

Woman incensed by friendship

Dear Annie: I'm 55 and have been married to the same man for 27 years. Before we met, my husband had been living with "Miranda" for six years. Although Miranda has had many relationships since, she never married.

All these years, my mother-in-law and two sisters-in-law have maintained a relationship with this woman, often meeting for lunch. They support and attend all her charity events. What really is galling is that they do all these things behind my back. No one even had the respect to tell me that Miranda was invited to my sister-in-law's wedding. I was a bridesmaid and was shocked to see her name on a place card for the reception.

I have always been close to my husband's family. We all live in the same town, while my family is out of state. I am constantly hosting holiday and birthday dinners for them, and helping their families with whatever arises. I have tried being the dutiful daughter and sister-in-law, but my patience is wearing thin.

My husband doesn't attend these events, but he does email Miranda occasionally. I found out that my in-laws drove hours to get to her brother's funeral when my

Annie's Mailbox

Creators
Syndicate Inc.

Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar



husband mentioned in passing that his sister's car broke down on the way.

I am so hurt that this is going on after all these years. One day, my sisters-in-law treat me like their BFF, and the next day, they spend time with Miranda. Not only have I become distrusting of them, I have taken a major step back from our previously close relationship.

Am I too sensitive and insecure, or is the situation just weird? —Stressed

Dear Stressed: Actually, had your in-laws stopped contact with Miranda and then picked it up again after 27 years, we'd find that weird. But since they have been in touch the entire time, we'd say you shouldn't try to dictate their friendships — even with ex-girlfriends. You believe that your in-laws are untrustworthy because they hav-

en't told you, but we think they are sparing your feelings. They obviously tell your husband, who chooses not to transmit the information to you, likely for the same reason.

Your in-laws have been friends with Miranda longer than they have known you. We suggest you tell them how hurt you are that they feel they must hide their contact with Miranda and, although you don't need to know the details, you'd prefer not to be kept in the dark. As long as they aren't trying to undermine your marriage, you have no cause for concern, and it would be a shame to let this wreck the good relationship you've built over the years.

Dear Annie: You printed a suggestion from "Indiana," saying that it might be easier for "Confused and Tom" to bear the loss of her beloved Pomeranian if she has the dog cremated and states in her will that she wants the ashes put in her coffin.

While this is a lovely idea, it will not help to put it in her will. Wills are read after the funeral. She needs to make arrangements in advance with her family and friends, letting everyone know her wishes. —Florida

Tomorrow's horoscope

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). You think you know where you belong, but it turns out you could belong in a lot of different places given half the chance. Nurturing environments will beckon to you through the channel of your curiosity.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). No, you're not imagining things. They are staring at you — well, it's only because they're expecting you to bring the fun. With your good mood today, you won't disappoint.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Even for you, socializing has its challenges. The more you overcome them, the luckier you are. Take a risk. Get to know that person who doesn't open up easily. Listen and observe carefully and you'll find your perfect "in."

CANCER (June 22-July 22). The seeds of kindness and greed are within each person, as is the potential to do good works or bad deeds. No one is born with character. Character is born of choices.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Ever since the thing you thought would make you happy didn't do its job, you've wondered where all the "happy" is kept. Are they hiding it from you on purpose? Time to knock on some doors and ask a few questions.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). The early stages of a relationship matter! A tone is being established; a rhythm is set. Add a dash of intrigue and a sprinkle of surprise to the mix and you've the start of something meaningful.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Set your price. You might like to work for free because it takes the pressure off. Or perhaps you still think of yourself as an amateur (you're not). Set your price anyway. People value what they pay for even if they pay very little.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). You'll find things a lot more interesting because of the person delivering the information. Info that would have caused your eyes to glaze over could become suddenly mesmerizing with a change of cast.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Usually you have to try things until one of your efforts brings the result. Today you'll just stumble into a good option. Sure you're lucky, but it's luck you deserve — and how!

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). This is an all-or-nothing kind of day. It's not enough to mean well. Doing well is the only option. You put your best efforts in, and then you dig deeper for more and better efforts to contribute.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Your empowered attitude is like a solvent for people who are stuck in their ways. You don't have to do much to get things moving in the right direction. The inspiration of your presence is enough.

