

Tired of the sore loser

Dear Annie: My boyfriend, "Mark," can be a sore loser, and it's beginning to ruin game night.

Every week, a few of my friends get together to play games — video games, board games, anything that can be played with a big group. Most of the time, I go alone, as these friends were made before Mark and I started dating. However, he gets along really well with everyone when we're out at parties and events, so he's always invited to play. Last game night, we played a difficult strategy game that I've only played once but a few friends are very proficient at. They play aggressively, so I matched that enthusiasm. I ended up winning, but any pride was hampered by Mark's sulking. About halfway through the game, he decided that he "got cheated" and couldn't win, so he stopped engaging with the rest of us and scrolled on his

phone instead. His childish behavior was annoying for everyone, and frankly, I was embarrassed by him. We've talked about this before, but it keeps coming up. And in the moment, I don't want to have to nag him to play nicely. I'm close to uninviting him to game night. What should I do? — *Tired of Playing Mom*

DEAR ANNIE



ANNIE LANE
Creators
Syndicate Inc.

Dear Tired of Playing Mom:

How exasperating for you and embarrassing for him. A year from now, nobody is going to remember who won at Monopoly, but everyone will remember who almost flipped over the board.

If Mark acknowledges his rudeness and irrationality after the fact, perhaps you two could come up with a warning signal he can give you when he feels himself starting to get upset or a signal you can give him when you notice it. Also, you might sug-

gest playing some cooperative games together rather than competitive ones. If he doesn't admit that this is a real problem or doesn't make a real effort at changing it, tell him that you're not going to keep playing with him if he acts this way. You've been more than fair.

Dear Annie: Recently, you published a letter from a fellow who said he has social anxiety and is uncomfortable during social events his wife plans. He even avoids parent night activities at his children's schools because he fears "awkward" moments alone.

Don Gabor wrote a wonderful book on how to make small talk, titled "How to Start a Conversation and Make Friends." I tried the advice in there, and it really worked!

The book came out in 1983 but is still in print, believe it or not, which is a testament to how much people get from it. I hope you'll pass this on to your readers. — *Virginia*

TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Something in you wants to wander in search of new inspiration. Wherever you go, you bring your heart, thoughts and desires with you to mingle with what's there, including fresh landscapes, people and adventures.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). It's not about the job; it's about how you do it. When you're true to yourself, you can't help but execute like only you can. So while others might be able to do the same job, none will do it quite the way you do. You're irreplaceable.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). When it's right, it's right. You don't have to talk a lot about it, or list the pros and cons, or run it by your friends and teachers and experts. When it's right, you just know.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). You're respectful of people's time, including your own, and therefore you find redundancy and inefficiency downright unacceptable. You'll root it out, remedy it and have a surprisingly good time organizing your next efforts.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). There will be a reason to get realistic in your assessment of your abilities. Maybe you're neither the best nor are you the worst in the room, but "the room" actually doesn't matter. Other people have nothing to do with what you can do.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). When it comes to friendship, you don't need a certain number of them to be happy, you just need to be certain of the ones you've got. You'll see who you can count on, and it's both a good feeling and a good thing to know.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You'll tell the truth, but you'll do it in a way that doesn't shock, anger or upset anyone. You're sensitive. And you're coming from a place of love and possibility, so that helps, too.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). When you're around a certain person, there's an increased sense of stability, order and optimism in your world. You feel clear-headed and capable. It's a good reason to have this person around more often.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). What do delusions of grandeur and delusions of insignificance have in common? Both are delusions spun by the perceptions of fragile ego. The way to a balanced view of yourself is through self-acceptance and love.

