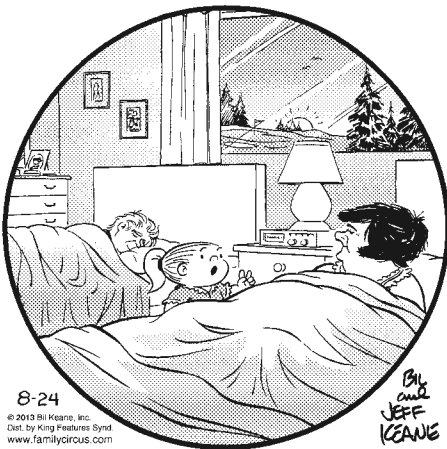


FAMILY CIRCUS | BIL KEANE



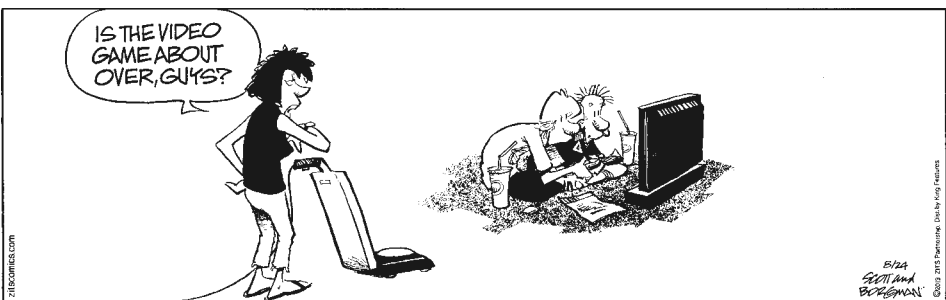
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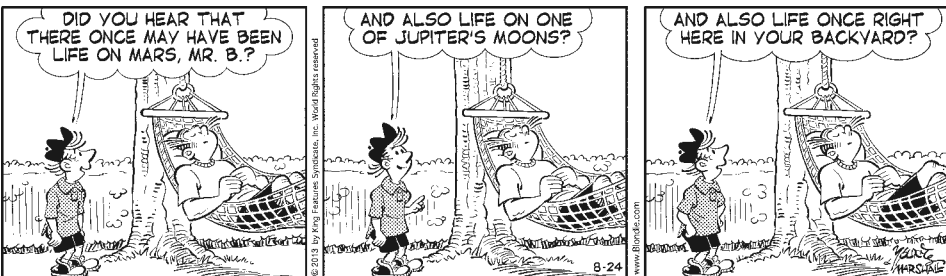
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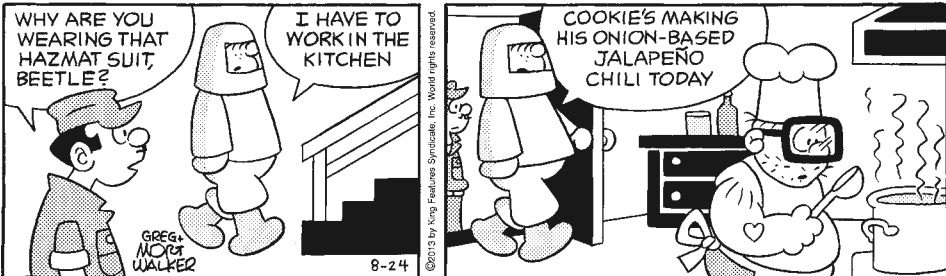
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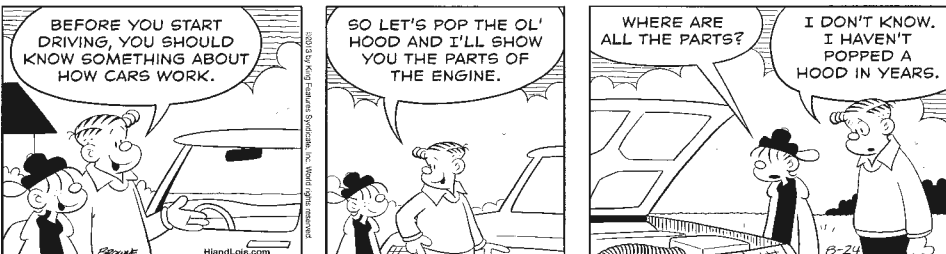
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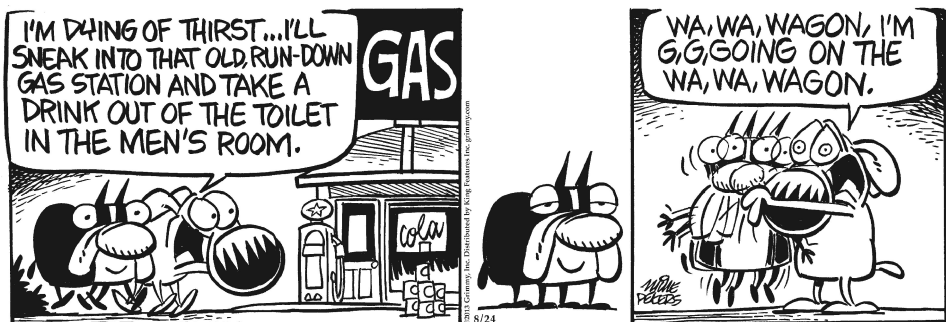
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Woman Needs Attitude Check To Become A Good Stepmom

