

Hers is a troublesome friendship

Dear Annie: I started to gradually notice changes in my friendship with "Marla" while I was having marital trouble. During this time, I had a lot of support from close friends and family. Because Marla and I were extremely close, I was disappointed she wasn't there for me. Marla started to decline invitations to go to lunch and would not answer my calls. Yet when my good friend from out of town came to visit, Marla suddenly had an urgent issue that had to be dealt with immediately. She was well aware of my friend's visit because I had invited Marla to join us for dinner that evening. Marla was blowing up my phone with texts, even after I explained that I was spending time with my old friend.

DEAR ANNIE



Annie Lane
Creators
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After my friend left, I reached out to Marla and offered to meet for coffee or to talk, expressing that I valued our friendship and telling her how important she was to me. I got no immediate

response, but a few days later, I got a "I'm sorry, I'm busy" text. I texted back and repeated that our friendship was important to me and that I wanted to have time to talk with her. No response. Marla has often been passive-aggressive toward me and also publicly revealed things I said to her in confidence.

About two years ago, we went to my vacation house for a weekend. I found out she had told a mutual friend that she felt "obligated" to go. I started to distance myself then. I guess she finally noticed recently or decided to pay attention. She has been texting me, asking, "What is going on?" We decided to meet for lunch, but none of this came up in conversation, and she just acted as if everything is peachy.

In addition to all this, there have been other incidents in which she has tried to involve other people and manipulate them or try to get information from them about me.

She says she will accept our friendship the way it is. I have invested a lot of time in this friendship, but at this point in my life, there are too many games. I want to be surrounded by people who are positive influences on me and value me. The trouble is that we have mutual friends and socialize in the same circle. — *Longtime Friend or Foe*

Dear Friend or Foe: Though you have tried to talk things out with Marla several times, it doesn't sound as if there's been a real conversation yet. You could give that one more try, directly addressing the problems that have come between you. But should she keep playing games, there would be no need for you to play along. You could continue to go to mutual friends' functions and be cordial toward her, but it would be better to keep your distance emotionally. And keep in mind that just because you've invested a lot of time in this fraught friendship does not mean you should invest more. No amount of time spent in a bad situation in the past is reason to stay in it in the future.

TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Every attitude causes a chain reaction. So it's important to check in with yourself before stepping one foot into conversations, environments or projects. Where am I at? What attitude am I bringing to it?

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). A buoyant mood prevails. From here it's easier to be resourceful and open to change. Any and every thing you do to feel better will contribute to your positive vibes.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). The real challenge will be in choosing what to believe. Assessing not only if a potential belief is correct, but also what its natural trajectory is. Who will you be if you believe it? Choose beliefs that uplift and empower.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Conventional approaches to self-improvement may leave you feeling resentful and rebellious against the taskmaster that is supposedly the higher version of you. Make your overall well-being a priority instead.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). The key to harnessing and maximizing your energy is to embrace your own polarizations — the very best and worst in you, the most attractive and unattractive traits and tendencies. There's power in loving your whole self.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Productivity and joy go hand in hand. Even work you once considered to be a grind will be over quickly and done well because of the happiness in your approach.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Your brain has a way of balancing itself and today you can practically feel it at work, guiding you to the next action that will lead to your health and

well-being.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). The earth is big, and yet in the entire world there is only one place where success exists, and that place is inside you. There are experiences you'd like to have. Whether you have them or not, you are successful.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Because everyone has different values, it is sometimes difficult for people to understand what matters to you and how you want to be treated. Today you won't have that problem. They'll get it right away.

