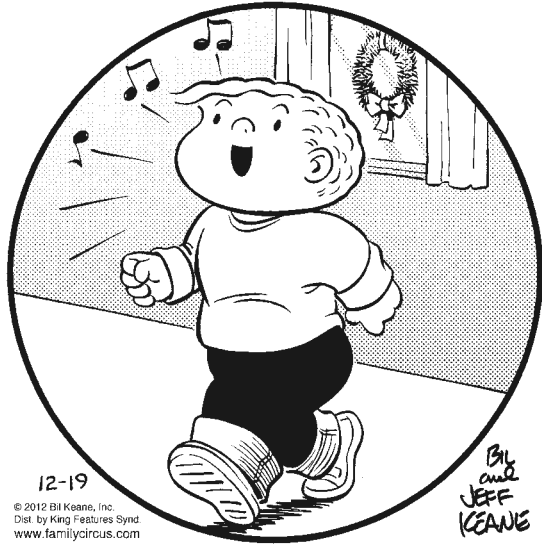
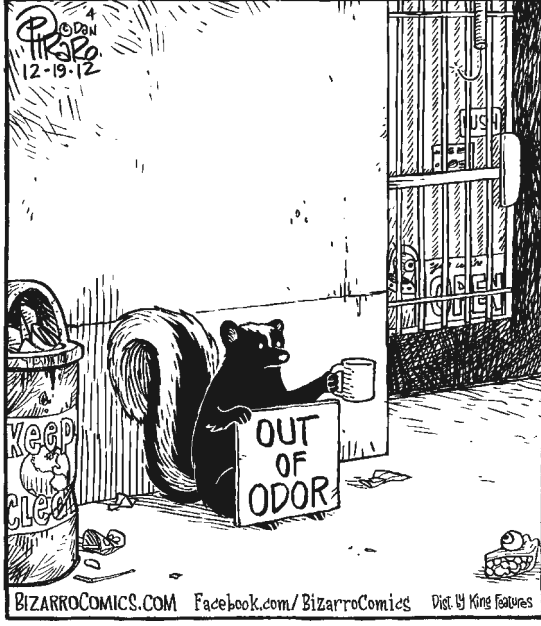


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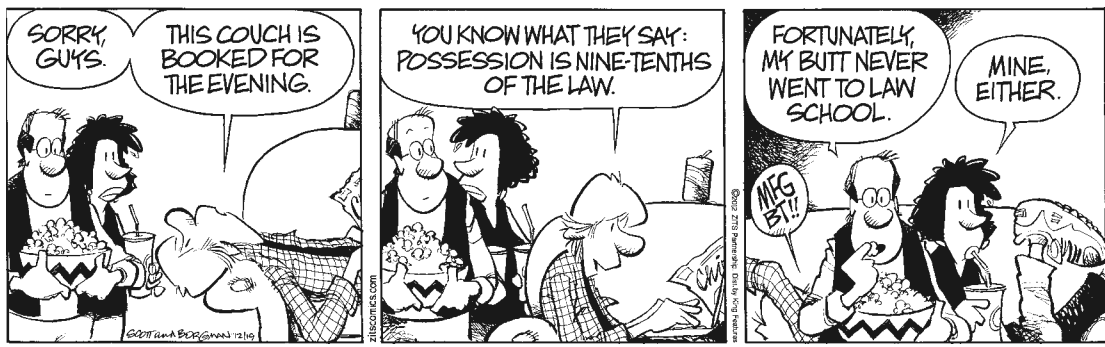
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'It's beginning to smell a lot like Christmas ...'

