

All's Well That Ends Well

I took off from work yesterday. I spent the morning sitting on my front porch watching the ducks and swans frolic on the frothy waters of Breton Bay. I cranked up my typewriter and wrote a poem, *Ode To A Screwdriver*, which I (for humanitarian reasons) immediately tore up and threw into the trash.



country philosopher

By Amos Arthur Holmes

My wife had gone to work, my daughter had dragged herself off to school, and the house was unbearably lonely. The only thing I had to entertain myself with was my imagination and I found it pleasant to lose myself in fantasies and hallucinations. The Loch Ness monster appears at my back door...or a huge bird flies down my chimney. I engage the monster and the bird in mortal combat. A group of female nudists come to my back door, and say, "Sir, could we come in? It is so cold out here." A female calls me on the phone,

and says, "My husband doesn't understand me."

But you can't daydream all the time. And so I sat thinking of something really constructive that I could do for my wife. I thought about doing the house because it was extremely dirty, but vacuum cleaners give me a severe skin reaction... so I disregarded that idea. Perhaps I could fix the leaky faucets in the bathroom, but then I remembered that wrenches and gaskets give me a severe skin reaction. Gosh! Wasn't there anything I could do that would please my wife? Wasn't there some little chore I could manage that would make her realize how much I love her?

And then it came to me. I would fix dinner. This idea was unique and daring because I had never attempted to cook anything in my life before. But wouldn't my wife be pleased when she came home from work and found dinner ready?

I put a huge pot on the stove and added a little olive oil to the bottom of the pot. Then I cut up onions and garlic and celery and started slowly simmering those ingredients. The kitchen was already filling up with a delicious fragrance and I thought...hell...there's nothing to cooking after all.

My wife would be home in little less than two hours so there was no time to waste. I cut thin strips of beef and added those to the pot. While the pot slowly bubbled I went into the dining room and cleared the table off. I put on a fine linen tablecloth, and set out our finest china and silver. I placed, as a centerpiece, our eighteenth century candelabra.

I was becoming excited. There are so few ways that a

husband can show his wife how much he cares. I often feel ashamed because I sit on my duff constantly and watch my wife do a thousand household chores. And she does those chores after she has put in eight hard hours at the office. Wouldn't she be surprised when she walked into the house and smelled an aroma unbelievably beautiful? Wouldn't her heart melt when she saw how magnificently I had decorated the dining room table? And wouldn't she be emotionally overcome at the realization of what I had done and how much I cared for her?

She would be home now in less than an hour. I must hurry. I added a jigger of wine to the pot, salt and pepper, and a cup of carefully diced potatoes.

I ran into the bathroom and took a shower. I shaved and put on just a small dab of that after shave that drives my wife crazy. I got out the craziest, prettiest shirt I owned and then slipped into my blue leisure suit. I put on my black boots, combed my hair, and I was ready. When my wife got home I would serve her food, light the candles, and fill her goblet with wine. I would sit there scrubbed and immaculately dressed and she would love me with all her heart.

I went back into the kitchen and added tomato sauce and large chunks of lobster.

She would be home in ten minutes. I thought I would have time to drink a beer and smoke a cigarette but then I noticed the trash and garbage on the sink counter. It looked so unsightly and I knew that I would have to gather up that

mess and dispose of it. There wasn't much time. I got a pan and started scooping up all that ugly debris. The potato peelings, the cellophane, the cigarette butts and the soiled paper towels. I got them all gathered up in my pan and whirled around to throw them in the trash bag. But in whirling around I tripped over the end of the stove and the pan I was holding went flying in the air.

As the vile ingredients of that pan went soaring into the air I stood in absolute horror and I almost fainted when all that trash dropped lazily and accurately into the huge pot my dinner was cooking in.

I heard my wife's car pull into the driveway. I thought about confessing to my wife...and apologizing. But when I thought of all that lovely beef that would be wasted, all that beautiful lobster...I just couldn't do it. I reached into the pot and pulled out the soiled paper towels. I extracted the potato peels and the cellophane. And just as my wife walked in the door I was removing the last of the cigarette butts.

"Amos," my wife cried, "you've cooked dinner."

"It was nothing," I replied.

My wife sat at the dining room table. I dished up her food, filled her wine goblet, and lit the candles.

She took a spoonful of food, raised it to her lips, and tasted it.

"Honey," she smiled, "This is delicious."

"Thank you," I said.