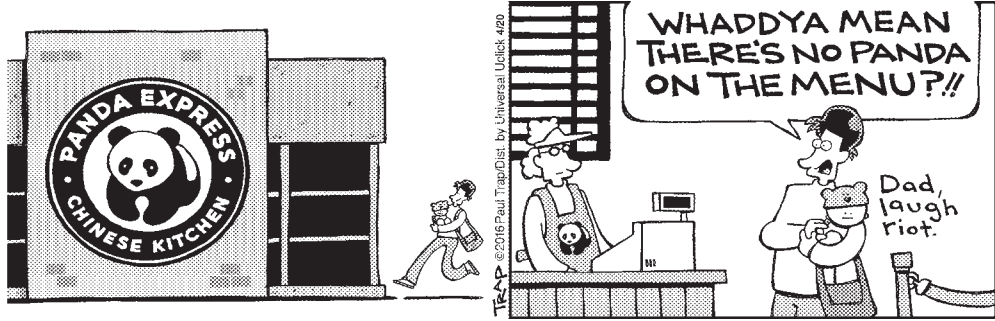
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Like a fish traveling with your "school," you won't have to bother with too many decisions today. Your natural instincts will have you sticking with your group for all the strength and protection you need.

THURSDAY'S BIRTHDAY (April 21). A bit of unpleasantness is all in the past now. You've been made richer for it, which is why you'll have so much to give the next three months. Your generosity will change a life. July brings financial flexibility. Apply your education to September's challenge. The additions to your family send smiles across the globe. Aquarius and Cancer adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 43, 5, 33, 2 and 9.

