

Our Man Hoppe

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Father Always
Knows Best

Arthur Hoppe

MY FELLOW SPOUSE, I want to talk to you tonight from my heart.

It was last June 17, when I was trying to get a little rest on the back porch after my strenuous efforts to make our yard a better yard in which to live, that I first heard reports of seven termites being found in our basement.

While I did not say so at the time, as your husband I was appalled at this senseless invasion of seven termites in our basement. And I immediately asked younger members of our family, who shall be nameless, to investigate.

When they reported there were no more termites in our basement, I believed in them. I had faith in them. I did not know that in their zeal to spare the neighborhood from worry, they concealed facts from the neighbors, from you and from me.

When gossips continued to insist there were more termites in our basement, I repeatedly asked whether this was true. I received repeated reassurances it was not.

Then, last March, new information came to me suggesting a real possibility the charges were true. That was when the kitchen floor fell in.

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NOW I HAVE always believed, rightly or wrongly, as the father of this family, that maintaining the integrity of this house was a sacred trust. I was determined we should get to the bottom of this matter and the truth should fully be brought out, no matter how many termites were involved.

At the same time, I was determined not to take any precipitous action, and to avoid, if at all possible, any action that would appear to reflect on innocent termites.

However, while I usually inspect the

basement myself, I was extremely busy, as you know, painting the living room and building a gazebo. Gazeboes first, Basements second. For it is my sacred duty, as head of the household, to make this a better house for all members of our family.

Who, then, is to blame for the front wall caving in?

The easiest course would be for me to blame those to whom I delegated the responsibility to inspect the basement. But that would be the cowardly thing to do.

I will not place the blame on subordinates — on those whose zeal exceeded their judgment, and who may have done wrong for a father they deeply believed to be right.

In any family, the man at the top must bear the responsibility. That responsibility, therefore, belongs to the head of the household. I accept it.

And I pledge to you tonight, dear, that those who are responsible, other than myself, shall be brought to justice and that all termites shall be purged from this house long after I have left.

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AND, speaking of that, I have already devoted entirely too much of my invaluable time to this whole sordid affair. Having been betrayed by those I trusted to investigate this matter, I have now asked others whom I trust to investigate this matter.

I feel we should now turn our attention to less divisive subjects and work together for peace in our family. To this end, I am off on a grand tour of Europe to discuss our mutual problems with other heads of households in order that we may build an even better house.

God bless America! God bless each and every one of you! And God help us if the roof falls in! Thank you.