

Ex ruining the wedding?

Dear Annie: I have been dating "Brad" for three years. We currently date long-distance, but the relationship is fine. He is loving and kind toward me and everyone in our lives. When he proposed, I said yes immediately. But what is supposed to be an exciting time in my life is now marred by his ex-girlfriend, "Marsha."

I knew Marsha when she and Brad dated 10 years ago. For some reason, she disliked me, even treating me rudely when she and Brad were invited to parties at my place with my then-boyfriend. Brad confided that Marsha didn't like any of the women he was friends with, saying they were "petty."

Marsha is now married, but she and Brad have remained friends. The three of them have even vacationed together. I've never objected to their friendship, but I've also never found a reason to befriend her, nor has she reached out to me.

Brad has reiterated Marsha's old accusation of my being "petty" because I am resistant to initiating a friendship. He says that Marsha doesn't remember how rudely she treated me and insists she be invited to our wedding. I disagree. I envi-

Annie's Mailbox

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sion my wedding filled with people who love me. Since I'm paying for half, I should have a say about the guest list. Brad even told me to get counseling in order to find the "real reason" I dislike her. He intimated that I had deep-seated problems and that Marsha was the innocent party.

I'm beginning to think wedding bells are not on our horizon. Please help. — *To Wed or Not to Wed*

Dear Wed: There are several things going on here. If you are splitting the costs of the wedding, Brad gets to invite Marsha and her husband. You were wrong to turn that into an ultimatum. It made you seem ungenerous and forced Brad to defend his ex. The way Marsha behaved 10 years ago is old news. She was probably jealous of any women around Brad. You need to stop holding that grudge. People

can change, and you won't know if you exclude her. But we also wonder why Brad is so attached to Marsha and demands that you make friends with her. There is no reason for that except that he anticipates including Marsha and her husband in your social life on an ongoing basis. Frankly, if this argument is enough for you to stop the wedding, we think it might be for the best.

Dear Annie: I appreciated your answer to "Confused and Torn" about her dog. I have loved and cherished a number of animals in my life. It is always hard to let them go, so I ask myself, "Am I prolonging her life or prolonging her death?" And, "Am I keeping her alive for myself or for her?"

The way I see it, the animal does not understand why it suffers. I will clearly understand the loss and take that pain upon myself to keep the animal from suffering more. It is simply the price to pay for all the love and companionship the animal has given me over the years, and is the last and most important thing we can do. — *S.*

Dear S.: Thank you for taking a different perspective on such a difficult time.

Tomorrow's horoscope

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Don't believe everything you hear. Some around you will be speaking out of school. There's no reason to attach a distorted significance to this. People are sometimes just plain misinformed.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Words are strongly linked to destiny today. There may be a bit of vocabulary that needs clarification. Does your definition of terms match up with someone else's? If you're not sure, ask!

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). When you're committed to the right goal, you really won't need to motivate yourself through the imposition of consequences. Reward and punishment will be unnecessary. Just lighten up and do your best.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). One way to feel like a superstar is to surround yourself with people who will obey, flatter and comfort you. That's not your style. You want to be inspired, pushed and challenged, so you seek those with equal and/or superior skills.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). An exchange of two very different kinds of goods or acts may work out brilliantly, so long as both agree they are getting an equal value. Spend time sorting out a mutually agreeable system of evaluation.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). You will be susceptible to a special combination of alluring language and intriguing ideas and will likely follow their suggestion into a bit of lighthearted afternoon fun.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Your tastes are changing as you become exposed to a wider range of experiences and options. Ask the questions that will help you understand why and where things fit into the larger context.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Some around you have a cool demeanor that prevents them from showing too much enthusiasm. You're not bound to the same rules and values. Give out that infectious and energizing joy!

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). You have been successful without knowing why. Ask around, though, because you've also been observed. It will be interesting to hear what others think of your process.

