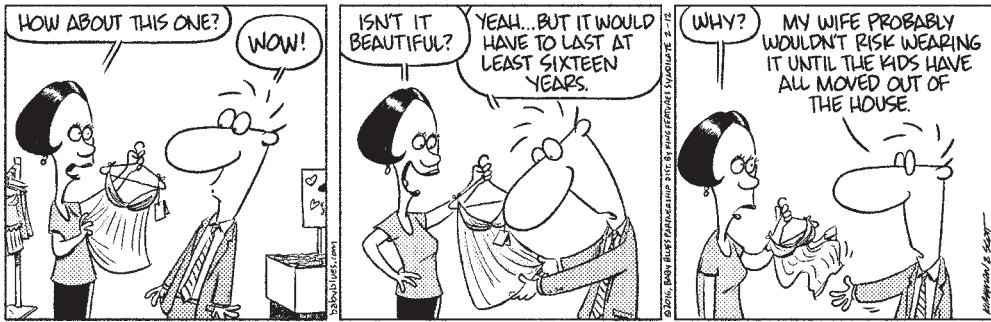
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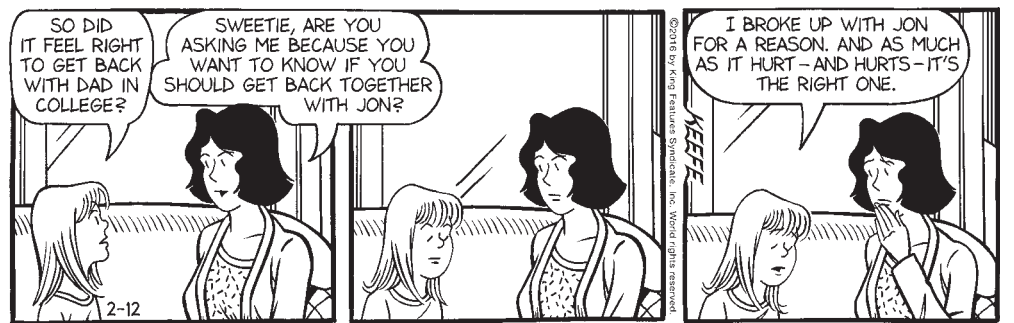
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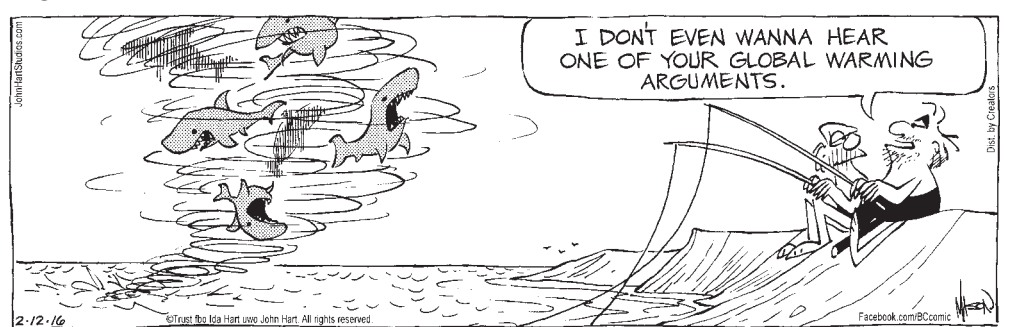
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