

A companion for all time

Dear Annie: Ten years ago, I was transferred to Chicago for work. I didn't know anyone and found myself very lonely the first year. One winter night while I was out picking up Chinese take-out for dinner, I heard barking and saw a little black and white puppy under a tree. I looked around everywhere and saw no signs of an owner. He was very young, and it was very cold, so I took him home.

DEAR ANNIE



Annie Lane
Creators
Syndicate Inc.

I put up signs with his picture. No one responded. I decided to "adopt" him. I named him Snoopy.

Having the companionship of a dog really helped with my loneliness. I went out for walks and took him to the dog park on weekends. Snoopy even helped me meet my husband. You see, one Saturday afternoon at the dog park, Snoopy started playing with a huge black Labrador. The Lab's owner came up to me, and we struck up a conversation. Long story short, we were married within three years. (We had our dogs walk down the aisle to give them credit for introducing us.)

Fast-forward 10 years. Snoopy was diagnosed with hemangio-

sarcoma. The vet gave him three months to live. My husband and I were devastated. I simply couldn't imagine life without this dog. He had been such a wonderful companion to us. Two months after his diagnosis, he passed away.

Since then, I have been so depressed. I am having trouble concentrating at work. This companion who was there through so much of my life is now gone. My husband is sad, too, but keeps trying to tell me to snap out of it. I am so sad; I can't. How can I get over this loss? — *Grieving for Snoopy*

Dear Grieving: I am so sorry for your loss. I, too, am an animal lover and understand how much animals truly are members of the family. It sounds as if you gave Snoopy a great home. Take comfort in knowing that you gave him a wonderful life, the best life he could have asked for. Though you will never forget Snoopy, I promise that time will lessen the pain. I've always found comfort in a poem by Steve and Diane Bodofsky, "The Rainbow Bridge":

"By the edge of a woods, at the foot of a hill, is a lush, green meadow where time stands still.

"Where the friends of man and woman do run, when their time on earth is over and done.

"For here, between this world and the next, is a place where each beloved creature finds rest.

"On this golden land, they wait and they play, till the Rainbow Bridge they cross over one day.

"No more do they suffer, in pain or in sadness, for here they are whole, their lives filled with gladness.

"Their limbs are restored, their health renewed, their bodies healed, with strength imbued.

"They romp through the grass, without even a care, until one day they start, and sniff at the air.

"All ears prick forward, eyes dart front and back, then all of a sudden, one breaks from the pack.

"For just at that instant, their eyes have met; together again, both person and pet.

"So they run to each other, these friends from long past, the time of their parting is over at last.

"The sadness they felt while they were apart, has turned into joy once more in each heart.

"They embrace with a love that will last forever, and then, side-by-side, they cross over ... together."

TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Yes, life is full of contradiction. It's also full of tautology. Redundancy is validation. It's comforting when things are as they seem to be, people work together as a team and love behaves lovingly.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). This process you're going through now is a kind of evolution. The elegance of evolution is especially obvious when the circumstances change. You might be surprised by what survives and prevails.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). The mystery that baffles you in the a.m. will be so utterly explainable tonight that it all seems rather obvious. You'll either help the others understand, or you'll help them be baffled so they can enjoy the discovery process, too.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). As for the thing that's been gnawing at your curiosity: It's time to investigate it. You'll get lucky. There are a lot of questions that will be answered when one or two facts have come to light.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Everyone is selfish from time to time, but if it happens frequently, it's more about your own tolerance than anything else. Stand up for yourself. Get on your own team. You don't do anyone favors by letting them behave badly.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). It's said that to forgive is divine, but there's no heavenly choir of angels to accompany you when you let go of your grievances today. Still, life will get better for the gesture, and that counts for something.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Does it really matter if you were born this way or got there through living? Embrace it; no further questions are necessary. To fully accept yourself will be your best move yet.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). You may not understand all of the factors that got you here, but accept them. Humility is better than arrogance; contribute as though you deserve to be where you are. If you didn't, you wouldn't be there.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). You can be proud of the relationships you've built and even more proud of the fact that you keep building. Friendships, after all, need continual maintenance to thrive.

