

Suspicious of dad's girlfriend

Dear Annie: Two years after my mentally ill mother passed away, my retired 76-year-old father, "Juan," started dating a 61-year-old woman, "Lucy." At first, Lucy was friendly to my sister and me, and we hoped we could fill a gap, because she was estranged from her own family and had lost her previous husband in a tragic New Year's Eve accident years prior. She has no children of her own. My family, including my three children, was welcoming. My father is kind and generous to Lucy with trips and gifts, and it's good he has someone who brings that out in him.

DEAR ANNIE



Annie Lane
Creators
Syndicate Inc.

But now, as the relationship has progressed, they are shutting us out of their lives. Lucy has caused rifts between us with gossip and talking behind our backs. She persuaded him to buy a house and move away from his network of friends and family. She pushed my father into using my sister's and my trust assets to buy said house, and she doesn't actually live with my father. He's rented her an apartment of her own for three years now. She says she

can't move in yet because she's "still cleaning out" her current place. Yet my dad just revised the deed to give her the house upon his passing.

My sister and I question Lucy's intentions, and we're worried she's using my dad. Our small family is now divided in a way I never thought possible. Any suggestions about how to salvage the relationship with my father without causing his girlfriend to further isolate him from my sister and me? — Looking to Bridge the Girlfriend Divide

Dear Looking: Sharks can smell blood from a mile away. Your father has probably been hurting and feeling lonely for a long time. He was vulnerable. I'm not prepared to declare Lucy a shark just based on your letter; it's possible that she truly loves your father and you and she just have your differences. If she's a shark, her fin will surface in time. In the meantime, consult a lawyer to explore any legal options you might have should things with Lucy and your dad escalate. Even more importantly, be as much a

part of your dad's life as possible so that he is not isolated. Take him to lunch, or go for walks together. The more he feels connected to family the less dependent he will be on his girlfriend.

Dear Annie: This is in response to "Worried Times Two," who were concerned about their potentially unsafe ex-daughter-in-law's having custody of their grandchildren. You may be interested in suggesting that in this situation, their son could ask the judge or magistrate to appoint a special advocate. It would be in the best interest of the children. Court-appointed special guardians can do amazingly thorough investigations and make recommendations to the court. I felt very sad about the situation described and have been involved over the past 24 years as an advocate in similar situations. I would like these children to get the help they need. — Court-Appointed Special Advocate/Guardian Ad Litem

Dear CASA/GAL: I appreciate your bringing such a great resource to my attention. Thank you. Those interested in having an advocate appointed can visit <http://www.casaforchildren.org> for more information.

TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). You're seeking inspiration, and you'll find it both in those you want to be like and in those you don't want to be like. Stand where you can see and hear the people you find interesting.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). It's the perfect moment to do a mental scan of your current skillset to remind yourself of what you're good at and what you'd like to get good at. (If you don't know what you're good at, you'll miss the chance to sell it!)

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). There's no reason to bargain with boredom. Instead, take this emotion as a flag that signals it is time to shake things up, put things back, write things down or all of the above.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Everyday life is rich. You sense this and appreciate it. Someone else will help you in this regard, enjoying the details and the particular way you attend to them.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Do the most important thing first. Once that's out of the way, you can relax. The relaxed you is more effective, because an easygoing mindset helps you resist getting caught up in the extraneous parts that ultimately won't matter.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Although it would be wonderful to find a perfect showcase for your work, the fact is that there probably isn't one yet. You'll have to make one, or one will be made to accommodate the work, once you do it.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You're attracted to a type of person who may or may not be good for you. This is a day of noticing — of observing yourself and how you change or don't around the people you spend your life with.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). The relationship requirements are not rules, more like patterns. You set up the expectation early on and keep delivering in one way or another. Now you don't like what's being required of you, and today is about changing it.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). You don't have to be lost to wonder how you're going to find your way to the next place. If you're not too proud to ask for directions, you'll get there faster. Side up to an expert and you'll learn more than you asked for.

