

COMICS

MARMADUKE



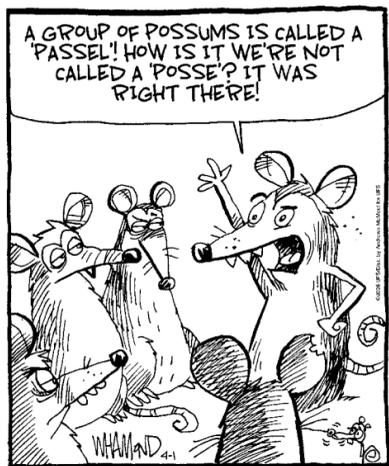
"Marmaduke has the BEST sound effects for scary stories."

HERMAN



"You call yourself 'early man'? You're three hours late!"

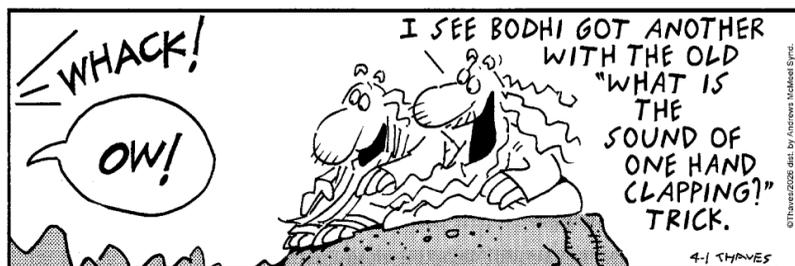
REALITY CHECK



MODERATELY CONFUSED



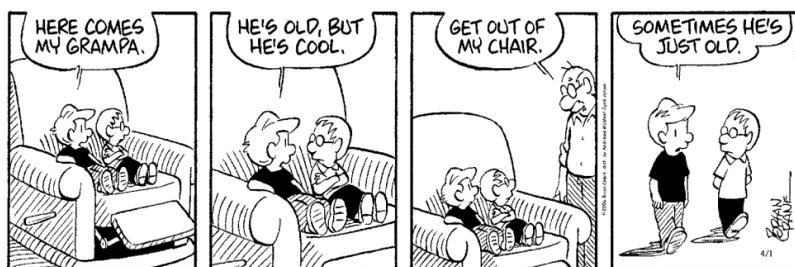
FRANK & ERNEST



THE GRIZZLELLS



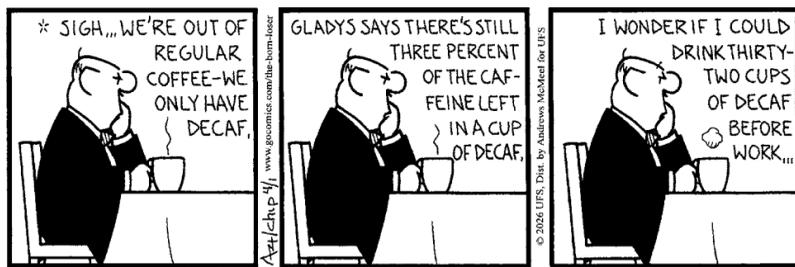
PICKLES



BLONDIE



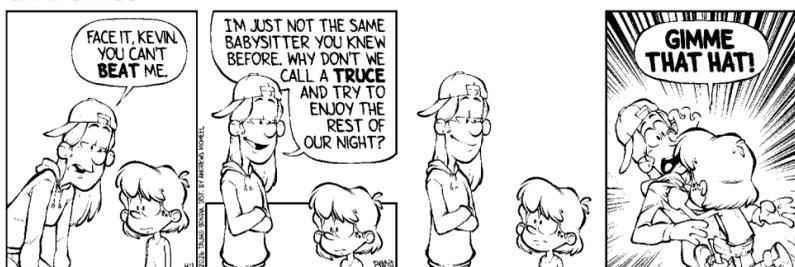
BORN LOSER



HI AND LOIS



CRABGRASS



Kids' Privilege Has Distorted Their Perspectives



ANNIE LANE

Dear Annie

Dear Annie: My spouse and I chose to raise our kids in a neighborhood with excellent schools and a strong sense of community. The downside is that it's also a very affluent area, and many of the families around us are far wealthier than we are. We work hard and live comfortably enough, but we can't provide the kinds of luxuries that some of our children's friends take for granted -- brand-name clothes, international vacations, new cars at 16 and the latest electronics.

