

# COMICS

## MARMADUKE



"Stop drooling on the shopping list."

## HERMAN



"I asked that lawyer on the third floor what time he wanted me to clean his office and he sent me a bill for a consultation."

## REALITY CHECK



## MODERATELY CONFUSED



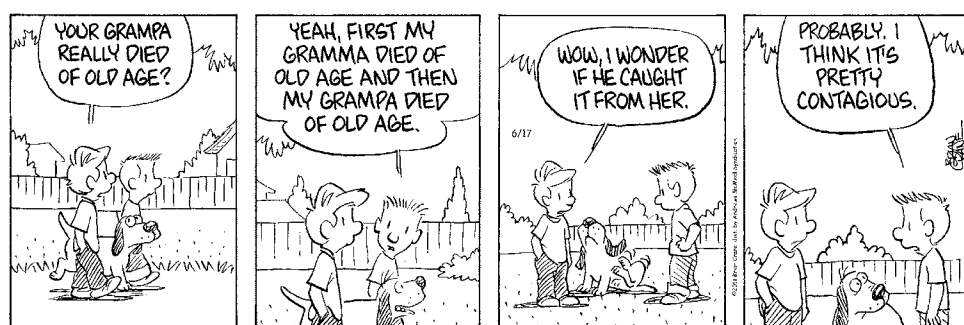
## FRANK & ERNEST



## THE GRIZZLELLS



## PICKLES



## BLONDIE



## BORN LOSER



## HI AND LOIS



## CRABGRASS



# Drama at the Gym



ANNIE LANE

Dear Annie

Dear Annie: I love the gym. It has really helped me gain confidence and strength. I have been going to the same gym in our small town for roughly 10 years. I know all the people there and enjoy my time there -- until lately.

There is a woman who just started going to the gym who is toxic. She really hurt a dear friend of mine, whose child was in the same class as her child, by spreading vicious rumors that she was having an affair with a tennis instructor. This was not true. She is the typical mean girl from middle school who we all choose to forget -- the girl who never grew up.

Aside from comforting my hurt friend, I never came into contact with this woman until she joined my gym. Now I have to see her daily, and it bothers me. It seems like every time I sign up for a class, she is also in the same class. -- Took Away My Happy Place

Dear Took Away: Don't let her take away your happy place. So long as she does not try to engage you in conversation, just ignore her. The gym is a big place with lots of people, so don't let one bad apple spoil the bunch. Focus on your exercises and on the kind people, the friends you have made at the gym over

the years, and you won't have time to focus on her negativity. If you consciously choose to focus your attention on all the wonderful people and experiences you have at the moment, she will become like white noise in the background, and you won't even notice her.

Dear Annie: I was hanging out with my closest friend, "Alice," and her friend, "Jane," and they started talking about Alice's ex-boyfriend. They asked me to leave for a minute so they could talk privately, but then they avoided me for the rest of the day.

Once Alice and I both got home, she sent a message saying our friendship wasn't working and how we shouldn't be friends anymore. I agreed with her, considering the fact that she couldn't trust me.

But then, without explanation, for the next few days, Alice was friendly and nice. At that point, I was broken. I've been crying over this. What

should I do? -- Confused Girl

Dear Confused Girl: Her behavior is certainly confusing; it makes no sense. One day she is nice, and the next day she is mean, and then she is nice again. If you want this friendship to continue, you have to find out why she doesn't trust you. If she makes up a reason, or if you don't agree with her, then I might pull away and find a new friend, one who is consistently kind. She might also be suffering from a mental illness. If her behavior continues to be erratic, encourage her to seek help.

"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](mailto:dearannie@creators.com).

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## ASTROGRAPH BY EUGENIA LAST

Happy Birthday: Change will tempt you this year, but don't let it cost you. Do the legwork, talk less, do more and choose to simplify your routine instead of exhausting yourself on things that don't or won't matter or make a difference to the outcome.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20) -- A personal change awaits you. Start conversations with people who have something to offer, or those in an authoritative position who can guide you forward, making sure you understand the rules and regulations.

