

Endgame with an abuser

Dear Annie: For 37 years, I've been married to a sociopath. When "Robert" and I met, he was sweet, charming and thoughtful. His father was an alcoholic, mean physically and emotionally. Robert said he never wanted to be like that. When our first child was born, he was a good father. But when I was pregnant with our second child, things changed. He cheated on me. When I had the child and was released from the hospital, I waited for three hours for him to come pick me up and meet his new daughter. He never came. He was out with another woman. I was going to leave, but he sought forgiveness. Being in a deep depression, I agreed. In the years since, he's cheated on me many more times. I went back to work. Robert got off work at an early hour and was supposed to pick up the kids from day care. But he wouldn't. He often went out all night "fishing," yet he never caught any fish. When the kids became teen-

agers, he started abusing them verbally. My two elder children and I eventually ended up in therapy, where we learned to deal with this man. Now they are in their 30s, and they still bear emotional scars from things he did or said. Robert has always refused counseling, by the way. He will not discuss his moods with the family doctor. He thinks the problem is everyone but him. I became disabled a few years ago. We have a younger child, a 16-year-old, and my main concern right now is protecting him. Robert is technically still my husband but is never around; he calls just to make sure I'm taking care of his stuff. He will be 59 1/2 in a few months, and he's planning on taking the money in his 401(k) and leaving us all. Robert and I have properties. He promised that each child would be added to the deed of one place. I also need his medical insurance, and I feel that I am entitled to half of everything plus child support and maybe

even spousal support. But I cannot get the money to retain a good lawyer. How do I leave this man and not be a pauper so I can protect my minor child? — *Desperately Need Help*

Dear Desperately: The National Domestic Violence Hotline provides assistance to victims of abuse, whether physical or emotional. The people there can refer you to resources in your state. Call them at 800-799-7233 today so you can begin safely planning for a new life that doesn't include your abuser.

Dear Annie: I have a solution for "Free Bird," the man who wants to be clothes-free but whose wife does not want to attend nudist events. He said he researches nudist locations online. If he found all-male events, he could satisfy his joy of being naked outside, and his wife would be satisfied that his joy is not being around naked women. — *Linda*

Dear Linda: I like your idea. It's a simple, practical way for "Free Bird" to find a like-minded flock without ruffling his wife's feathers. Thanks for writing.

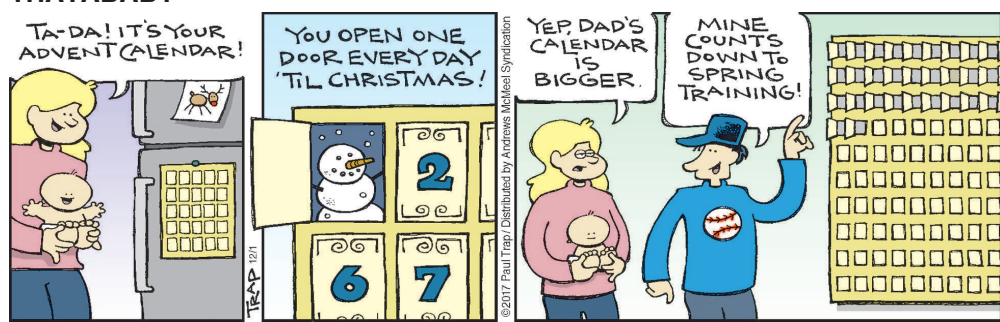


Annie Lane
Creators
Syndicate Inc.

