



On The Family Circus

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Look, I think it's time to acknowledge what all of us have been thinking for a long time: PJ is obviously developmentally disabled. The warning signs the strip has been pumping out daily have just become too much to ignore. From the Mongoloidish slope of his forehead to his complete lack of communication skills, it's clear that something isn't right with the Keane family's youngest. As loyal readers, we've been quiet about it for too long, hoping that one day PJ would begin to talk and interact normally. Unfortunately, we've been waiting for forty-three years now, and nothing's changed. It pains me to say this, but I think it's time for an intervention.

Now it is true, as some of you may point out, that we're not exactly talking about a family of geniuses here. From Billy's inadequate artistry to Dolly's bumbling questions to Jeffy's cringe-inducing malapropisms, this house about has the market cornered on cute idiocy. After all, I think everyone else has figured out that "Ida Know" isn't really some invisible ghost bent on wreaking havoc in their house. My guess is it's a malformed fifth Keane child that occasionally escapes from the attic where they keep it locked up.

And maybe this is why the family has been reluctant to confront PJ's "issues." After all, you don't lock a kid in the attic until you're sure there's something wrong with him. But as a reader, I think PJ is rapidly reaching that point. Just the other day I read a Family Circus where PJ had an umbrella open in the house because it was raining outside.

Jesus.

Even Dolly was sharp enough to point out that you don't need a frigging umbrella in the house when it's raining out. But did PJ respond? Was there even the slightest glimmer on comprehension in his small, dull eyes? Sadly, no.

Something needs to be done before it's too late. Mr. Keane, I beg you, take PJ to see a doctor. Don't let any feelings of guilt or embarrassment about his obvious incapacity get in your way. Modern medicine has developed numerous speech and behavioral treatments to help the mentally handicapped. Perhaps, with proper treatment, PJ can someday simply be a charming dimwit, like his brothers and sister.

You owe him that chance.