CANCER (June 21-July 22) -- Set priorities and high standards, and follow through with your plans. Dreaming is not the same as delivering. Don't limit what you can do because you are too busy trying to get even with someone.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) -- Gather information and participate, and you'll broaden your comprehension of what's possible and expand your plans to meet your demands. You are overdue for a change.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) -- Keep busy, catch up and make room for the people and pastimes that make you happy. Expand your interests and your vision, and test your strengths and weaknesses.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23) -- Attending social events, engaging in flirtatious banter and exploring the possibilities of forming a unique partnership with someone who has as much to offer as you do will inspire you to gain momentum.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 22) -- Refuse to let trivial matters, gossip or emotional conversations stand in your way or ruin your day. Put your

energy into research and expanding your knowledge, experience and connections to those who have something to offer.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23-Dec. 21) -- By directing your energy into lifestyle improvements and a less indulgent and more rhythmic and regimented routine, you'll begin to make steady gains that boost your awareness regarding what's possible.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) -- Open conversations that offer insight into what you can do and what you want to do, and you'll gain insight into options you hadn't considered. Go directly to the source or the one in an authoritative position to bypass setbacks.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 19) -- Emotions will surface, but progress can and will be made. Be receptive to change and ready to compromise to ensure everything runs smoothly. Keep the momentum flowing and your eyes on your goal.

PISCES (Feb. 20-March 20) -- Consider what's available to you, but take a wait-and-see approach to initiating change. Put your energy into expanding your interests, skills and association with people heading down a similar path.

ARIES (March 21-April 19) -- A change of plans will play in your favor. Engage in projects that encourage you to be the best version of yourself. Network, take a leadership position and market yourself for success.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) -- Prepare to take care of minor details when you're put on hold, and make the most of your time. An opportunity to improve your surroundings, living arrangements or lifestyle is worth checking into.

- ACROSS**
- 1 "Gun"
  - 4 Acquires
  - 8 Mend
  - 12 Stat. in baseball
  - 13 Gothic arch
  - 14 Have -- in one's bonnet
  - 15 Tree fluid
  - 16 Culture medium
  - 17 Bare
  - 18 Snoozed
  - 20 Triumphant one
  - 22 "Murders in the -- Morgue"
  - 23 Holiday lead-in
  - 24 Power source
  - 28 Plant fungus
  - 32 Bat wood
  - 33 "My bad!"
  - 35 The "loneliest" number
  - 36 Flower garland
  - 37 Food shop
  - 38 Roll
  - 39 Knight's weapon
  - 41 Most eager
  - 44 That girl
  - 46 Made the acquaintance of
  - 47 Spatter
  - 50 Soup holders
  - 53 Cambodia neighbor
  - 54 Type style (Abbr.)
  - 57 -- Claire, Wisconsin
  - 58 Encourage
  - 59 Church's central aisle
  - 60 -- out a living
  - 61 Marsh plant
  - 62 City in Utah
  - 63 Snood

- DOWN**
- 1 Thomas Hardy heroine
  - 2 Spoken
  - 3 Like onionskin (Hyph.)
  - 4 Beard
  - 5 Fellow
  - 6 Brewed beverage
  - 7 Put the ball in play
  - 8 Hooper
  - 9 Touch on
  - 10 Change the decor
  - 11 -- do-well
  - 19 Position
  - 21 Currier and --
  - 24 Fancy dance
  - 25 On the Pacific
  - 26 Caviar
  - 27 Custard ingredient
  - 29 Middleman (Hyph.)
  - 30 Burden
  - 31 Big top
  - 34 Dessert choice
  - 37 Letters
  - 40 Pursued
  - 42 Symbol
  - 43 Role in "The Matrix"
  - 45 Horned animal, for short
  - 47 Aspersion
  - 48 Reduce
  - 49 Seating area
  - 51 "Lady in the --"
  - 52 Fat
  - 55 Sticky stuff
  - 56 "-- Maria"

Answer to this puzzle

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