

Mom's boyfriend is abusive

Dear Annie: In three years, I will be away at college. I am concerned because Mom has a boyfriend with a major anger problem, and he throws tantrums and gets abusive.

Mom has been in this relationship for a few years, and I'm afraid when I leave he will do some serious damage and I won't be there to protect her. She has been going to therapy, but it doesn't seem to be helping. I love my mother and want the best for her. How can I convince her to get away from this man? — *Concerned Daughter*

Dear Concerned: It is very difficult for some women to get out of an abusive relationship, and the longer they are involved, the more they believe they deserve to be treated poorly. It's good that Mom is getting therapy. She obviously needs it, and we hope it will help her find a way out. We know you are worried about her, but you are not responsible for her choices. If you witness this man being physically abusive or if he should come after you, call the police immediately. You also can contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline (thehotline.org) at 1-800-799-SAFE (1-800-799-7233) and ask if there is anything more you can do.

Dear Annie: Something unacceptable is happening with two casual

Annie's Mailbox

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friends. The man's wife is in a nursing home with dementia. The woman's husband is in a nursing home after a debilitating stroke. They are "dating."

The man has no children and is fairly low-key with his activities. The woman, however, is like a lovesick puppy. Her children are teenagers, and they seem uncomfortable with the situation. I know she is lonely, and I feel sorry for her, but frankly, I am embarrassed to be her friend. Another friend tried to talk to her about this, but she is too "in love" to listen to reason. I know I should MMOB, and I am, but what is your opinion? — *Momma Do-Rite*

Dear Momma: As long as husbands and wives are taking care of their nursing-home spouses and visiting often, we have no objection to their spending an evening out with a friend. We concur, however, that it is inappropriate for this couple to flaunt

a love affair, especially since there are children involved. However, you are a "casual friend," so you need to keep out of it.

Dear Annie: As an ex-wife who was married for 30 years, I disagree with your response to "Just Curious," who asked about attending her ex-husband's funeral. You also referred to the new wife as the "stepmother." If the new wife helped raised young children from the first marriage, then yes. But if they were grown up when Dad remarried, as mine were, she is simply Dad's wife.

If the ex was married to this man and bore his children, then there is a long and serious connection, and she should be able to attend the funeral. If my ex-husband dies before me, I plan to attend. Out of respect for his present wife, I will be as inconspicuous as possible. But I intend to be there not only for myself, but to help my children and grandchildren through that time. — *Loving Mother*

Dear Mother: The word "stepmother" refers to the woman Dad has married, whether you like it or not. The restriction on ex-wives attending the funeral is if your presence will cause a disruption and make the widow stressed. If you are certain you can avoid that, and your children want you there, it's OK to go.

Tomorrow's horoscope

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). You're terrific at sniffing out trouble. You can look into a person's eyes and see the potential for danger, or walk into a room and feel the level of risk in the air. These talents will be useful today.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). You're in the mood to stop and wonder, which causes you to consider the origin of everything, including you. It's interesting how you got here, but ultimately what matters is doing the most with where you are.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Their behavior is odd at best, irritating mostly, offensive occasionally. And then there's you: totally accepting. This is love. This is tolerance. This is the way to inner peace. This is the way to world peace.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Comparison, competition, commerce — these are the C's that will rule the day if you let them. This is a fierce game you're playing! Rejuvenate this evening with more C's: compassion, calm, centeredness.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). There is a strange communion between you and the natural world today. The truth is, this dance is always going on, but you are more keenly aware of it now. Nature is calling on you to set something right.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). All things come and go. Your ease with this is strongly linked to your moods. Letting things come and go as they please without posing a resistance to either side of the equation will free up a lot of energy in you.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). The most efficient way to streamline any task or relationship will be to set it up right from the start. Most of the work will be accomplished in the prepa-

ration stage, which will last for several hours.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). You will enjoy an impassioned, though brief, visitation from the muses. They'll part within an hour, leaving behind a gift — an unadulterated vision. What you do with it from there is your choice.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). There's something very seductive about the heated exchanges just outside of your realm. You do crave excitement, but at what cost? It takes maturity to rise above drama and seek your own happiness.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). You'll be called to a quest. There are deals to strike to favor you and yours. In the process, you'll introduce people who wouldn't know each other if you hadn't set out on this path.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You have the goods. There's talent in one of your back pockets; the other pocket is filled with confidence. You could be the star at any time of your choosing. But right now there is more benefit in being a team player.

