

—Country Philosopher—

Thou shalt not kill

by Amos Arthur Holmes

I was feeling under the weather yesterday. My nose thought it was a track star because it kept running and running. My entire head was a witch's cauldron and was bubbling and churning and completely uncomfortable.

I stayed home from work and covered myself with Vicks. I lashed a hot water bottle to my chest and wore that martyr-look I always get when the world is healthy and I am dying. I slithered slowly and agonizingly into the living room because the thought of dying in the kitchen was unbearable. My daughter was watching television and she looked over, and said, "Daddy, come sit with me and watch this soap opera."

Having always worked daylight hours I was unfamiliar with soap operas. I knew that they were very popular and that housewives all over the nation thought of them as being an essential part of their day.

I sat down on the couch, adjusted my bloodshot eyes, and began watching my first soap opera. A tall, handsome, elderly gentleman had his arms around this pale, anemic girl of tender years, and he was saying, "Alice, let's face it. Henry is dead, your mother is in the insane asylum, and Helen has leprosy. What have you got left but sorrow, pain, and remorse?"

I looked over toward my daughter and was surprised to see her crying. "What's the matter?" I asked.

"He's such a creep" she moaned.

"Who's a creep?" I inquired.

"The man in the picture. He's Bob Martin and the young girl is his wife's daughter from a previous marriage. Her name is Gilda and Gilda is madly in love with Dr. Peterson's alcoholic sister but the sister has already given



her heart to Tom Swales. Tom is in jail for child molesting and is already married to Bob Martin's mother."

"I see," I mumbled in baffled awe. I was so confused at this point that I wanted desperately to leave the room. But just then I noticed a new character had appeared on the screen and that my daughter was hissing.

"Why are you hissing?" I asked.

My daughter, her face contorted in rage, cried, "That's Tim Bolton. He's the one who carried the influenza germs into the maternity ward and killed Amy's baby."

My eyes went back to the television screen. Tim Bolton was saying, "Look, Gilda, I'm sorry about the social disease. I really am. And I swear to you that I was not responsible for Frank's amputation."

I began hissing. Loud, snake-like hissing that was even louder than my daughter's hissing. By golly, I have never hated a human being as much as I hated Tim Bolton. My hate was so severe it was clearing my nasal passages.

"YOU ROTTEN FINK!" screamed my daughter.

"WHAT IS IT?" I cried.

My daughter pointed to the television screen. A new character had appeared. A lovely blond wearing a black, lacy negligee.

"That's Tanya," moaned my daughter, "she's having an affair with Helen's son while Helen is in the Leper Colony. She has already caused Marian to miscarry and she sent those poison-pen letters to Belinda."

My rage was titanic. I have never hated anyone as much as I hated Tanya.

"I'LL KILL HER!" I screamed.

I pushed my daughter violently across the room. I ran to the television set. Tanya was smiling at me.

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Kill

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Laughing at me. I took my fist and rammed it into Tanya's face. Glass shattered, tubes popped, and in one insane moment of rage I had killed Tanya.

I sat back in my chair, completely calm, and waited for the police to arrive.