

Brother's problematic wife

Dear Annie: My brother, "Peter," recently got married for the second time, to a woman named "Valerie." As his elder brother, I was quite happy for him that he had found someone to spend his life with.

The problem is with Valerie. She has never been particularly nice to me or our extended family. I really do not care whether she likes me, as long as my brother is happy, and I have ignored things she has done that one would consider insulting. I have always addressed her appropriately and have kept quiet when around her.

Recently, we were at a family event. Everyone had a great time, or so I thought. As we were all leaving, Peter pulled me aside and told me how I had insulted Valerie because I did not speak with her during the evening.

Well, I feel Valerie could have talked to me, just as I could have talked more to her. In reality, there is very little to say to her because she cannot hold a conversation. I was not insulted that she did not talk to me, as I don't care.

But when Peter got home, he wrote me an email listing how I had insulted Valerie on every occasion we'd been together since

Dear Annie



By Annie Lane

Creators Syndicate Inc.

my father-in-law died six months prior, I never received any condolences from her, nor did she attend the funeral. Both my wife and I did not care and never thought anything of her behavior.

Needless to say, Valerie has caused a lot of trouble. My wife and I no longer want to be around this woman. This has destroyed my relationship with my brother. Any suggestions on how to fix this? It is obvious that no matter what I do, this woman will be insulted. — Family Dynamics

Dear Family: I'll grant you this: Valerie sounds demanding, dramatic and more than a little self-involved. That said, I think you could have been more empathetic to her after her mother died. There's nothing wrong with a person's persistently crying after losing a loved one. Your fear of tears shouldn't have stopped you from being there for a woman who was practically — and now is — family. Perhaps if you reach out to Valerie, apologize and tell her you're sorry for her loss, things will smooth over enough for you and your wife to continue having a cordial relationship with them. If for no other reason, try it for your brother's sake.

he started dating Valerie. Needless to say, I was not happy with the email.

Here is an example of how I have insulted Valerie: When we went out for Peter's bachelor party with about 20 friends, Peter forgot to kiss Valerie goodbye. We were already on our way, and I did not turn around so he could say goodbye to her.

Also, Valerie's mother passed away two months before the wedding. I did not attend the funeral or pay respects after the funeral. Valerie was deeply insulted by that. I was sick and did not say anything to her because my brother was saying how she was constantly crying. I did not say anything because I did not want her to start crying in front of me and the family (in a public place). Interesting to note, when

Tomorrow's horoscope

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). You can't change people (if you could, perhaps your home would be a lot cleaner without your efforts), but you can certainly inspire them, deter them and choose how long to be around them.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). You put yourself out there, and now you cringe to think of how it only means that you have guts. Truly, the best out there have had similar experiences. You're on your way to becoming a master.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Someone who is listening to you and tracking with you on matters of minutiae as well as the things that matter most to you: This is not only flattering and validating; it's practically intoxicating.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). You care, but you don't always call. Maybe you're afraid of getting hooked into the situation and not being able to get out of it. This is a legitimate fear. Decide before the interaction how far you're willing to go with it.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). While managing the practicalities of life we sometimes minimize the importance of being able to make others feel good. After all, what does the bottom line have to do with other people's feelings? Answer: everything.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Wanting is fun. It's fun all weekend! It's fun even after you realize that getting what you want won't bring happiness. Oh, well! The chase — now that's something you're going to remember.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You're not getting the help you once were getting — good! You've grown to the place where you can handle a lot more on your own, and

because of this you don't have to report to anyone. Relish the freedom!

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). It's amazing how people change the rules to accommodate their fascinations and preferences. Lucky for you, you've the preference and the fascination that will lead to favorable changes.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). When you're not sure of your social standing, the thing to do is to host a party. Not only will you discover the social lay of the land but also it will be your pleasure to put this all together.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). A critical mind can be a great gift. Your ability to discern the necessary bits from the unnecessary bits will make you more productive, popular and effective all-around.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). One way is to reach, wander and quest until you find what you're looking for. It's not the only way, and this weekend it's not the best way, either. If you stay in one place, the world is sure to come to you.