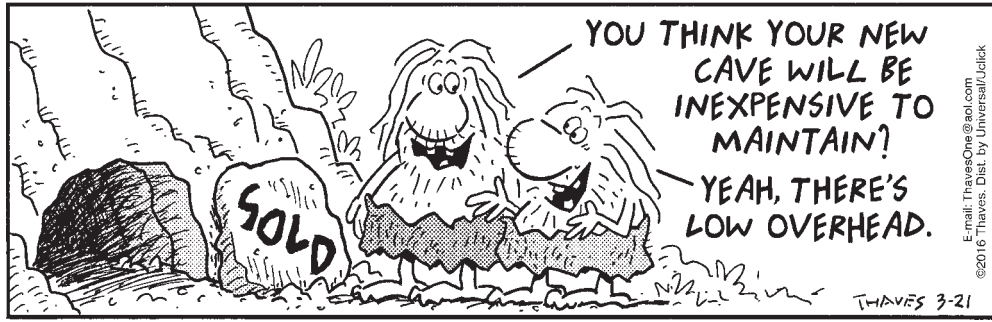
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). One project will take most of your focus. Up until now, progress has been slow and gradual. You've been happy with this approach, but now you've built up so much momentum that from here until the weekend you'll be chasing the action.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Though you were not trying to impress anyone, you did. Part of the reason is that you listen better than anyone else around and therefore will pick up on hints that others miss.

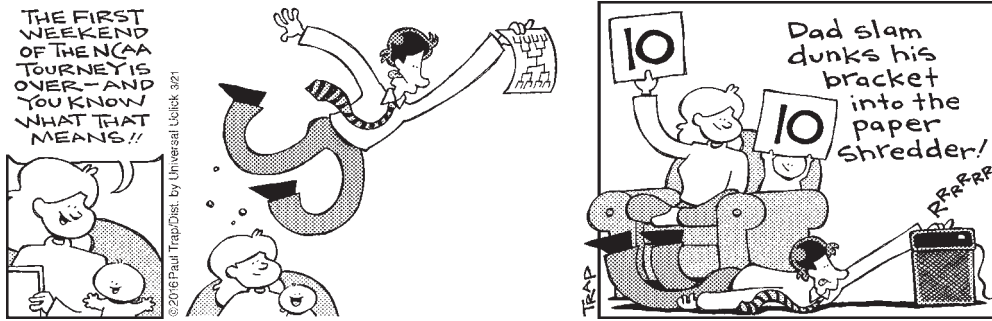
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). One needn't know more than you know to be able to teach you. For instance, many Pisces will learn spiritual lessons through caring for children or interacting with animals.

TUESDAY'S BIRTHDAY (March 22). Next month will inspire your imagination and cause you to question some of the work you did last year. You'll deconstruct a project and build a masterpiece from it. June will bring friendly rivalry that pushes you to greatness. A precious truth will quietly reveal itself in August. You'll celebrate new social energy in September. Aquarius and Libra adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 28, 17, 4, 11 and 39.

