

Where are children's rights?

Dear Annie: My nephew, "Bill," married "Helen." Helen had a 2-year-old son, "Dylan." Helen told Bill that Dylan's father had given up his parental rights, so Bill happily adopted baby Dylan.

We all came to deeply love baby Dylan. He was adorable, bright and sweet. Dylan quickly felt close to all his many cousins. Four years later, Helen abruptly left Bill for another man. When Bill attempted to get visitation with Dylan, Helen informed the court that Dylan's father had never really given up his parental rights, so therefore the adoption became void. Tragically, none of us in the family ever saw Dylan again.

How could 6-year-old Dylan begin to understand this? He loved Bill more than anyone in the world, and then one day he never saw him again! How could his mother hurt him like this?

I often wonder whether children are ever going to have any rights of their own in our courts. So far, the only rights kids have are not to be starved and not to be beaten. Our children are still lawfully treated as property of their parents. Our

courts look out for the parents' rights. When will our laws become in favor of what is in the best interest of the child? — *Still Crying*

Dear Annie: Look further into the laws in your state. I think there is a good chance your nephew has

recourse here to see Dylan again, especially as he adopted him — or at least was led to believe he did. Some states do have laws that take such factors into consideration, with the goal of doing what's best for the child.

Dear Annie: I feel that your reply to "Serially Disappointed" was a cop-out.

I am in my early 60s and have been divorced for 15 years. The men I meet are seriously lacking in relationship and basic life skills. I will admit I settled for much less than I should have with my most recent partners because they had good qualities that attracted me.

One decided after three years that I was "too fat" (I am a size 12), and I met a woman who is shorter than I am but not thinner. Another, after two years, told me he had a boyfriend and thought it was OK to date us both at the same time

because he is bisexual. I ended the relationship, and six months later, he was married to a woman.

Another one sat on my couch one day and began crying, telling me he missed his wife, whom he had divorced five years earlier.

My friends, all married or in long-term relationships, said, "Take some time for yourself!" I don't know what they were thinking when I'd been spending most birthdays, Christmas Eves and New Year's Eves alone for years.

I haven't dated for two years. Now the same friends say, "You have to get yourself out there!" I go to movies, plays and other events alone. I bicycle on busy bike paths, and I work a job. But the truth is that no one has the answer as to why most single men are so out of whack. So they tell you silly things — for example, "Learn how to be happy with yourself." "Serially Disappointed" gave no indication she is not happy with herself, and I am indeed happy with who I am. I just wish I could find a quality single guy in his 60s before he is snatched up by one of the millions of intelligent, compassionate, kind single women out there looking. — *Will Anyone Love Me When I'm 64?*