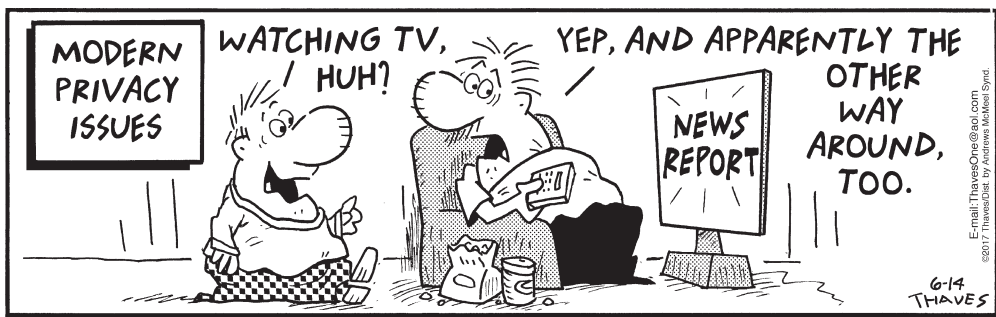
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Anger is not like a drug; it is a drug. It alters a person's chemistry more effectively than a lot of other substances. Keep this in mind while dealing with people who seem to lean on this emotion. Maybe it's not about you.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). "No comment" is always an option. No one (other than your own brain) is commanding you to speak. By not weighing in with an opinion, you'll leave your options open.

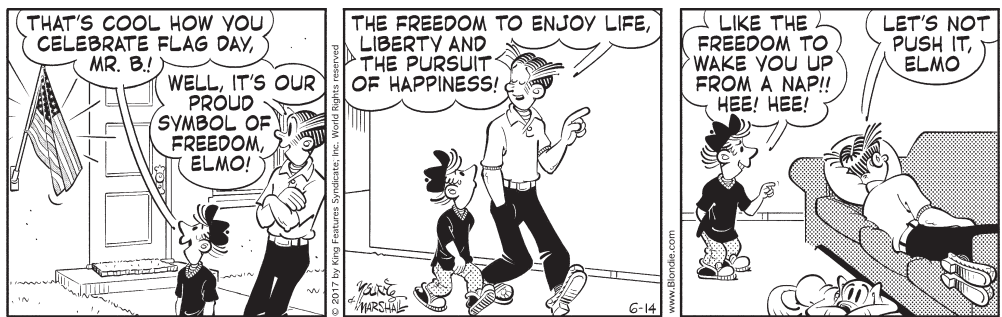
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). You don't expect people to be what they are not. Everyone is quirky. You realize this and act accordingly. People love you for that. You'll be the most nonjudgmental person on your block.

TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (June 15). Augmented powers of observation will help you to better sense what people want and grow in your capacity to deliver. It's good to be in demand, and when this has to do with business, you'll be paid handsomely. Lucky meetings happen in August and November. Money comes from out of the blue in July. Aries and Virgo adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 9, 40, 22, 27 and 50.

