

# Times Two

A Short Comedy by Albert Fried-Cassorla

Version 2

July 28, 2003

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## CHARACTERS

Helen Midthassel, a pregnant woman in her mid-30's

Hubie Kazarnowicz, Helen's husband  
(pronounced ka-ZAR-no-witch)

Dr. Tigrata Bengali, obstetrician, Asian Indian

Connie Jones, nurse

SCENE

The play takes place in a labor room and a delivery room at a large metropolitan hospital. The two rooms may be side by side, with a real or imaginary wall intervening.

AT RISE:

The early action of play takes place in the labor room, where Helen is not far from delivering. Her contractions are now ten minutes apart. Lying in bed, she is wearing a hospital gown and appears nervous and weary.

Hubie wears hospital green clothing given to visitors. As the play begins, he is far from his wife's bed and aiming a sound movie camera at her while she screams.

HELEN

YAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!

HUBIE

Fantastic! (approaching her, still shooting) How do you feel, dear, at this incredibly important moment in life? Tell the camera!

HELEN

Hubie! Come hold my hand, It's terrible.

HUBIE

(stops shooting)

You can't imagine the life rushing through this lens. People watching'll imagine they were right here....

HELEN

Oooh!

HUBIE

... helping out, doing what has to be done, and-

HELEN

Where's Dr. Bengali?

HUBIE

Oh, he'll be here any minute, Thank goodness we have each other.

(Enter CONNIE. HUBIE wheels and films her briefly as she speaks.)

CONNIE

Hel-lo! Are you Helen Midthassel?

HELEN:

(in pain, nodding "yes")

Uh!

CONNIE

Good. I'm Connie Jones, your nurse-anesthetist. I'll be with you the rest of the way. And are your Mr. Midthassel?

HUBIE

(stands, shakes her hand)

Uh, no. I'm Hubert Kazarnowicz. But I am her husband.

CONNIE

Pleased to meet you. Well, how's our patient doing?

HELEN

I just had a killer contraction. It was horrible. Do you have any pain-killers? Even Demerol'd be fine.

CONNIE

(stepping over to check an imaginary fetal monitor and other instruments at bedside)

Now you know we're going to stay away from that kind of thing as much as possible, Aren't you going natural?

HELEN

That was way back, more than ten minutes ago. Now when am I going to get that shot?

CONNIE

Dr. Bengali'll be here very shortly, and you can ask him... although I'm sure he'll say that's next to improbable.

HUBIE

And where is the good doctor?

CONNIE

Oh, he's at (CONNIE babbles) Ke-mer, hm, I see the baby's heartbeat is coming through very well. Yes, a good clear signal. How fortunate.

HUBIE

Where'd you say he was?

CONNIE:

At Ke-mer... How far apart would you say your contractions've been?

HUBIE

I'm sorry to keep repeating myself, but I didn't catch that -- where is he?

CONNIE

K-Mart, he's a houseware buff, and there's a special sale on.

HUBIE

But we called his office more than two hours ago, and they said he'd be right over. Helen, where'd you find this guy anyway?

HELEN

Angie recommended him.

HUBIE

Angie Bertell, our birthing lady?

HELEN

Yeah. No need to worry...I don't think. He's very nice, just a bit unorthodox.

(Intercom rings; CONNIE picks up receiver at Stage Left, talks inaudibly.)

CONNIE

Excuse me.

(CONNIE exits stage left)

HELEN

Did you bring the list? I want to get this over with, once and for all,

HUBIE

Yeah. I put it on my computer.

(Pulls a crumpled printout from his pocket.)

HELEN

Whatever did you do that for?

HUBIE

Well.. it's alphabetized now.

HELEN

Thank goodness. We needed that. Now read me the girls' names first. Slowly.

HUBIE

Okay. First, there's Anemone. I like that.

HELEN

Anemone, There is a kind of poetry to it... Anemone.

HUBIE

I think she'll be popular.

HELEN:

Why?

HUBIE

You know, an Anemone of the People... There's another one I liked... Fatima. (sighs) She'll be our little miracle.

HELEN

Nickname, HUBIE. You always forget the nickname!

HUBIE

Hm? Oh!... Okay, we only call her Fatima if she weighs in at more'n nine pounds... You don't like that. Then there's your favorite...Hermione.

HELEN

Hermione! I can see her little nose, her toothless sweet smile. Yes, I love Hermione.

HUBIE

Let's not forget we both liked Kahlua.

HELEN

Ever since that luau at Mimi Hawami's.

HUBIE

You got quite soused on it, as I recall.

HELEN

Me? You're the one who hung pineapple rings from your ears and asked Mimi, "Hawami doin?"

HUBIE

Still, Kahlua's a nice name. But then, you were partial to Shenuyomp (She-noo-yomp). Did we get that from Angie, or from that whacko book, The Newfangled....uh.