FRANK AND ERNEST



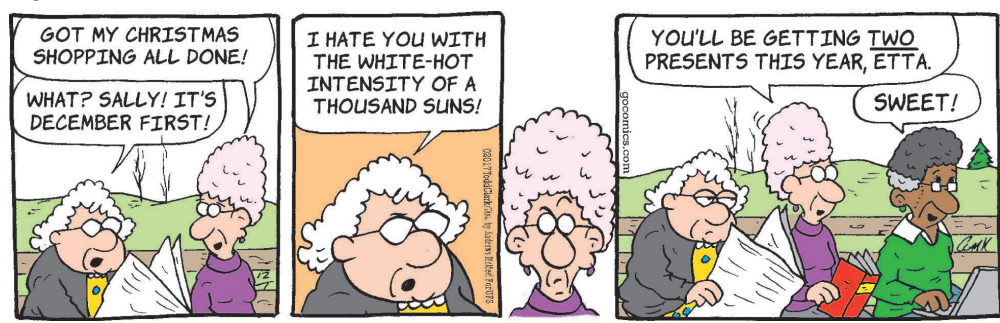
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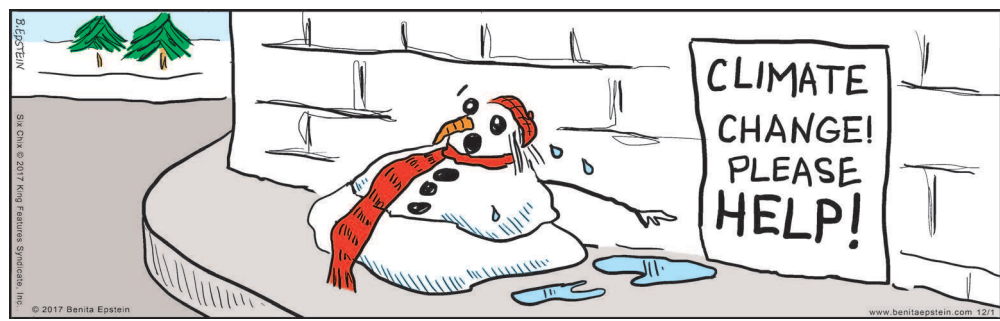
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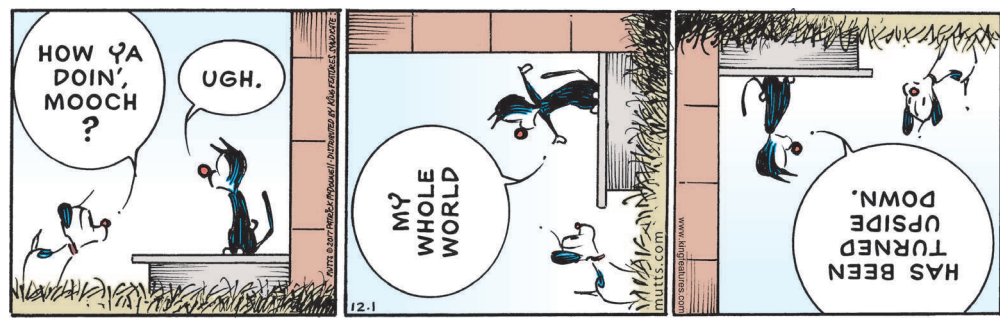
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TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). You were blamed for something that wasn't your fault, but that's just part of love. Two people in love project things, mistake each other's identities, see only who they want to see instead of who is actually standing before them.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). There is no circumstance or person who is completely on one side of morality. "All human beings are commingled out of good and evil." — Robert Louis Stevenson

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). You're finding out that it's better to have numerous friends than to depend on one person for affection. Tonight you'll be the star, so dress the part. You'll enjoy it more when your outside reflects the role.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Those close to you have needs, but you're not the only one who can fill them. Check in with yourself. Assess what you have to give. The saying goes, "You can't pour from an empty cup."

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). You'll reel in the admirers with your social ease. And as long as you stay aware of other people's sensitivities and steer clear of them, you'll keep those admirers.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). A level of detachment will help you achieve the peace you crave. Neutrality helps you recognize the consequences of any action. Often consequences are neither reward nor punishment — just the cause of another effect.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Financial exchanges are clean, but there's something magical about volunteer exchanges that beats a clean deal. Tonight a friend's introduction will set off a chain of fortuitous events.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). You're not sure what someone wants from you, but you know there's something. Get closer and find out. Extend a social invitation, and let the conversation fly loose and lively.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Just because you're fortunate (and there are many ways in which you have been blessed) doesn't mean you're happy. Normalcy must be breached! Challenge! Change! All are necessary components of joy.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Today you're more of a pen than a pencil. Pencils are creative and flexible, willing to be erased, blended, reworked. Some days you're like that, but today your moves will be bold — maybe even indelible.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). While the scenario at hand may be very fun, you're also being assessed inside of it. People are getting to know your style, and they are testing your character by your reaction to freedom and temptation.

