

CLOSE TO HOME by John McPherson



"Santa! Cover your head and we'll try to get you unstuck with this bowling ball for Jimmy Rinaldi!"

Mom exposed by daughter's classmate

Dear Abby: My 7-year-old daughter, "Rosie," recently came home in tears because a classmate, "Emily," told her I was a liar and she was an idiot for believing my lies.

Then Rosie asked me if I had been the one putting money under her pillow and presents under the tree all along.

Ultimately, I told her that, yes, I had. But I stressed how important it was that she not ruin other kids' belief in the tooth fairy, etc.

The cat is out of the bag for my child, but do you think I should mention this to Emily's mother?

We are friendly, but not close. She lives near me, so I run into her often. I'm not just upset that Emily told Rosie, but also that she was so rude. I don't want that girl to do this to more kids.

It's not about criticizing the mother's parenting skills. My kids need correction sometimes, too.



JEANNE PHILLIPS
DEAR ABBY

I just believe it takes a village and we should all work together as parents. What are your thoughts? — *Cat's Out of the Bag in Maryland*

Dear Cat's Out: It's a shame that your daughter got the news the way she did. But in situations like this, when one child knows something the others don't, it's not unusual for the child to share the "news."

Emily was out of line to have said what she did to your daughter, particularly in saying that she couldn't trust you, because it could have far-reaching implications.

By all means have a word with Emily's mother.

Dear Abby: I have an extreme aversion to alcohol and those who consume it. I suspect that it comes from having a father who was a violent, emotionally abusive alcoholic.

Alcohol has zero appeal for me and, as I'm in my mid-20s, it's difficult for me to go on outings with friends without having to go to a bar. I become that grumpy, silent person in the corner.

Because of this, my fiancée has begun socializing with her family and our friends without me.

Most recently, they celebrated a sibling's 21st birthday and left me home across the country. Talking to her and knowing she's at a bar and drinking makes me extremely angry, and we almost always end up in a fight about it.

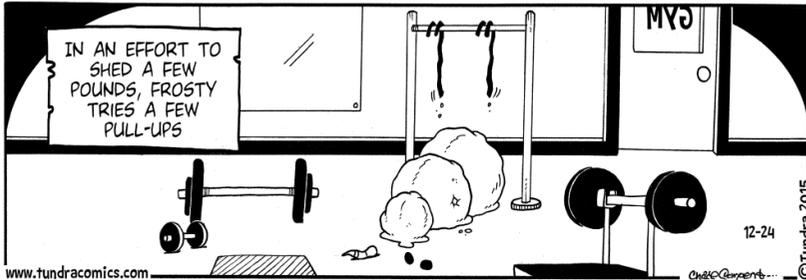
I know this is MY problem. Do you have any advice on getting over it? — *Doesn't Touch the Stuff in Las Vegas*

Dear Doesn't Touch: Yes. Either get counseling for your issues and to help you recognize that not everyone who enjoys an alcoholic beverage is an alcoholic, or find a woman to marry whose views more closely match your own.

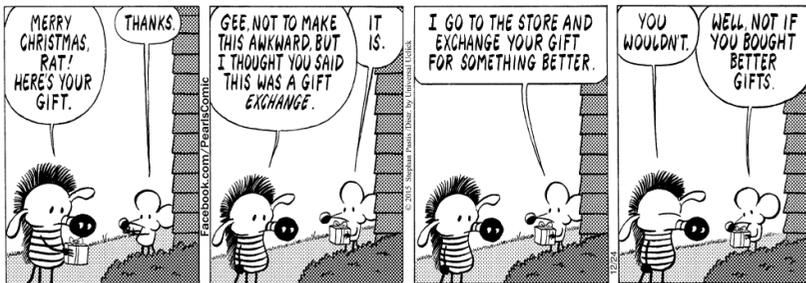
There is a support group called Adult Children of Alcoholics that might be helpful to you if you attend some meetings. You can find a group near you by going to www.adultchildren.org.

Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

TUNDRA by Chad Carpenter



PEARLS BEFORE SWINE by Stephan Pastis



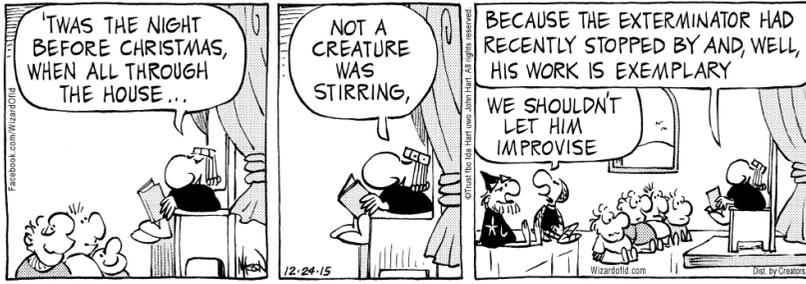
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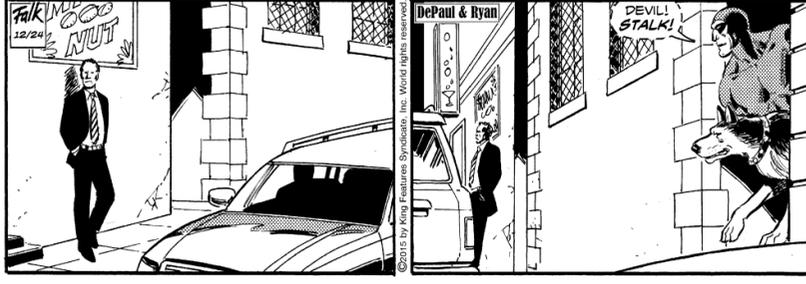
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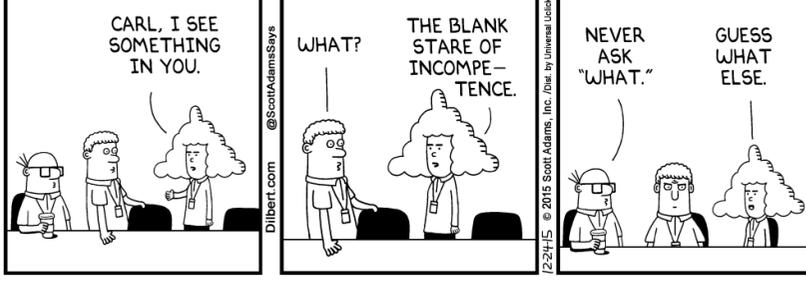
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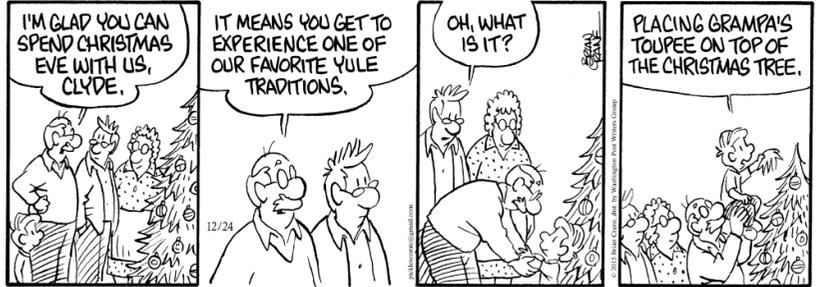
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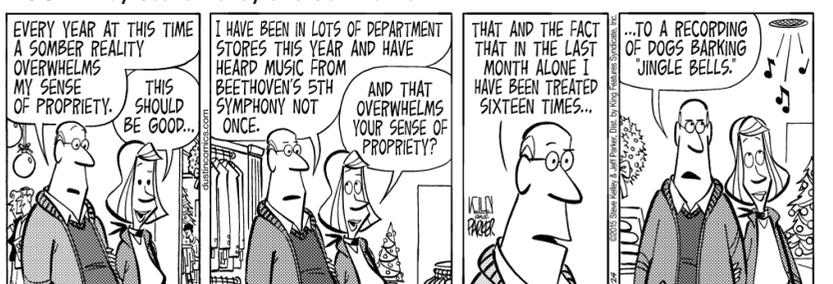
BABY BLUES by Jerry Scott & Rick Kirkman



ZITS by Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman



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Daily Horoscope

ARIES (March 21-April 19). The ones you're around will make up the games, but they have no idea the warrior-competitor you are. Whoops! Major whoops. At best, the result will be laughs.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). You're doing something. People notice. People respond. Sometimes it's favorable, but not always. When it's not favorable, take refuge in the earlier fact. You're doing something! Many aren't.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). You're not typically drawn to the fire, but doing something a little bit dangerous will exhilarate your mood today and favorably affect those around you as well.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). People are expecting you to deliver a product, service or presentation. Something new is going on inside you — you're not even nervous. It feels like all your life has prepared you for this.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Savor the day. The best things will happen as you move slowly through, always inching forward, never standing still. Your allies will be Sagittarius and Aquarius.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Sleep has reset your subconscious mind. What didn't make sense yesterday is now so clear. You'll act on the information and make good. Take a picture; this is one for the album.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Once upon a time you gave up too quickly, only to find out that if you had hung on for a short while longer you would have succeeded. Now you have the determination that only experience can teach and the tenacity to see it through.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Should you settle an old score, or write it off? The sure part is that you have to do something because this problem is taking up way too much mental space. A truthful and brief conversation will put the issue to rest.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). For every echo there is an origin. You are the origin. Be careful what you say. Even your utterances will have resonance. It's a power not to take lightly.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Sure, you would prefer to be in charge, steering a project to its glory. Since that's not always possible, especially considering the politics at play in your current situation, you'll try hard to be adaptable.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You'll communicate in an open and effective manner and this will relay more than you would have thought. In fact, you'll probably have to rewind to figure out what exactly you said.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Kindness is an under-rated glory these days. Luckily, in the case of this cause, you're a leader. Rate it high and the others will do the same. You'll start a wave, and who knows whom it will affect?



HOLIDAY MATHS