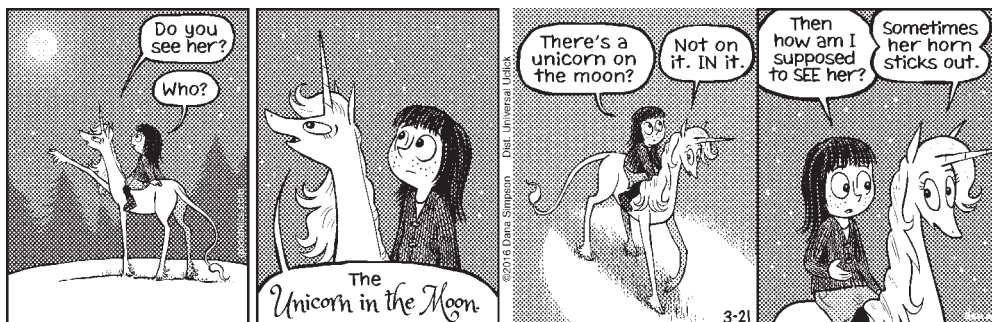
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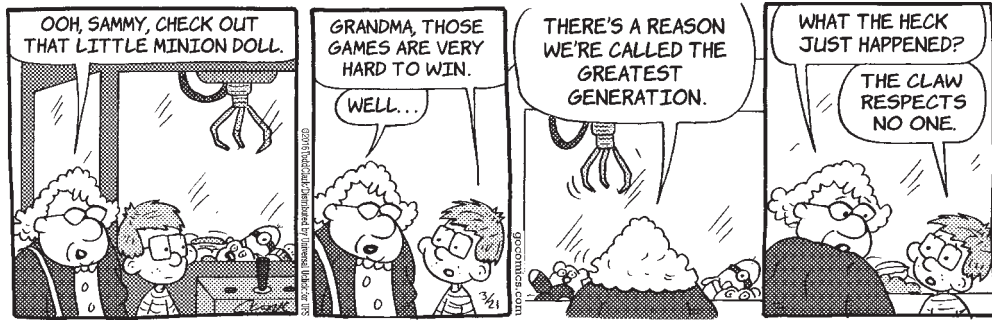
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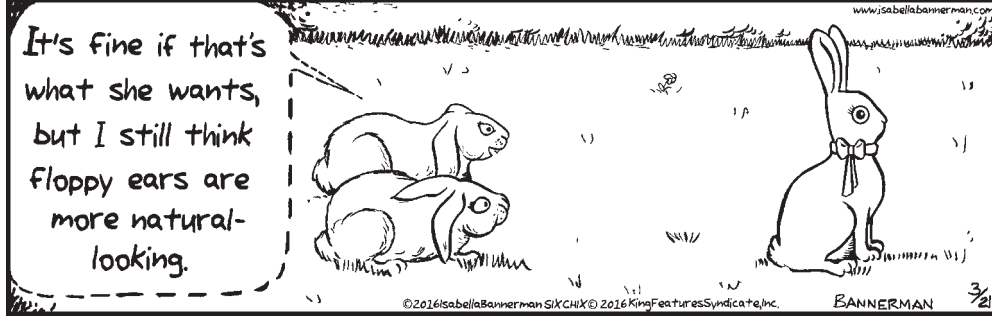
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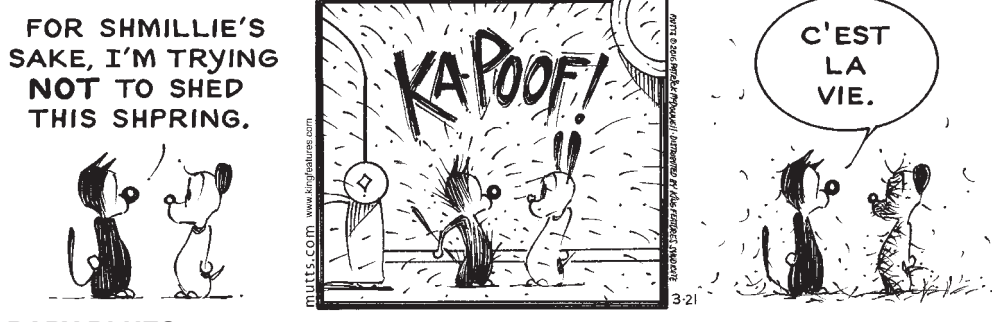
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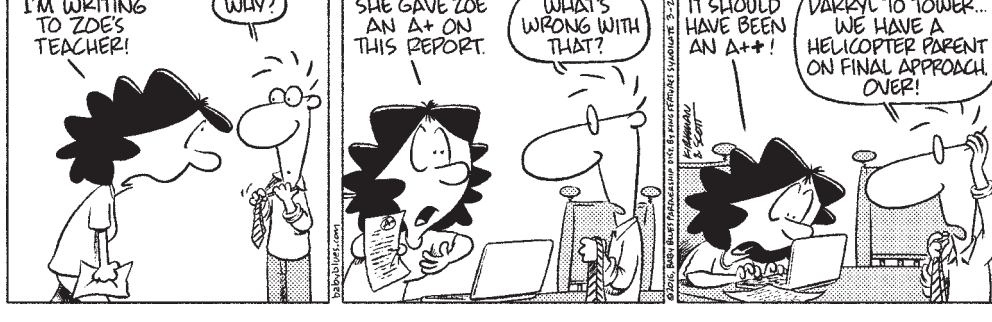
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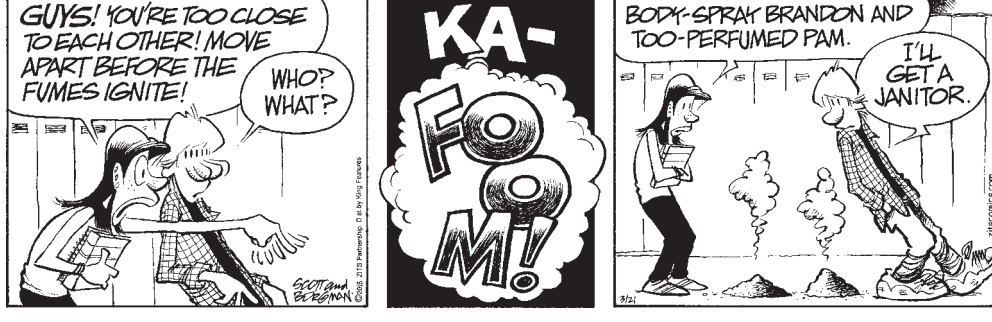
