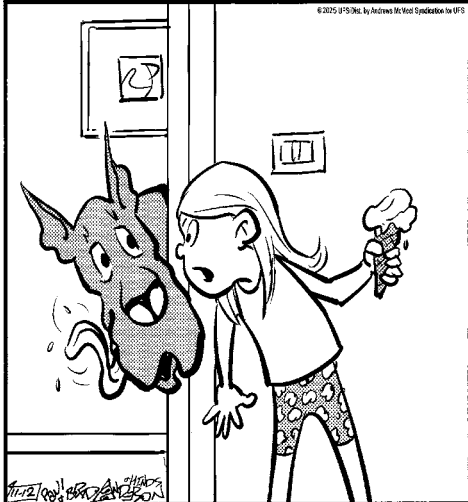


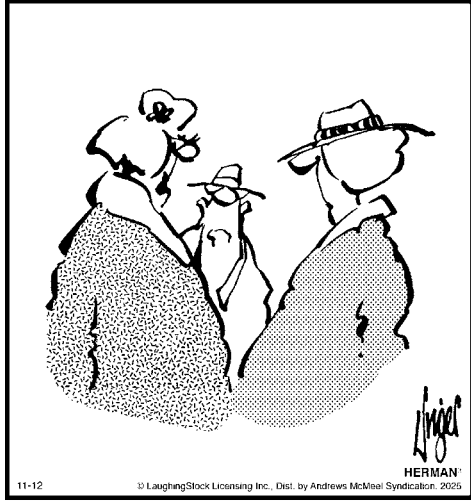
COMICS

MARMADUKE



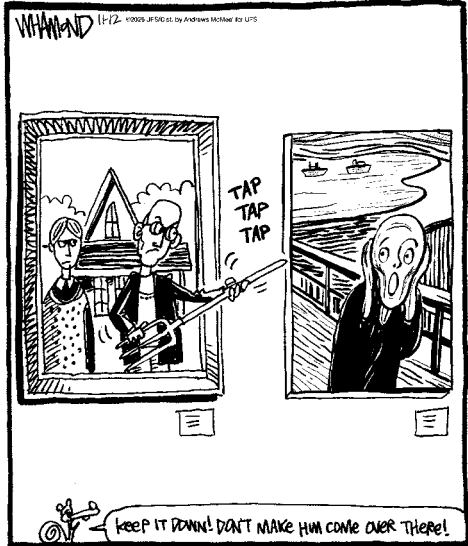
“How did you hear me eating ice cream?”

HERMAN



“I gave up all dreams of happiness when I agreed to marry Henry.”

REALITY CHECK



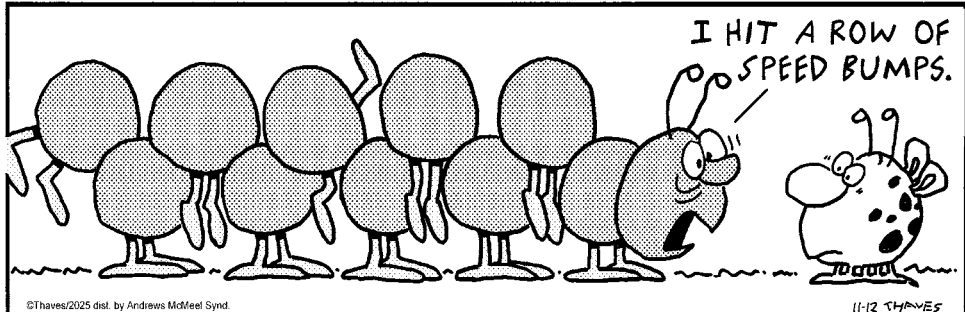
KEEP IT DOWN! DON'T MAKE HIM COME OVER THERE!

MODERATELY CONFUSED



© 2025 Jeff Stahler/ Dist. by Andrews McMeel Syndication

FRANK & ERNEST



THE GRIZZWELLS



PICKLES



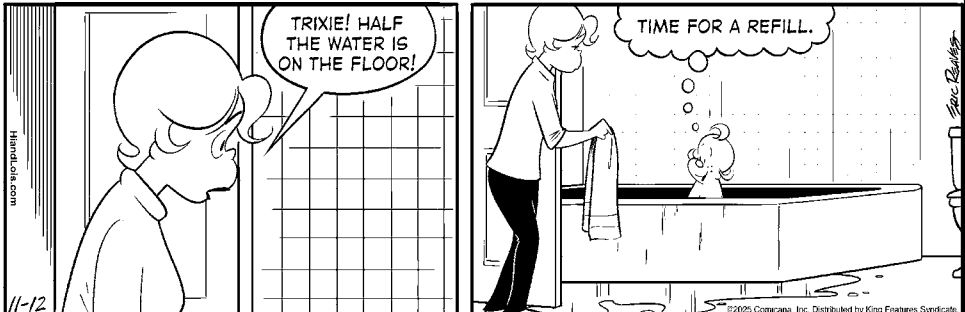
BLONDIE



BORN LOSER



HI AND LOIS



CRABGRASS



Breaking Up the Book Club

Dear Annie: A few years ago, a group of us started a book club that became one of the highlights of our month. We'd gather with good food, wine and plenty of laughter, and occasionally even talk about the book. For a long time, it was pure fun.

