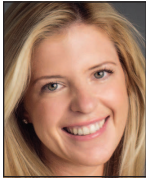


Mother-in-law's alcohol problem

Dear Annie: My mother-in-law is a very good person deep down. She is a joy to be around — when she's sober. But more and more lately, she is not. And when she's not, she is hateful and vindictive and blames everyone else for her problems. She has gone so far recently as to tell me something happened to my 2-year-old son when she was watching him that would require medical attention — just to get me to leave work early and pick him up sooner than planned so she could start drinking. Annie, there was nothing wrong at all with my son.

DEAR ANNIE



Annie Lane
Creators
Syndicate Inc.

Whenever we call her out on her drinking, she spews hateful things at my husband and me. She threatens to cut him out of her will. She brings up things he did decades ago (before he got smart and sobered up and stopped drinking), and she has physically put her hands on me. (This was years ago, before we knew she had a problem; she was very good at hiding it.)

She now has the love of a man who is wonderful to her, unlike her former husband of two decades,

who cheated multiple times on her. But she is even pushing this man away and is hateful toward him when she's drinking. On numerous occasions, we have had to cut her off from seeing our sons because she is choosing drinking over spending time with them and us.

Of course, when we do this, we are the ones at fault, and she doesn't have a problem and doesn't need help — and so on and so forth. I hate what this is doing to my husband, and my sons don't understand why they can't see her sometimes. We have told the eldest

one (he's 10) what the real situation is, and it absolutely breaks his heart. Which I guess does actually lead me to a question: Why? Why is the pull to drink so strong that people will mess up perfectly good relationships with friends and family? I understand that it is an addiction, but why can't she and others see what they are missing out on and losing just to fill a void for only a little while? And why does she want to potentially kill herself by drinking so much? Doesn't her future matter to her? I

just don't understand, and I guess I never will. I know that only she can choose to help herself and that she will only do so if and when she's ready. But the pain that we are going through right now will inevitably become irreversible. And I don't want that — for my husband, my sons or me. Thank you for taking the time to read this.

— *Depressed Daughter-in-Law of a Drinker*

Dear Depressed Daughter-in-Law of a Drinker: I am so sorry that you're going through this. To ask "Why?" is to try to ascribe rationale where there is none. The disease of alcoholism does not operate on logical terms.

I urge you to attend an Al-Anon Family Groups meeting. I think you'll find it can be a great relief just to be in a room full of people who know exactly what you're going through. The meetings are free and anonymous; you don't even have to talk if you don't want to. And if you don't like your first meeting, don't give up. Al-Anon recommends trying at least six different meetings before deciding that the program isn't for you. Visit <https://al-anon.org> to find a meeting near you. It just might change your life.

TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). No one can change the truth, but the truth can change everyone. It's the light that brings plants up from mud. It's a curtain that opens to begin the show. You already know the truth, so you don't have to seek it, only accept it.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Don't be too quick to form an opinion today, because you're likely to change it after you've had some time to consider all of the different viewpoints. Your best thinking will happen in private, in silence and after the fact.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Obviously, writing, painting, acting and other artistic disciplines call on your powers of imagination. But not so obviously, so does love. You imagine the best in another person and project how you might exist together.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Who are all of these friends on your list, anyway? Are they buying tickets to the raffle when you're fundraising? Do they show up to your birthday party? Have they ever even stepped a foot into your house? It's pruning time.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). You've a different image of yourself than the one currently being supported by your lifestyle. Reconcile the discrepancy. To make it match you'll have to think differently of yourself or do differently as yourself.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Just because you were dropped into the environment doesn't make it your identity, but it does make it your challenge to figure it out. And figure it out you will, so long as you stick with it, resolving to handle all that comes.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Because you're consciously and actively trying to improve yourself, you'll be analyzing the facts of your life a lot

more than usual. Keep in mind that it's not what you do but why you do it that matters most.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Someone who won't show you support is either withholding it or incapable of it. Either way, you deserve better communication. That's a key part of healthy relationships. Don't settle in this regard.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). It would be boring if life were always this smooth, but for now, savor these good times. You can rest assured that however tough things might get, you're tougher. So for now, relax and have fun.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). There are many forms of knowing. The knowing that matters most to today's outcome doesn't center on hard facts; rather, it circles the imaginative and emotional realms, relying on the fuel of creativity.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Excessive amounts of time in solitude and an absence of social relationships are typically considered unhealthy. But don't be too quick to judge on the matter. Alone time can also be healing.

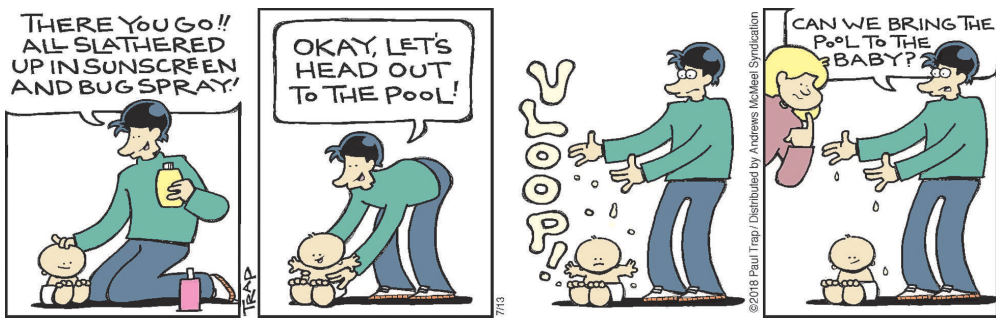
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). You're a magical thinker. You see the potential in things that others miss. It's especially interesting when the object of your projection misses it, too. But keep seeing. Because your vision gathers power the more you see it.

TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (July 14). Once you marveled at how difficult it was to control your impulses and know your own secret agenda. This solar return comes as a welcome reprieve, because self-direction gets simple. You tell yourself what to do, and then you do it. You're brilliant at both planning and executing, so you're the master of your destiny. Gemini and Sagittarius adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 3, 5, 35, 31 and 11.

