

*Smartass II*

*Smartass and Spithead:*

*Together Again*

Know how, several hours after a conversation, you think of exactly the right thing to say? A Smartass thinks of it immediately, while the discussion is progressing but usually doesn't say it; a Spithead thinks of it and then actually verbalizes it. By themselves, they're a handful; together, they're just too much.

- **Another Time, Another Place**
- **“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times” (A Tale of Two Cities, Charles Dickens)**
- **“Time...keeps flowing like a river” (Alan Parsons)**
- **Ah, Those Were the Days**
- **The Time is Now**

*“Did you fart?”*

*“Sure. Think I always smell this way?”*

**“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times” (A Tale of Two Cities, [or “...Two Shities” as the first Mayor of Mayberry would say] Charles Dickens)**

Jerry Leonard was a schoolmate; he was the Muhammad Ali of farts (butt bombs, chemical warfare, poofume) especially the “silent-but-deadly” (“SBD”) ones and the dreaded fart combo (two or more farts made within mere seconds of one other.) “*A fart unsmelled is a fart lost.*” (No, burps and farts aren’t at all the same thing just with a different means of expression.) If you were in about ten feet of him when he cut loose, your eyes would water, you’d choke, you’d have trouble breathing; strange someone would choose that for a legacy.... But, hey, if you’re going to do something that will be remembered, you might ought to do it well. Pity the poor fool next to him or, Heaven forbid, behind him when his “butt music” played. The teacher had to act all grown-up and adult and ignore it but

unless he was in a coma, he had to know what had happened; the teacher's lounge got a fun story later.

Reminds you of the woman who suffered from terrible gas trouble; she tried all manner of antacids and medicines but her doctor told her that she'd have to face the unfortunate fact that, on occasion, like it or not, she was gonna cut loose with one of those big ol' smelly paint-peelers. The only thing for it involved not medicine but "better living through chemistry." In her purse, in and amongst the compact, Kleenex, pencils, pens and wallet, was a small aerosol can of "Forest Fresh" pine scented air freshener.

One fine day, she was in a high rise office building and found herself (thank goodness) alone on an elevator when she had to "paint the town brown" so to speak. Lord, it was one of those depth charges that'd make your eyes water. (Remember: If your fart is lumpy, it's not a fart.) Of course, an elevator's not that big so it didn't take long for that pungent aroma to fill the space.

Thinking fast, she delved in her purse and quickly retrieved from the treasure trove the aerosol can with which to refresh the air. Her fart was between the second and third floors; her frantic air freshening was between the sixth and ninth floors; her destination was the 21<sup>st</sup> floor. At floor # 17, the elevator stopped for another passenger. People don't carry on "real"

conversations in the elevator; just idle chit-chat (“*Cold enough for you?*”,  
*How ‘bout them Bengals?*”)

In that tradition,

“*Doesn’t it smell nice in here?*”

“*Smells like somebody shit on a pine tree.*”

Smartass filed that story away for future use.

Needless to say, the aforementioned Jerry’s social life was a bit wanting. When he got a date for the Prom, most folks were surprised. That she was drop-dead gorgeous was even more surprising. (“*Her legs go all the way up to her ass.*” As a kid, I had no earthly idea what my uncle meant by that; now, it makes perfect sense.) That they continued dating afterward was more surprising still, especially when considering Jerry’s only claim to fame. There’s only so much you can hide or blame on the dog.

He took her to fancy four-star restaurant. Midway through the meal, nature tugged at Jerry; tugged (?), it grabbed him in a strangle-hold. Try as he may to stop it, Jerry let one of those SBDs cut loose; it was especially potent; in about 10 seconds, the whole restaurant knew something was terribly awry at Jerry’s table.

His girlfriend was, at first, shocked, then, mad as a wet hen. Without a word (it was pretty much understood at that point) she got up and stormed toward the exit. Jerry waited 'til she reached the door (and was safely out of throwing range) and said, loud and clear,

*“If you’d ha’ sat still, they’d ha’ thought it was me!”*

That was definitely something Spithead could use.