But over time, one member began to dominate everything. She interrupted constantly, turned every discussion back to herself, and flooded our group text with photos of her meals, her outfits and long comment threads that made the rest of us silently roll our eyes.

Several of us tried to address it gently, hoping she might get the hint, but nothing changed. Before long, people stopped responding to messages and started skipping meetings. What had once felt easy and joyful began to feel like an obligation.

Eventually, someone suggested ending the group altogether. But after a few weeks, a few of us realized



ANNIE LANE

Dear Annie

how much we missed each other, just not the drama. So we started a new book club, smaller and simpler, and didn't include her.

Word got out. She found out and sent a hurt, angry message. Now everyone feels awful, even though we just wanted to reclaim something that used to make us happy.

How do we handle this gracefully without reopening the chaos we worked so hard to escape?

Dear Torn: You handled this more kindly than most groups would have. You tried to talk with her, gave her chances to change, and when things didn't, you made the healthiest choice you could to protect the joy that had vanished from something you once loved.

It's understandable that she feels hurt, but that doesn't mean you did something cruel. You didn't set out to exclude her; you simply chose peace over exhaustion. You don't owe her an apology for that.

If she reaches out again, respond with kindness but keep it brief. You might say, "We really valued the time we all shared, but the group has changed direction. I wish you all the best." Then leave it there.

Sometimes protecting your peace will look like rejection to others, but that doesn't make it wrong. Friendships and groups evolve. You're allowed to move forward gracefully and guilt-free.

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.

COPYRIGHT 2025 CREATORS.COM

ASTROGRAPH BY EUGENIA LAST

Snap decisions will lead to trouble. Keep your thoughts private until you have time to think and do the math. Concentrate on preparation, what you can achieve and an innovative way to reach your destination. Life is a work in progress, and trying to rush through it will only slow you down.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 22) -- Critique yourself before criticizing others. Making progress will help you maintain a positive state of mind. Observe what your cohorts are doing, and it will help you decide what's next for you.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23-Dec. 21) -- Speak up, and you'll find out where you stand and what's possible. Refuse to jeopardize what you have for something intangible. Set guidelines and get what you want in writing.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) -- Add a splash of ingenuity to whatever you do, and you'll gain interest and a platform to share your plans. A change is within reach, so start mapping out the possibilities.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 19) -- Learn from experience that too much of anything will lead to trouble. Slow down, take inventory and see what's left. Your strength, knowledge and skills will lead to bigger and better opportunities.

PISCES (Feb. 20-March 20) -- Set a budget and a timeline, and get moving. Trust in your abilities and discipline to help you see matters through to the end. When opportunity knocks, be quick to respond and to show your worth.

ARIES (March 21-April 19) -- Put your energy where it counts. How hard you work will depend on your ability to be direct and

live up to your promises. Choose bold words, stick to the truth and adopt a smile and a friendly demeanor.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) -- Stick to simple terms and map out a route that ticks off everything on your to-do list. Set goals that are reasonable and unlikely to be jeopardized by outside influences.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20) -- Changes you make due to emotional influences will slow you down. Look for alternative ways to reach your destination without raising eyebrows or igniting a negative response from onlookers.

CANCER (June 21-July 22) -- Participate in social events, engage in work-related activities and network to expand your interests. Diversify, and use your imagination to apply what you can offer in new and exciting ways.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) -- Use words, not actions, and you'll make progress. Reach out to the source instead of complaining to the go-betweens. Change only what's necessary, and distance yourself from people heading in a different direction.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) -- Put a plan in place before making a move or trying to change the impossible. Detail and precision will play a role in what you achieve and how others perceive you.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23) -- Be careful whom you share your ideas with. Someone is likely to take advantage of you if you aren't careful. Opportunity is within reach if you advocate on your own behalf.

ACROSS

- 1 Afflict
- 4 Durable wood
- 7 Gift-wrapping need
- 11 Snoop
- 12 Wheel shaft
- 13 Footnote abbr.
- 14 Pinna
- 15 Gong
- 16 — Spumante
- 17 Record spinner
- 19 Read
- 21 Like hand-me-downs
- 23 “The — of the Worlds”
- 24 Measuring device
- 27 DDE's nickname
- 29 Water barrier
- 32 Coffee-filled container
- 33 Affirm
- 34 Nest-egg letters

DOWN

- 35 — Pasha
- 36 Shipboard jail
- 37 Light metal
- 38 Low
- 39 Scarlet
- 40 Sir Arthur Conan —
- 42 Sports org.
- 44 Mild oath
- 46 Spurn
- 49 The Beaver State
- 53 Racetrack shape
- 54 Feudal serf
- 56 Cakes and —
- 57 Diplomacy
- 58 Marsh plant
- 59 — de Janeiro
- 60 Prepares a printing press
- 61 Damage
- 62 Hither and —

Answer to this puzzle

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

1	2	3		4	5	6		7	8	9	10
11				12				13			
14				15				16			
17				18			19	20			
			21			22		23			
24	25	26			27	28			29	30	31
32					33				34		
35					36				37		
38					39			40	41		
			42	43		44	45				
46	47				48		49		50	51	52
53					54	55			56		
57					58				59		
60					61				62		