

Bad baby-sitting gig

Dear Annie: I'm a college sophomore. Recently, I baby-sat for a friend of a friend who is a few years older and lives in town with her husband and two kids. One was an infant, and the other was a toddler. It was a relatively easy baby-sitting gig; the little one mostly just slept, and the older one, though a bit of a handful at times, was not too much trouble. I watched them for about three hours while the parents went on a date. At the end of the night, the mom and I chatted for a few minutes. Then she said, "Well, it would be tacky to pay you, so I'll just take you to lunch sometime." I felt awkward and said, "Oh, OK. Sure." I wasn't sure what else to say. I got my things and left.

Dear Baby Sitter Blues: There's nothing tacky about trying to pay the bills. That said, the best defense for socially awkward situations such as this one is a good offense. The next time she or anyone else asks you to baby-sit, provide your rates (e.g., \$10 per child per hour) upfront, to eliminate any room for misunderstanding and keep your piggy bank fed.

Dear Annie: I wanted to submit this letter of forgiveness that I wrote to my dad. Dad, today is the day you passed away three years ago. But that was not the first time I felt the pain of your absence. That has been with me for a very long time. When I was 4, you walked out and left us. I didn't understand why you were leaving. I only knew you were no longer there.

You didn't leave us entirely. You would come pick us up every Sunday, spend the day with us and drop us off. Then you would leave again. My heart would break when I would see you drive away. After a year or so, I asked you

to come let me live with you. You came down to pick me up and then said you couldn't take me. I got out of your truck and watched you drive away.

Years later, when I was grown up, I would come to visit you, and as I walked to my car to leave, you would apologize to me. To hear you say you were sorry for not being there broke my heart, because I felt it should have been an easy choice.

Many years later, as you sat in a rehab facility, I came to visit you. I said my final goodbye. As the nurses pushed you away in the wheelchair, my heart sank. I knew that was going to be the last time I would see you.

I learned a lot about forgiveness in my relationship with you. This has been a real gift to me. Going through my relationship with you has helped me be a better father.

Dad, I know that one day, you and I will have our special time together. Until then, I love you and I forgive you. — Jay

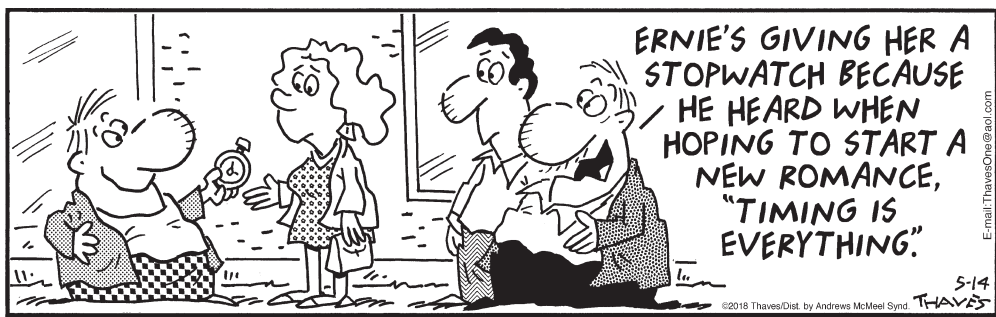
Dear Jay: I have said that putting pen to paper is a cheap and effective form of therapy. But this is something even more special: the gift of forgiveness. Thank you for sharing it with us.

DEAR ANNIE



Annie Lane
Creators
Syndicate Inc.

