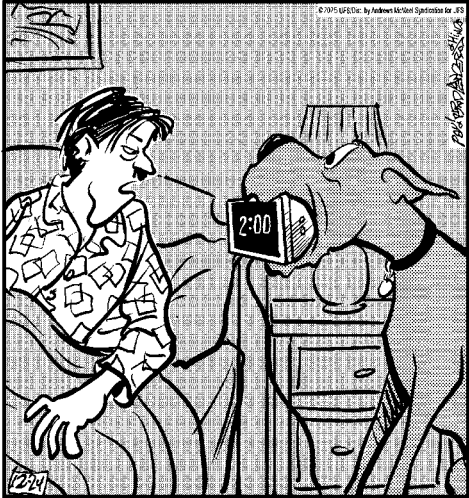


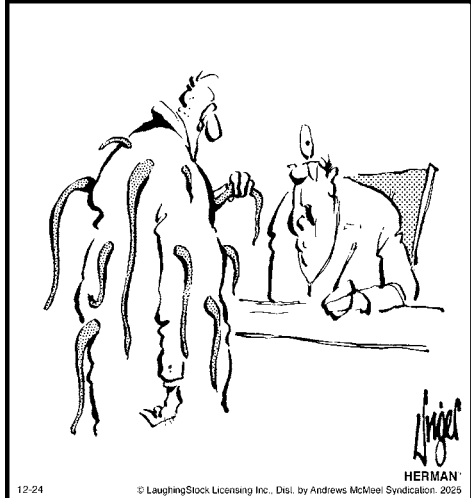
COMICS

MARMADUKE



“Santa has a few more hours. Go back to sleep.”

HERMAN



“It’s nothing to worry about. You just need to drink more water.”

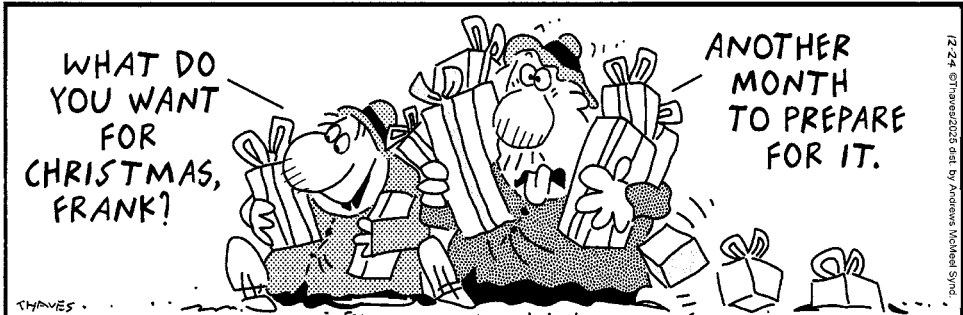
REALITY CHECK



MODERATELY CONFUSED



FRANK & ERNEST



THE GRIZZWELLS



PICKLES



BLONDIE



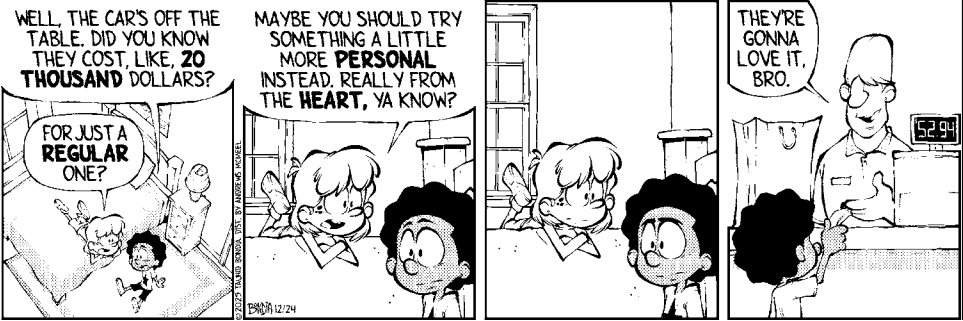
BORN LOSER



HI AND LOIS



CRABGRASS



Happy Holidays to All

Dear Readers: Wishing you and all a very happy holiday season. Please enjoy the following poem.