BIZARRO | DAN PIRARO

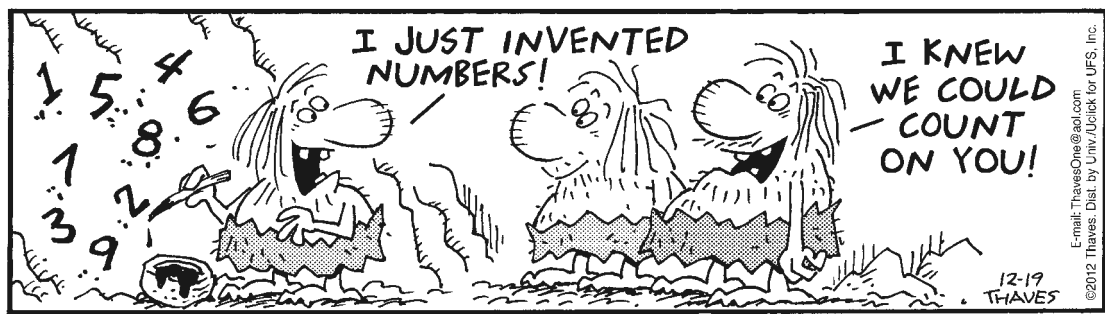


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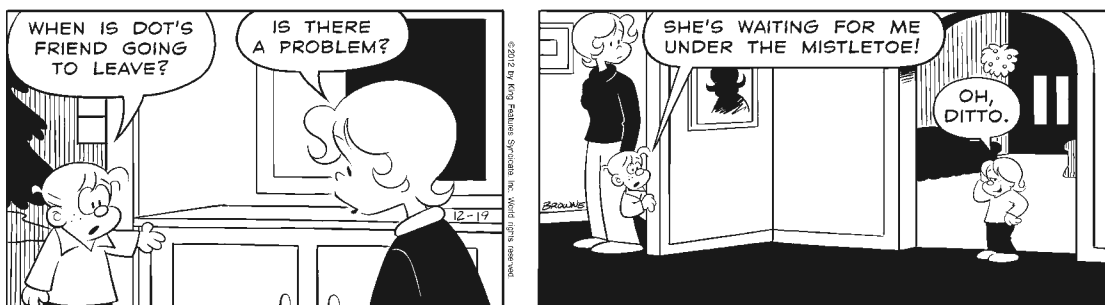
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Woman Deep In Love Triangle Has Trouble Thinking Straight

DEAR ABBY: I am a 31-year-old, never-married mother of two. Last summer I started having an affair with "Jordan," the father of my first child. He left me when our daughter was a year old and has been engaged for three years in an on-again, off-again relationship.

years and I love him very much, but I am no longer "in love" with him. Somehow along the way the spark has fizzled.

We have a wonderful family and have been through so much together. I don't want a divorce. I want to make our marriage work, and so does he. So how do I get my spark back? — SPARKLESS IN TEXAS



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.

I could give you excuses about why the affair started up again, but the truth is we both knew it was wrong and continued to do it anyway. I never stopped loving him and I thought it would bring him back to me.

Today I found out from Jordan's fiancée that they have set their wedding date for next spring. She said they would like for me to come. As if it wouldn't be painful enough to go to the wedding, his fiancée has also asked me to do her hair for the occasion. (I'm a hairstylist.)

Abby, Jordan and I are still having an affair. I want to tell her, but I don't want him to hate me. I believe this wedding is a big mistake for many reasons, not just the obvious. Please give me some outside advice. — CAN'T HELP MYSELF IN OHIO

DEAR CAN'T HELP YOURSELF: OK, the first thing to do is wake up, smell the coffee and accept that resuming the sexual relationship with Jordan has not had the desired effect. He WILL be marrying someone else.

Next, concentrate on saving yourself and waste no more of your time on him — that is, if you would like a permanent, monogamous relationship with someone. Jordan has given you ample proof that he is incapable of being faithful to one woman.

And last, tell his fiancée that you do not plan to attend the wedding or do her hair because you are in love with Jordan and have been sleeping with him since last summer.

DEAR ABBY: I have known my husband for seven

DEAR SPARKLESS: That you and your husband want your marriage to work means it is capable of being resuscitated. While you didn't give any details, it is possible that you have been "through so much" that it didn't allow you to concentrate on each other. Exhaustion and distraction can cause a spark to fizzle.

A way to reignite it would be to spend more time alone together, participate in activities you both enjoy, and make time on a regular basis to talk, relax and touch each other. And if necessary, enlist the services of a licensed marriage counselor.

DEAR ABBY: My sister relinquished custody of her kids in a divorce 30 years ago. I recently made contact with them to re-establish lost ties. The contact I made with the daughter has been a wonderful success. The other resulted in complete — and understandable — rejection.

Now my sister, who didn't want to open the door, blames me for her heartache because her son rejected her. Was I wrong for bringing at least one of them back into the family? — SISTER IN THE SOUTH

DEAR SISTER: Because you did it over your sister's objections, I think you were. While the daughter seems interested in establishing contact — at least for now — your sister has now "lost" her son TWICE. And if the daughter eventually backs off, your sister will be zero for two.

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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 Sagittarius and a Moon in Pisces if born before 11:43 p.m. (PST). Afterward, the Moon will be in Aries.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY FOR WEDNESDAY, DEC. 19, 2012:

This year you often are inspired to live out a dream or go for what you really want. Sometimes this path can be confusing. Friends and family who are observing you might become cynical. Don't worry -- you know what you are doing. If you are single, you could be drawn to a Capricorn or a very strong-willed individual. Working out this relationship might be important, but only you can make that decision. If you are attached, share more of your newfound inspiration by living it. ARIES can be a bull in a china shop.

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)

\*\*\* You might react in a resistant manner to someone's proposal. Whether it is good or bad, think about the consequences that your reactions might bring. Take a stand, but explain your reasoning behind it. Pressure could build as a result. Tonight: Off to the gym.