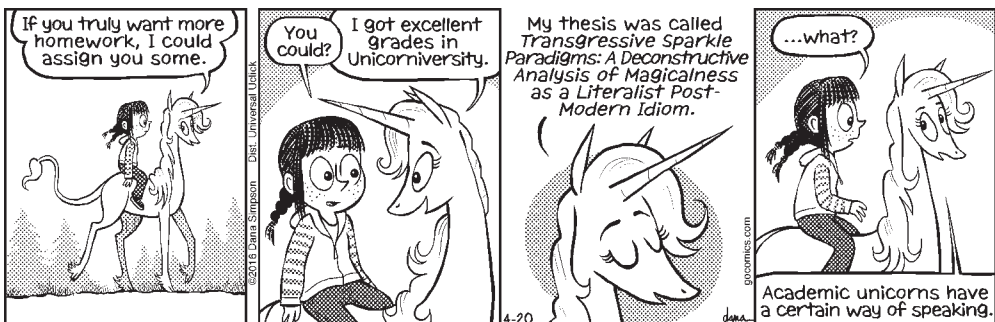
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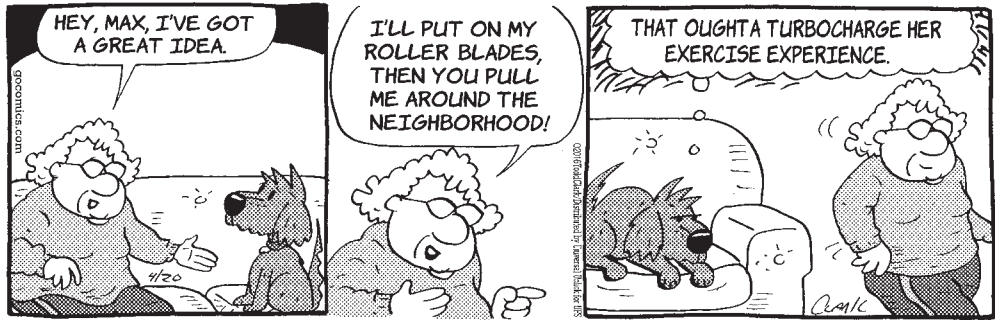
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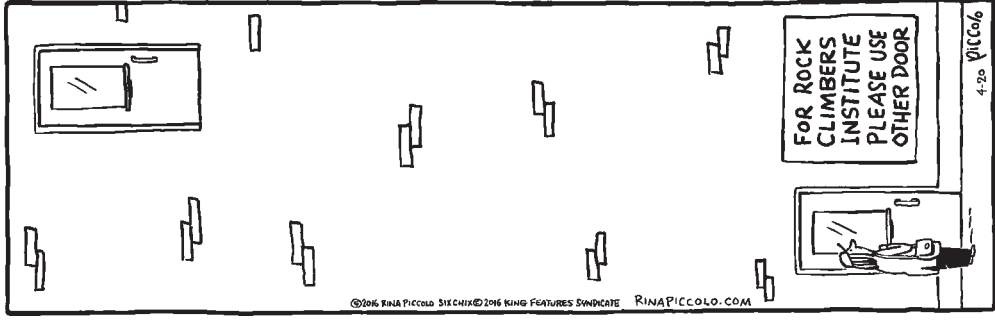
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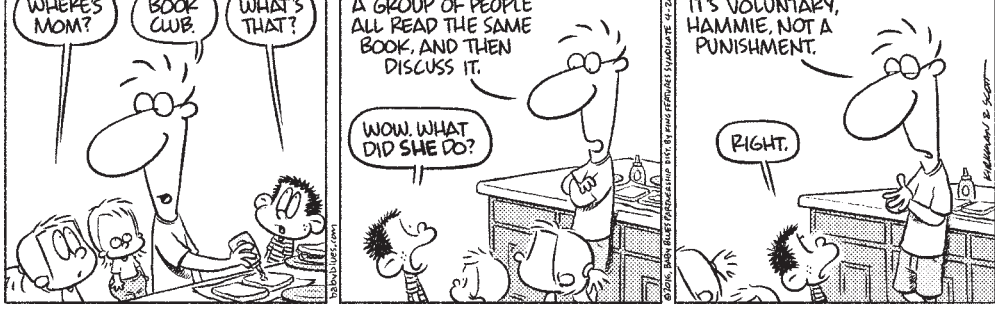
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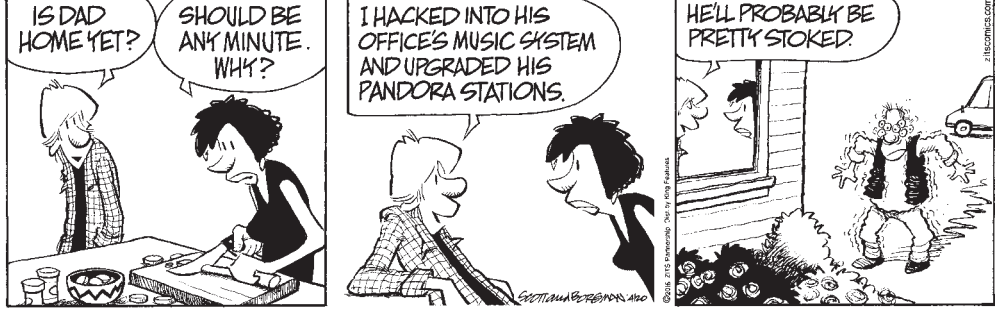
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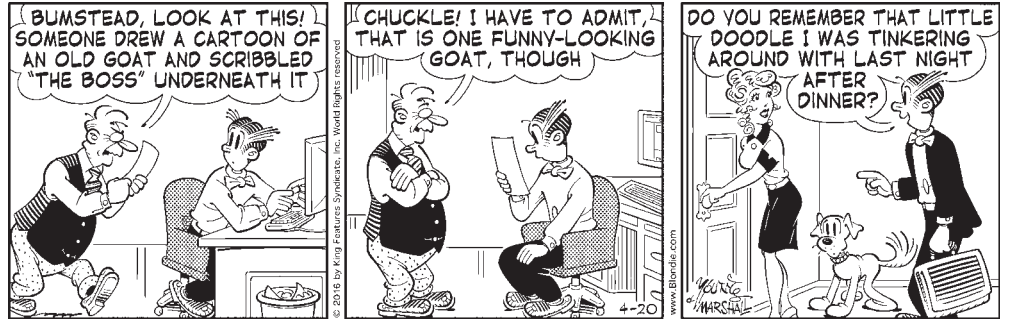
