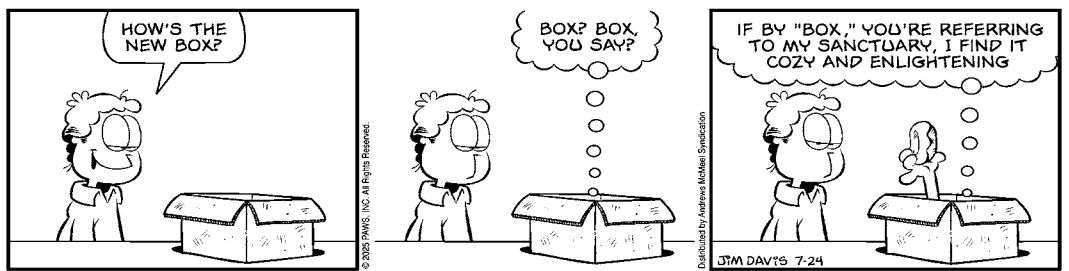
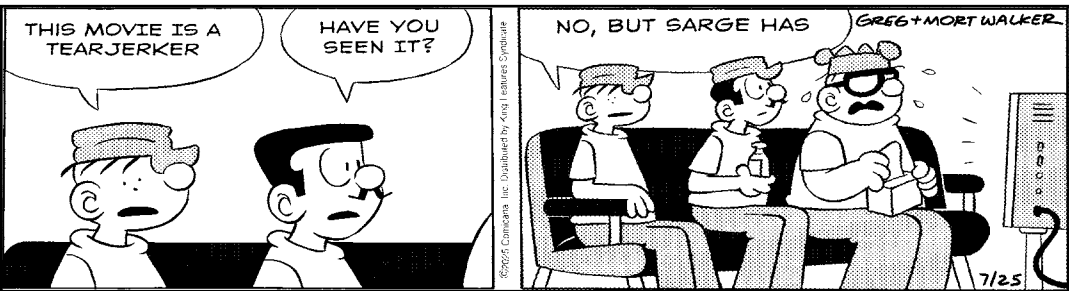


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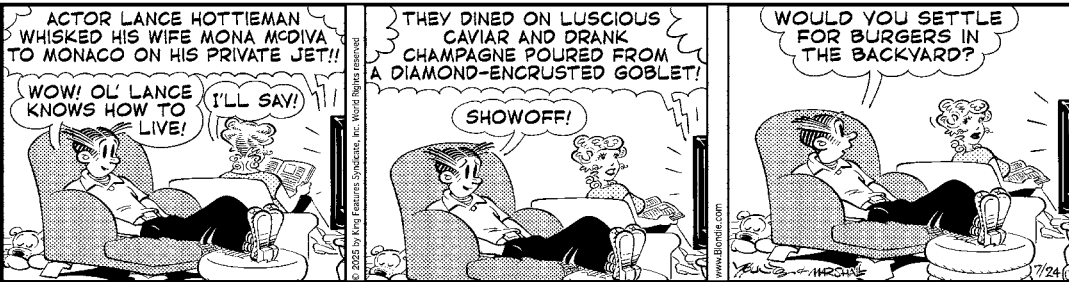
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FOR BETTER OR WORSE



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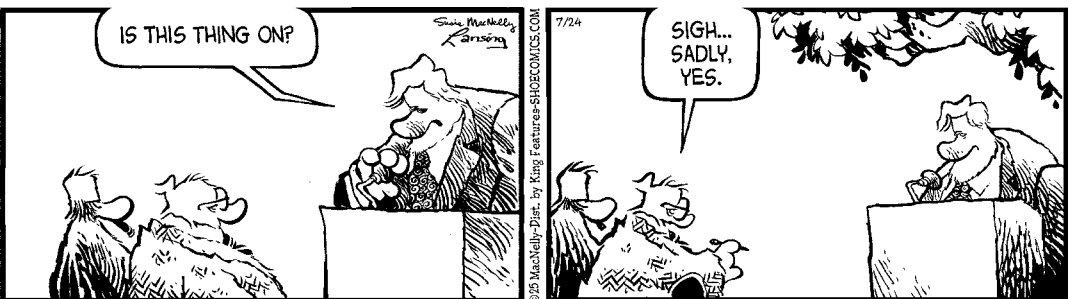
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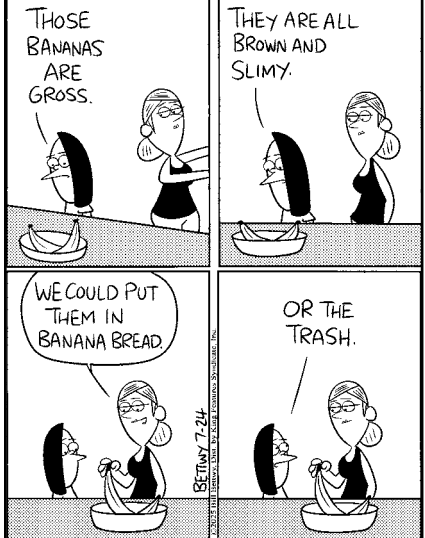
DUSTIN



THE FAMILY CIRCUS



TINKERSONS



# Clingy girlfriend's behavior could be a marriage red flag

**DEAR ABBY:** I am a 47-year-old male who is 20 days from being divorced. For the past three months, I have been dating a woman I've known for 26 years. We love each other and plan to be married. We have great times when we are together but struggle on the phone or with texting. I'm not sure why this is, but she says it's because we need to be together all the time.