“A Visit from St. Nicholas” by Clement Clarke Moore.

“’Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house / Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse; / The stockings were hung by the chimney with care, / In hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be there; / The children were nestled all snug in their beds, / While visions of sugar-plums danced in their heads; / And mamma in her ‘kerchief, and I in my cap, / Had just settled our brains for a long winter’s nap. / When out on the lawn there arose such a clatter, / I sprang from the bed to see what was the matter. / Away to the window I flew like a flash, / Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash. / The moon on the breast of the new-fallen snow / Gave the lustre of mid-day to objects below, / When, what to my wondering eyes should appear, / But a miniature sleigh, and eight tiny reindeer, / With a little old driver, so lively and quick, / I knew in a moment it must be St. Nick. / More rapid than eagles his coursers they came, / And he whistled, and shouted, and called them by name; / ‘Now, Dasher! now, Dancer! now, Prancer and Vixen! / On, Comet! on, Cupid! on, Dunder and Blitzen! / To the



ANNIE LANE
Dear Annie

top of the porch! to the top of the wall! / Now dash away! dash away! / dash away! / dash away all! / As dry leaves that before the wild hurricane fly, / When they meet with an obstacle, mount to the sky; / So up to the house-top the coursers they flew, / With the sleigh full of Toys, and St. Nicholas too. / And then, in a twinkling, I heard on the roof / The prancing and pawing of each little hoof. / As I drew in my head, and was turning around, / Down the chimney St. Nicholas came with a bound. / He was dressed all in fur, from his head to his foot, / And his clothes were all tarnished with ashes and soot; / A bundle of Toys he had flung on his back, / And he looked like a pedler just opening his pack. / His eyes -- how they twinkled! his dimples how merry! / His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a cherry! / His droll little mouth was drawn up like a bow / And the beard of his chin was as white as the snow; / The stump of a pipe he held tight in his teeth, / And the

smoke it encircled his head like a wreath; / He had a broad face and a little round belly, / That shook when he laughed, like a bowlful of jelly. / He was chubby and plump, a right jolly old elf, / And I laughed when I saw him, in spite of myself; / A wink of his eye and a twist of his head, / Soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread; / He spoke not a word, but went straight to his work, / And filled all the stockings; then turned with a jerk, / And laying his finger aside of his nose, / And giving a nod, up the chimney he rose; / He sprang to his sleigh, to his team gave a whistle, / And away they all flew like the down of a thistle, / But I heard him exclaim, ere he drove out of sight, / ‘Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good-night.’”

“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.
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ASTROGRAPH BY EUGENIA LAST

Money and mixed emotions will hold you back. Distance yourself from drama and situations that play on your weaknesses. Say no to interference and yes to following your heart and dreams. It’s time to put yourself first. Once you are content, you can reach out and help others. Timing and priorities are essential.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) -- Maintaining discipline and sticking to your original game plan will get you where you want to go at a price you can afford. Choose well-thought-out ideas and stay within your budget.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 19) -- Jump into action, do your part and make fond memories with the ones you love. Put your best foot forward, and the love you get in return will be the best gift ever.

PISCES (Feb. 20-March 20) -- You’ve got everything under control. Don’t let consumption be your downfall. Be the good Samaritan, the one who looks out for others and offers a helping hand wherever and whenever necessary.

ARIES (March 21-April 19) -- Do the legwork necessary to ensure you aren’t caught off guard by those who try your patience during the festive season. It’s up to you to protect yourself from any fallout that comes your way.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) -- Mixed emotions will set in, leading you to question whether what you are donating or dealing with is worthwhile. Travel, visits and gatherings with loved ones you don’t get to see very often will be enlightening.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20) -- Review the

year gone by, weigh the pros and cons, and establish what to put to rest and what to carry forward. Look at the big picture, but once your vision is clear, take a minimalist approach to how you proceed.