HELEN

The New Handle Handbook. It's Aramaic for "pancreas of the donkey."  
But it's funny. As pretty as Shenuyomp is, there was a slightly different name - Shenuyemp -- that's so much worse. It means "liver of the donkey."

HUBIE

God that's awful. It's such a large, clumsy organ. Who'd name their kid that?

HELEN

It's tricky, this name business. A syllable here or there changes things drastically.

HUBIE

Well, as Shenuyomp she'd be different from everybody else. I like that.

HELEN

So do I, but which shall it be?

HUBIE:

Why don't we make it simple? You pick the girl's name, and I'll pick the boy's. Unless, of course, one of us picks something the other finds revolting and despicable.

HELEN

Of course... Or just revolting, without necessarily being despicable.

HUBIE (serious)

Sure.

HELEN

Are you ready for my choice?

HUBIE

Already? Don't you want to give this some consideration? I mean, this is a lifetime we're talking about.

HELEN

No. I know what I like, and what I like is Hermione.

HUBIE

(standing up and hugging her)  
Hermione!

HELEN

Hermione! Our Hermione!... What does it mean? Did you look it up?

HUBIE

Mm. It means "gum resin of the ginkho tree."

HELEN

That's lovely!... At least I think so. (suddenly stricken) But what if she hates it?

HUBIE

Come on, she won't hate it, Most kids'd give their eye teeth to be named Hermione.

HELEN

I suppose that's true. It beats Susan, at any rate. What about the boy's names?

HUBIE

Here we go, Are you ready? No contraction coming, or anything?

HELEN

Ready.

HUBIE

Biff.

HELEN

(with distaste)

Biff! Ooooh, I think I have morning sickness.

HUBIE

But it's 4 in the afternoon! Ha, ha, ha-- (suddenly serious) Should I get a basin?

HELEN

No, I think it's passing. But that name -- why?!

HUBIE

All right. Forget it. But I do like Bic.

HELEN

You're not serious.

HUBIE

I don't kid about the important things in life. You ought to know that by now. Bic is masculine, bold. He'll always be in people's minds... when they're writing, shaving, lighting cigarettes. They'll be thinking of our Bic!

HELEN

Well, it has possibilities. Wasn't Mankiewicz on the list? And you said he was some kind of writer?

HUBIE

Was he! Joseph L. Mankiewicz, one of the greatest screenwriters of all time! A genius! He did "All About Eve," "The Philadelphia Story," "The--

HELEN

But that's not why you liked it.

HUBIE

Right. The nickname. See? I do remember the nickname. Mank. Simple, authoritative. Like Hank, only

distinctive. A man like Mank.

HELEN  
What else?

HUBIE  
Exeter.

HELEN  
A scholarly man.

HUBIE  
My Uncle Henry went to Exeter. Loved it... Has that elegant, WASPy cachet, don'tcha think?

HELEN  
Mmm- Like Yale Farnsworth. He's in a romance I'm reading. Why don't we call our boy that?

HUBIE  
Because neither of us is named Farnsworth.

HELEN  
I suppose that would be a problem... And you know? The more I think about it, the more I realize that all of the Farnsworths are probably naming their kids Yale.

HUBIE  
I despise conventionality.

HELEN  
Well, I loathe it.

HUBIE  
I detest it.

HELEN  
Well, it makes me vomit.... Oooohhhh, I shouldn'a said that. Ooooo. I think I'm gonna...

HUBIE  
Helen, are you going to?

HELEN  
Ooooooooh. Quick, get the basin. Ooooooh.

(Enter CONNIE)

CONNIE  
I know this is going to seem odd, but it's part of Dr. Bengali's methodology.

HUBIE  
What methodology? (to Helen) Is there something about Dr. Bengali that I should know?

HELEN  
Well, he--

CONNIE (tooting a fanfare on the kazoo)  
Too-ta-too-toot-too-toot!

(DR.BENGALI strides in smiling,  
carrying a new broom and laundry basket,  
which he quickly puts aside.  
He bends and kisses HELEN's hand.)

DR.

In the deep undergrowth of the Bengali rain forest, lies the nest of the bewitching Minihaha bird. All day long it feeds on grubs. And when it has a full belly, it flies to the roof of the rain forest, where it lets go a big, gigantic laugh. A laugh at all and every bird's troubles -- at beak fungus, mildewed feathers, and cosmic angst. Indeed, a laugh that knows no bounds. Once heard, the entire jungle convulses, from the lowly mongoose to the lordly lion. And this, the essence of the Good Humor Birthing Method, is what I have to offer you, my fortunate couple. Now, may I play my tape?

(HELEN nods.)

HUBIE

Where'd you say Angie knew him from?

(HUBIE holds the basin for HELEN,  
who leans over it but does not vomit.  
DR. Bengali claps his hands peremptorily.  
CONNIE hits a tape recorder button  
on a wall, and the insane laugh of a  
jungle bird is heard.)