We generally see one another on weekends. She says she has a tough time and cries a lot when I'm not around. My question is, is this normal? If I don't see her for two days, she gushes that she "missed me so much," whereas I miss her, but it's not a big deal to me. We aren't married now so I'm not in that frame of mind until we are. What can we do?

— Navigating love in Florida

**DEAR NAVIGATING:** What your lady friend is telling you may seem like a protestation of devotion, but it could instead be a red flag. Her discomfort at being apart could eventually become smothering. She's obviously emotionally needy. Although you have discussed marriage, PLEASE be sure the two of you have premarital counseling before proposing anything more than a warm friendship.

**DEAR ABBY:** I have been a little sad lately. The reason is that my best friend is acting weird. It makes me wonder if our friendship is slowly going away. Throughout our friendship, we have always jokingly made fun of each other. Lately, it seems that anything I say makes it awkward, and she hasn't been wanting to talk to me as often or acting the same way she did before. I'm afraid we are not going to be friends much

longer, which scares me. How do I fix our friendship without asking for it upfront and without being weird?

— Her bestie in California



**Jeanne Phillips**  
Advice columnist

**DEAR BESTIE:** You may be scared, but the only way you may be able to repair your friendship is to tell her how you are feeling. Because you sense she is distancing herself, you have nothing to lose and everything to gain by being honest. A way to start the conversation would be to ask if you may have offended her in some way with your jokes because, if you did, they weren't intended to be hurtful.

**DEAR ABBY:** How does one overcome a fear of heights? I have had it from the time I was a little girl. There was a bridge I had to cross walking home from school. I had to look down at my feet to I recently purchased a condominium on the 16th floor in a high-rise building. I love the view, but I'm too afraid to walk out on my balcony. How do I overcome this?

— Up high in Georgia

**DEAR UP HIGH:** You are far from the only person who has a fear of heights. Consider installing some waist-high plants in front of the patio railing. This may allow you to enjoy your view without your knees wobbling. If you try this, DO NOT LOOK DIRECTLY DOWN. (I speak from experience.)

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at [www.DearAbby.com](http://www.DearAbby.com) or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

HOROSCOPE

Horoscopes for July 20-26.

**ARIES (March 21-April 20)**

Aries, the week kicks off with a surge of vitality and determination. You're eager to take action, and the universe backs you. It's a perfect week to push ahead with goals.

**TAURUS (April 21-May 21)**

Creative energy flows in and a long-dormant idea may spark back to life, Taurus. You're in the right mindset to pursue something artistic and innovative. Reconsider a refreshing hobby.

**GEMINI (May 22-June 21)**

Gemini, you're in your element this week and buzzing with charm and curiosity. Engaging conversations abound. Opportunities to connect, both socially and professionally, come easily.

**CANCER (June 22-July 22)**

Cancer, a small act of courage pays off in a big way, and you'll find that trusting yourself leads to a fulfilling outcome this week. Embrace your instincts.

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 23)**

Love and joy surround you, and this week is ideal for connecting with someone special or deepening an important bond, Leo. Your heart feels open, and good things are flowing your way.

**VIRGO (Aug. 24-Sept. 22)**

A chance to help or support someone brings a deeper sense of purpose. Kindness flows easily

from you now, Virgo, and the gratitude you receive in return is both touching and inspiring.

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23)**

This week your relationships are in harmony, Libra. You're feeling strongly supported. Conversations flow with ease, and people are drawn to your warm personality.

**SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 22)**

A milestone is within reach, and the progress you've made starts to emerge this week, Scorpio. Your persistence and inner fire have been guiding you forward.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23-Dec. 21)**

Sagittarius, a fresh perspective allows you to release old worries or doubts. This is a week of clarity and growth during which inspiration meets personal freedom.

**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 20)**

Practical matters - especially career or finances - are looking up, Capricorn. A smart decision made now could lead to something even better down the line.

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 21-Feb. 18)**

Aquarius, you've had your eye on the prize for some time now, and the good news is that the finish line is within arm's length. Stick with things for just a little longer.

**PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)**

Pisces, you have been making some changes this week. Your perspective and surroundings at home have changed. This can be a refreshing endeavor.

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