What impacts a Spithead; where does a Spithead draw the line? (Is it too early for Steve Irwin jokes?)

There was a boy in the neighborhood, Mike, who’s mildly retarded who sometimes thought he was a superhero called Mitor, which he would become by crossing his arms over his head and saying, very loudly, *“Mi--tor!”* followed by a loud boom, the sound people make when they’re imitating the rumble of thunder. Mike was really big, but was nice to all the little kids. He functioned sort of as everybody’s “big brother”; God help the would-be bully that Mike became Mitor on. Mike’s one of the first you pick when you’re choosing teams for a game of tackle football, because no one could knock him down.

*“Is Mike coming?”*

*“No, he’s battling the forces of evil.”*

*“Oh.”*

The grade school, beginner band, God’s little joke (still waiting for the punch line). No wonder the suicide rate is so high for music instructors—all that screeching and squawking by everybody. Most of the time, it sounds like somebody’s not having a lot of luck trying to kill a cat. And the same guy teaches beginning band at eight different schools; he’s gotta be a little nuts by now. Can’t imagine willingly doing that, year after year. Jobs can’t be that hard to come by. What a way to make a living. Poor Mr. Deitz! And, of course, they’re all perfect little angels, never giving anyone anything but blissful, undivided attention. During a group concert, where all the beginning bands learn the same songs and then play together, it’s passable at best, but when they play “Tie a Yellow Ribbon ‘Round the Old Oak Tree”, it’s one of those that if you didn’t already know it was supposed to be the tune, you’d be hard-pressed to name it; the parents and grandparents think it’s the best thing since sliced bread. (Well, guess there’s no accounting for taste.)

That will become a Smartass tale.

Body odor—try as you might, you just can't pretty it up. It's like putting lipstick on a pig; it just won't help. (Not a Kodak moment but these are the little pieces of time Spitheads live for.)

The Music Department does the musical, *Guys and Dolls*. They have a really good Nicely Nicely Johnson, but the actor has a body odor smell that's a killer; it will knock you down. Since it's always considered impolite in any social setting to hold your nose, the option instead is to light matches, because the aroma of burning sulfur is in preference to his body odor. Simply, which smell is less offensive: wanna talk about suffering for your art? He's a nice enough guy and has a great Tenor voice, but, God, that smell! It's not a matter of lacking the proper personal hygiene, but at 6 feet 2 and a body weight in excess of 325 pounds, he sweats a lot.

In the sewer scene, just before "Luck, Be a Lady", it is the actor playing Harry the Horse's turn to speak, and he says,

*"If you do not shut up...."*

It is, more or less, at this point that the actor realizes he's skipped nearly two pages of dialogue and, in fact, given a cue line for something that is to happen much later. Nice to know the people backstage are having, albeit less public, a tizzy as well. The actor playing Harry has that "glazed over" look, the one where you know you messed up, but aren't exactly sure what

you did or how to fix it. And time is not your friend in that circumstance.

But Harry the Horse isn't done; he decides to finish the thought (and I use the term loosely). But everything he does only serves to make things worse. Now, the actor has trouble with the written word, and he's going to ad lib?

*“If you do not shut up, Big Jule will have to...kill ya.”*

Nice cover. Then he kind of “harrumphs” and, walking away, leaves the other actors to salvage the scene as best they know how. Boy, that's a great job to have: walk on, deliver the wrong line, and leave. (Supposedly, he's to remain on stage, but his mistake throws him for such a loop, he just leaves.) It's not like he has the burden of too much to remember.

Where does that line come from? Nowhere in the script does Harry the Horse ever threaten Nathan Detroit with death, at Harry's hand or anyone else's.

This fun-loving, good-natured musical has certainly taken an ugly turn.

Never seen that many people turn and look upstage, trying not to laugh. Amid snorts and giggles, suddenly, the curtain covering the back wall of the stage becomes extremely interesting to everyone onstage that doesn't have a line.