HELEN

I think I've got control of myself... Can humans get beak fungus? (feels her mouth) I think I've got it.

(CONNIE ends the tape. DR. Bengali checks the  
machines. All signs are good. He seems pleased.)

DR.

And you, my dear, how are you feeling?

HELEN

Now, fine, But a few minutes ago, I was in so much pain. Please, may I have some Demerol?

DR

Now remember what I explained to you in my office. Laughter is the best anesthetic. And a baby born amidst laughter will be happy for the rest of its life. If you remember your breathing, as taught to you by Ms. Bertell, especially the belly laugh technique, you'll never need a single cubic centimeter of drugs... Here, let me see your hand.

(HELEN extends her hand. His gag hand buzzer goes off.)

DR

Ha, ha, ha, ha! And this is only the beginning. Remember -- to laugh is to live, by Jolly! I see by the baby's heartbeat that it has a fine sense of humor. When we played the Minihaha tape, its pulse picked up significantly. It's bound to be a smiler. Maybe -- dare we hope -- maybe even a chuckler!

HELEN

And what if it isn't? How does that fit in with your method?



DR

Fear not. I haven't had a sourpuss yet. Excuse me, Nurse Jones, may. I have a word with you?

(CONNIE and DR. BENAGLI step aside and chat privately.)

HELEN

I'm beginning to have my doubts, Hubie.

HUBIE

You mean, all you did was take Angie's word about him? How did your checkups go with this weirdo?

HELEN

Fine. I mean, nothing like this. Sure, his receptionist wore a clownsuit. And the reading matter was, you know, National Lampoon, Mad magazine, The World's 100 Best Dirty Jokes. But it all fit in. He was very straight with me in his office. But he did say I'd be pleasantly surprised by his method.

HUBIE

I don't know. Maybe we should call the whole thing off.

HELEN

Hubie, you can't call off a delivery! Listen, in the medicine cabinet at home, there's an old packet of Demerols. Go home and get them as fast as you can.

HUBIE

(rising to leave)

You got it.

HELEN (distraught)

Where are you going?

HUBIE

(stopping mid-step)

Home, of course.

HELEN

How can you leave me at a time like this? Ooooooh! Ahhhh! ...Give me your hand. (HUBIE does.)

YAAACH! (In the pain, she accidentally bites his hand.)

DR (adoring)

Yes, sympathetic labor pains. It's so refreshing to see. (pats HUBIE on the back, as he stands hunched over in pain.) It reflects a real and genuine concern for the well-being of your spouse, a most noble characteristic. The male Himalayan yak also bemoans his wife's birthing. Lying at her side, rubbing hoof to snout, he enmeshes his eyelashes in the soft underfur of her stretched belly. Typically, he tickles her with his tongue, and the hills resound with yak yuks, my friend. It is the way of Nature.

HUBIE

Get any iodine?

DR.

(lifting a coverlet which shields HELEN's legs)

Now I will inspect you.

HELEN

Go inspect a yak, you fruitcake! Get your dirty hands off me!

DR

Nurse Jones, more help, please.

CONNIE

Yes, Doctor.

(CONNIE restrains HELEN.)

DR

Ahh! You're five centimeters dilated. my dear. It don't be long now till we hear the squeaky laughter of a sweet little baby.

HELEN

Give me the goddamned anesthetic!

DR

Patience.

(Puts his hand on her cheek. HELEN turns and tries to bite it, just nips him, and he pulls his hand away.)

Ah, feisty! Just like my dog, Vishnu, when he sees Fifi.

HELEN

Will you...ooh!...be doing an episiotomy?

CONNIE

Bengali never does epeazies. He hates to use the knife.

DR

But I am quite a cut-up!

(DR. BENGALI and CONNIE laugh uproariously.)

...Did you like that? Good, because now it's time for the really big laugh -- bringing a new person into this crazy world!!

(DR. BENGALI laughs madly as he moves to the head of the bed and works with CONNIE to push the bed into the Delivery Room. Stagelights flicker on and off suggesting craziness. HUBIE films all the while.)

Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!

HELEN

Hubie, go home! Quick! (HUBIE turns to go. DR. BENGALI puts on a gag hat, perhaps one with feathers or wings on it. He smiles madly.) Hubie, don't go! (HUBIE wheels and turns, filming.)

HUBIE (interviewing CONNIE)

This is it! How does it feel to be the nurse anesthetist at such an important occasion, Nurse Jones -- the birth of our baby by my wife? (The entourage gets settled in the Delivery Room. The fickering stops.)

CONNIE

(Very flattered to be on film, she primps and strikes a sexy pose, batting her eyelashes.)

I'm always on when it comes to Labor and Delivery, do you know what I mean? I mean, the juices really flow, when I let the nozzle go.

HUBIE

How long've you been in this profession, