

# Smile when you say that

BY AMOS ARTHUR HOLMES

Twenty-five years ago my wife squeezed my arm, and said, "I think I am ready." I flew out of bed, ran into the wall, jumped up and down, and screamed. "Whooooooppeeeee."

Hot Dog! I was going to have a baby. At least my wife was going to have a baby. It was wonderful, fantastic, unreal. I dressed hurriedly and half carried my wife out to the car. I drove as swiftly as I could. I did not want, or need, the experience of delivering a baby. We got to the hospital and a nurse whisked my wife down the corridor while I sank into a chair. This was just a terrible ordeal. I began to sweat.

YIPPEEEEEEE. I was going to get a son. I would teach him every sport. I would take him hunting. I would warn him about women's peculiarities.

I began to worry. Would the delivery be normal? Had my doctor actually graduated from medical school? Was the operation of this hospital good enough to handle the birth of my son? I began to feel sorry for myself. Why should a nice young boy have to go through the torments of hell just to become a father? Would the kid look like me? I hoped so. I was so much better looking than my wife. And golly... if he got my wife's nose it would be a disaster for him socially.

The hours passed and nothing happened. I debated the wisdom of asking the nurse if it would be possible for me to get a pint of blood. I was desperately in need of a stimulant.

Finally, when I was down on my knees pleading for divine intervention, the doctor came to the door. He raised me up gently, and then said, "Your wife came through just fine."

"AND MY SON. . . HOW IS MY SON?"

The doctor smiled. He put his arm around my shoulder, and said, "You have a very healthy, a very lovely daughter."

I was stunned. How could my wife have fouled up to that extent? What in the world was I going to do with a girl? Was I going to teach her how to knit? Must I show her how to play with dolls? But what the hell. . . I couldn't sulk about this thing, and so I forgave my wife her gross mistake, bit my lip, and kept on living.

Two years later my wife squeezed my arm, and said, "I think I am ready." I lay there hoping the whole thing would go away but finally I stumbled out of bed. My wife half carried me down the stairs and put

me in the car. She drove swiftly to the hospital because she didn't want the experience of delivering her own baby. The nurse took her down the hall and I went to sleep in a chair. I woke up sometime during the night and sat there thinking that at least all this trouble would result in my getting a fine son. I knew it would be a boy this time. That mistake of getting a girl had been all my fault. You see. . . I had started my romantic overtures during a full moon. And how can you expect to get a boy doing stupid things like that? But this time I was absolutely sure of myself. I couldn't miss.

The doctor came to the door, put his arm around my shoulder, and said, "You have a healthy, lovely daughter."

"BUT I ALREADY HAVE A DAUGHTER" I screamed.

The doctor gave me a sedative and told me where I could buy a book of instructions on the art of knitting.

I managed to live through the following years. I took my daughters with me to the store and the men I passed would smile. They pitied me. Felt sorry for me. But I was an old man and there wasn't anything I could do about the situation.

One day my wife informed me I wasn't as old as I thought. She smiled, and said, "I'm pregnant."

"Good Jumping Pancakes" I screamed, "It's a physical, mental, moral impossibility."

Some months later my wife squeezed my arm, and said, "I think I am ready."

"You're always ready" I bellowed. But I got out of bed and took my prolific mate to the hospital. I sat reading a book by a Doctor Paul Stroud called, *The Joys of Sex*, and I would have killed the physician if I could have gotten my hands on him.

I knew even before my doctor appeared that I was going to have another girl. I really didn't care anymore. I could play hop-scotch, sew, and felt quite convinced that I could raise another daughter.

The doctor came to the door. He walked up to me and put his arm around my shoulder. He was crying.

"You have" he sobbed, "A healthy, lovely daughter."

I honestly love my daughters. I wouldn't trade them for anything in this world. But I do wish people would stop coming up to me and whispering in my ear that one sentence that makes me vile.

"It takes a man to get a boy."