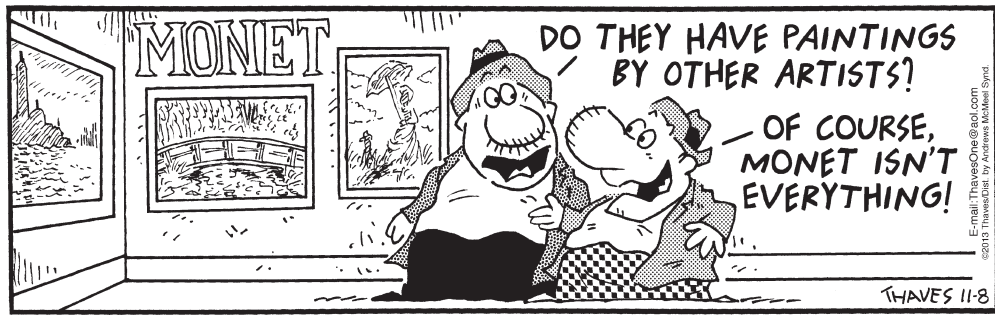
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). How can you get more of the things that make you feel good being in your body? Because when your physical self is happy, the rest of you will follow in kind.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). The first time you do something, there's excitement and possibly trepidation over the unknown aspects of it. The second time you know what to expect and can relax into the process. The third time — that will truly be the charm!

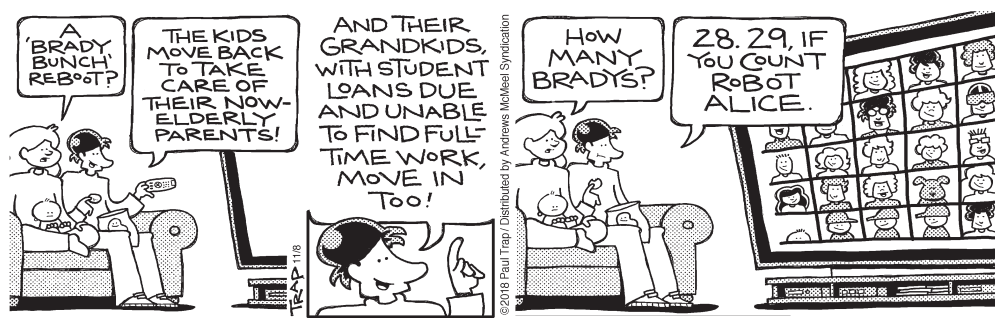
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Learning about things makes you appreciate and enjoy them better. Your urge to go deeper into a body of knowledge is an instinct to move toward happiness.

TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (Nov. 9). You'll take in gorgeous views this solar return, including natural landscapes, seascapes and many warm smiles. Other victories will include a special friendship bond made even tighter, work that makes a difference in the world and progress within a group that helps you finally reach your goal. Pisces and Gemini adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 1, 3, 47, 11 and 20.