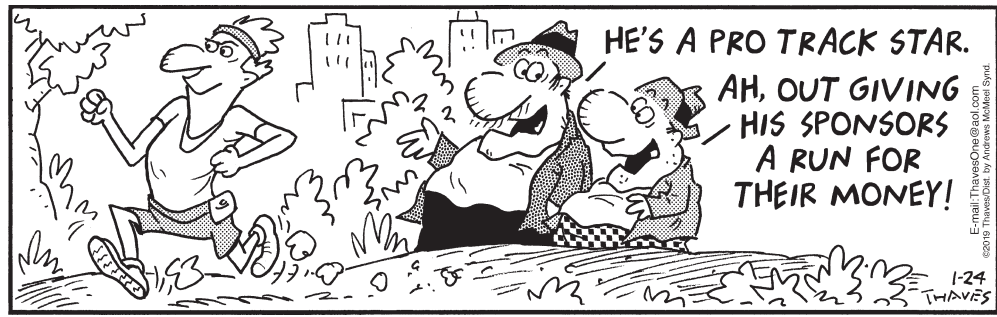
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). You're not afraid to do what your heart tells you to do. And for this reason, it will feel like your spirit is larger than your body, larger than the room, larger than the whole situation you happen to be standing inside.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). There must be a solution to the problem that has two people meeting somewhere in the middle, each sacrificing and endeavoring, if not to an equal degree, then at least to a comparable one.

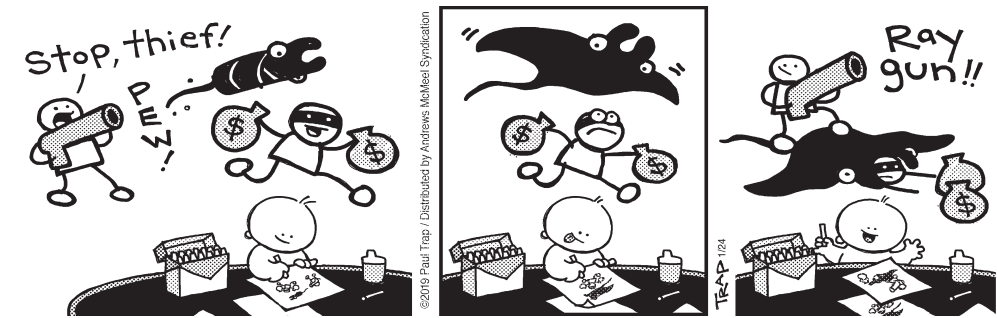
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). You will communicate so clearly, talking to people instead of about people. This is the way of becoming more powerful in your own life and more influential in the world.

TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (Jan. 25). You don't think of common sense as a talent, but it is. So is your enormously capable style and generally sunny attitude. These are the gifts that will send you to the top of the invite list for all sorts of opportunities, jobs and relationships. Exciting adventures are born out of your extreme trustworthiness. Gemini and Virgo adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 7, 40, 44, 38 and 18.