DEAR ABBY: I am in my late 20s and have been with my boyfriend for more than two years. We are serious, having lived together for a year, and we discuss marriage often. We make all our major decisions and purchases together and are generally very happy.

The problem arises when his children from a previous relationship are around (he shares custody with his ex). I am overwhelmed by them. They are very needy and have some minor manner problems. I am uncomfortable with all the attention they demand of me. They are literally always in my space, trying to sit on my lap or show me something, etc. It gets to the point where I just want to get away. Sometimes they're OK and we have some fun, but it's the downtime at home that is annoying.

I am ashamed writing this, but I need some advice because the kids are obviously not going away. Will they grow out of this? It's making me question if I can remain in the relationship. — BOTH-ERED IN BUFFALO

DEAR BOTHERED: You need an attitude adjustment. I don't think you realize what a compliment it is that the children compete for your attention and want to be close to you. A way to deal with this could be to arrange to have one-on-one time with EACH child while your boyfriend spends time with the others. It is very important that they spend quality time with their father.

If you and he agree that their manners need tweaking, it shouldn't be too difficult to set a good example, and praise and reward them as they improve. When they grow older, they will develop interests of their own and be less needy. But for now, it is important you work on being patient, show the children you care about them — and let your boyfriend know when you need a timeout. Everyone does.

DEAR ABBY: My 26-year-old son has been going with a 23-year-old woman off and on for a year and a half. He has tried to break off the relationship several times. Last weekend

she played the "I'll kill myself" card when he told her he wanted to move on.

I take any threat of suicide seriously. However, she is holding this over his head. I need the right words to use to talk to him about her threat. — FEELING LOST IN GEORGIA

DEAR FEELING LOST: The woman is trying to manipulate your son using emotional blackmail. He should not attempt to "rescue" her by continuing to see her. During their next conversation, he should let her know the personal responsibility for her well-being is hers and hers alone, and he wants no part of it. If he feels she is truly a danger to herself, he should notify her family so they can help her get the psychological help she needs.



DEAR ABBY

Jeanne Phillips

■ Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

DEAR ABBY: Can you please tell me what women are looking for? I keep being told that they feel so "safe" with me, it's like dating their brother. They know I won't force them into doing anything they don't want to do. — PUZZLED IN NEW MEXICO

DEAR PUZZLED: It looks like the women you're asking out may have been dating men who forced them into doing things they didn't want, or may be trying to tell you politely that their interest in you is only platonic.

It's time to ask some married friends what is causing women to react to you this way. Having been through the dating scene, they should be able to give you some helpful input.

Abby shares more than 100 of her favorite recipes in two booklets: "Abby's Favorite Recipes" and "More Favorite Recipes by Dear Abby." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$14 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Cookbooklet Set, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

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JACQUELINE BIGAR'S STARS

EDITOR'S NOTE: Bigar's Stars is based on the degree of your sun at birth. The sign name is simply a label astrologers put on a set of degrees for convenience. For best results, readers should refer to the dates following each sign.

A baby born today has a Sun in Virgo and a Moon in Aries all day.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY FOR SATURDAY, AUG. 24, 2013:

This year you feel more comfortable kicking up your heels and becoming more playful than in the past. You often will be juggling two different interests. Knowing what you want can't be emphasized enough. You could be unusually fortunate, especially in your personal life. If you are single, you seriously might be considering a change of status this year. If you are attached, the two of you benefit from special time together. In some cases, you will be getting to know each other again. ARIES can be demanding.