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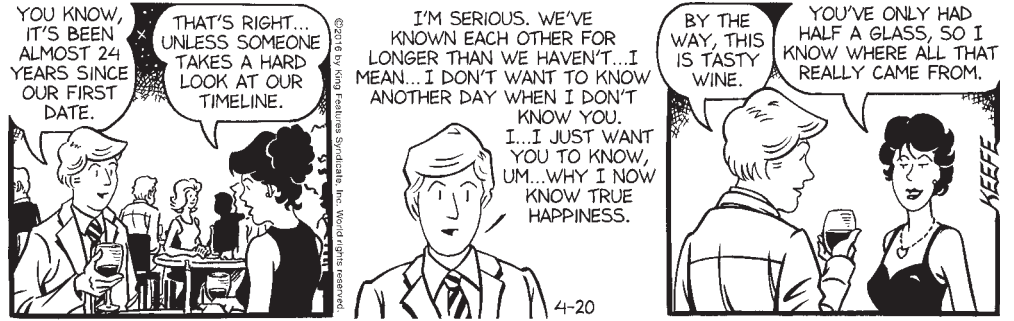
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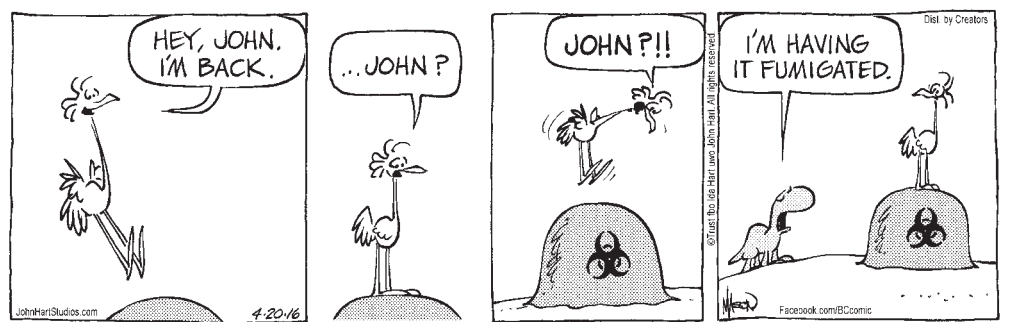
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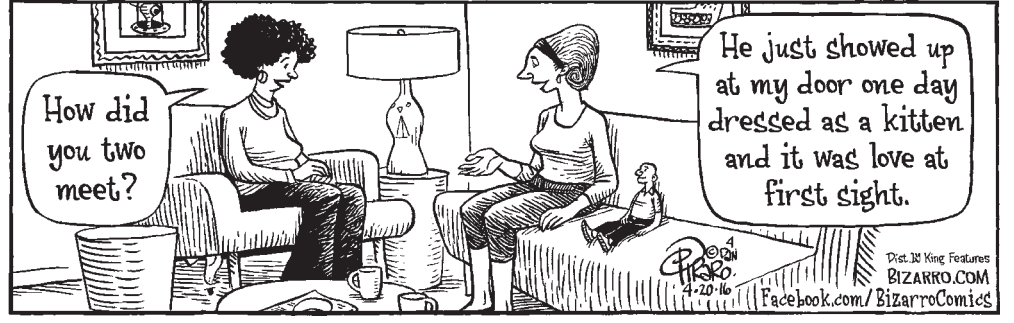
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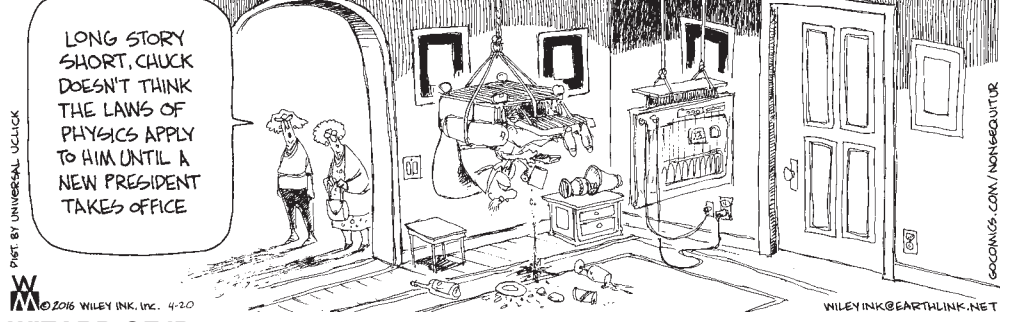
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