

Cold shoulder after divorce

Dear Annie: I recently went on vacation with my mom, stepdad and siblings. We went to the river where my stepdad has been going for about 30 years. Everyone else in the community has been going there every year for just as long, if not longer. Now, my mom and stepdad met each other while they were married, and, well, you can put the rest together. Many families we know have taken sides ever since, so being the daughter, I'm no stranger to weird vibes in social situations and people choosing sides.

Upon meeting the rivergoers, I quickly realized that some of them were on my stepdad's ex-wife's side. How did I know? They avoided talking to us and didn't invite us to partake in group water-sport activities. In one case, after I introduced myself, the woman looked at me, scoffed and walked away. There were plenty of nice people, though, so we still had a great time.

This isn't something I take personally. The situation has nothing to do with me, and the affair happened six years ago. If they're getting all hung up about something that's not even their business, that's their problem. But I never know whether I should stand up

Dear Annie



By Annie Lane

Creators Syndicate Inc.

for myself, kill them with kindness or just ignore them. What do you think? — *Boating With Baggage*

Dear Boating: It sounds as if you're expert at navigating these treacherous rapids, so kudos. It's incredibly mature of you not to take the antics of your stepdad's ex-wife's friends personally. The bitterness and resentment they're holding on to is only dragging them down.

Continue being pleasant in the face of their ugly attitudes. Pretend you're oblivious to their bad vibes. They can scoff until they're blue in the face. But don't be a doormat, either. If one of them says something outright rude to you, you have a right to stand up for yourself.

Dear Annie: What is the etiquette concerning who pays for a date these days? I am realizing I

may be a bit old-fashioned, as I still think that a man should pick up the check at least the first few times he goes out with someone. I've been on three dates with a guy recently, and we've split it every time.

For our first date, he picked out an expensive restaurant that I would never normally go to, as it's way out of my price range. I assumed he would only invite me to such an expensive place if he planned on covering the bill.

Before I was seeing him, I dated a man for about six months, and we always split everything, too. If I didn't have cash on me, he expected me to pay him back later.

I work full time and can support myself, and I don't need or expect anyone to spoil me. But I still appreciate small gestures of chivalry. Am I out of step with the times? — *Halfsies*

Dear Halfsies: A good rule is that the person who does the asking does the paying — at least on the first date. So, if this man asked you out, it would be courteous of him to pay, and vice versa.

After the first date, going Dutch is commonplace. There's nothing wrong with treating your significant other to dinner on, just as a nice gesture, regardless of gender.

Tomorrow's horoscope

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Respect is about honoring personal boundaries — hard to do when you don't know where they are. Everyone is different in this regard, so avoid making assumptions. When in doubt, ask.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). An important part of the creative process is in feeling foolish, silly, idiotic and/or out of control. If you never touch on those feelings, you're not taking the risks necessary to achieve compelling results.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). This task before you is rather like a video game, complete with cheats and codes to unlock certain compartments. Mastering the game itself will bring satisfaction beyond whatever prize is at stake.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Some people crave relationships, and others have alternative priorities. There is nothing wrong with either agenda; it's just a matter of how well it matches up with your own priorities and expectations.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Instead of saying, "You misunderstand," you say, "I didn't make myself clear." These kinds of small ways of taking responsibility and making others a little more comfortable are what will, in the end, earn you enormous loyalty.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). There are some who are more excited by studying life than by living it. What's wrong with that? Nothing at all, which is hard for the more actively inclined to comprehend. Developing an intellectual playground is a worthy pursuit.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). What's worth fighting for? You're the only one who can answer that question in your own life. Today you'll be resting, gathering up your energy for the next round, and reminding yourself of

your motivation. **SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21).** Your curiosity will be aroused and you'll pay attention because you have to know what happens next. With a skillful enough teaser, this could go on forever, one cliffhanger after another.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Lines are everywhere — where the sidewalk meets the street, the door meets the hall, the ceiling meets the wall. There are lines in your mind, too, with different rules that apply depending on which side of them you are on.

