

THE TEST

Written by

Carl Megill

Copyright © January 2019 Carl Megill and Off the Wall Play Publishers

<http://offthewallplays.com>

This script is provided for reading purposes only. Professionals and amateurs are hereby advised that it is subject to royalty. It is fully protected under the laws of the United States of America, the British Empire, including the Dominion of Canada, South Africa and all other countries of the Copyright Union. All rights, including but not limited to professional, amateur, film, radio, and all other media (including use on the worldwide web) and the rights of translation into foreign languages are strictly reserved; and any unauthorized use of the material may subject the user to any and all applicable civil and criminal penalties. For any information about royalties or to apply for a performance license please click the following link:

<http://offthewallplays.com/royalties-and-licensing-of-plays-sold-by-off-the-wall-plays/>

SYNOPSIS

A young, professional, married couple awaits the outcome of a home pregnancy test.

Running Time: About twenty minutes

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.

SUSAN

Listen, Perry White, before you paint an "S" on this kid's chest, let's talk.

ELLIOT

About what?

SUSAN

Money.

ELLIOT

Money?

SUSAN

Money. Do you know what it costs to raise a kid?

ELLIOT

What?

SUSAN

Well, a lot.

ELLIOT

Susan, the problem here isn't money, is it?

SUSAN

Yes it is.

Elliot waits for a moment. Susan begins scratching again.

ELLIOT

Susan, we both make comfortable incomes. So, it can't be that we can't afford it.

SUSAN

Elliot, I like being a lawyer. I'm not going to give that up.

ELLIOT

Haven't you ever heard of a working mother?

SUSAN

You know the hours I keep. Sometimes I don't get home until late. When am I going to have time to take care of a kid?

ELLIOT

That's what I'm here for, Susan. When you have to work late, I'll take care of him.

(jumping up)
Aha!

SUSAN

What aha?

ELLIOT

Aha! You said "him".

SUSAN

Who said "him"?

ELLIOT

You said "him". You said, if I have to work late, you'll take care of him.

SUSAN

So what?

ELLIOT

So, that's what this is all about. You want a son so that you can have someone to throw homeruns with, and shoot touchdowns, and catch some hoops.

SUSAN

Why is it whenever you talk sports, I develop indigestion?

ELLIOT

Don't change the subject.

SUSAN

Okay, I admit it. It would be great to have a son to catch some hoops with.

ELLIOT

Aha!

SUSAN

Enough with the ahas. Listen, it would be equally as much fun to have a little girl.

ELLIOT

Oh, yeah, I can see it now.

SUSAN

(MORE)

SUSAN (Cont'd)

You and her sitting around a little table, having pretend tea time, with all her dolls surrounding you. Give me a break.

ELLIOT

I'm not going to stereotype any kid of ours. If our daughter wants to play baseball, I'll encourage her.

SUSAN

And what if your son wants to take ballet lessons?

ELLIOT

I'll encourage him.

(pause)

And then I'll make fun of him.

SUSAN

Sounds like the old double standard to me.

ELLIOT

Well, what do you care? You don't even want to have kids.

SUSAN

And you do? I can see you now changing a dirty diaper.

ELLIOT

I could do it.

SUSAN

Elliot, you gag when you open a can of cat food.

ELLIOT

I do not.

SUSAN

I know you, Elliot. The first time you saw a diaper full of poop, you'd freak out.

ELLIOT

I would not.

SUSAN

Then, you'd try to break him of the habit.

ELLIOT
What?

SUSAN
You know. Stick his nose in it and say, "Don't you ever do this again!"

ELLIOT
Can we change the subject?

SUSAN
To what?

ELLIOT
Father's Day.

SUSAN
Father's Day?

ELLIOT
I used to love Father's Day. When I was a kid, every year I would look in the store windows and save up my allowance, so I could buy a neat Father's Day gift. It wouldn't be much. But he was always grateful. I remember one year, I bought him a pair of galoshes, because I overheard him tell my mother he couldn't find his rubbers.

SUSAN
Was it raining when he said this?

ELLIOT
I don't know.

SUSAN
So, galoshes are why you want to have a kid.

ELLIOT
No, Father's Day. I want my kid to have the same kind of excitement I had while picking out my dad's gift. Not to mention the thrill he'll have picking out my Christmas and birthday gifts.

SUSAN
Isn't that a little self-indulgent? Wanting a kid just so that you can get presents?

ELLIOT

Hey, I'm trying to carry on a tradition here.

SUSAN

Elliot, you are bizarre.

Susan gets up, goes over to her dressing table and begins putting on make-up.

ELLIOT

Why? Because when we have kids, I'm going to be looking forward to Father's Day, Christmas and birthdays?

SUSAN

Tell me. Are you going to be looking forward to him having measles, mumps, tonsillitis, chicken-pox and colic?

ELLIOT

Sure. Well, maybe not the colic.

Elliot begins getting dressed for work.

SUSAN

Why are you so obsessed with starting a family all of a sudden?

ELLIOT

It's not all of a sudden. It's been on my mind a lot lately. You know when we're having dinner at the table and we both go into our own little intellectual worlds? You read the business section of the Times?

SUSAN

And you watch reruns of Baywatch?

ELLIOT

That show is a classic.

SUSAN

Yeah. I'm getting stimulated by reading the Dow Jones Report and you're getting stimulated by seeing Yasmine Bleeth running in slow motion in a wet bathing suit.

ELLIOT

Anyway, sometimes when you're not looking, I pretend we have a couple of kids sitting at the table with us. I ask little E.J. how school was.

SUSAN

E.J.?

ELLIOT

Yeah, Elliot Junior.

SUSAN

Oh.

ELLIOT

And little E.J. says, "Okay, Dad. I particularly enjoyed English Class, because we studied the intelligibility of one of your famous newspaper articles."

SUSAN

How old is E.J.?

ELLIOT

Six.

SUSAN

Uh-huh.

ELLIOT

What? You don't think a six year old would be interested in studying one of my articles?

SUSAN

No, I don't think a six year old would know how to pronounce intelligibility.

ELLIOT

Then I would ask little Roxanne how her day was.

SUSAN

Roxanne?

ELLIOT

Named after the heroine in Cyrano DeBergerac.

SUSAN

Roxanne is also your mother's name, Elliot.

ELLIOT

(surprised)
It is? What a small world.

SUSAN

Only the one you live in.

ELLIOT

Hey, this is my fantasy. When you fantasize about your kids, you can name them anything you want.

SUSAN

Really? How do you feel about Conga and Flatulence?

Susan sees that Elliot is becoming annoyed.

SUSAN

Sorry. Go ahead.

ELLIOT

So, I would ask Roxanne what happened at school and she would say, "Daddy, I'm going to play a piano solo at my second grade recital."

SUSAN

And what is she playing?

ELLIOT

I don't know. I think Mendelsshon's Piano Concerto in "F" Minor. Either that or Jagger's "Street Fighting Man." Don't you ever fantasize at dinner?

SUSAN

Yes, but mostly it's wishing you would take your elbows off the table.

ELLIOT

You know, Susan, we talked about having kids when we were engaged. What has changed your mind?

SUSAN

The thought of a little, helpless creature depending on me scares the hell out of me.

