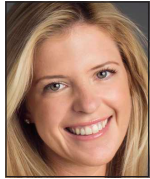


The forgotten parents

Dear Annie: I am writing because another Mother's Day will soon be upon us and, once again, my grown stepchildren — who were grown and on their own when their parents divorced — will ignore me. Every year, they celebrate Mother's Day without thinking of me at all. That wouldn't hurt so much if I could write it off as just my being a stepparent — but every Father's Day, they include their stepfather in the celebration.

DEAR ANNIE



Annie Lane
Creators
Syndicate Inc.

father. I hope that they see themselves in this letter and do a gut check. Their father loves them very much, but he is accustomed to not being included, so he hides his pain from them. Since we married, he has leaned more on me, seeing as they don't ever call him just to chat. I call my dad regularly, and my husband was astounded when he learned that. I hurt for him and for them because they have no idea how they hurt us, and we will never let them know.

Many other times, they share with their mother and stepfather whatever news they have — a new vehicle they bought, the name of their unborn baby, etc. Their father and I do eventually learn most news, but it's usually long after the fact. We all get along, and there is absolutely no animosity at all among any of us; we love them, and we both love the former in-laws. All I ask is for them to treat their father as well as they treat their step-

Is it asking too much to be included in their news? We share our news with them and don't leave them out, as far as I can tell. They are very family-oriented, just not with their dad. — *Midwestern Stepmother Loving Them From the Outside*

Dear Midwestern: The sentence that most struck me in your letter was this: "They have no idea how they hurt us, and we will never let them know." Your husband hides

his pain from them, so for all they know, he's fine with talking only once in a while. They may even think he prefers it that way. This is the status quo they're used to, and until you take the initiative to call more and speak up about your wish to be included, your stepchildren will continue in their current pattern. So shake up the routine. Call them often. Invite them to visit, and go visit them. Let them know how much you value the time together.

Dear Annie: This is in response to "Distracted by His Distraction," who is bothered by her long-term partner's wandering eyes whenever they're out together. Maybe the only way her partner will get the message is if she does likewise — sets her eyes and attention on a handsome man in the restaurant. — *CR in New York*

Dear CR: Not a bad idea. I'm not normally an advocate of the eye-for-an-eye approach, but in this case, perhaps "Distracted" would do well to illustrate her point with an ogle for an ogle.

FRANK AND ERNEST



THATABABY



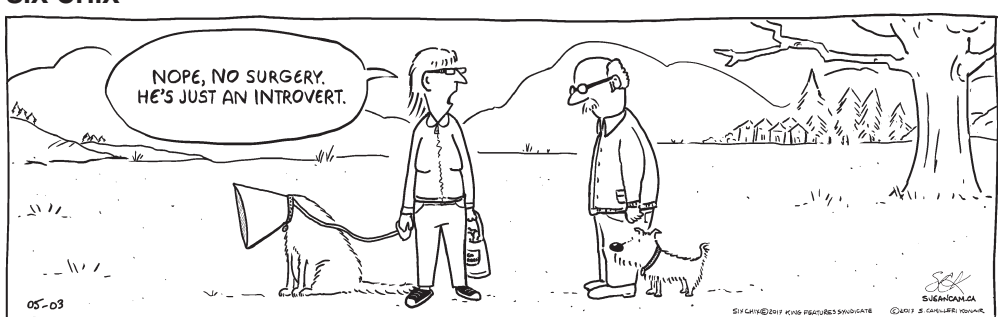
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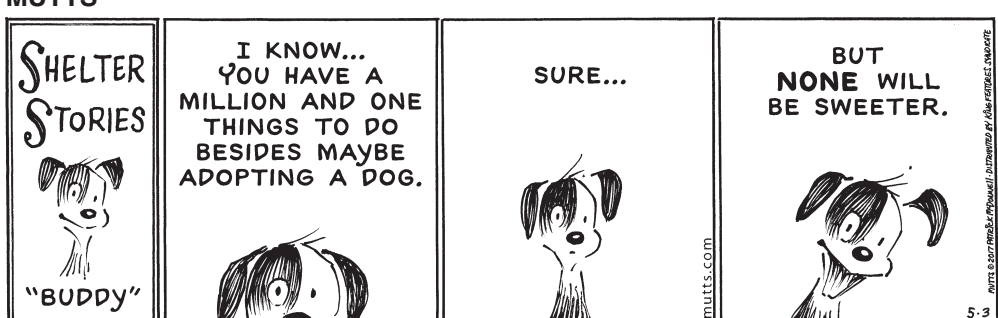
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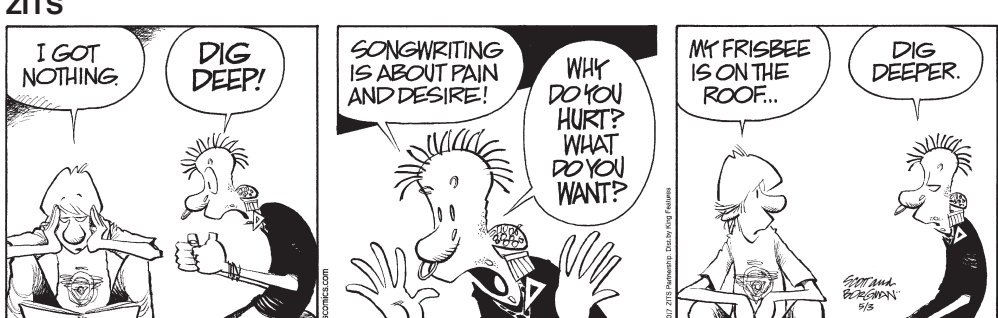
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ZITS



TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Children playing on the playground often don't have to have the rules clearly explained to them. They just join in with a willing spirit and soon absorb the rhythm of the game, much like you will today.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Music carries emotion, teases it out, adds layers of the stuff to the moments, charges memory, invigorates, exhausts, confounds, comforts and changes you. That's why it's worth your while to choose your own soundtrack.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). You're not the only subject in the experiment called life, but when you're alone in your room it certainly feels that way. Connect with the others. Share data. You'll mess around with the outcome in a good way today.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). You'll lead with your courage-filled heart today. It's not always wise to be brave, and yet if everyone were to stop and dwell upon the possible consequences, there wouldn't be any heroes among us.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). When you're not getting anywhere by looking at the problem head on, you cock your head to the side and suddenly you have a new slant on it. Bonus: Your brilliance will be celebrated by those smart enough to get you.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). You don't want to spend your time fake laughing. No one does! And today you won't have to. Someone can make you laugh for real, and that humor-click will set off a lucky chain of events.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). When you love someone, flaws are part of the package. A mature person recognizes that trying to extract the flawed parts in order to love only the suitable parts isn't really love at all.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). You'd be wise to pause and decide very carefully how you're going to interact with loved ones today. Negativity will be difficult to get past. It will take at least five positive interactions to nullify even one slightly negative interaction.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Society prefers it when personal information can be neatly categorized. Today you'll find yourself toying with different ways to frame information to find the most socially palatable presentation.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). To be grateful for circumstances you do not prefer might seem like setting up an internal diametric opposition — akin to tipping well for bad service. And yet, finding something to appreciate in a mess will attract good luck.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). For friendship, love and even certain business decisions, a mental match is essential. If you don't like how a person thinks, you're not going to want to share your ideas, plans and daily doings with that person on the regular.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). There was a time you enjoyed the escape of dreaming you were someone else. Currently, you find that loving who you are creates far more energy in your life.

TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (May 4). The love you receive over the course of this solar return will lift your spirits and fill your reserves until you have even more to give than you ever did. Also, a special relationship will teach you to tune into others even better than you already do. You'll win money this month. June and August represent big professional opportunity. Leo and Scorpio adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 6, 40, 5, 38 and 18.

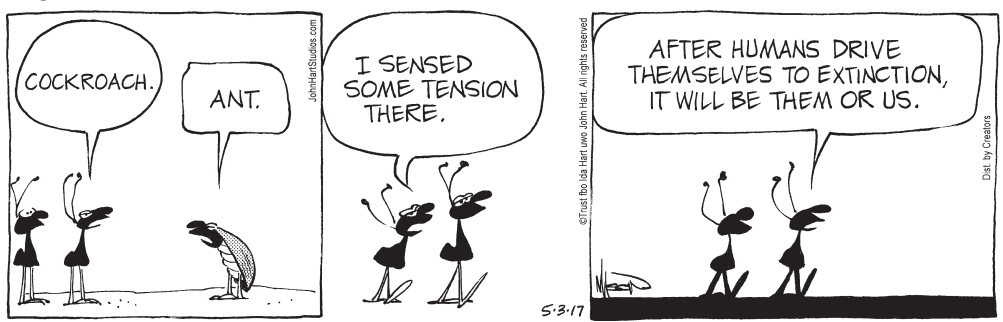
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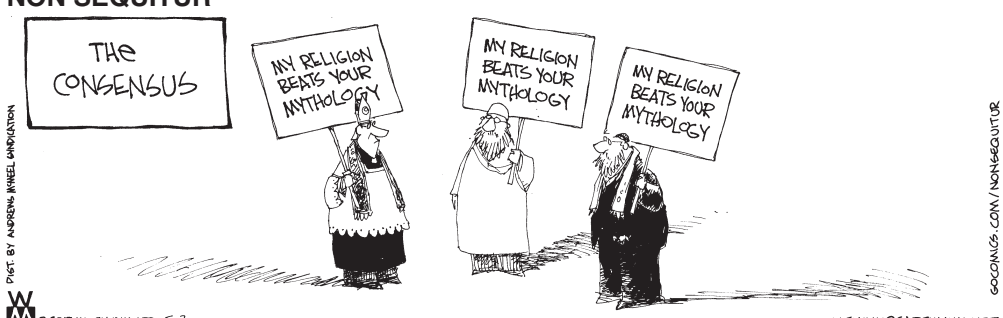
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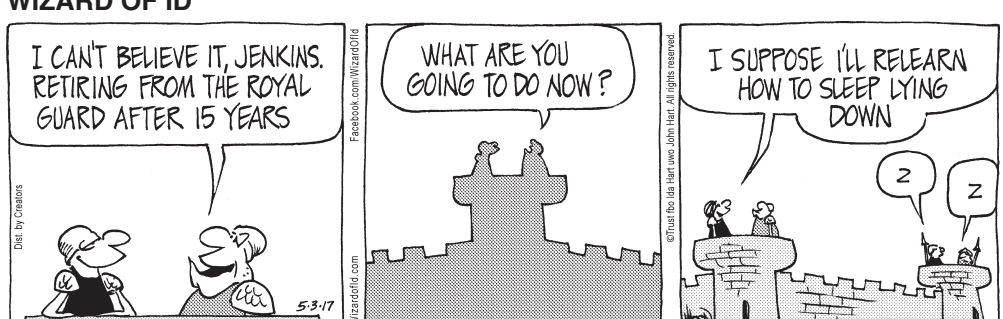
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WIZARD OF ID



ROSE IS ROSE