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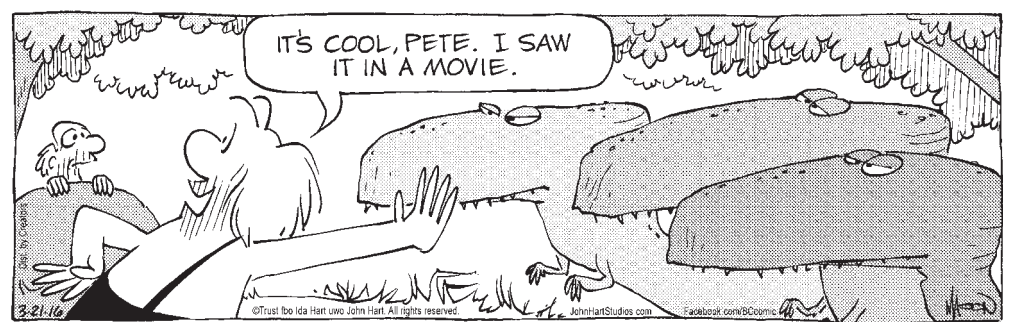
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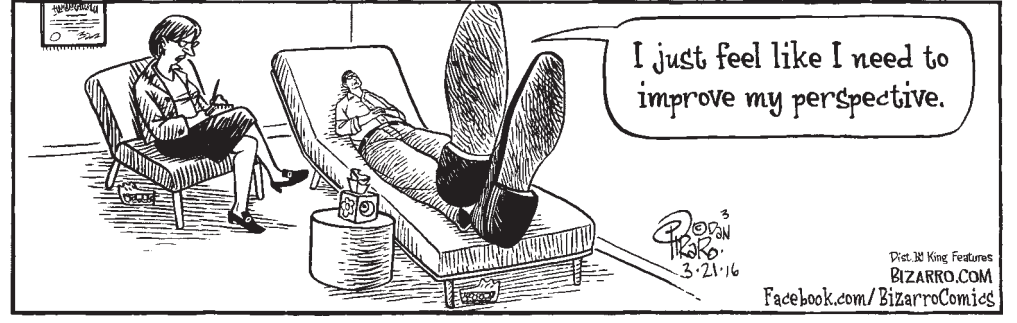
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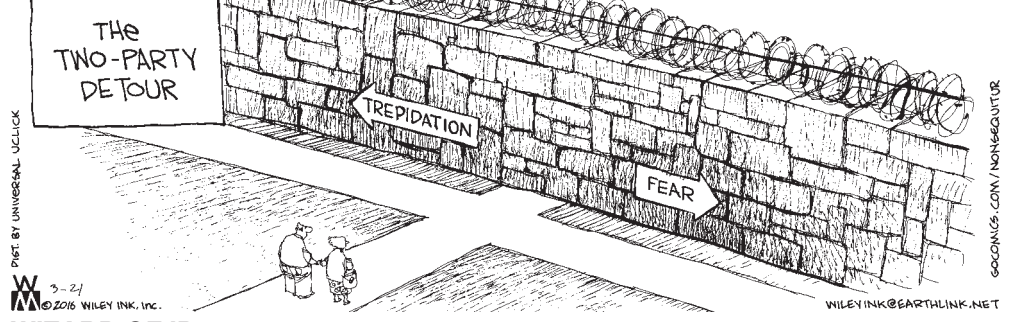
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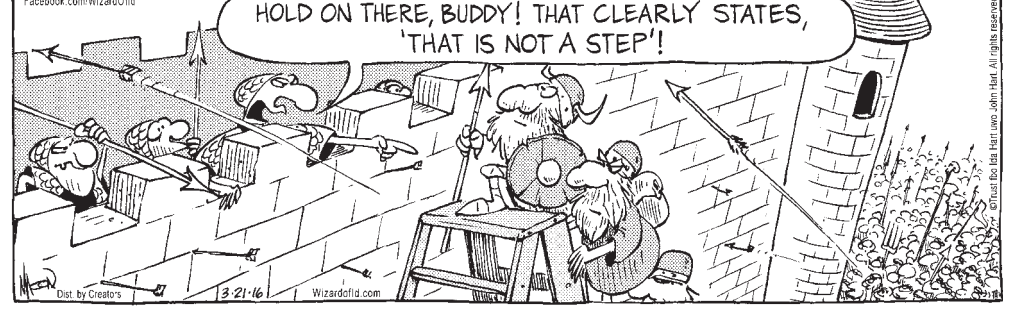
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