Lately, our kids have started acting embarrassed about what we can't afford. They complain that their friends have nicer things and sometimes act as if we're failing them because we can't keep up with the spending around us. It's painful, because we've always tried to emphasize gratitude, responsibility and living within our means. We also worry that they're losing sight of how fortunate they actually are.

I don't want to dismiss their feelings, but I also don't want to raise kids who think love and success are measured by material things. How can we help them develop a healthier perspective when they're surrounded by so much wealth and comparison every day? -- Feeling Outmatched

Dear Outmatched: Comparison is powerful, especially for kids surrounded by wealth. What your children are experiencing isn't unusual -- but it doesn't mean you've done anything wrong. As Theodore Roosevelt wisely said, "Comparison is the thief of joy."

I really like her, but I worry that our lifestyles are too different to be compatible long-term. I don't want to pressure her into activities she dislikes, but I also can't imagine giving up the physical side of my life that I love and rely on.

Is it possible to build a lasting relationship when your passions and daily habits are so different, or is this a sign that we're not meant for each other? -- Caught Between Heart and Sweat

Dear Heart and Sweat: It's possible to make it work, but it requires compromise and respect. Celebrate the activities you love without making her feel guilty, and find small ways to share experiences she enjoys. A lasting relationship doesn't require identical lifestyles, but both partners need to honor each other's passions. If your core values align and you communicate openly, differences in activity levels can be managed rather than a deal-breaker.

"Out of Bounds: Estrangement, Boundaries and the Search for Forgiveness" is out now! Annie Lane's third anthology is for anyone who has lived with anger, estrangement or the deep ache of being wronged -- because forgiveness isn't for them. It's for you. Visit <http://www.creatorspublishing.com> for more information. Follow Annie Lane on Instagram at @dearannieofficial. Send your questions for Annie Lane to dearannie@creators.com. COPYRIGHT 2026 CREATORS.COM

Remind your kids (and yourself) that measuring life against others' possessions only steals happiness.

Keep talking openly about your family's values and the reasons behind your financial choices. Emphasize that character, kindness and responsibility matter far more than status symbols. Over time, those lessons tend to stick, even if they roll their eyes now.

And remember, many parents with far more money would gladly trade it for the kind of perspective you're giving your children.

Dear Annie: I'm a competitive athlete, and my life revolves around training, staying active and maintaining a healthy lifestyle. I've recently fallen for a woman, and we have a lot in common -- similar senses of humor, shared values, and she's incredibly kind. But there's a problem: She's not into physical activity at all. She doesn't enjoy walking around the block, hiking or participating in the outdoor activities that are a big part of my life. Even casual things like biking on weekends feel like a chore for her.

ASTROGRAPH BY EUGENIA LAST

Stand on guard and be ready to act. Your ability to see situations and solutions simultaneously will help you carry out your plans with ease this year. Sticking to the rules will help you dodge temptation and loss. Let your intelligence lead to opportunities. Live life your way.

ARIES (March 21-April 19) -- Think creatively, and you'll dazzle everyone with your insight. An emotional situation is best handled swiftly before matters escalate. Protect your assets and yourself.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) -- Get busy, make your move and be the one to make things happen. Make some calls and set up meetings, and you'll gain access to information that can help you further your agenda.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20) -- Learn something new. Sign up for a course that encourages you to increase your mental, physical or emotional strength. Take a chance and make a positive change.