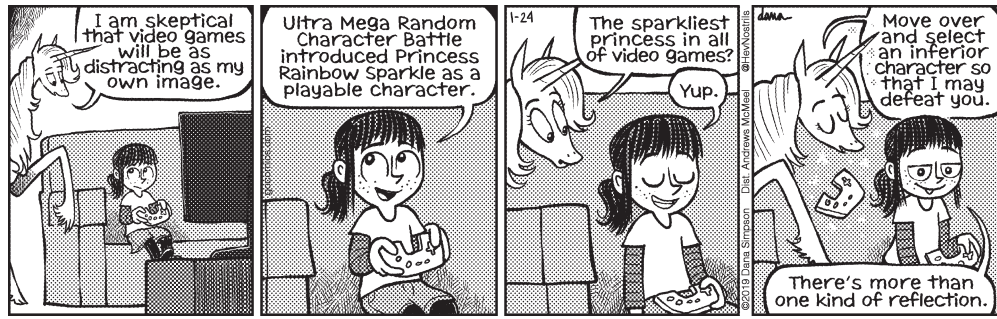
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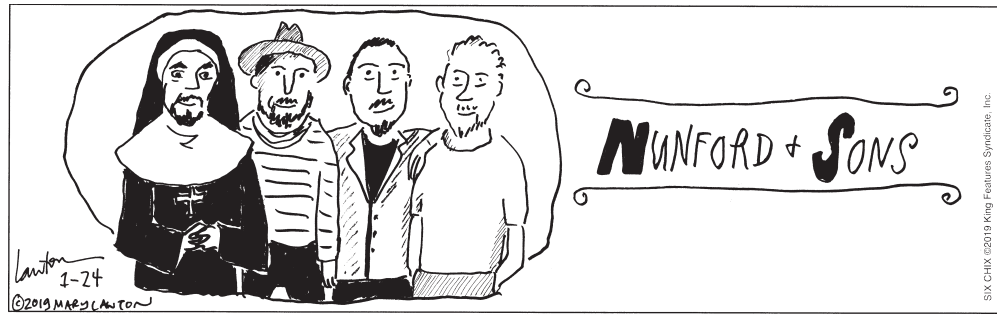
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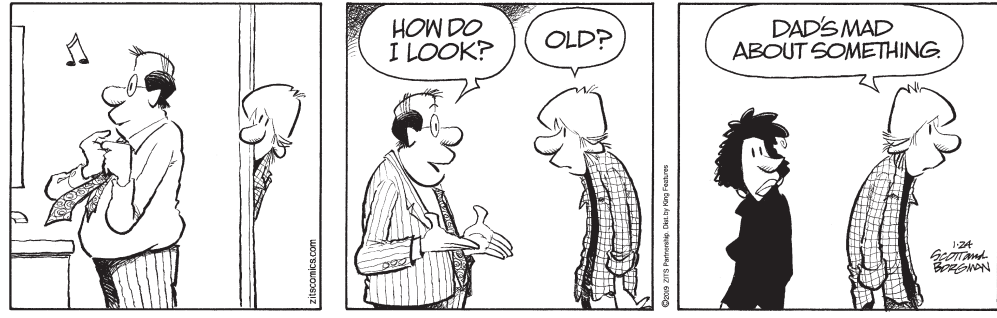
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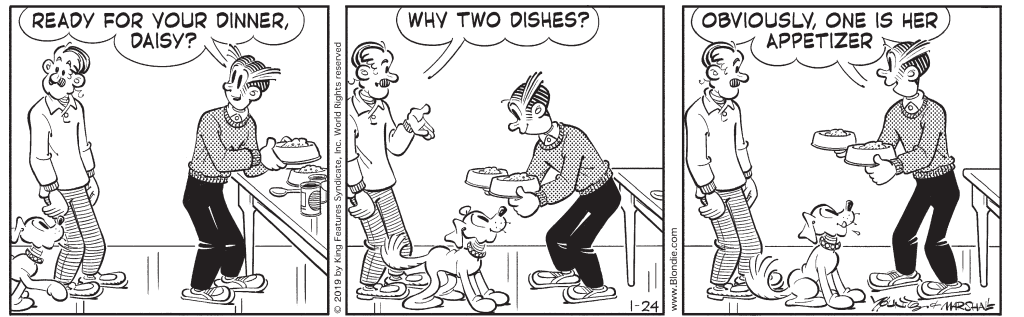
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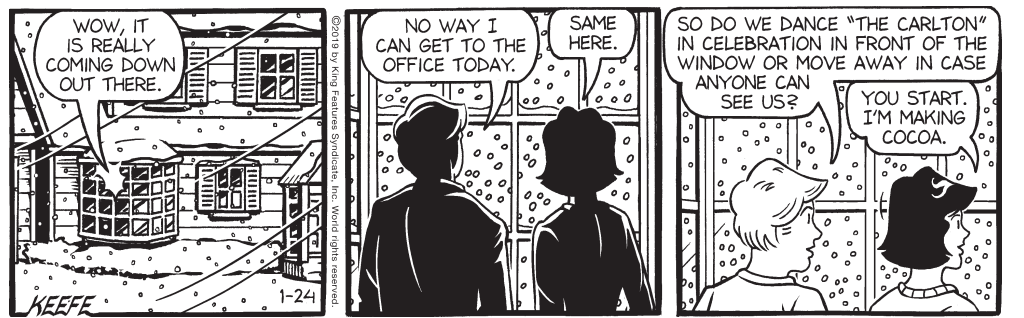