FRANK AND ERNEST



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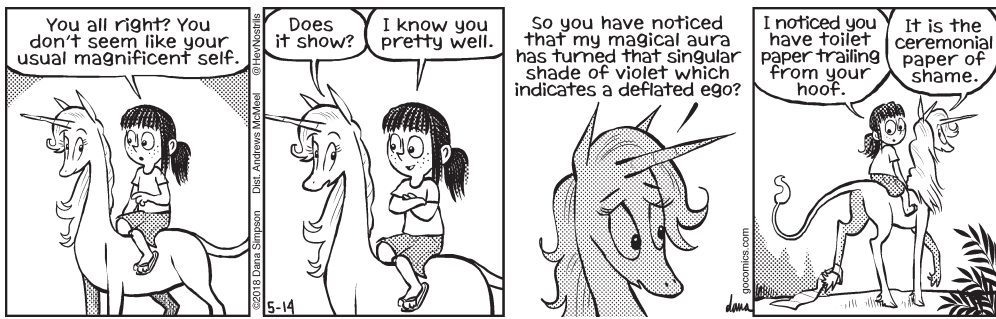
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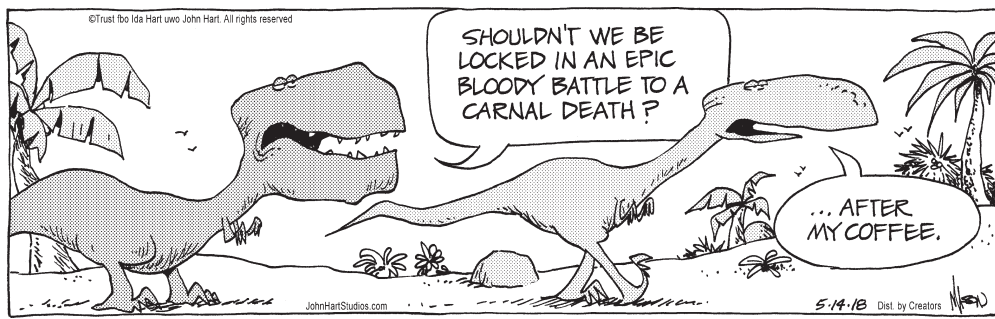
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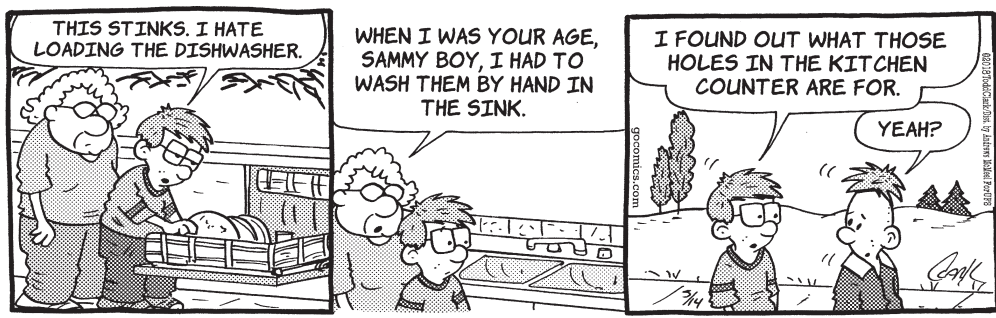
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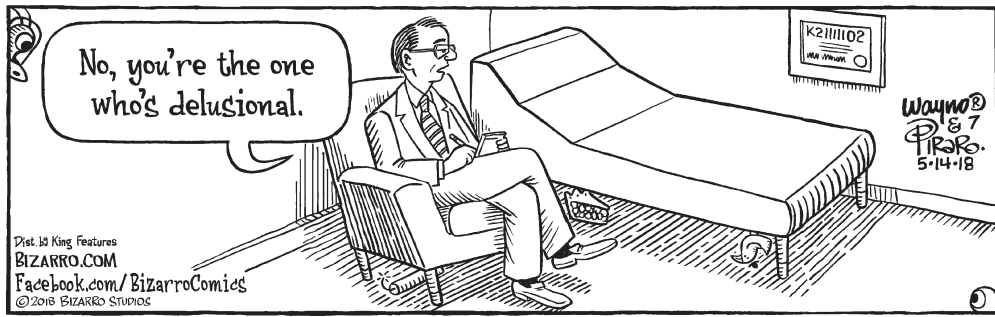
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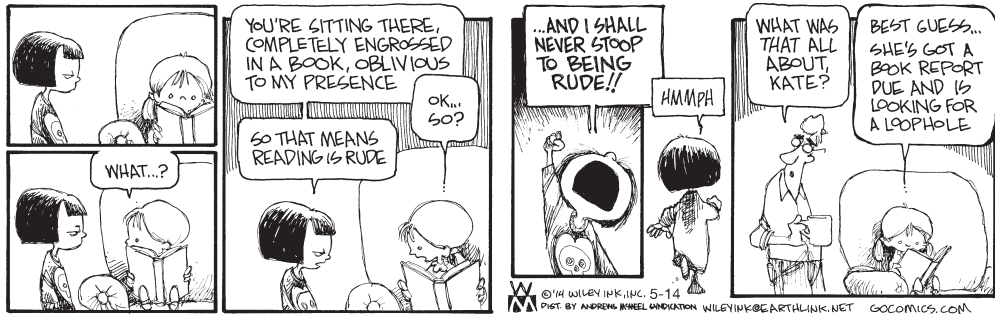
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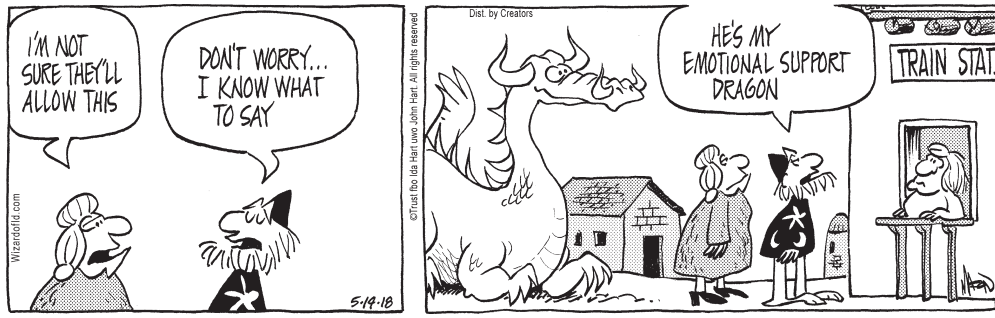
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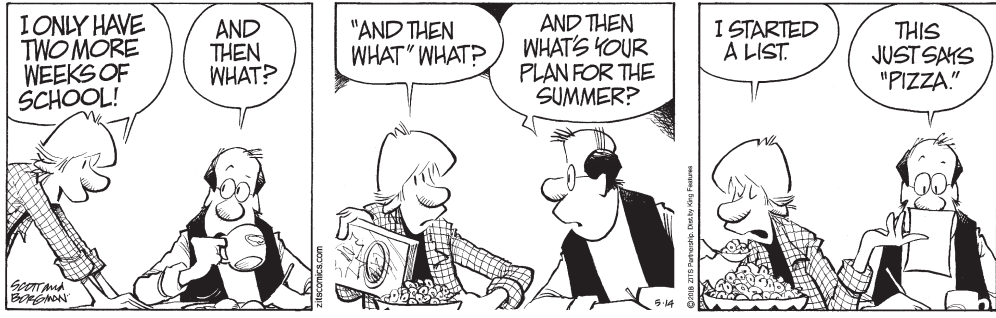
BABY BLUES



WIZARD OF ID



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