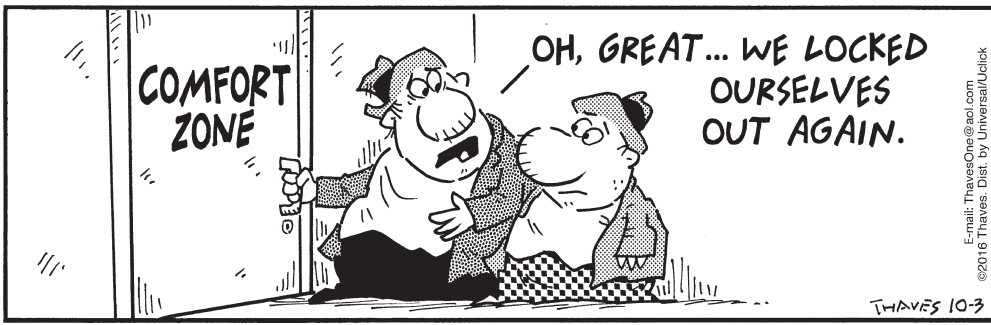
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Technology can help your plight but in the end you'll build according to the governing laws: physical, emotional, spiritual. Gravity trumps theories. Love trumps logic. Right is right.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). The feeling of being overwhelmed is paralyzing and unhelpful, especially if you let it take over for too long. Snap out of it. Change your scenery. You have plenty of time to figure it all out. Now, what's next?

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). A fresh situation makes it much easier to change habits. If moving to a new city, school, job or relationship is out of the question, try a massive routine shift or lifestyle shake-up to support the habit you want to establish.

TUESDAY'S BIRTHDAY (Oct. 4). Your excitement makes events even better. Because of your contagious enthusiasm, people start to organize themselves around your dreams. The next 12 weeks will bring hard work, but it's so worthwhile to you, even more so with your March payout. Love sends you to emotional highs in 2017. Cancer and Gemini adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 4, 44, 35, 10 and 19.