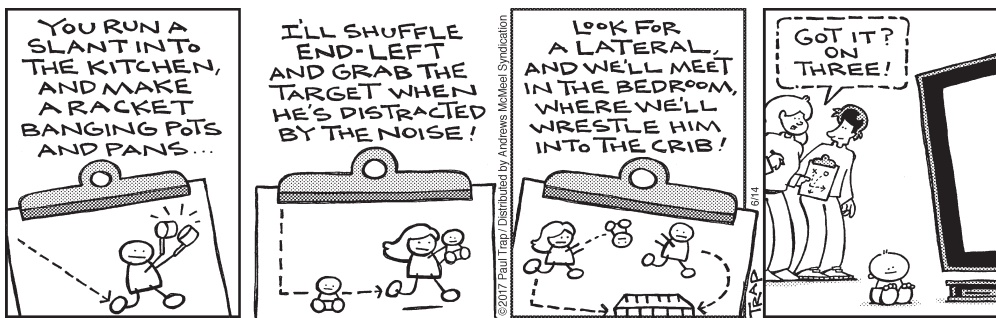
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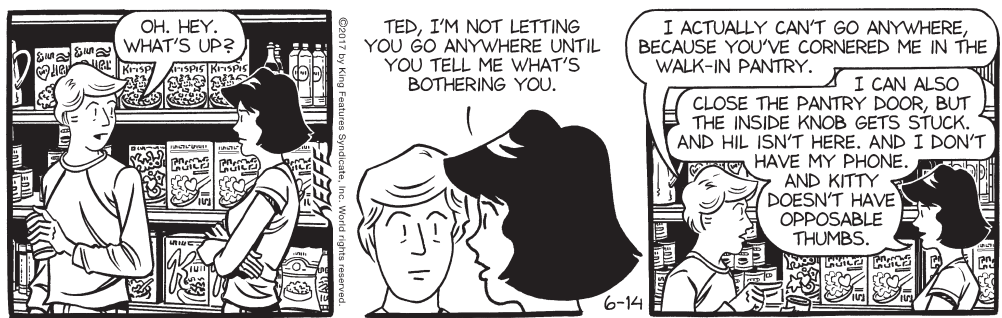
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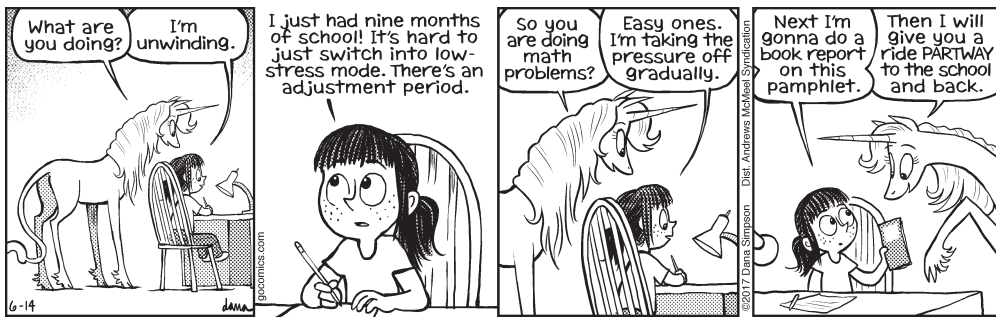
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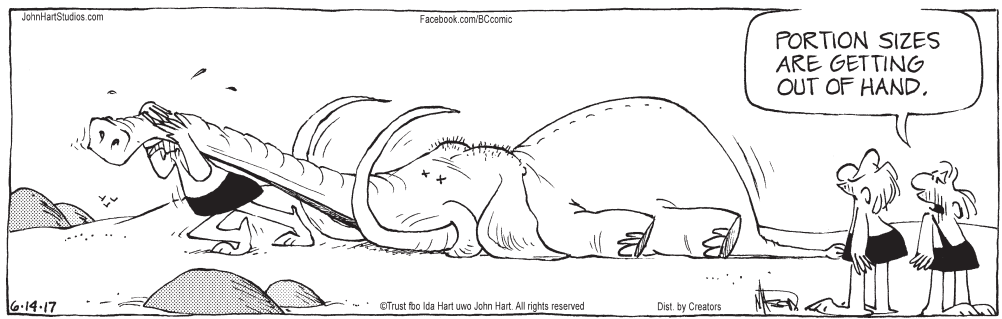
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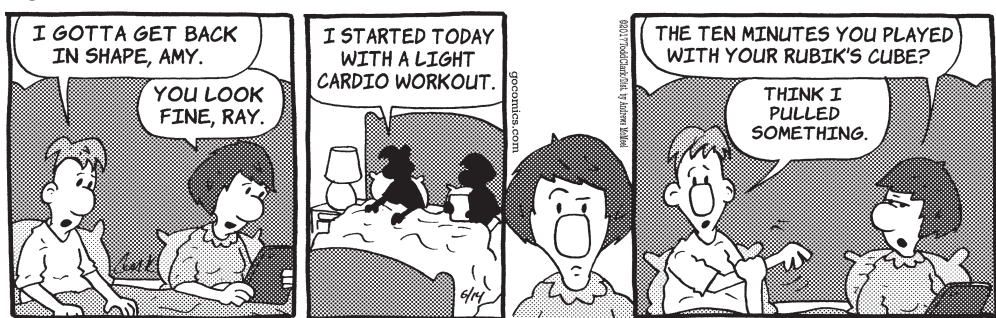