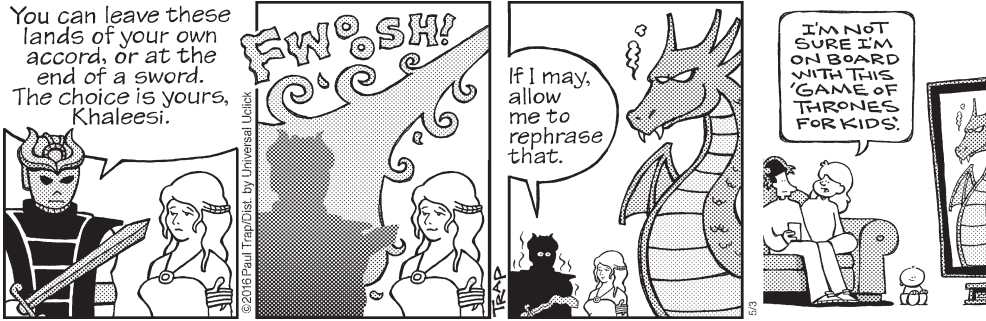
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Regardless of how nice and positive people may be, it's still toxic to spend all your time in the same group. Change it up. Seek the kind of company that activates your imagination and motivates you in new ways.

WEDNESDAY'S BIRTHDAY (May 4). Your solar return emboldens you to grab at the things you would have let pass you by only last year. Your opportunities will multiply as they are seized. June features someone who challenges you, makes you laugh and gives you your preferred brand of trouble. Education will be your great passion in July. Love signs are Taurus and Aquarius. Your lucky numbers are: 4, 22, 31, 9 and 50.

