

The worm that turned

Thirty years ago, a very short time after my marriage, I took my wife dancing. She looked lovely and was wearing a dress that was obscenely open from neck to waist. Everything she owned was abundantly displayed. I never complained about that dress. After all, my wife was a big girl and she had a right to wear what tshshe wanted to wear. A little past midnight my wife went to the Ladies Room and when she got back she was crying.

"What in the hell happened?" I asked.

Between snuffles, my wife replied, "Some guy over there just put his hand on me."

"WHAT FELLOW?" I snarled.
"The guy in the green sportcoat."

I looked across the room and saw the guy in the green sportcoat. He was about seven feet tall, weighed two hundred and sixty pounds, and had shoulders that looked mountainous.

I walked reluctantly across the room, grabbed the guy in the green sportcoat, and screamed, "IF YOU SO MUCH AS GLANCE AT MY WIFE AGAIN I'LL KILL YOU."

The guy in the green sportcoat hit me twice. Once in the stomach and once on the jaw. When I woke up I was in my own bedroom and the doctor was taking my blood pressure. The room was spinning around and my wife leaned over, smiling, and said, "Thank you, Amos, for protecting my

honor."

Two weeks later we went to another dance. My wife wore pants that looked like a second skin and she had on a see-through blouse that you could REALLY see through. Some huge, gigantic fellow came over and asked her to dance. Before I could protest, my wife was out on the floor dancing with this handsome dude. They were dancing so close it looked like a photo of the Siamese twins. When the music stopped, my wife returned to the table and leaned over to whisper, "Amos, that man I just danced with made an indecent proposal."

"That's fine," I said.

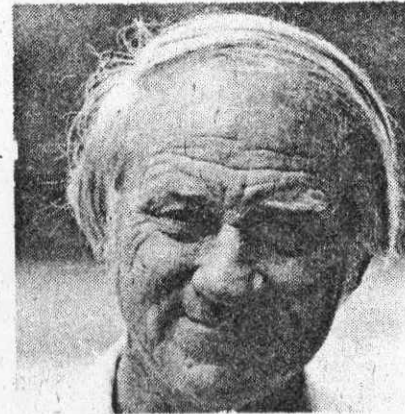
"AREN'T YOU GOING TO KILL HIM?" screamed my wife.

"Look" I said, "I don't seem to be very good at killing people although I am quite good at getting killed. Now if you want to come to these dances dressed like some debauched stripper you will have to accept the results of your folly."

That night my wife called me ... "a little worm."

For the next thirty years I never lifted a hand to protect my wife. I just enjoyed the dancing and let my wife take care of the insults.

But last week we went dancing again. We don't go often, because I have grown fat and short-winded. Just after midnight my wife went to the Ladies Room and when she got back



by Amos Arthur Holmes

to our table, she said, "Honey, that guy over there in the orange sportcoat just put his hand on me."

It could have been the twenty martinis that I had imbibed. Maybe I honestly believed that a man should protect his woman. At any rate, I walked across the room and grabbed the guy in the orange sportcoat. I snarled, "IF YOU LAY YOUR HANDS ON MY WIFE AGAIN I'LL KILL YOU."

The guy in the orange sportcoat hit me twice. Once in the stomach and once on the jaw. When I woke up I was in my own bedroom and the doctor was taking my blood pressure. The room was spinning around and my wife leaned over, smiled, and said, "Thank you, Amos, for protecting my honor."

And even though I lay there bleeding... even though I knew the folly of the thing... the stupidity of the thing... still... I knew that I would forever protect the honor of my woman.

After all... it's such a terrible thing being... "a little worm."