

Sis dating ex causes trouble

Dear Annie: My ex-husband, the father of my kids, decided to date my younger sister, who is in the early stages of recovery from heroin addiction. When she wants to see her four children, she has to have a supervisor present for visitation.

My mother and stepfather support this relationship and think it will be good for her. My older sister and I do not approve. Because of this, my mother decided to disown me and my sister. We have not spoken for six months.

What I don't understand is that my mother mentioned this whole dating thing about four years ago. She asked whether I would be OK with them seeing each other and I strongly replied that I would NOT, and that it was unethical for the two of them to even think about it. Now it's happening.

How do I carry on with no contact with my family due to this? I have been married to my second husband for 11 years. I have no feelings for my ex. My kids seem to be OK with everything, but I just can't do it. It makes everything uncomfortable. Now my older sister and I are cut off from the rest of the family. What can I do? — *Disturbed Middle Sister*

Dear Sister: Obviously, this attraction has been going on for at

Annie's Mailbox

Creators Syndicate Inc.

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least four years (and probably longer). We agree that dating the sibling (or best friend) of an ex can be problematic and we don't recommend it. But you don't get to control who other people date, and that includes both your ex and your sister. Expressing your opinion about it is fine. Creating ultimatums only forces an estrangement.

Your decision now is whether or not to accept your sister's relationship (you don't have to approve), in order to remain close to the rest of the family. If the two of them split up, you've lost nothing. If they marry, you will be stuck with this, so be sure you make a choice that you can live with.

Dear Annie: I am writing about "Crying Mother," who views her formerly loving and involved daughter-in-law as "cold and distant" now that the children are older. You gave her some possible explanations.

I'd like to suggest another.

Parents' days are filled with meeting the needs of their growing children, in addition to maintaining a home and keeping up with career responsibilities. This may be the busiest and most stressful time of their lives. They have less time to think about their parents, yet they need their parents' love and support more than ever.

After our first was born, my father-in-law would call to say that he would be grilling that weekend and wondered if the baby would like some prime rib. My mother-in-law was happy to bake and decorate cookies with my second-grader for a school activity. I would suggest that "Crying Mother" step into a more supportive role. Does she invite the family over for a meal and fun activity? Does she offer to take the children so the parents can have time alone? Does she inquire about the children's activities and attend when possible? Grandparents can be very important to families, and such efforts are greatly appreciated. — *Been There on Both Sides*

Dear Been There: There are always two sides to every story (sometimes three). We hope "Crying Mother" will give your great suggestions a try.

Tomorrow's horoscope

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). The hardest kind of criticism to take is honest criticism. Only the strong (that means you) can handle it, and handle it you will — because there's something just beyond your usual awareness that will be incredibly helpful for you to know.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Those moments in which you feel happy, healthy, safe and protected from all harm — those shouldn't be rare. If those moments are not abundant for you, why not? Today is a fine time to turn the trend around.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Life will make you change for the better, and there's nothing you need to do about that now. Just relax and believe. If you can't believe, that's fine, too, but you'll be more comfortable if you at least relax.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Those who know you well are expecting you to succeed, and so are those who don't know you. That's because success is your vibe these days! Anyone who isn't rooting for you in an obvious way doesn't belong on your team.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Your perfect blend is out there. When the music of your thoughts mixes with the music of a compatible individual's thoughts, the result will be a beautiful, layered symphony you both can dance to.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Stressful moments have a way of constricting your creativity and thought processes. Laughter is an experience of opening up and getting everything flowing again. You'll be at your best when you keep looking for the humor.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Maybe it sounds a little harsh, but the fact is that some people in your life nourish you while others deplete you. Recognize this reality and plan your day

accordingly to stay buoyant.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Take a moment to gently acknowledge the feeling you're having; it's human. You're not the only one. Whatever you feel, it's acceptable. Does that help you soften into the moment instead of resisting it?

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Address the concerns you have about your image. It's not selfish to want to put your best foot forward. This is the moment to nip a problem in the bud or make an easy improvement.

