

A deeply resentful brother

Dear Annie: My brother and I are close in age, and from the time I was born, he has bullied, teased and ignored me. He finally confessed that he had been jealous of me because our mother was overwhelmed and he felt abandoned.

A few years ago, I was diagnosed with a rare form of cancer with a low survival rate, but against all odds, I am in remission. Several months ago, I asked my mother for a financial gift to pay for an experimental treatment that was not covered by insurance. She has a sizable estate and is in her 90s, and she readily agreed. It most likely saved my life.

My brother was furious with her and with me and wrote a cold email to the other siblings, saying that "everyone has problems" and asking why I was being given special treatment. Last week, he sent out another email to the family, masked in sincere language about how he was concerned for our mother. He wanted to make us all promise not to ask her for any more gifts, saying she is anxious about her finances.

The whole family knows that she is quite comfortably off and that her fears are most likely a result of early dementia. But it was

Dear Annie



By Annie Lane

Creators Syndicate Inc.

clear in a separate email to me that he blames me for stressing her out.

I have no intention of asking my mother for any more money, but these exchanges have left me in tears. My husband says I should not open any emails from my brother and I should cut off contact, but now my brother has contacted all of us with a plan for a sibling reunion — to take place during a time I'd planned to visit my mother. I'm not sure how to get out of this reunion without causing a family rift. — *Living Life Without My Brother*

Dear Living: For whatever reason, your brother is a deeply unhappy person, and he's bent on bringing others down into his miserable company. He is toxic, and cutting off communication is the healthy choice for now.

Like a classic bully, he's reacting to your withdrawal by desperately trying even harder to provoke you. You absolutely do not have to go to this reunion. Visit your mother instead (assuming the reunion isn't at her house).

If your brother seeks help to become a happier person and less emotionally manipulative toward you, you can reconnect.

Dear Annie: I'd like to know why some restaurants and diners don't treat tea drinkers the same as coffee drinkers. I've been dining with a group when coffee drinkers were given unlimited free refills but I was charged for a second cup of tea. I can't believe tea costs more than coffee, so I wonder what the reason is. — *Tea Drinker*

Dear Tea: Your question stumped me, so I asked some servers: Why the "steep" cost for tea? Apparently, it's because it requires more steps than coffee. Not all restaurants have hot water at the ready, so they heat it up just for that cup of tea. Then, at some restaurants, there's the matter presenting all the tea bag choices, arranging the lemon, cream, sugar, etc. If any other servers or tea drinkers would like to weigh in on this, I would love to hear from you.

Tomorrow's horoscope

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Your love is not blind as love tends to be. You even may worry that it's a little too filled with visions today. You see close and intimately, and you see a distant future, too.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). You'll be told what to do. Having your work cut out for you is actually a good thing — much better than having your work uncut and trying to figure out what you're supposed to do.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). You value family. You value family to such an extent that you feel the impetus to raise and teach relatives who aren't your children. Today is perfect for taking care of parents or another extension of your clan.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). How in the world will you get ahead? List it. Think about it. Fantasize about it. Flesh it out in your mind. And then just know that in the pursuit of an ambition, many sacrifices will happen.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). You won't mind working long, though it's a little better if the work is not so difficult. Furthermore, who depends on you? Who is waiting for you at the other end? These things will make a difference.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Even though you've a full schedule, you're on the quest for delight and amusement. Friendships are your wealth. When you really like someone, you'll celebrate every one of their small victories and accomplishments.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). When you live in a world where every computer and phone has a camera and you never know what it's capturing, is there any privacy, really? Probably not, so it's particularly lucky

today that you're doing the right thing.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). You will influence others without thinking, persuade them without talking and comfort them without putting yourself out in the least. This is the magic of your cosmic gift.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Here's what it will take to get clarity on the situation. First, you'll have to disassociate yourself from your current point of view: Pretend you're not you, and try out a detached, emotionless vantage. Next, you'll see.