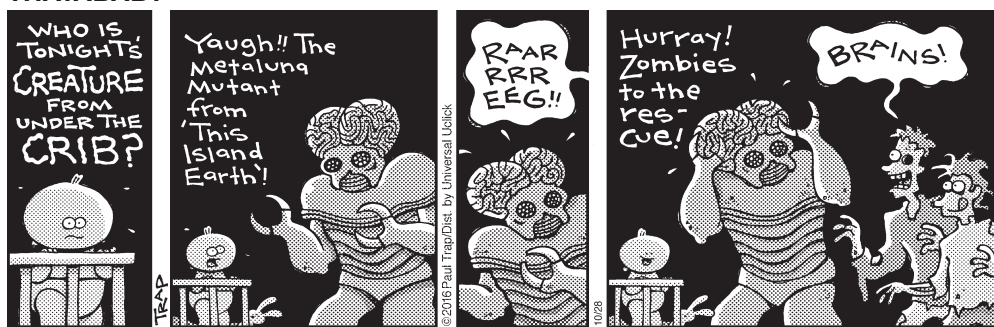
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Before you do the heavy lifting, physically, emotionally or otherwise, pause to ask yourself if there's another way to float this. Look for elevators. Good sense may prevent a strain.

SATURDAY'S BIRTHDAY (Oct. 29). Sort out the finances, and the next 10 weeks will bring you new resources you can use all year. With the healing of a relationship, you will no longer feel you have to go to great lengths to earn someone's love. A new creative channel will open in you this year, too. Love is among the friends you meet pursuing it. Cancer and Taurus adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 9, 4, 20, 45 and 13.

