

# Planning an exit strategy

**Dear Annie:** I have been married to my husband for 34 years. He's been emotionally and verbally abusive for the whole 34.

He hit me a few times when we first got married (he was physically and verbally abused as a child), but he hasn't hit me since then. However, he's very bossy and controlling. I can't go visit anybody without his approval. My niece and nephew live 45 minutes away, and several of us in the family go to their house to watch college football on Saturdays. He doesn't want me to go, because I have to drive after dark if I do. I have no problem driving after dark. Really it's that he doesn't want to go, so he expects me to stay home with him.

I didn't mind it as much years ago. When we were both young and healthy, I worked and was gone all day. But now we're both retired.

I'm sick and tired of being around him all day long. He is grouchy, complains about everything under the sun, drives like a maniac and yells at me as if I were stupid in front of people. He's

embarrassed me in front of every boss of every job I've ever had. He's constantly putting me down. I can't do anything right in his eyes.

His favorite expression is, "If you would just do as you're told!" I've told him for years that I wasn't put on earth to do as I'm told.

I have put away enough money over the years (which he doesn't know about, or it would have been long gone, spent by him), and I want to divorce him. My problem is that I don't know how to go about telling him without being trapped here in the house with him. We live in a rural area and each have our own vehicle. He is in poor health and doesn't get out much unless it's a doctor's appointment.

I have enough money saved up to rent an apartment in town, 15 miles away, so I would have somewhere to go. I have no siblings, and my parents are both deceased. My dad passed away six months ago and left me his house. It needs a lot of work done to it, and I don't want to live there. I want to sell it, but I don't want to give my husband any

of the money when it sells.

I'm trying to figure out a way to go somewhere public and call him to come meet me at a restaurant or something. But I'm not sure he would come if I did call him.

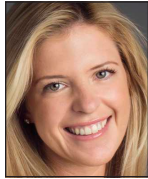
Could you please help me figure out how to tell him I want a divorce without getting trapped here with him? He will raise all kinds of hell when I tell him.

— *Trapped*  
**Dear Trapped:** I commend you for finding the strength to leave an abusive partner and for coming up with an exit plan. Those are huge steps. You should be proud of yourself.

Your safety is paramount. Meeting in public is wise, and if you fear he will become violent, you can request an escort from your local police department. For more personalized guidance on planning a safe exit from your relationship, contact Loveisrespect at 866-331-9474 when your husband is not around.

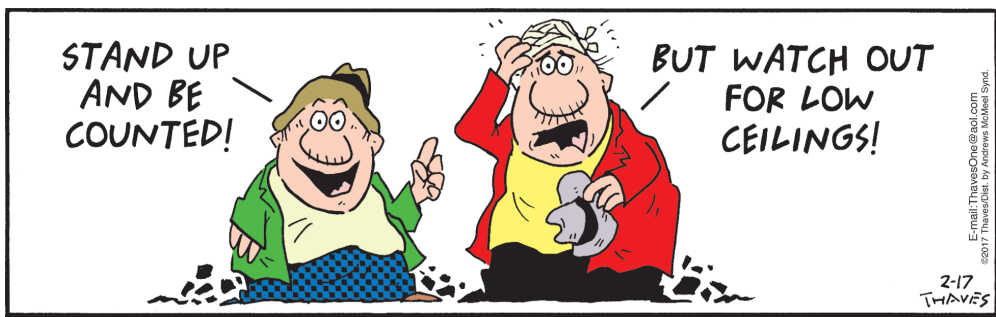
Once you're free and starting the next chapter of your life, the healing process can really begin. Consider seeking counseling or joining a support group for women who have undergone similar abuse. I wish you all the best.

## DEAR ANNIE

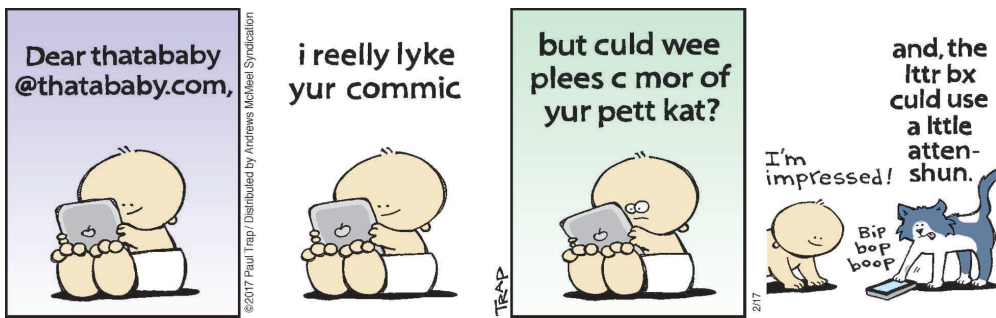


Annie Lane  
Creators  
Syndicate Inc.