DEAR ANNIE

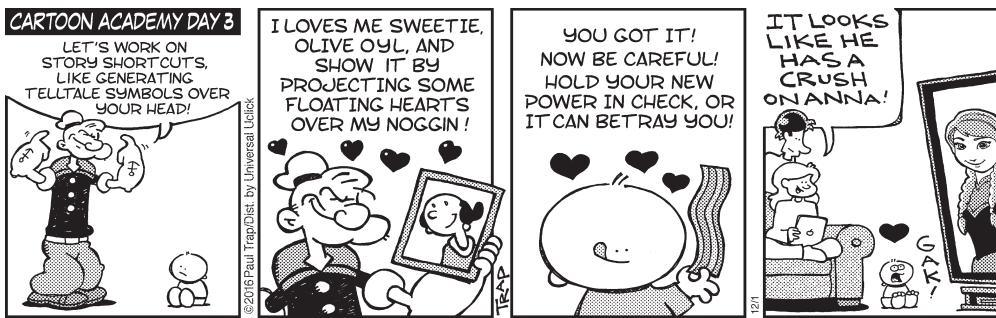


Annie Lane
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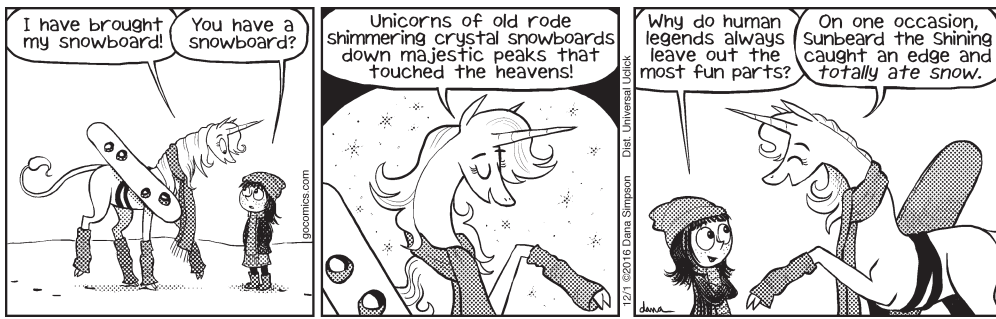
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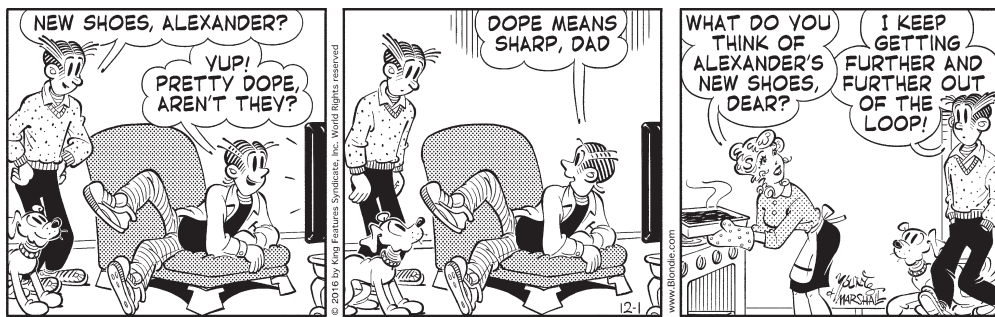
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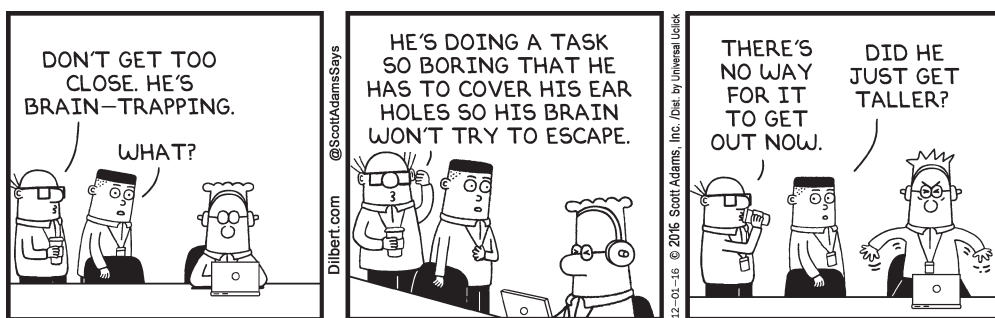
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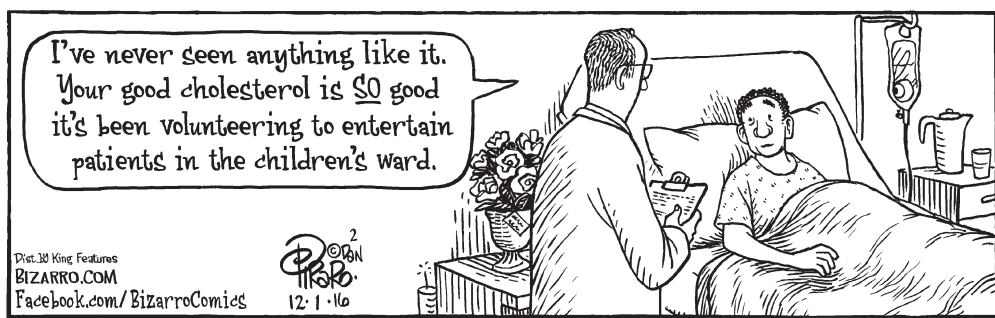
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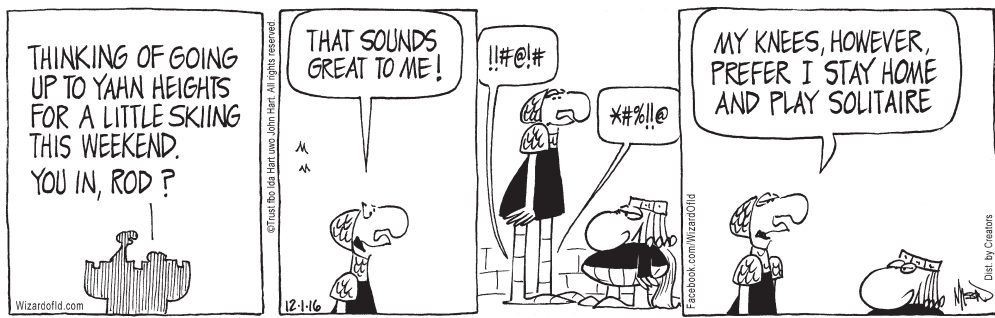
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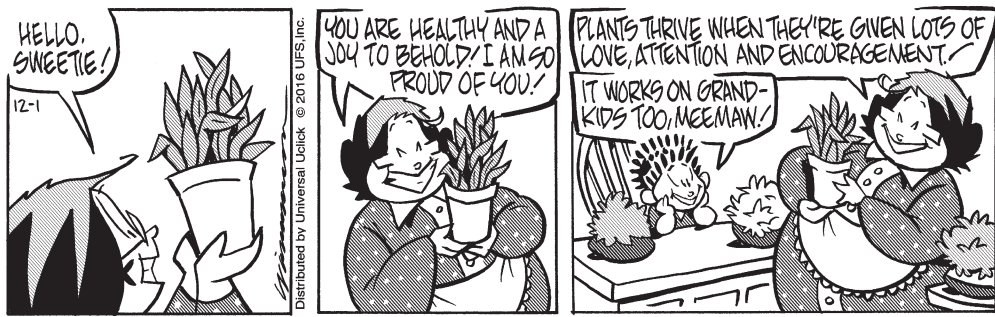
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WIZARD OF ID