FRANK AND ERNEST



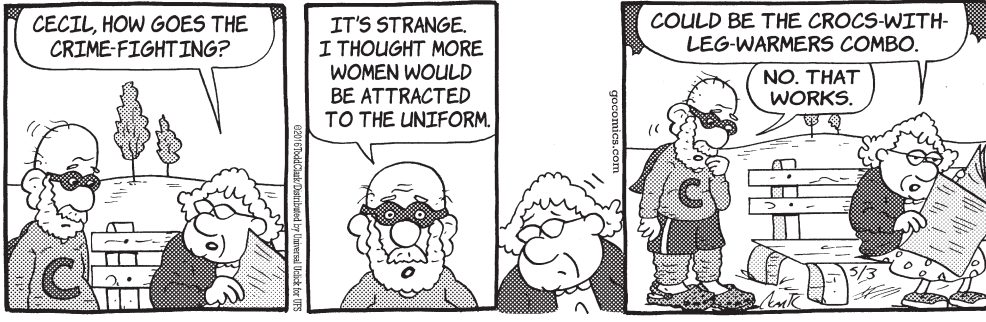
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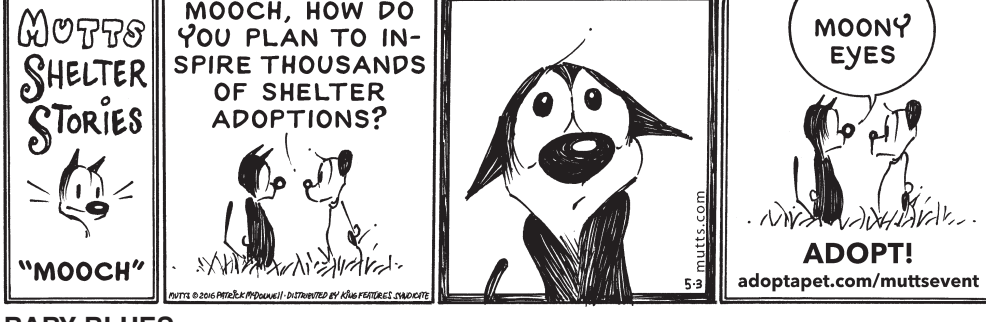
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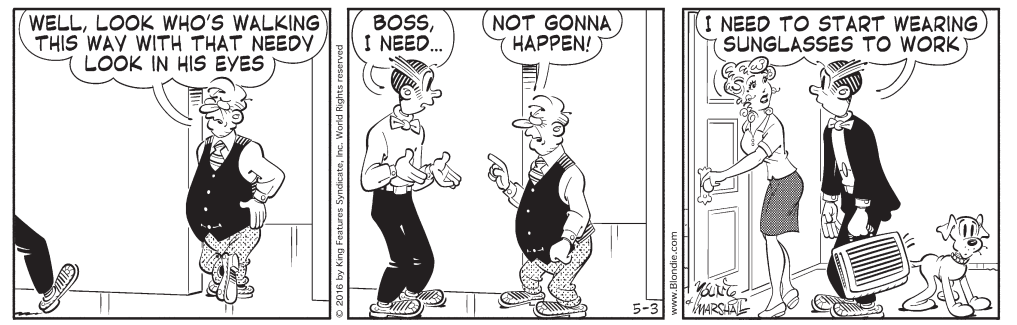
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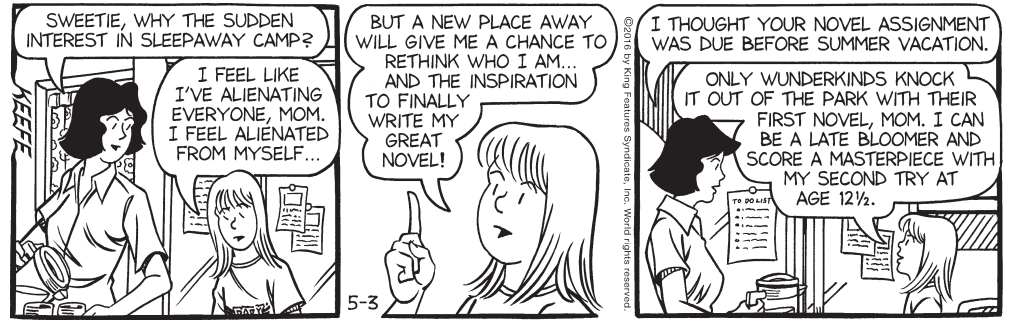
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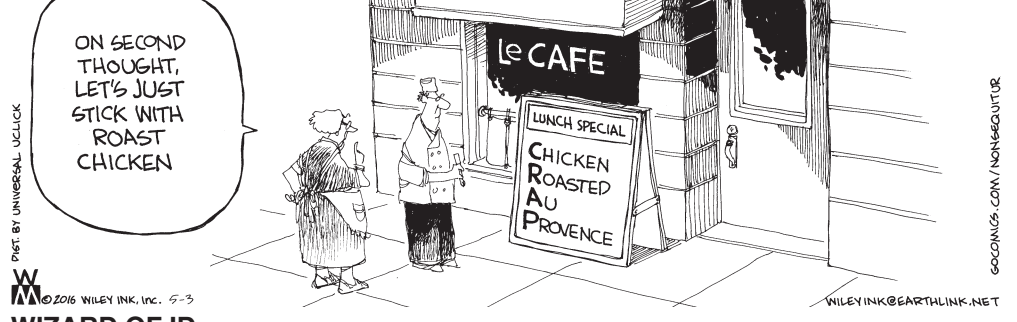
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