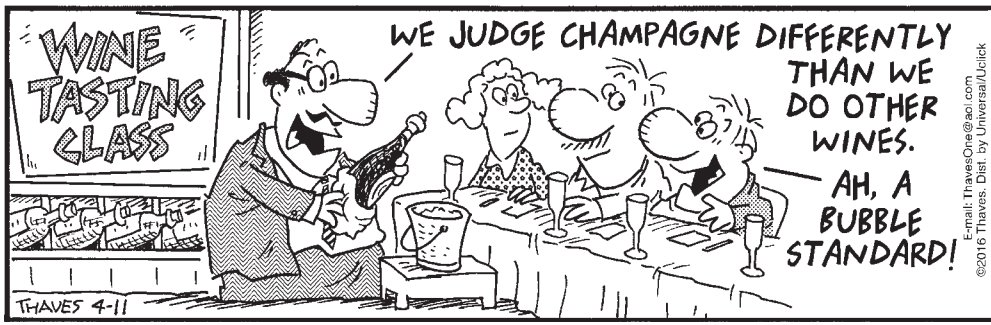
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). You get to decide just how close you want people to be to you. Sure, they may have their own ideas, and there is a bit of negotiating to do (most of it informal and implied), but ultimately you're in charge. Don't forget that!

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). For moments it will be as though your ordinary mind and sense of personal identity have dissolved into a dream. The question is: How much of this dream are you able to influence? Test it out. Assert yourself and see.

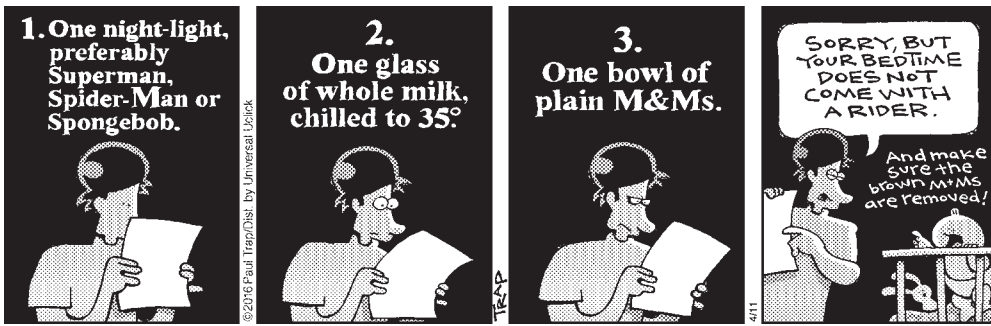
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). You didn't go wrong; you went right. Anyway, it's best not to think about it now. This is different from the original plan, but assume that it's different in a good way and move forward.

TUESDAY'S BIRTHDAY (April 12). You've a talent for finding helpful people. The most attractive aren't always the best for you. Wishing to be a bright light in the world, you keep asking what would yield the highest good for the most people. You'll be at the center of the social swirl in May and June. August brings different work for excellent pay. Scorpio and Capricorn adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 6, 41, 49, 22 and 48.