## FRANK AND ERNEST



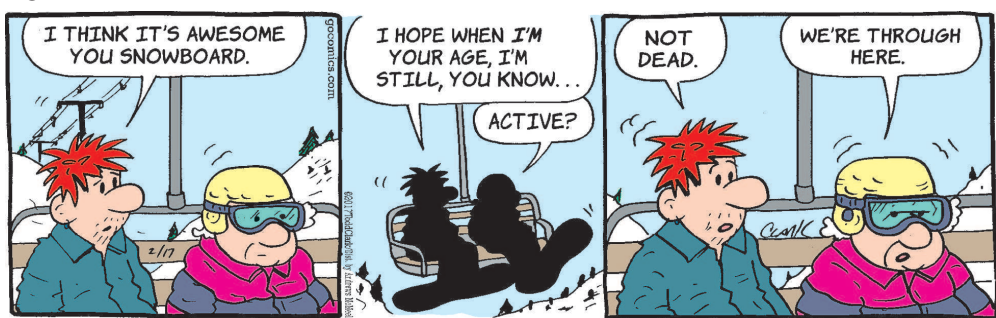
## THATABABY



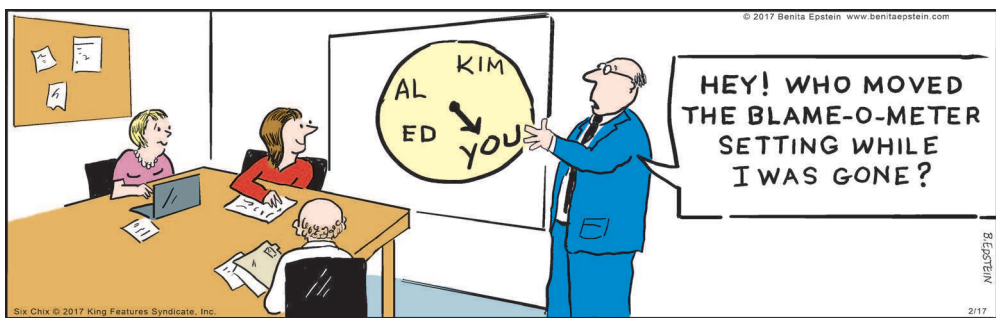
## PHOEBE AND HER UNICORN



## LOLA



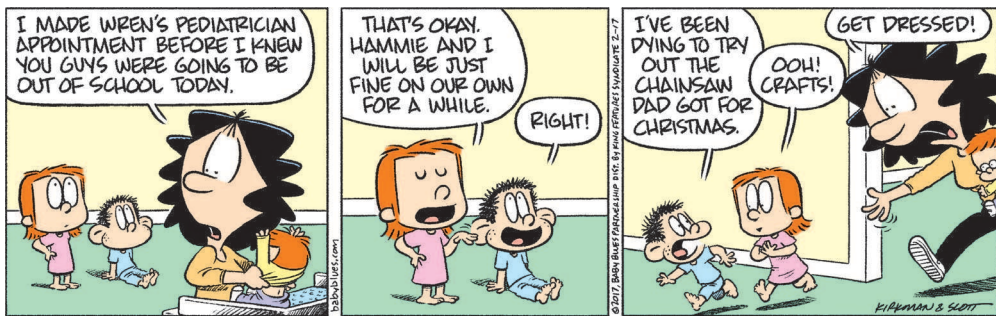
## SIX CHIX



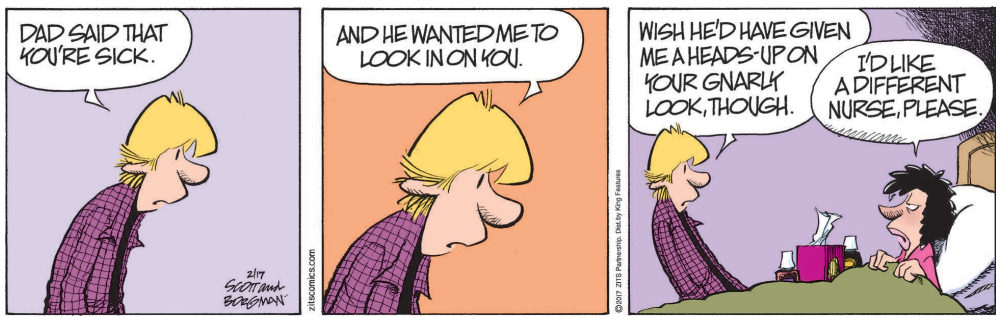
## MUTTS



## BABY BLUES



## ZITS



## TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

**ARIES (March 21-April 19).** Just as you have often clicked "Agree" without reading the internet agreement jargon that goes along with the software download, you might have agreed to what a loved one wants without fully understanding what it is.

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20).** It's human nature to feel entitled to the things that the other humans close by seem to have. Those who compare and fall short become discontented. It makes you think twice about whom you surround yourself with.

**GEMINI (May 21-June 21).** There are people with similar talents to yours who do a similar job to what you can do. But it's not the same. Your contributions are rare! No one else can do what you do in the way you do it.