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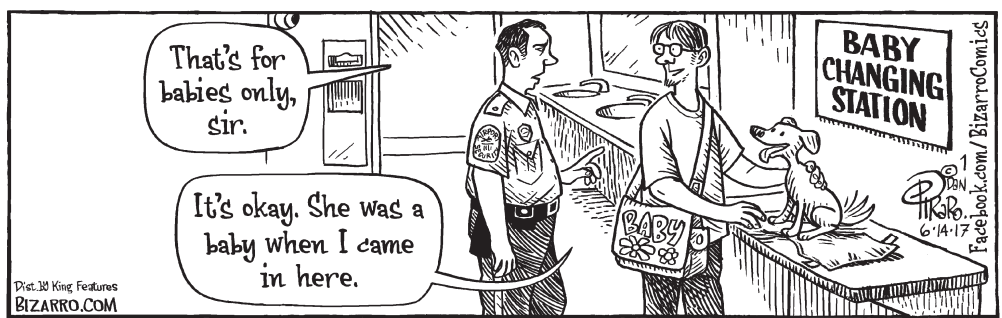
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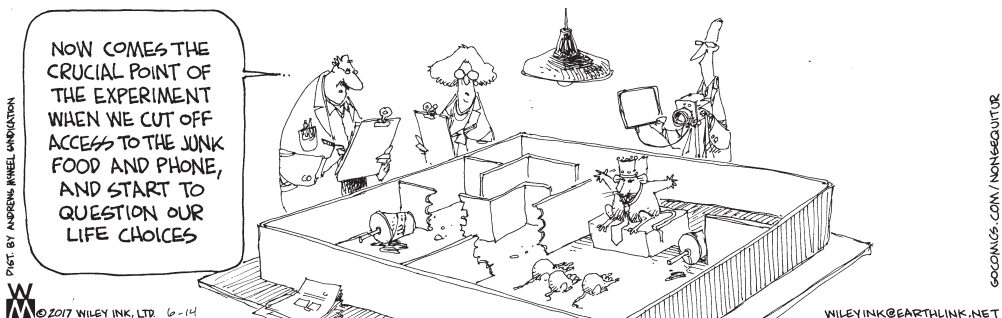
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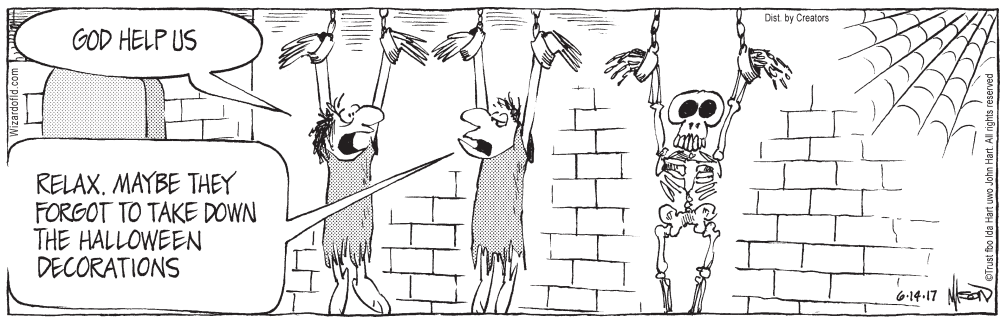
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