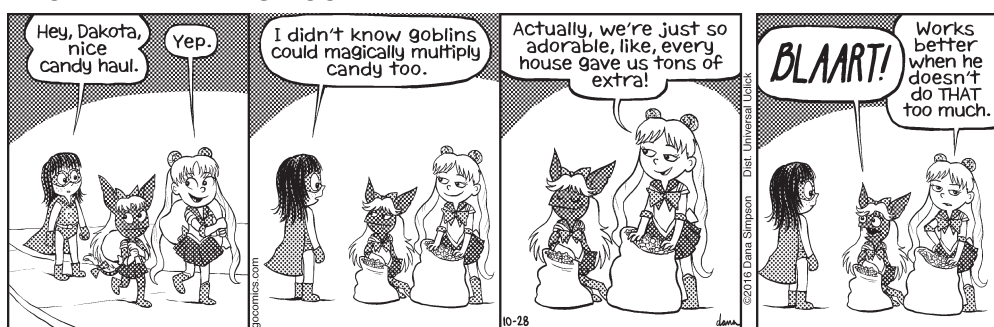
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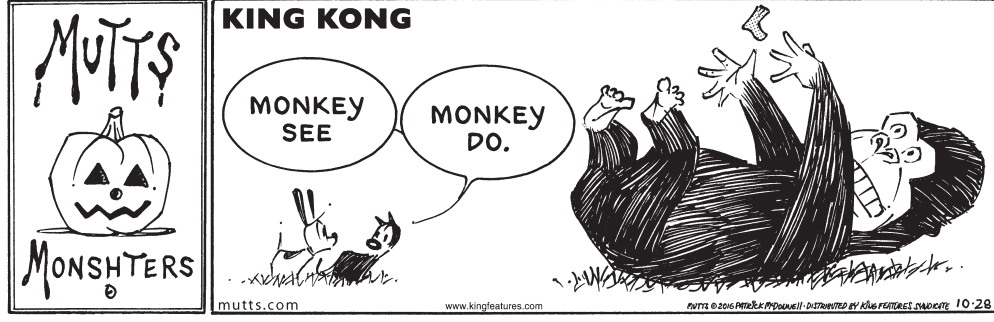
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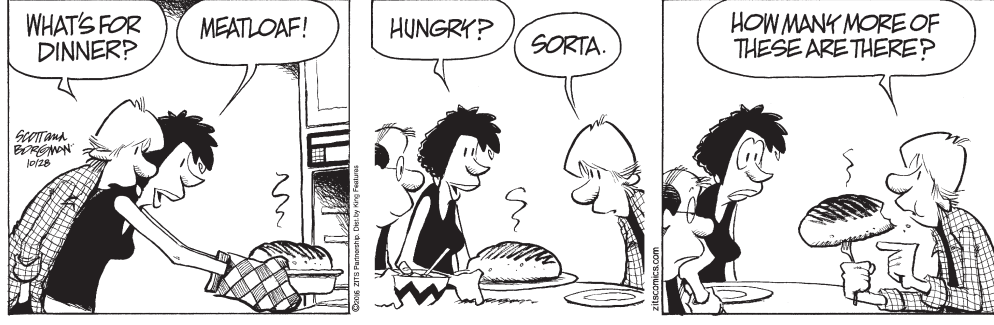
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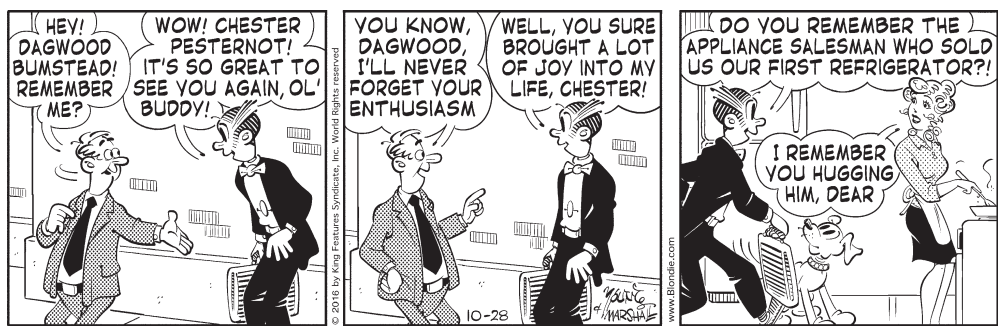
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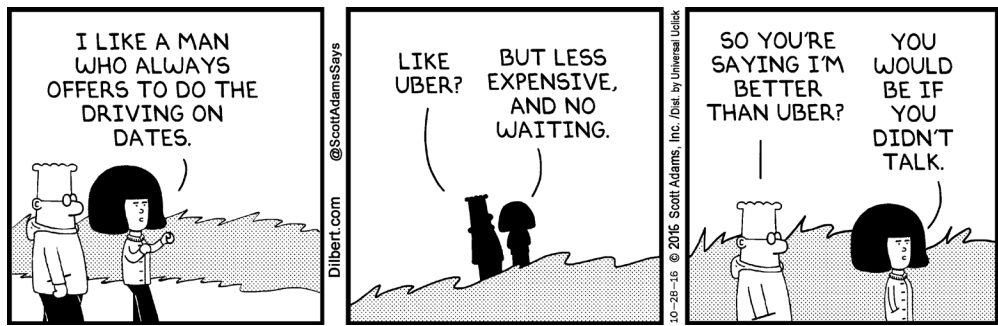
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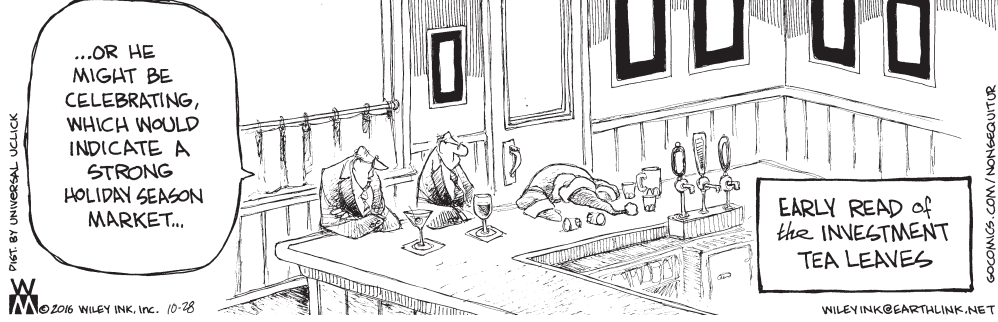
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WIZARD OF ID



ROSE IS ROSE