**CANCER (June 22-July 22).** It's the people who have known one another for a long time who find it the most challenging to refrain from argument and bickering that they would never engage in with less-familiar people.

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22).** Certain rituals have served you well. Build on the trend by creating a ritual around the habit you want to incorporate in your daily life. Put in the style and quirkiness that will make it your own.

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22).** You'd rather be acknowledged for something minute and very specific to you than accept big, general praise. You'll get your wish in a compliment you can take to heart.

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23).** Maybe you want something you shouldn't want. Then again, what if you thought that it was perfectly acceptable to want whatever you want in whatever quantity you believe would be

most satisfying?  
**SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21).** You contribute daily to the lives of others in ways big and small. Good fortune follows your indulgence in an artistic whimsy; appreciating the arts in any way at all counts.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21).** Your light, casual curiosity about the people you encounter today is nonetheless focused enough to be flattering. Perfect strangers will open up and tell you what their innermost circle doesn't even know.

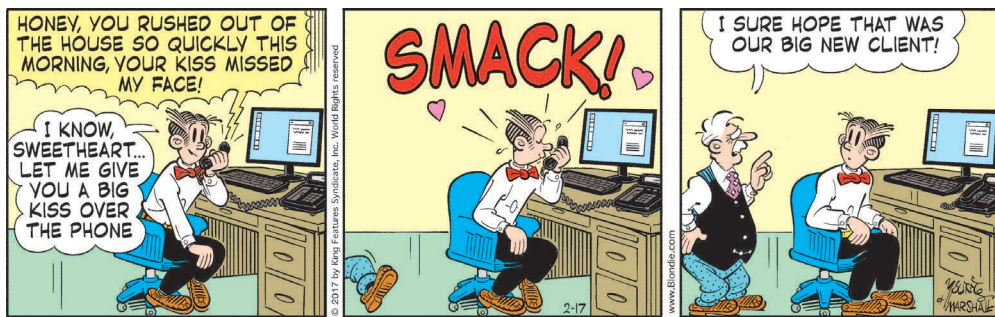
**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19).** Your relationship with someone from a different generation will get interesting. You may realize that there is much you know that can never really be understood by people who weren't your age when it happened.

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18).** The generosity you deal out today is hardly unusual, though those who are not used to the perks that come with being your friend may experience it as such.

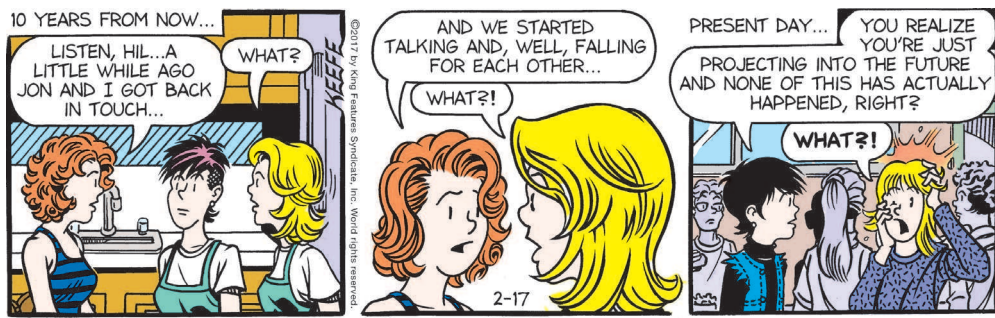
**PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20).** In the fairy tales, someone is a hero and someone gets saved. Today's real-life scenario features several heroes who save themselves through the process of helping others.

**TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (Feb. 18).** Family business booms this year. Aesthetic choices will matter more than you might have guessed over the next 10 weeks. As you make your environment lovelier and better suited to you, you attract fascinating people. The opportunities in July and September will pay double on the investment. Sagittarius and Virgo adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 14, 18, 20, 45 and 33.

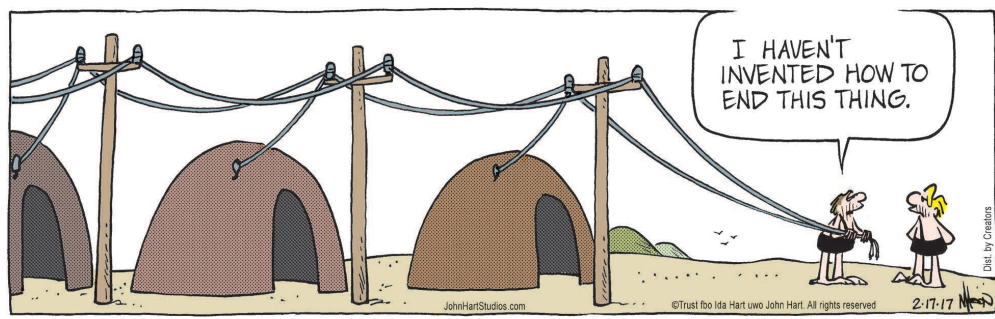
## BLONDIE



## SALLY FORTH



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## ROSE IS ROSE