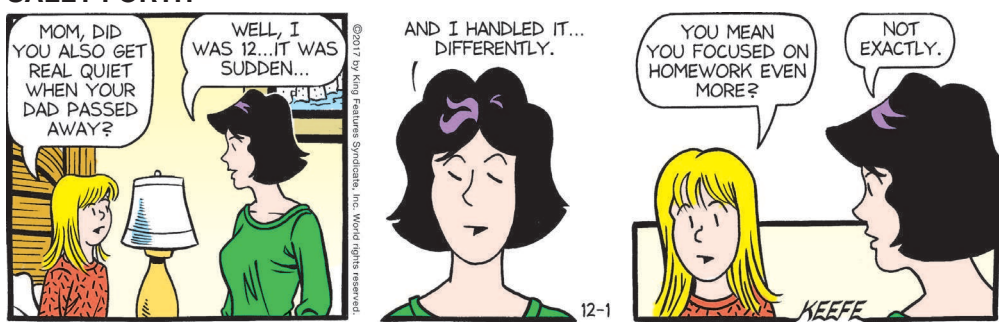
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Attention-neediness is a turnoff to you. You strive to be self-sufficient emotionally and every other way. Unfortunately, you can't be. No one is. People need people. The question is, how much?

TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (Dec. 2). Your heart connections are what fortify and inspire you, and in the months to come your expressions of love will be received in kind. Because you've been a stellar team player, you'll feel what it's like for the whole team to rally behind you — awesome! There's a payoff in February and another in July. Aquarius and Cancer adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 7, 20, 44, 19 and 32.

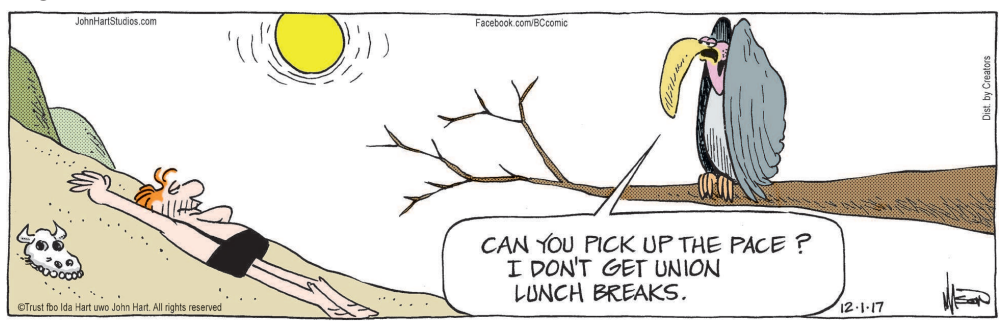
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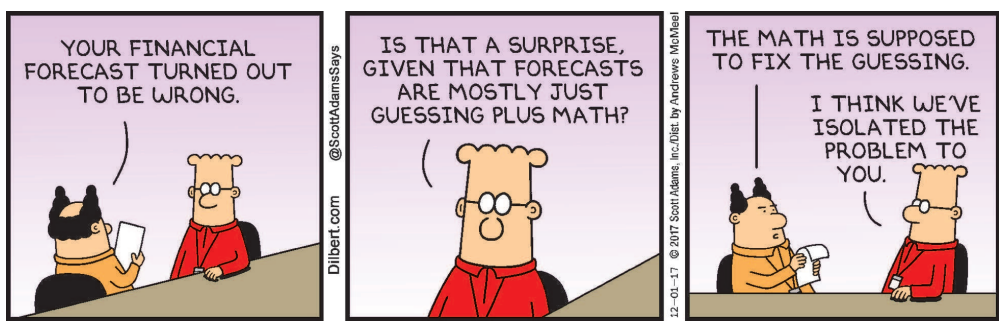
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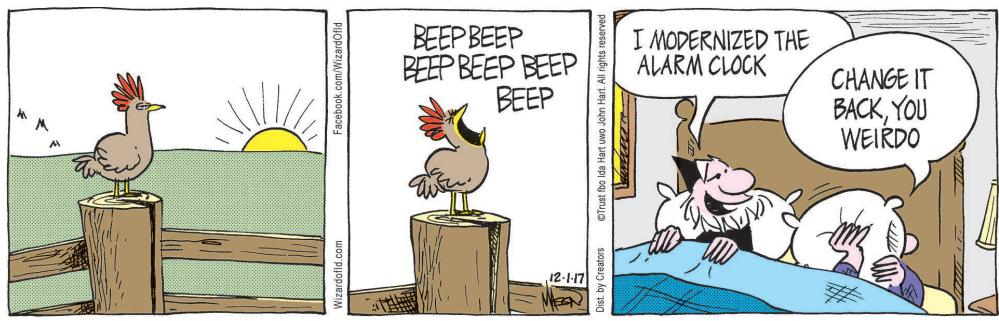
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