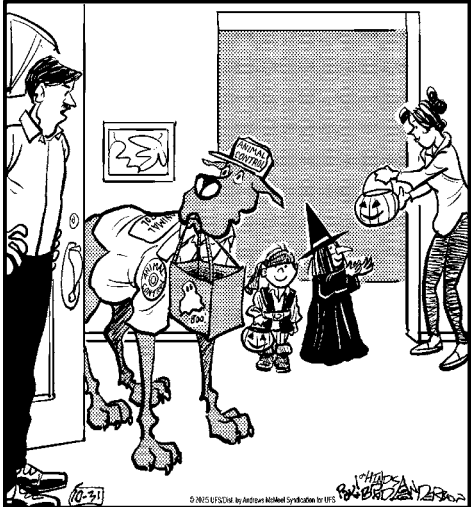


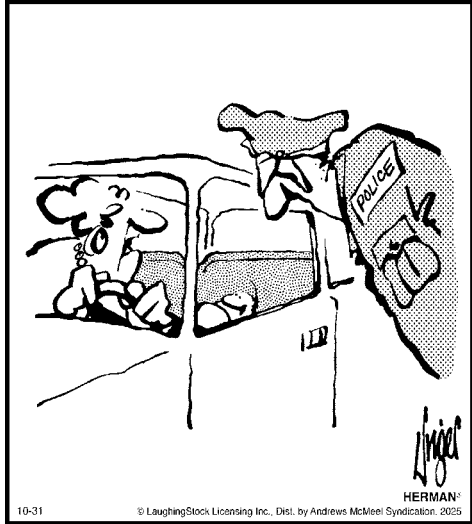
COMICS

MARMADUKE



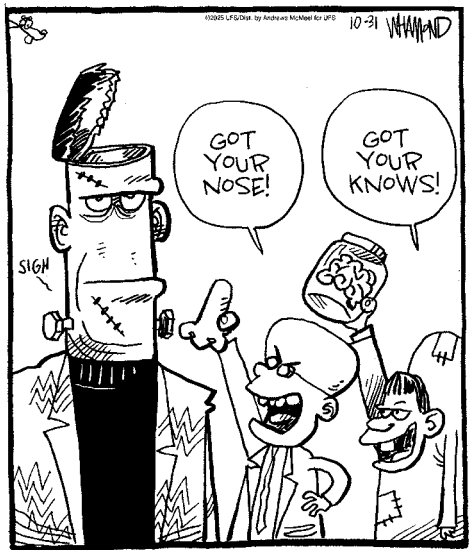
"Great costumes... wait... where did you get that?"

HERMAN



"He's been driving 16 hours non-stop."