ROSE IS ROSE



TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). You have a big heart. You can't help but accommodate those who live inside it. If you don't get to the goal, it's because your loved one needed you more. You thought that was more important, and you were right.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). You'll work from sun to moon — no "casual Friday" for you. In your efforts, you'll prove just how strong you are. Determination and tenacity are so much a part of your makeup that everyone comes to expect it from you.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). People have surprised you in good and bad ways, and now you're not as surprised. In fact, now you can predict some behaviors you wish you couldn't. But you can, and you should.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Your space matters. You're happiest in a thriving space that lives and grows along with you. The maintenance, the updates — when you approach them with the right attitude, they bring you pleasure and satisfaction.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). This is not a day to buy or sell anything in haste. Do your research. Wait to get the best price. An attitude of nonchalance doesn't hurt either. You're in a good position, but not if you don't believe it.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). You're a citizen of the world, and your exemplary manners will be your passport. Of course there are cultural differences to consider. Intention counts. You don't have to get it perfect to get it right.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). The best people you know have a dark side, and the worst people you know can be kind and wonderful, too. Your capacity for understanding the complexities will help you manage the day.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). A world in emotional order can plunge into unpredictable chaos with the introduction of one exciting dynamic. Such things can be like thrilling carnival attractions. Do not fear: Use your ticket to ride.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Make thoughtful decisions. Stave away the fever of impulsivity. Don't give in! If you feel yourself acting rashly, consider that you may feel differently when a few hours have passed.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Hagging for what you need can be a long, drawn-out, tedious process if the people involved just can't give it to you. Maybe they don't have it. Turn elsewhere and hang on for big, bright, beautiful results.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Quiet observation is called for. Tune into your nearest and dearest. Read the small changes in a loved one's behavior and draw a conclusion. Then keep it to yourself for a while. Watch and see to test the truth.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). The relationship that doesn't help you is hurting you because it's taking up your valuable attention. If you had a void there, you would fill it with more helpful forces.

TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (Dec. 2). Professional adventures are so thrilling that you may put key parts of your life on the back burner while you pursue ambitions in this regard. Reward the loyal loved ones who support you through this. You'll love what comes from it in May. July is your chance to double down and invest in something exciting. Gemini and Libra adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 30, 49, 47, 26 and 31.