CANCER (June 21-July 22) -- Avoid taking life too seriously. Step back from the drama, and you'll find alternative options that encourage you to let go of what's no longer working for you.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) -- Walk away from negative people. Refuse to let anyone stifle your plans; actions will help you carry your thoughts forward. Live in the present and let go of the past.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) -- Taking care of business will make it easier to release stress and

enjoy life's little pleasures. Shoot for greater balance between work and play, and set a routine that puts your mind at ease.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23) -- You know what's coming, but are you ready to adjust? Think about recent events, and you'll find a way to navigate the changes that are heading your way.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 22) -- Making impossible promises or demands will take its toll. Put emotions aside and be reasonable, and you'll devise an alternative that works wonders for others and puts you in a good position.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23-Dec. 21) -- Do your best to protect yourself against misrepresentation, gossip and false information. "Waste not, want not" is the mantra for today. Set your space up to reflect your lifestyle.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) -- Take notes, keep tabs on what you hear and see, and separate truth from fiction. Protect and appreciate yourself and awaken to truth and possibilities.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 19) -- Lay down a foundation and begin your journey. The possibilities are endless if you restrict excess and use your time and ingenuity to reach your goals.

PISCES (Feb. 20-March 20) -- Interact with people who spark your imagination and motivate you to use your intelligence and talents to get ahead. Take advantage of networking opportunities and use any public venue to promote yourself.

- ACROSS**
- 1 Go from — to worse
 - 4 Container for flowers
 - 8 Jewish month
 - 12 — Wan
 - 13 Kenobi
 - 14 Apple tablet
 - 15 High-maintenance singer
 - 16 Tummy muscles
 - 17 Tear
 - 18 First (Abbr.)
 - 20 Hinder
 - 22 — Claire,
 - 23 Wisconsin
 - 24 Have a bite
 - 28 Rues
 - 28 Ait
 - 32 Cry of sadness
 - 33 Unknown writer (Abbr.)
 - 35 Give — go
 - 36 Seaman
- DOWN**
- 37 Footnote abbr.
 - 38 Burn the surface of — the line
 - 41 Cotton fabric
 - 43 Hack
 - 45 Corn spike
 - 46 Standing
 - 49 Calla lily or cuckoo pint
 - 52 Spoken
 - 53 Door frame part
 - 56 Sea urchin roe
 - 57 Isinglass
 - 58 Utah city
 - 59 Gun grp.
 - 60 "... partridge in a — tree"
 - 61 Hot beverages
 - 62 East Coast state (Abbr.)
- DOWN**
- 1 Ark
 - 2 "Dancing Queen" group
 - 3 Ignore

Answer to this puzzle

T	E	D	S	A	V	E	T	R	E	A	R	E	P	A	D
A	R	N	M	R	O	R	E	A	C	I	A	M	I	C	A
I	N	U	L	L	S	T	A	V	A	L	O	R	A	O	
D	O	R	V	A	T	E	R	E	F	U	T	E	R	E	
R	A	R	E	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	
E	T	E	C	R	E	P	E	F	O	N	D	E	N	E	
R	A	V	S	D	I	B	I	S	V	A	L	A	R	T	
A	V	L	T	S	I	N	A	V	S	V	A	L	A	R	
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I	A	V	A	D	I	P	A	D	I	P	A	D	I	B	I
A	D	A	R	A	S	E	V	A	L	A	R	T			

- 4 Moral goodness
- 5 Simian
- 6 — Antonio, Texas
- 7 Actor — Murphy
- 8 Takes as one's own
- 9 Terrible
- 10 Eager
- 11 Anger
- 19 Rowing need
- 21 Big pipe for water
- 24 Appraise
- 25 — vital
- 26 Bar bill
- 27 Cut
- 29 Be idle (2 wds.)
- 30 Footnote abbr.
- 31 Vetch seed
- 34 Pindaric
- 37 "— first you don't succeed ..."
- 38 Wound result
- 40 Of sight
- 42 Domains
- 44 Infatuate
- 46 Play boisterously
- 47 Pennsylvania port
- 48 Spotted rodent
- 50 About (2 wds.)
- 51 Soap brand
- 54 Fury
- 55 Grassland

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
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46	47	48				49		50	51	
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60				61				62		