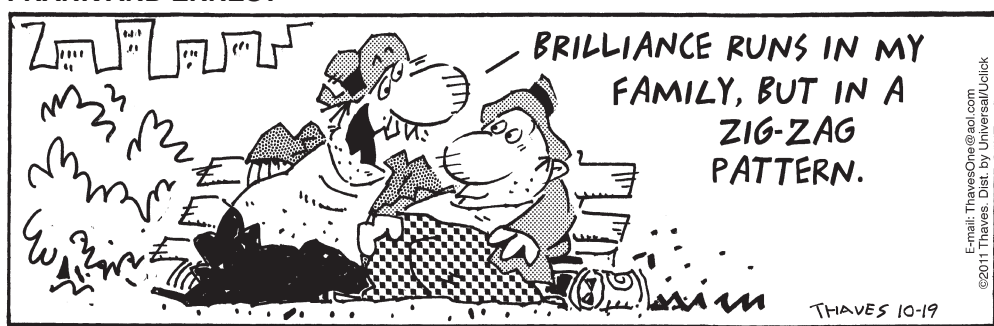
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). When loved ones shut you down, it's something to pay attention to, especially the how and why of it. The one who tries to keep you from your happiness is also threatened by your power.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Every little thing you do is magic! At least the rest of the world sees it this way, though your tendency to be hard on yourself obscures your own vision.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Some say a life without reflection is a waste. Others claim being too conscious of oneself messes up what would otherwise be beautiful living. Split the difference. Think, but don't over-think.

THURSDAY'S BIRTHDAY (Oct. 20). Your love will be celebrated this year as you give yourself in new ways, and all the good heart energy comes back around to hug you. In 2017, the best ideas and the most horrible ones will lead to excitement, adventure and the kind of experience that looks better in a Facebook post. Wedding bells ring in July. Leo and Scorpio adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 4, 7, 10, 44 and 32.