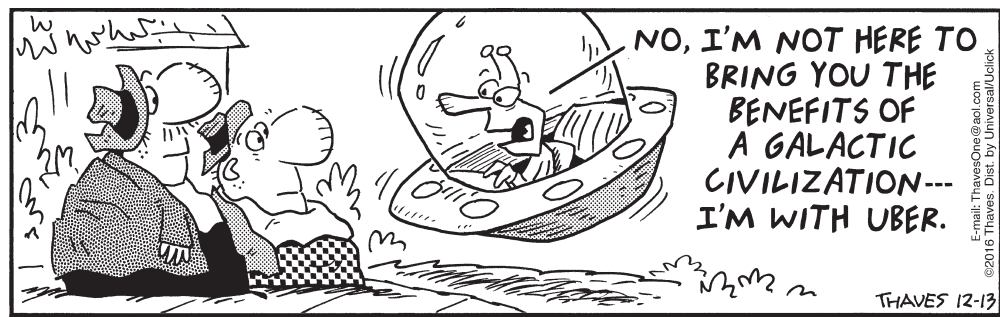
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). You're emotionally flexible and quite strong. Still, you shouldn't have to bend over backward to get your love. If you find yourself doing this trick time and again, seek different sources of support.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Information has a way of expanding to the capacity of your curiosity. So the thing to ask yourself is: "How much do I really want and/or need to know?" Today will bring a case where more is not necessarily better.

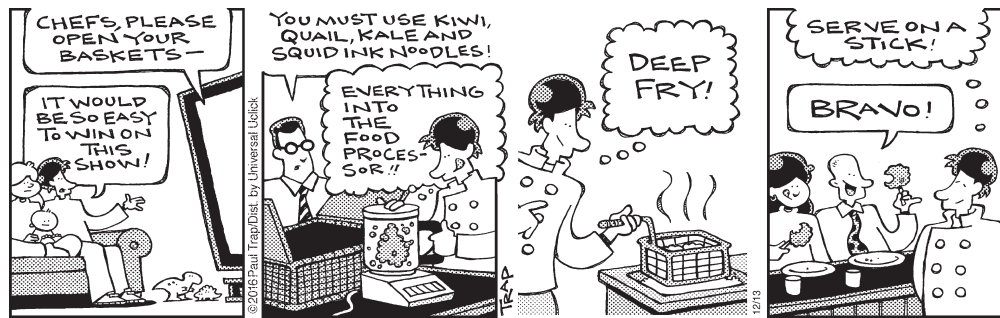
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). From keys and phones to friendships and jobs, most of the things a person can lose in life can be replaced. Not time. It's the most precious of your resources, which is why you're so mindful now not to waste it.

TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (Dec. 14). Friedrich Nietzsche said: "Art is the proper task of life." You'll flip it and turn proper tasks into art. Your way of living will bring beauty and harmony to others. You'll continually get stronger as you home in on invigorating choices. Friendships will blossom and multiply through the spring. Singles will marry in June. Aquarius and Pisces adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 9, 30, 25, 16 and 4.