CANCER (June 21-July 22) -- It’s the thought that counts, and last-minute shopping can be time-consuming if you don’t have a plan or the cash on hand. Cap your spending; it’s the thought, not what you spend on a gift, that counts.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) -- Offering help, money or time is admirable, but don’t let anyone take advantage of your kindness. Charity begins at home this year. Look around, and support loved ones.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) -- Participation will be called for. Attend fundraisers, mix business with pleasure or lift the spirits of someone who is down and out. Emotions will be close to the surface.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23) -- Everybody has a story. Don’t judge; show compassion. Manage your consumption to avoid the consequences and regrets that follow indulgence, especially when mixing business with pleasure.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 22) -- Leave yourself plenty of time to get to where you want to go. Traveling at this time of year can be stressful. Stay calm and enjoy the moment. It’s a time to make memories, not regrets.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23-Dec. 21) -- Proceed with patience and good intentions. A gracious attitude and a big smile will help deter anyone from taking their frustrations out on you. Be the good Samaritan, not the Grinch.

- ACROSS**
- 1 Fleecy animal
 - 4 Tardy
 - 8 --made man
 - 12 Wire measure
 - 13 Unvarying
 - 14 Margarine
 - 15 Anger
 - 16 Bird’s home
 - 17 Highway division
 - 18 Send, as payment
 - 20 Occupant
 - 22 Do a publishing job
 - 24 Sinbad’s bird
 - 25 Segmented worm
 - 28 Cry
 - 31 Facts and figures
 - 32 Back muscle, for short
 - 34 Roosted
 - 36 Lawyers’ orgy.
- DOWN**
- 1 Eastern potentate
 - 2 Telegram
 - 3 Basic
 - 37 Palindrome word
 - 38 Altar’s place
 - 39 Opening
 - 42 Destructive insect
 - 44 Watch pocket
 - 46 Inbox item
 - 47 Exertion
 - 50 Bracing drink
 - 53 -- and hearty
 - 54 Jason’s ship
 - 56 Altar
 - 57 constellation
 - 58 Press
 - 59 Liquor
 - 60 Winter glider
 - 61 Aug. follower
 - 62 Superlative suffix

Answer to this puzzle

T	S	E		T	D	E	S		D	E	T	S
N	I	G		R	A	V	S		N	O	R	I
V	R	V		O	G	R	V		E	T	V	H
C	I	N	O	T		T	R	O	F	E		
			O	M	E	W		B	O	F		
E	T	I	W	R	E	T		T	O	T	S	
E	S	D	V		E	R	E		V	B	V	
T	V	S			V	T		V	T	N	V	
	D	E	E	M		D	O	I	T	E	N	N
			C	O	R			I	D	E		
	T	N	V	N	E	T		T	I	W	E	R
E	N	V	T		T	S	E	N		E	R	I
O	N	T	O		N	E	A		T	I	W	
F	E	L	S									E

- 4 Edible seed
- 5 “-- Maria”
- 6 School event
- 7 Stage direction
- 8 Comfort
- 9 -- vital
- 10 Time of fasting
- 11 Rival
- 19 Brainstorming result
- 21 “At once!”
- 23 Scrabble piece
- 25 Oklahoma town
- 26 Seizes
- 27 Flit
- 29 Secret agent’s specialty
- 30 Gone by
- 33 Abound
- 35 Golf peg
- 38 Bombs and bullets
- 40 Insult
- 41 Overly
- 43 Sharp reply
- 45 Orchestra section
- 47 Nobleman
- 48 Floating ice mass
- 49 Family relationships diagram
- 51 Eye part
- 52 Jargon
- 53 That man’s
- 55 Mountain pass