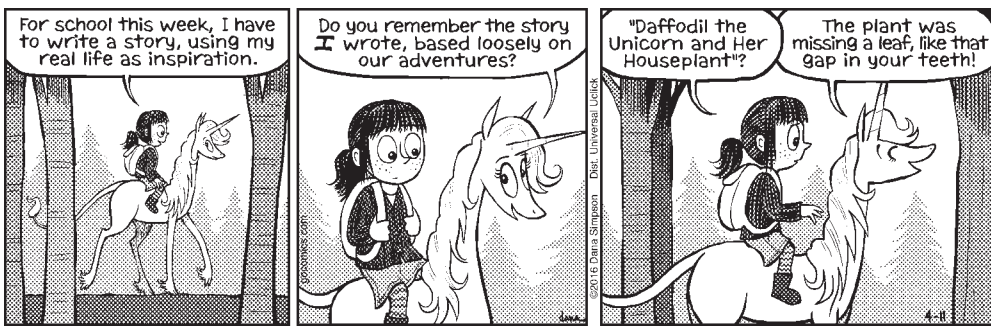
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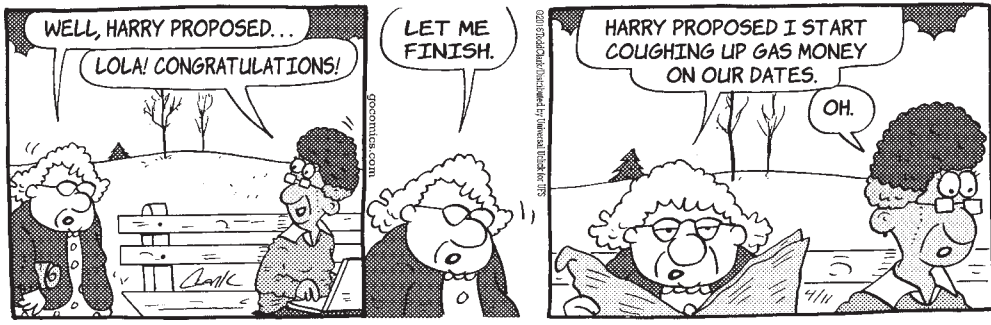
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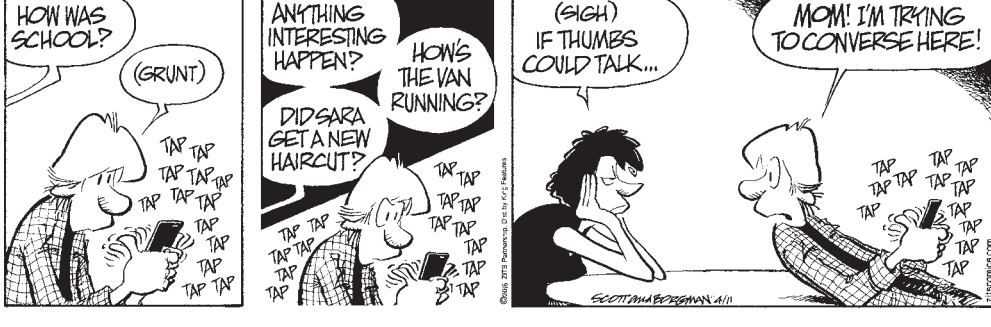
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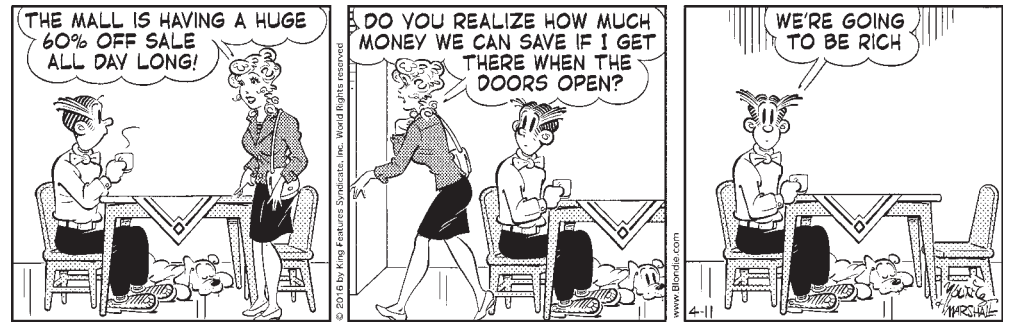
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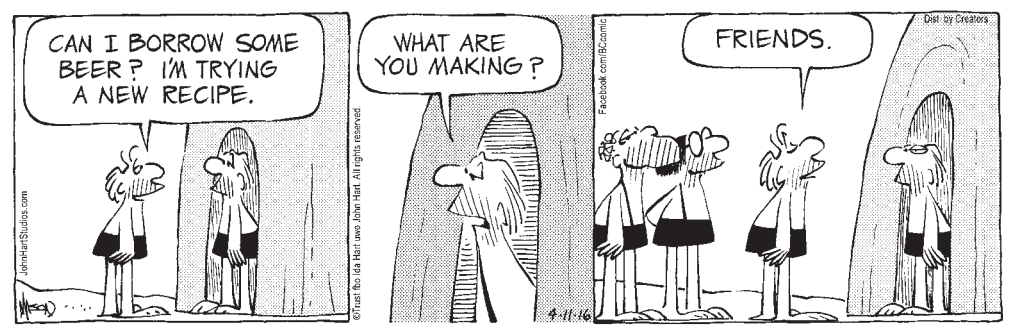