TAURUS (APRIL 20-MAY 20)

\*\*\*\* Act quickly, or you could miss out on an important opportunity. A conversation with an adviser points to making a more solid decision about present facts. You might have strong feelings for a new friend. If you are not ready to share, don't. Tonight: Take some personal time.

GEMINI (MAY 21-JUNE 20)

\*\*\*\*\* Zero in on a goal. The unexpected surrounds a revelation, which allows you to move forward. A partner or loved one supports and even pushes you toward the finish line. Tension builds until you opt to jump right in and go for it. Tonight: Only where your friends are.

CANCER (JUNE 21-JULY 22)

\*\*\*\*\* Others look up to you. A surprising event occurs, which will force you to regroup. Understanding evolves after a conversation. You might not like how assertive a friend or loved one is, but at least this person gets the action moving. Tonight: To the wee hours.

LEO (JULY 23-AUG. 22)

\*\*\*\* Work with a partner directly. Unusual information could toss your thinking into "revamp" mode. Verify

that what you are hearing is legitimate and factual. Appreciate someone's efforts, and say "thank you" in a way that he or she can hear. Tonight: Only where there is music.

VIRGO (AUG. 23-SEPT. 22)

\*\*\*\* Others dominate the scene and want control. That's OK -- you have other fish to fry. While others express their power, you might have some extra time off to go holiday shopping. A loved one lets you know that he or she expects more time with you. Tonight: Remain sensitive to a friend.

LIBRA (SEPT. 23-OCT. 22)

\*\*\*\* Easy works, but not everyone is in agreement with you. A family member knows how to push you hard. Your options are: fight, go along with his or her demands, or flee the scene. It is your decision. Honor your needs, even if one of them is to buy this person a muzzle! Tonight: Get some extra R and R.

SCORPIO (OCT. 23-NOV. 21)

\*\*\*\* You might want to move past a problem involving someone talking too much. You already have tried to isolate yourself by screening calls. How creative can you be in telling someone you don't want to hear any more, and not damage your bond? Tonight: Silence is nice.

SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22-DEC. 21)

\*\*\* Tension easily could get the best of you. Do you feel as if someone is dragging you down? You suddenly might decide to toss the shackles and free yourself, which could result in a mouth-gaping audience. Ultimately, does this act serve you? Tonight: Put your feet up and relax.

CAPRICORN (DEC. 22-JAN. 19)

\*\*\*\* You might be coming off stronger than you realize. If someone backs away, he or she probably has good reason. A little softness goes a long way. Go for a walk. Reduce high energy to a level that's easier to manage. Respond to a close friend. Tonight: Relax with a pal.

AQUARIUS (JAN. 20-FEB. 18)

\*\*\*\* You can flex your budget, or you could consider robbing Peter to pay Paul. The best solution would be to pare down remaining gifts. Brainstorm with a friend. Remember that it isn't the cost, but the thought that counts. Tonight: Rethink your shopping list.

PISCES (FEB. 19-MARCH 20)

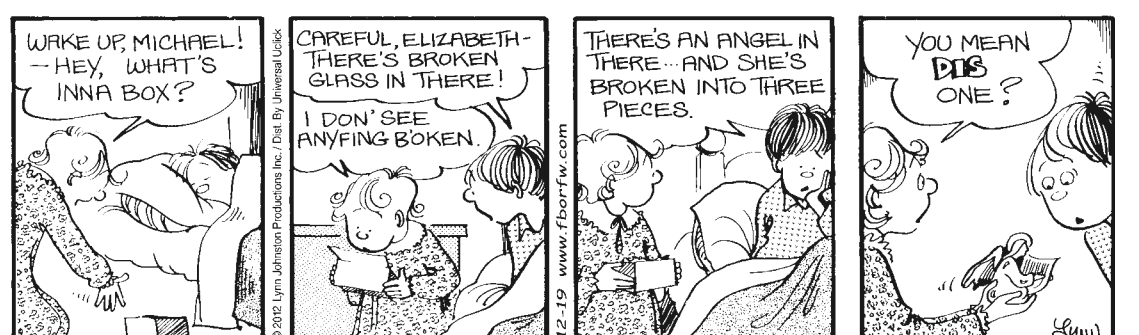
\*\*\*\* You can try positive thinking, but that might not bring you what you want. It is too late to write to Santa. Go out, and lasso in exactly what you would like. Someone appreciates your directness and finds it flattering. Tonight: Keep wishing on a star, but only if you must.

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BABY BLUES | RICK KIRKMAN AND JERRY SCOTT



FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE | LYNN JOHNSTON



MOTHER GOOSE AND GRIMM | MIKE PETERS

