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Lesson



not a quick study

The first little girl I ever really knew came home from the hospital in the back seat of my car, wrapped in a pink and

white sort of blanket her mother called a bunting. Sure, I'd seen other little girls around the neighborhood, and a few crawling on the floor in the homes of friends, but this little one was mine, my only daughter. She seemed a strange being.

Right from the start, I knew she was unlike her older brother. I'm not sure how to explain it, but at only 18 inches long her entire persona was different from anything I'd ever experienced. Just looking at her, I could tell she had a head start on me, and I'd have to run to keep up with her for the rest of my life.

I like to say I grew up in a family of men, aside from my mother, and that much of my education about womanhood has come from my wife and daughter. I had to be a quick study when I met my bride, but I've had most of a lifetime to learn from my daughter. In fact, if I'd met my daughter first, I would have been surprised much less by my wife. Kids can teach you a lot.

For example. Don't expect a little toddler to use a napkin to wipe a gooey snack from her mouth when your knee is just the right height and she was on her way up onto your lap anyway. Doesn't matter if you just had the suit cleaned.

Don't expect a little two year old to understand the chicken pox has ballooned her face to look like a cantaloupe and she's pretty ugly at the moment. Grab her up and hug her anyway, and don't make a fuss when she throws up on you.

Don't go absolutely off the deep end, hollering and shouting, when your wife says your 12 year old pubescent daughter invited a boy over to the house while we were at work, took him out in the woods

and God Knows What Happened! Try to look calm and collected as your wife rejects your suggestion to take the girl to the Emergency Room to have her checked out.

Don't get mad when the fourteen year old lady sasses you back and acts like you are the last person on earth she would want to spend fifteen minutes with, even in a rescue boat. Delay your annoyance and plan to get revenge someday, like when her first beau arrives at the house and you hand him an "Application For a Date" you concocted.

And you can hope your teenage lass was indeed understanding when you gave her a little pull on her hand while skating at the roller rink and caused her to fly off, crashing into the popcorn machine and breaking her arm. Or when she lost control of the mini bike and slammed it into the barn and gashed her leg, you stopped for cigarettes while rushing her to the hospital. You weren't born perfect, and someday you hope she realizes it. In fact, she has been mentioning that more often lately.

But do expect the lovely young woman to find a husband to love and delight her, to steal her heart and give her babies in return.

And to make an old man feel older, but content.

Were those lessons? Did I learn something? Yeah, I think so, but not so much about women or even about my little girl. More about myself, I think. I learned I have been captured. That years ago (I won't say how many) a tiny little person wrapped herself around my heart and has never seen fit to let go. And neither will I. Ever.

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