FRANK AND ERNEST



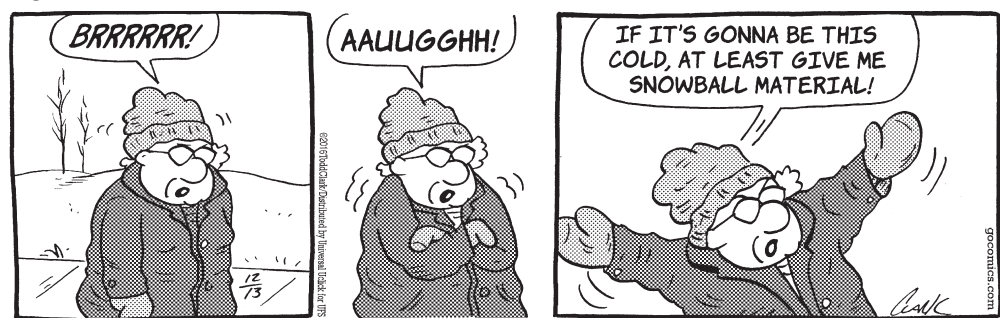
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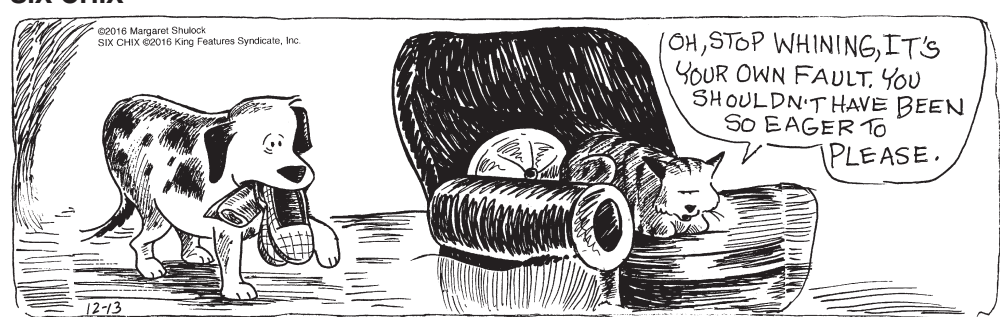
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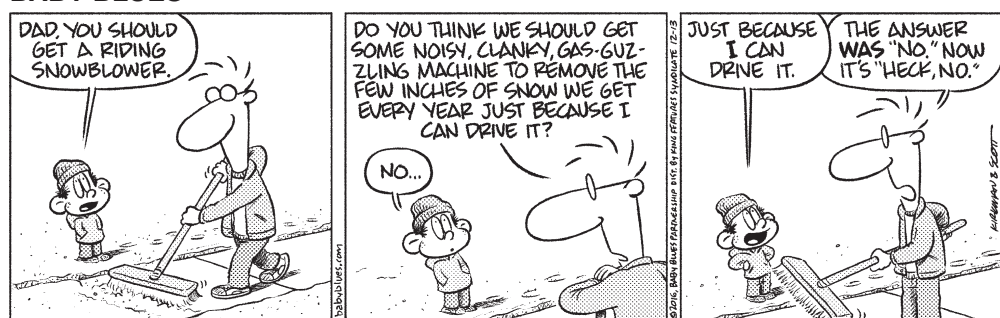
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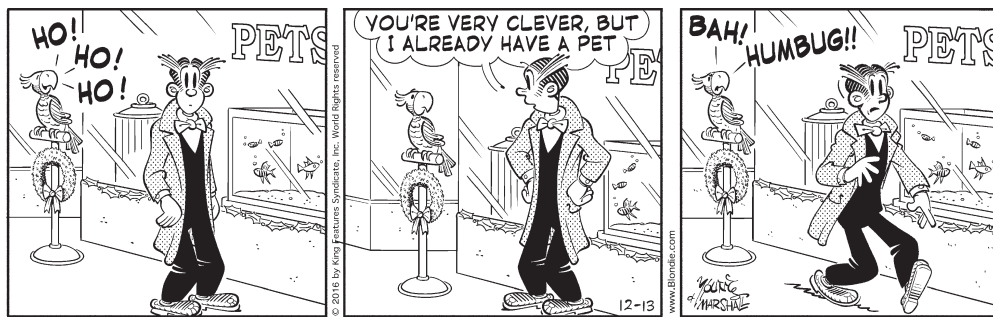
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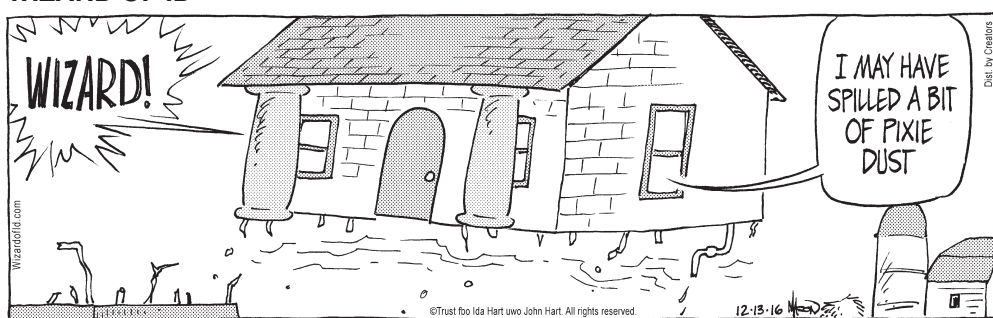
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