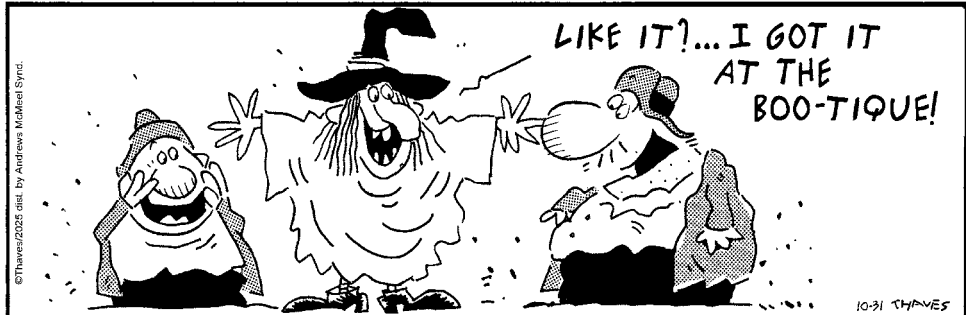
REALITY CHECK



MODERATELY CONFUSED



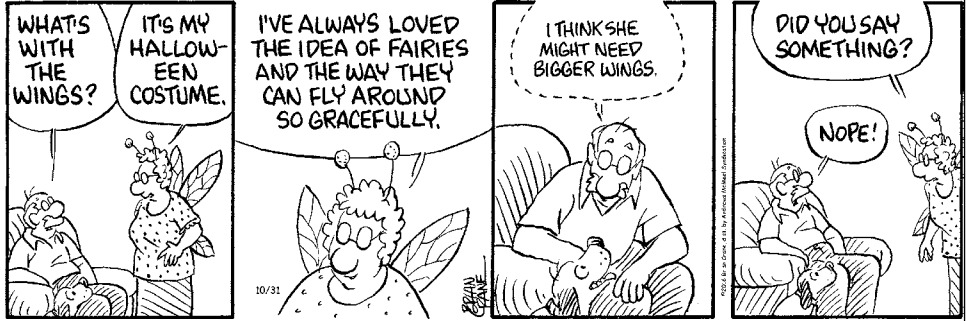
FRANK & ERNEST



THE GRIZZWELLS



PICKLES



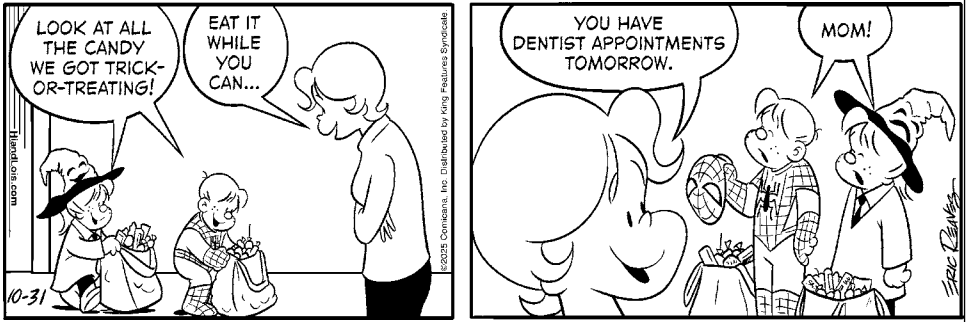
BLONDIE



BORN LOSER



HI AND LOIS



CRABGRASS



When Marriage Changes Everything



ANNIE LANE

Dear Annie

Dear Annie: My younger sister "Natalie" got married this spring to a man none of us really know. They met online, and within six months, they were engaged. My parents were uneasy about how fast it all happened, but Natalie was sure. She said she'd never felt so connected to anyone.

Since the wedding, though, she's been pulling away from the family. She used to call me almost every day, and now it's maybe once a week. She skipped our mom's birthday dinner last month and didn't seem that apologetic about it. When I ask how she's doing, she just says she's "busy" and changes the subject.

I know married life is an adjustment, and I don't expect to be her top priority right now, but the shift feels bigger than that. I miss her, and I'm not sure how to reach out without sounding clingy or critical. I don't want to make her feel guilty. I just want our closeness back!

How do I let her know I miss her without pushing her away? -- Protective Big Sister

Dear Protective Big Sister: The "honeymoon phase" can be all-consuming, especially when a relationship moved as fast as theirs did. It's possible Natalie is simply wrapped up in her new life and hasn't realized how distant she's become.

Still, if you ever notice clear red flags in their relationship -- controlling behavior, possessiveness or signs of

emotional abuse -- it's important to stay close and remain a judgment-free place she can turn to.

More likely, though, she's just infatuated and adjusting. That phase won't last forever, but don't wait it out in silence. Tell her you miss her and value the relationship. Being honest now can keep resentment from building later.

Dear Annie: I'm 28 and work as a graphic designer at a small marketing agency. I've always loved art and design, and it felt like a dream to turn something creative into a career. I've worked hard -- took on unpaid internships, freelanced nights and weekends, and finally landed a full-time job where I get to do what I'm good at.

The problem is, I'm starting to feel stuck financially. I make enough to get by, but just barely. I rent a tiny apartment with two roommates, I'm still paying off student loans, and I've had to say no to things like weddings or trips because I can't afford them.

Meanwhile, my college friends -- who went into

finance, law or tech -- are buying homes, getting promotions and talking about their 401(k)s. I can't help but compare. I feel like I followed my passion and they followed the money -- and now I'm struggling to keep up.

I'm not sure if I need to pivot careers, find a better-paying job in my field or just ride this out. How do I know if I'm being practical or just giving up? -- Tom

Dear Tom: You don't need to give up on design to make a better living. Many graphic designers move into higher-paying roles like art direction, UX/UI design or brand strategy. Agencies, tech companies and in-house creative teams often pay more than small firms -- and they need strong design thinkers. You might also consider contract work or consulting once you've built a portfolio and network.

And let's be clear: Wanting to earn more isn't selfish or shallow. It doesn't mean you're selling out. It means you're recognizing your value and building a life where your work can support your goals -- creative and otherwise.