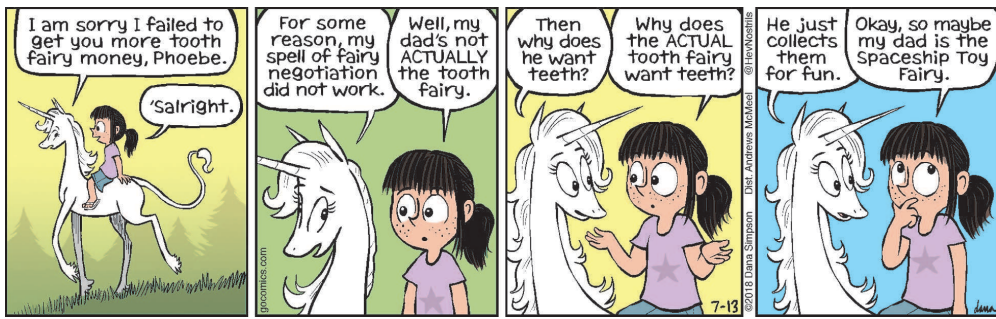
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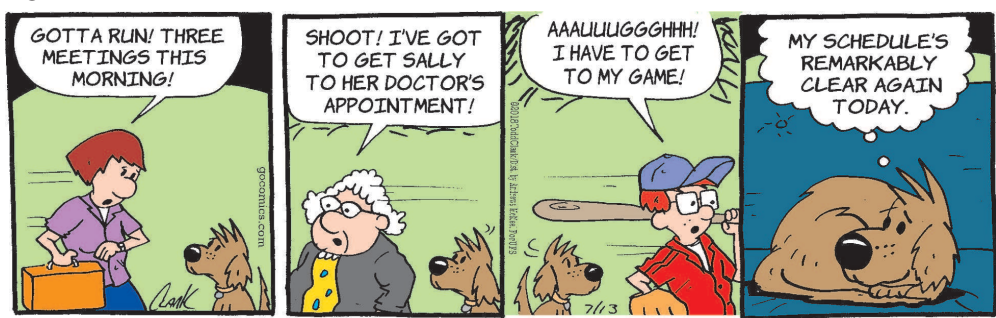
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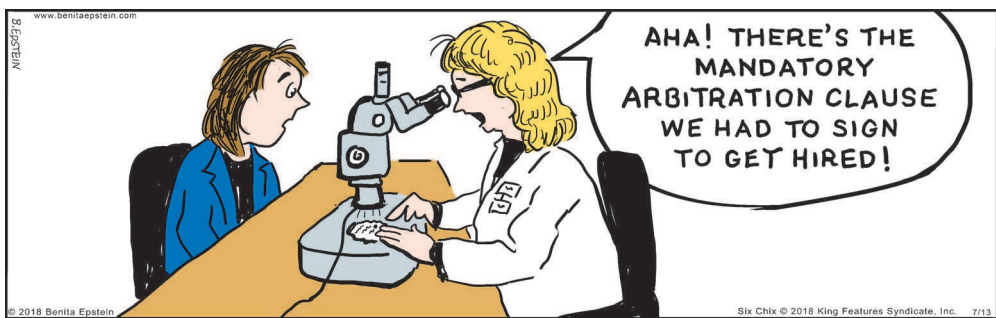
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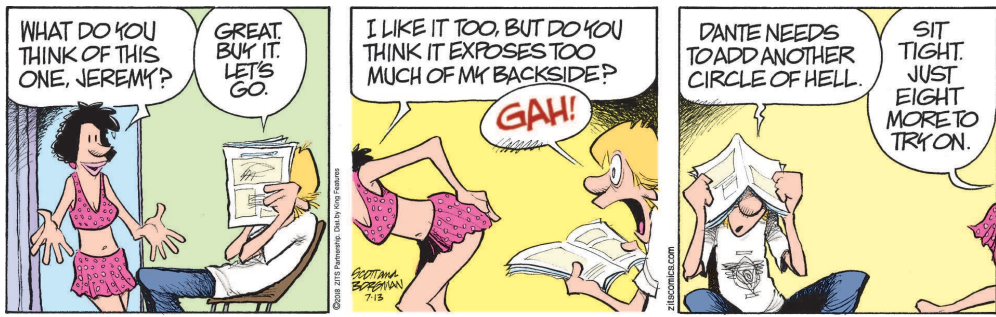
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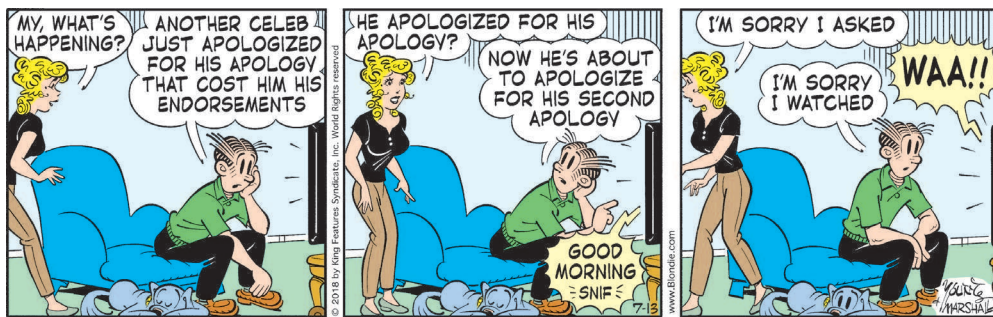
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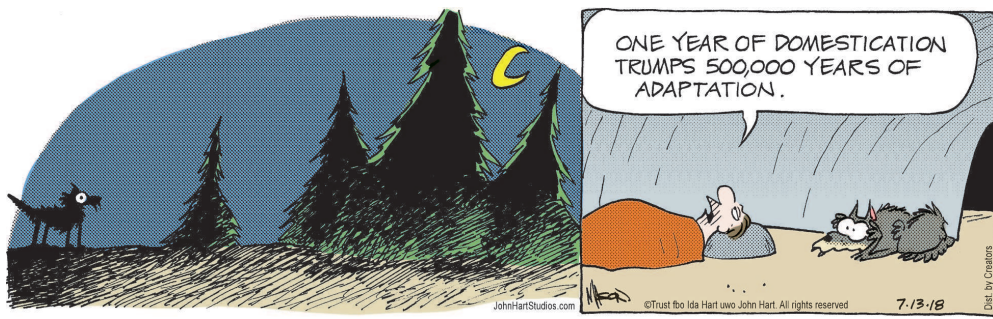
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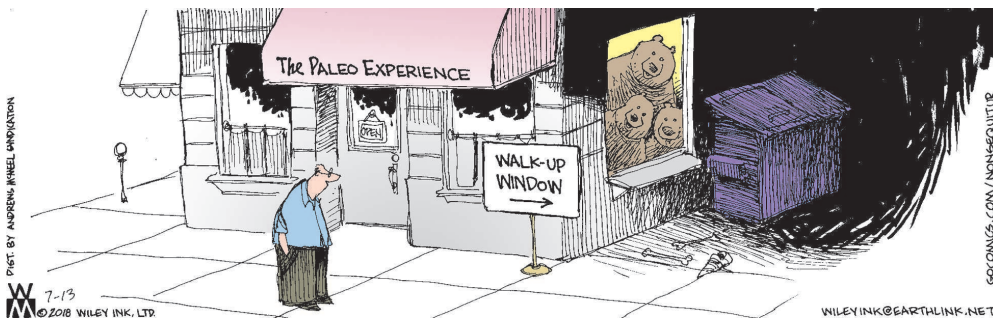
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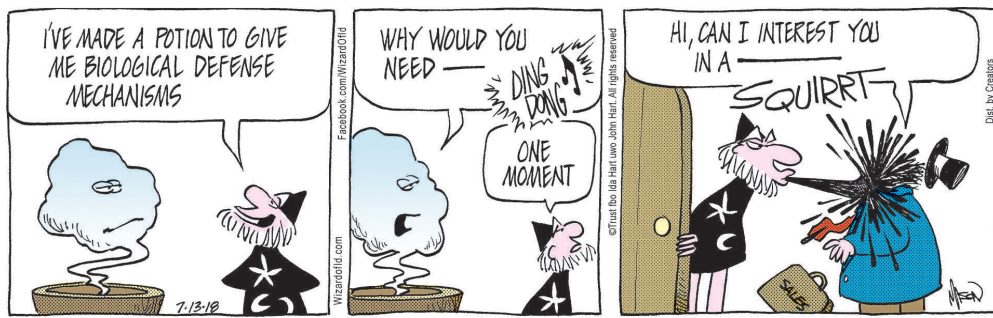
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