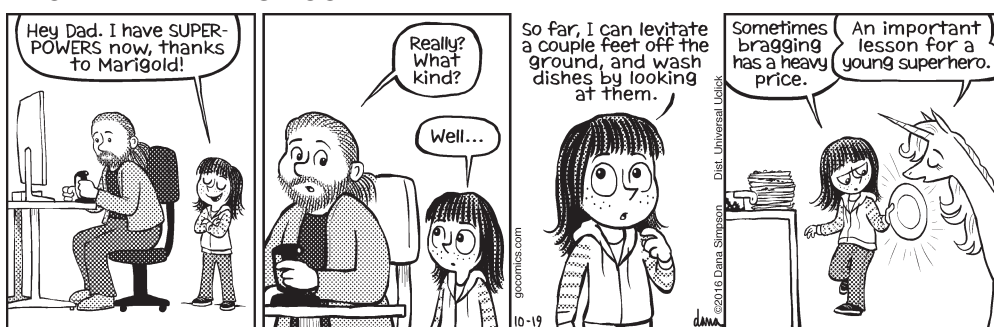
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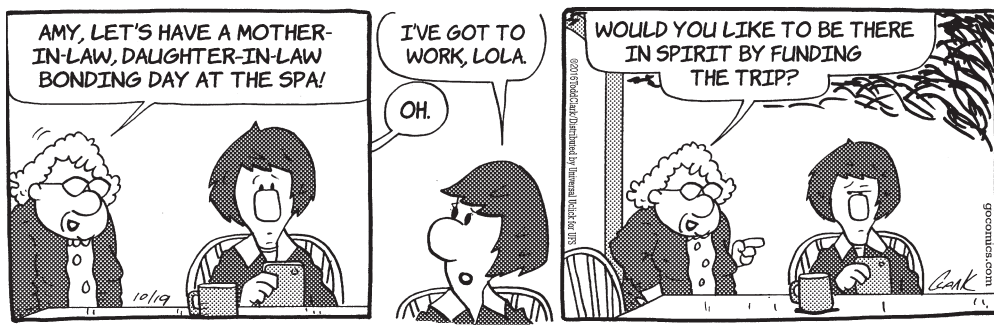
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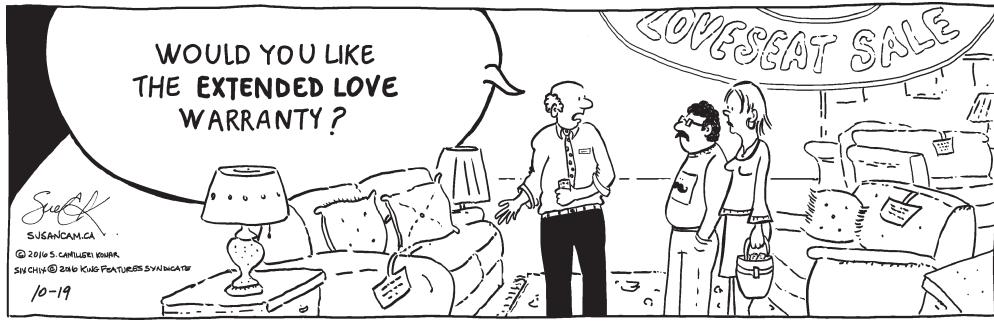
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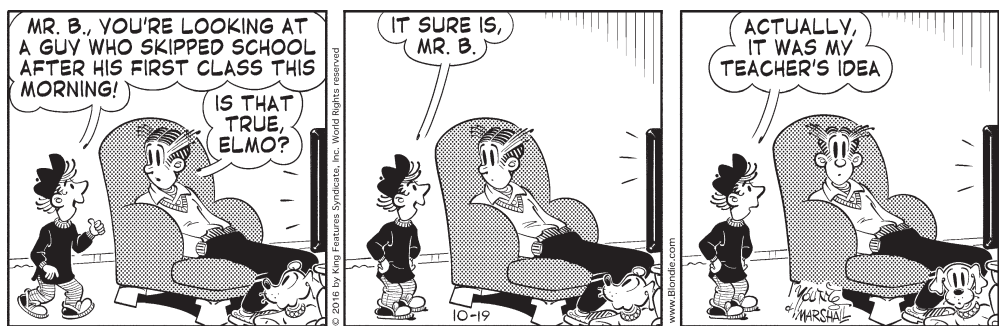
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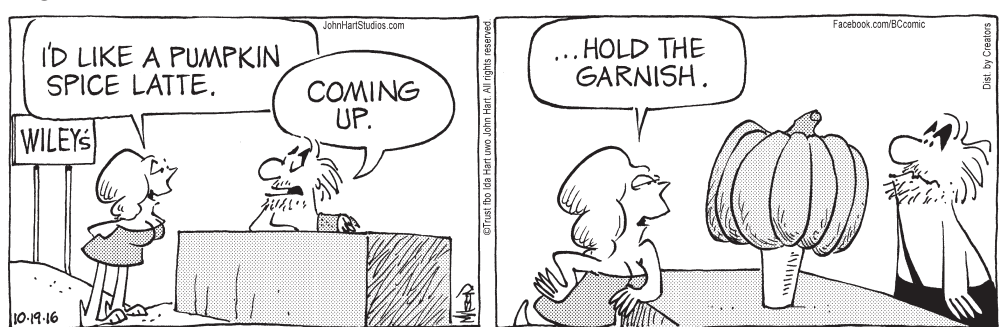
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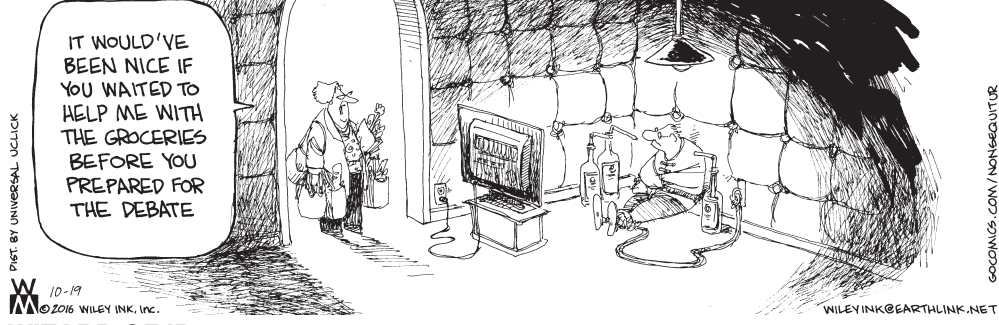
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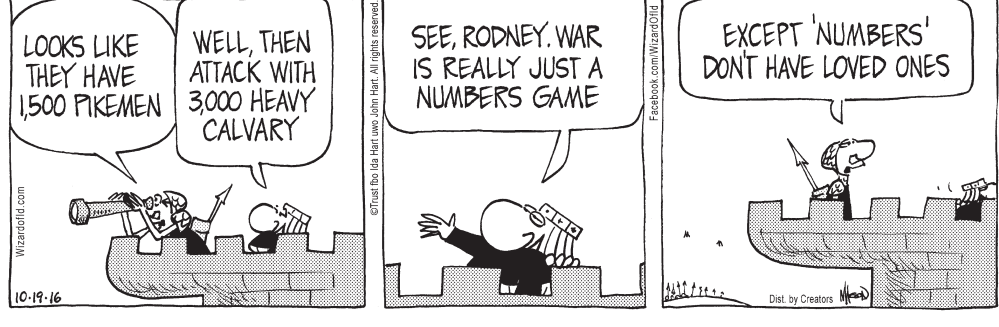
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