

## *A Most Appropriate Gift*

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Amos Arthur Holmes

Marriage is a great deal like a garden. It must be developed, cultivated, and worked on if beautiful results are to be obtained. You reap, in marriage, exactly what you sow.

The female, basically, is a pretty fundamental, uncomplicated mechanism. They become complex and mysterious only if the correct proportion of care and love is denied them. Becoming a bride does not, in itself, formulate vague emotional outbursts, nor does the state of matrimony automatically transform females into revengeful terrors. Every undesirable trait found in the married woman has been fostered upon her by the paranoid selfishness of her mate.

I was very cognizant of this, thirty years ago, when I picked the female I was to walk through life with. I was

aware of my responsibilities and I worked doubly hard to erase those human frailties that seem to be handed down to the male from generation to generation. My wife became an extension of me just as I became an extension of her. If I were the paramount force in her life then certainly she was the essence of my own existence. I cared with tenderness and I loved with the fire of passion. I bought her roses when there was not reason but my desire to make her happy. And for thirty years we have walked through life's garden, hand in hand, and smiled at the beauty of a perfect togetherness.

Until yesterday.

I should have noticed that something peculiar was happening when I caught my wife burning her brassiers. This was a forceful pointing to new horizons that was totally overlooked in the obvious truth of my own perfection. My wife's burning her brassiers certainly wasn't a step toward women's liberation, not in the power of my reasoning, but simply an expeditious destruction of things old and useless.

But yesterday my wife came to me, and said, "Amos, I have gotten into

women's liberation and there must be some changes made in our marriage."

"But why," I cried, "Aren't you happy?"

"Of course I'm happy," said my wife, "That's just the point."

It certainly was a vaporous point, an unfathomable kind of point, and I didn't know quite how to handle it.

"So," continued my wife, "Your male chauvinism must cease. You must stop doing those inconsiderate things that are making a mockery of our marriage."

"Like bringing you roses?" I asked.

"Exactly," screamed my wife.

What in the hell was going on here? Our marriage was absolutely beautiful. We smiled and laughed and felt such magnificent warmth for each other.

"Now then," purred my wife, "I am as good as you are. I am as strong, as smart, and I resent your constant arrogance and imagined superiority."

I just sat there stunned.

"From now on," continued my wife, "We will share the responsibilities in this house. And we will start by distributing the chores in this household. From this day on... you

will do the cooking."

"BUT I CAN'T BOIL WATER," I screamed.

"And you will do the sewing."

"I CAN'T THREAD A NEEDLE," I bellowed.

My wife sat there and gave me a million unfamiliar and bewildering chores. From then on I was to do all the canning, dusting, ironing, and washing, while my wife would do the household repairs, change the oil in the car, paint the house, and fix the furnace. She has already bought herself a pair of overalls, a tool box, and several Mr. Fix-it type magazines. She has started swearing, playing softball, shooting pool, and flirting with girls.

I'm not at all happy with this change. I somehow feel very feminine and useless. I can't get my curtains to hang right and my cakes have been absolute flops. My wife's muscles are beginning to bulge and this morning she bought me a dozen roses.

I pray that I am doing things to her satisfaction. I love her so dearly and I live in dread of displeasing her. Next week she is having a birthday and I'm in a dither deciding what to get her.

I wonder if she would like a jock strap?