The Stars Show the Kind of Day You'll Have: 5-Dynamic; 4-Positive; 3-Average; 2-So-so; 1-Difficult

ARIES (MARCH 21-APRIL 19)

★★★★ Your efficiency emerges, even if it's just playing softball or organizing a get-together with family. No one can deny your enthusiasm and energy. Opportunities seem to fly right by you. Allow greater give-and-take with a child, older friend or relative. Tonight: Trust your whims.

TAURUS (APRIL 20-MAY 20)

★★★ You will continue to be slightly remote. Assure a loved one that the issue has nothing to do with him or her. The unexpected occurs, which gives you more insight into what is happening. Return calls, and fun plans naturally will evolve. Tonight: Remain open to someone else's idea.

GEMINI (MAY 21-JUNE 20)

★★★★ Follow through on plans involving your immediate circle. You'll enjoy yourself no matter where you are, as long as you're with friends. Don't say "no" to an unorthodox invitation. Renew your energy with the excitement of something new. Tonight: You are the party.

CANCER (JUNE 21-JULY 22)

★★★ Pressure could build quickly, which will encourage you to take charge in the near future. You might feel in sync with this project. Recognize that an older family member needs some of your time. This person is more dependent than you realize. Tonight: A force to be dealt with.

LEO (JULY 23-AUG. 22)

★★★★ Keep reaching out to someone you care dearly about who might not be in the same town as you. When the two of you connect, you'll support each other in making positive changes to-

ward a long-desired goal you share together. Tonight: Go where you can be entertained.

VRIGO (AUG. 23-SEPT. 22)

★★★★ Relate to someone directly. Understand what is happening within a key relationship and/or business partnership. You don't often try to "get" this person, so try walking in his or her shoes. Your self-expression will be far more dynamic with greater understanding. Tonight: Be a duo.

LIBRA (SEPT. 23-OCT. 22)

★★★★ You might discover that there are limits to what you can do without the support of a friend or loved one. You often put up a good front, but you would be more successful with the person in question if you were more vulnerable. Tonight: Make and return calls.

SCORPIO (OCT. 23-NOV. 21)

★★★★ Take in a different perspective. You can get stuck in your own opinions and ideas, if you are not careful. Your creativity will flourish once communication starts to flow. You'll see the benefits of being more open as a result. Tonight: Carry the day's interactions into the night.

SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22-DEC. 21)

★★★★ It might be too much for others to ask you to contain yourself, and fortunately no one will. You seem to be able to share your feelings openly. Others respond to your enthusiasm in kind. You could be taken back by a partner's responsiveness. Tonight: Feel like a kid again.

CAPRICORN (DEC. 22-JAN. 19)

★★★ You might feel as if you can do no wrong, but a surprise could happen. A partner could try to branch out into new areas. Take a leap of faith; otherwise, you'll have to deal with a hassle. Because you are logical, you are likely to study the possibilities first. Tonight: Entertain guests.

AQUARIUS (JAN. 20-FEB. 18)

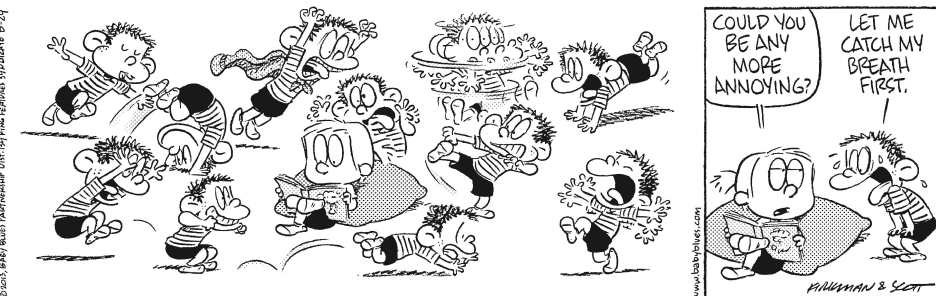
★★★★ You have a way with words that draws several people closer. If you are single, you could have a situation evolve between two potential suitors. Your best bet is to remain your charming self and continue maintaining a low profile. Tonight: Favorite people, favorite place.

PISCES (FEB. 19-MARCH 20)

★★★★ Rethink a recent expenditure, especially if some important information comes up that could affect your finances. Your creativity will kick into high gear, as you try to manage to have it all. Be reasonable, for everyone else's sake. Tonight: Pick up the tab for the group.

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BABY BLUES | RICK KIRKMAN AND JERRY SCOTT



FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE | LYNN JOHNSTON