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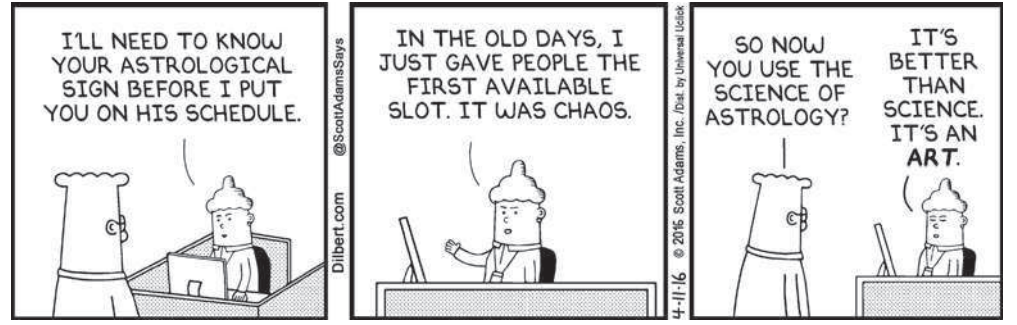
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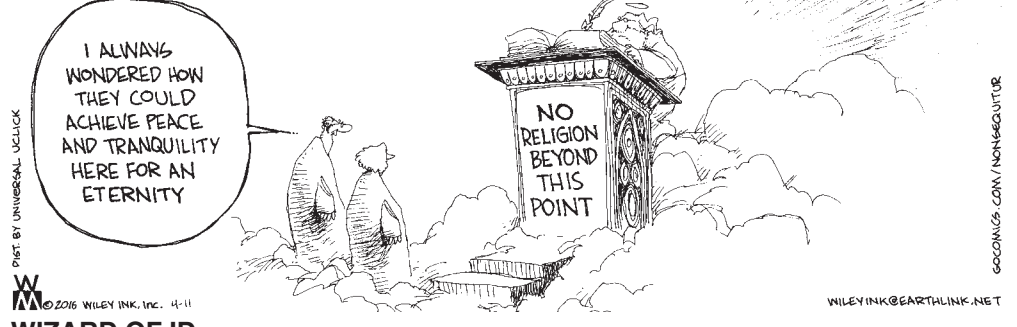
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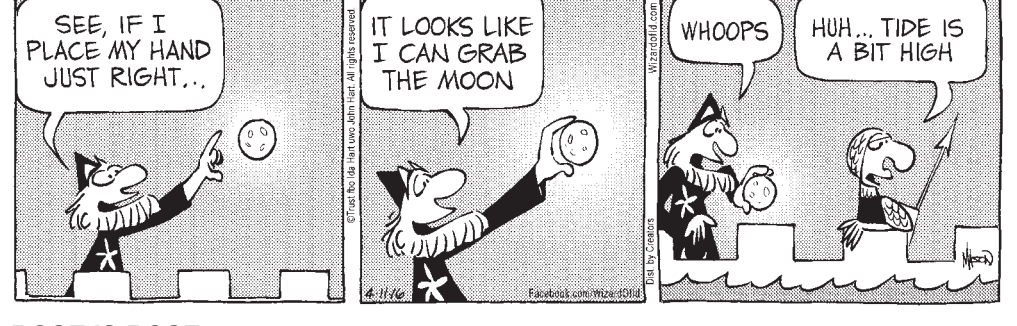
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