

THE TEST

Setting: Bedroom. The bed is centered along the back wall. There is a nightstand to the right of the bed and a dressing table along the right wall. The exit to the bathroom is also to the right. There is another nightstand to the left of the bed with a telephone on it. The exit to the rest of the house is also to the left.

Elliot is sitting up in bed in his pajamas. Susan enters from the bathroom wearing a nightgown. She gets into bed and sits next to Elliot. Neither one says anything for a moment.

ELLIOT

(breaking the silence)
Well, did you do it?

SUSAN

Yes, I did it.

ELLIOT

Are you sure?

SUSAN

(angered)
Elliot, I'm perfectly capable of peeing onto a plastic stick, thank you.

The silence returns.

SUSAN

I've never been this late, Elliot. I'm really nervous about this test. I mean, suppose it shows positive.

ELLIOT

(teasing)
You mean, suppose it shows you're...PREGNANT!!! AH! The shame of it all. I can see the headlines now. MARRIED WOMAN BECOMES PREGNANT. People won't believe it. Ripley's will be at our front door. We'll be on the six o'clock news.

(Elliot pretends to be holding a microphone.)

ELLIOT

This is Jack Jackson, Eyewitness News. We're here at the home of Elliot and Susan Cherney. Just a typical married couple, in a typical small town, in a typical country, on a typical continent, in a typical universe. Typical, that is, until Mrs. Cherney developed an unknown biological phenomenon. The doctors call this abnormality a pregnancy. Tell me, Mrs. Cherney, how did this uncommon and strange development happen?

SUSAN

Kiss my ass.

ELLIOT

(still reporting)

Sounds like an assumable beginning. First, tell me if it's communicable.

SUSAN

Elliot, I'm serious. Suppose I am pregnant. What are we going to do?

ELLIOT

We're going to be a family.

SUSAN

You mean, we're going to raise it?

(Elliot can't believe what he's hearing.)

ELLIOT

No. I figure, after it's born, we'll drive it out to the country and let it run loose on somebody's farm.

SUSAN

Elliot.

ELLIOT

Well, come on, Susan. Listen to yourself. Are we going to raise it?

SUSAN

Elliot, I'm not ready for a family. I've been working too hard on my career to give it up. I'm not going to let all those years in school to become a lawyer, be destroyed by a seven pound, crying, whining, overly-damp, disgustingly messy kid.

ELLIOT

Okay, but what about the negative side?

SUSAN

Not now, Elliot. I'm not in the mood.

ELLIOT

Being in the mood is why you're urinating onto a plastic stick today.

SUSAN

You understand, don't you, Elliot?

ELLIOT

I understand that you're thirty years old. You're not as young as you used to be. The old biological clock is ticking.

SUSAN

There better be a point to all of this.

ELLIOT

There is. The point is, when are you going to be ready to start a family, Susan? I'm not getting any younger either. I don't want to attend my kid's high school graduation using a walker.

SUSAN

Look, I know before we got married we discussed having a family. But we've only been married three years. Give it a chance.

ELLIOT

That's not the real reason.

SUSAN

Yes, it is.

ELLIOT

No, it's not. I can tell when you're avoiding the truth.

SUSAN

How?

ELLIOT

You've got this one little habit that completely gives you away.

SUSAN

What?

Elliot just stares at her for a moment. She stares back. Suddenly, she begins scratching herself like crazy.

ELLIOT

And there it is now.

SUSAN

Oh, Elliot, you think you're so damn smart.

ELLIOT

So, now tell me the real reason.

SUSAN

Alright. Do you know what it's like to be pregnant?

ELLIOT

I suppose you do?

SUSAN

No, but my cousin has two kids and she told me what it's like. It's not pretty.

ELLIOT

Neither are her two kids.

SUSAN

I wish, just once, a man could get pregnant.

ELLIOT

Oh, yeah. It's real tough.

Elliot gets up and stuffs his pillow under his pajama top and walks up and down, in front of the bed.

ELLIOT

Oh, dear. I think I'm going into labor.

Elliot grunts and pulls the pillow out.

ELLIOT

Oh. Oh, my. It's a boy.

Elliot relaxes in the bed, rocking the pillow in his arms.

ELLIOT

Go to sleep, Junior.

SUSAN

I can't believe you're so insensitive.

ELLIOT

I'm just showing you that women go through it every day and survive.

SUSAN

(anger builds)

First of all, it's nothing like you said. For nine months, you walk around with a gut like a Sumo wrestler. Your feet swell, your back aches, and your breasts leak. You put on so much weight that you need the Harvard tug-of-war team to get you out of a comfortable chair. Then comes the day of the blessed event; which always seems to happen at four in the morning. You go into labor and spend anywhere from one to thirty-six or more hours in constant uterine pain. Then it comes time for the delivery. Do you know what it's like to give birth? Do you?

ELLIOT

Is this a rhetorical question?

SUSAN

Let me put this in the male perspective for you. It's like, it's like...

(searching for the right word and then exploding.)

IT'S LIKE DEFECATING A BOWLING BALL!!!

Elliot gives her a moment to relax.

ELLIOT

Yeah, but look what you get after you give birth.

SUSAN

Right. Hemorrhoids.

ELLIOT

No. I'm talking about a little, tiny, helpless creature; one that will grow as a result of our parental discretion, one that we can mold into a fine, upstanding human being, one that will rely on us for everything, one that will learn the meaning of truth, justice and the American way.