Follow Annie Lane on Instagram at @dearannieofficial. Visit <http://www.creatorspublishing.com> for more information. Send your questions for Annie Lane to dearannie@creators.com.

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ASTROGRAPH BY EUGENIA LAST

Reclaim what you truly want this year. Reflect on what you've given up or set aside. It's your turn to expand your mind and to let your heart lead the way. Take a silent approach and set things right.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 22) -- Observe and take notes. Preparation is vital to getting what you want. A positive change comes with executing your plans flawlessly. Choose minimalism over excess and indulgence.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23-Dec. 21) -- Set boundaries, offer honest assessments and pursue something tangible. Focus your energy on updating your surroundings to suit your situation and foster success.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) -- Mixed emotions will drain you mentally and financially. Be wary of scams and people trying to separate you from your cash. Gather information regarding any event that may pose a risk of injury or illness.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 19) -- Put your emotions aside and know when to walk away. A debate will not serve a purpose and will leave you feeling distraught. Pay more attention to building your physical strength.

PISCES (Feb. 20-March 20) -- Upbeat talks will help you gain enthusiasm to get moving and to introduce positive change into your life. Stop letting mixed emotions hinder your ability to act.

ARIES (March 21-April 19) -- A little primping will go a long way. Do something that makes you feel good, boosts your confidence and gives you the nudge you

need to make a move. Participate in events that are geared toward a purpose.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) -- You should sift through your options and decrease the number of your commitments. Effective communication is essential to prevent mistakes and misinformation.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20) -- Live, love and learn, and a positive change will be unveiled. Trust your instincts and let your imagination wander. Reach out, and the result will fulfill your expectations.

CANCER (June 21-July 22) -- Avoid jumping to conclusions or taking on too much. Pace yourself and explore all options before deciding on your next step. Tone down drama and indulgence, and concentrate on self-improvement.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) -- Look at the big picture before you make a comment or change. The impression you make and the effect you have on the people you encounter will determine what comes your way.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) -- It's all or nothing when dealing with domestic or work-related matters. Stand back, absorb the atmosphere in the room and let your instincts guide you in interpreting the outcome.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23) -- Effective money management encourages you to live frugally and appreciate what you already have. Consider what you can do to update your look or build your confidence. Socializing will promote romance.

- ACROSS**
- 1 Rotating machine part
 - 4 Roof overhangs
 - 9 Swab
 - 12 — and cry
 - 13 "Stayin' —"
 - 14 Woolly animal
 - 15 "To — is human ..."
 - 16 Dead duck
 - 17 Kind of cold case evidence
 - 18 Easy
 - 20 Depends
 - 22 Tool for farming
 - 23 Pearly stuff
 - 24 Gravy dish
 - 26 Bury
 - 29 Actress — Paquin
 - 30 "The Matrix" hero
 - 31 Play it by —
 - 34 Acquire
 - 35 Place north of Amer.
 - 36 Auto part
 - 37 Batter's place
 - 39 Dregs
 - 40 Lake on the California-Nevada border
 - 43 Remote
 - 44 Smells
 - 46 Minister
 - 49 — peeve
 - 50 Fond —, Wisconsin
 - 52 Rage
 - 53 Snow cone base
 - 54 Author — Zola
 - 55 Poem
 - 56 Actor — Mineo
 - 57 Observed
 - 58 Show of assent
- DOWN**
- 1 Kitchen VIP
 - 2 Atmosphere
 - 3 Vendor
 - 4 Score in golf
 - 5 Sunscreen ingredient
 - 6 Coq au —
 - 7 At any time
 - 8 Tranquil
 - 9 Corpsman
 - 10 Deed holder
 - 11 "— porridge hot ..."
 - 19 Jot
 - 21 Roman household god
 - 24 Sack
 - 25 Countdown number
 - 26 Ancient Peruvian
 - 27 Tidy
 - 28 Musical sound
 - 31 Effort
 - 32 Pub offering
 - 33 Domicile (Abbr.)
 - 36 "Woe is me!"
 - 37 Small dog
 - 38 Heavy
 - 40 Old decorative carpet
 - 41 Betel palm
 - 42 Monopoly piece
 - 43 Confronted
 - 45 Japanese sport
 - 46 Wan
 - 47 Church calendar
 - 48 Woodwind need
 - 51 Kindled

Answer to this puzzle

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

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