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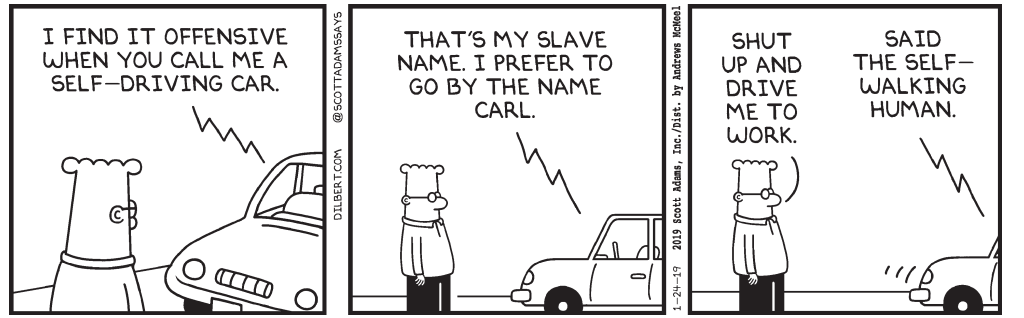
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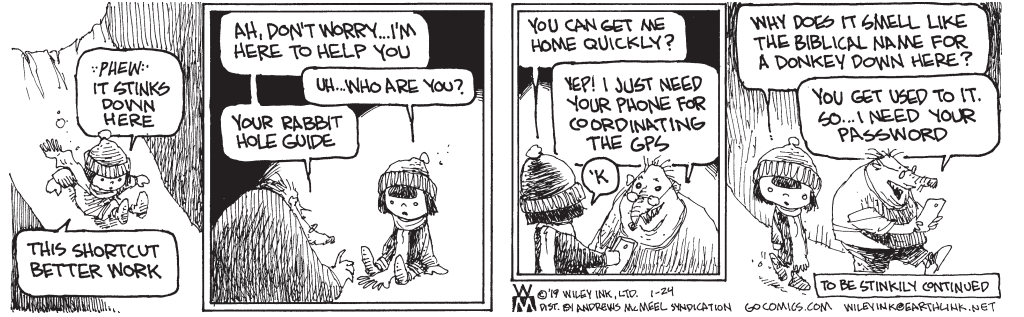
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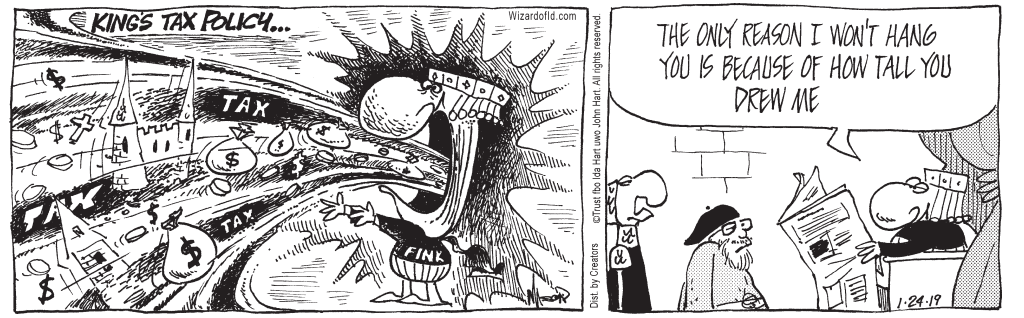
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