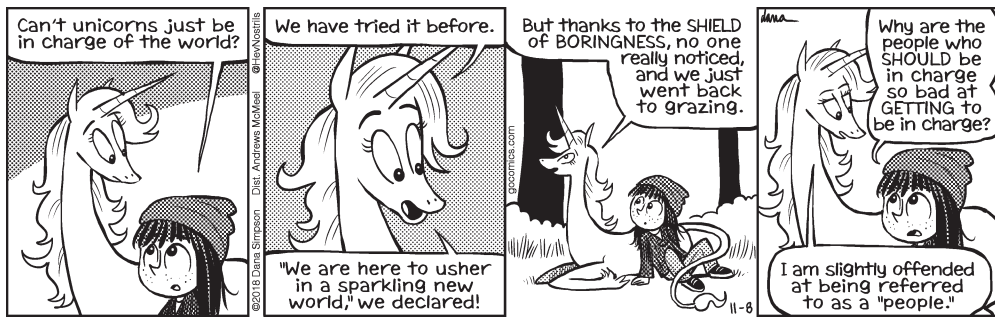
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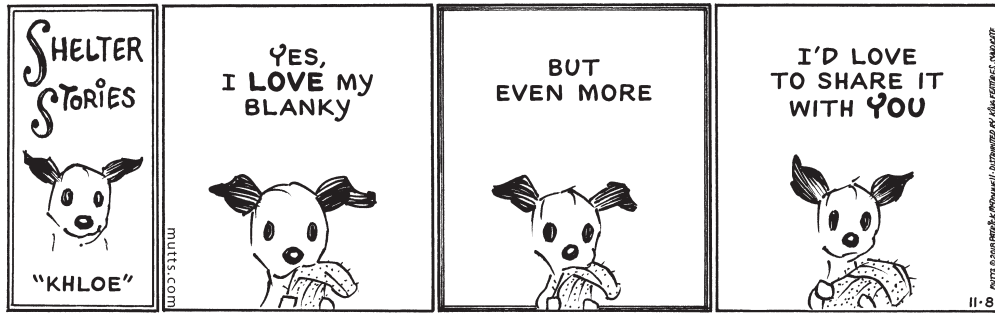
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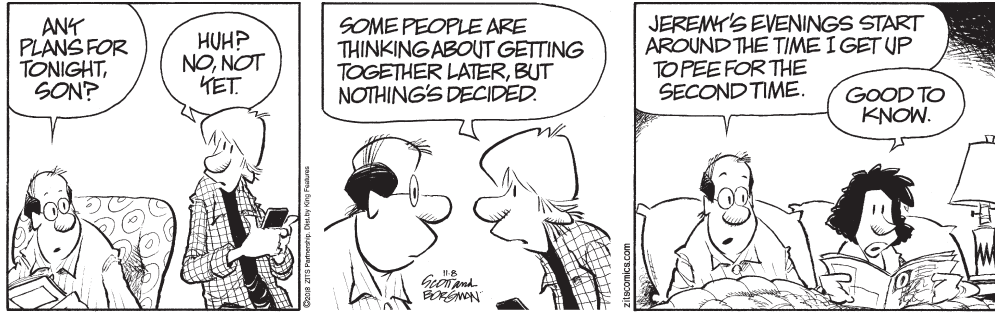
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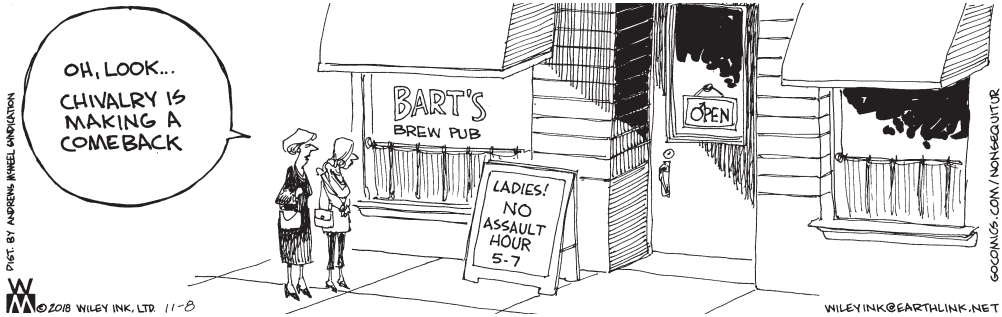
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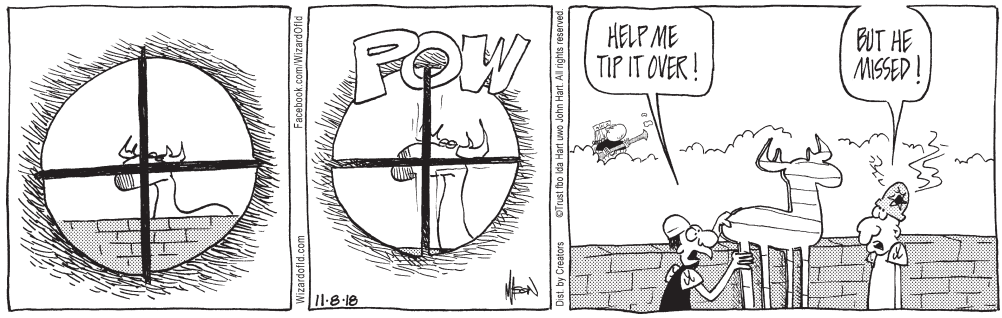
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