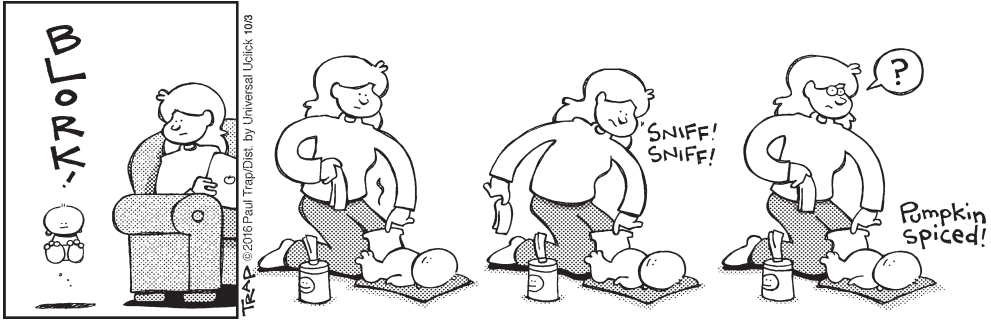
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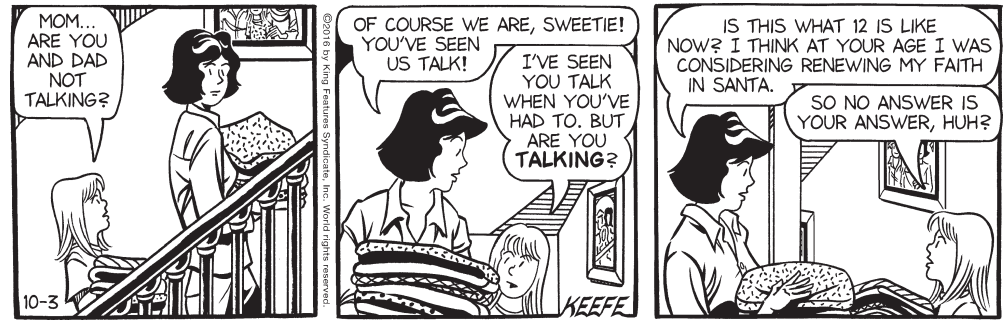
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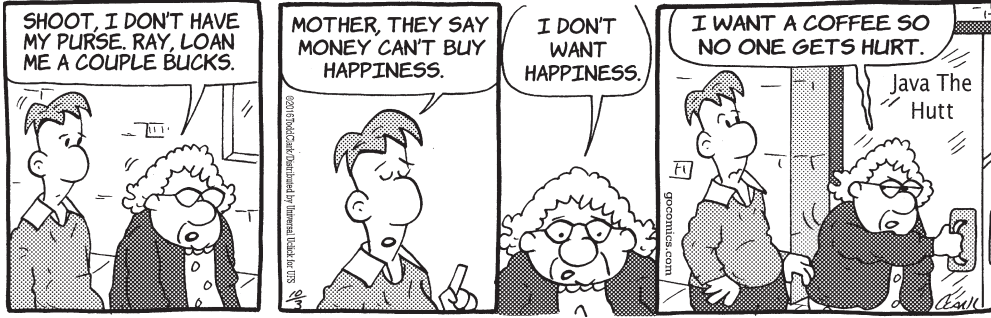
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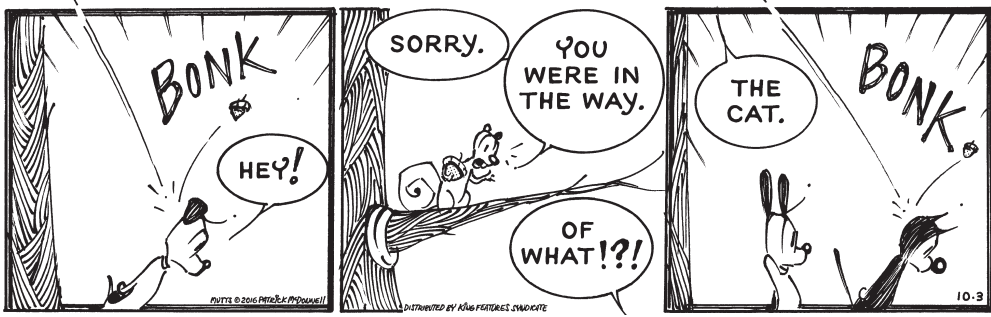
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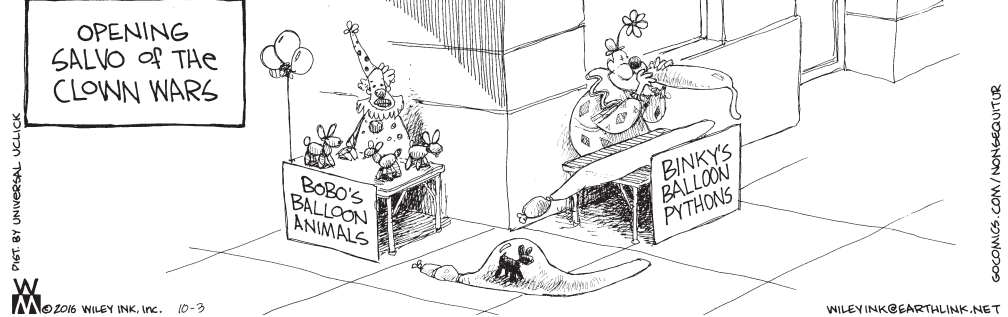
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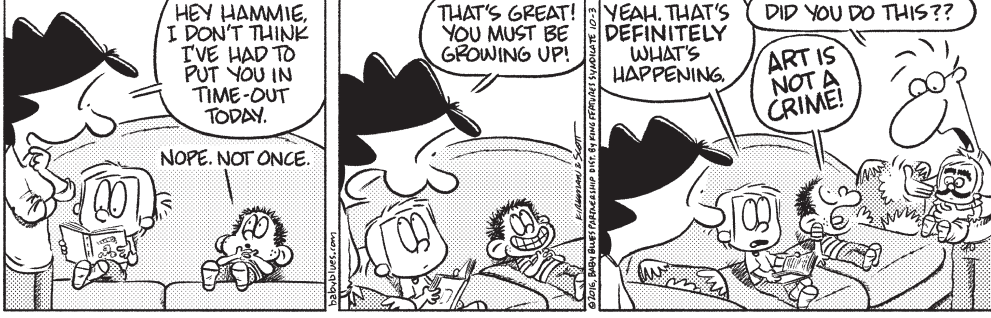
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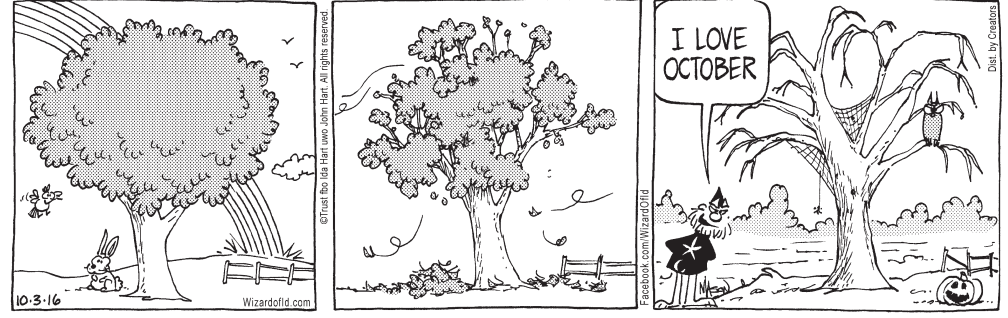
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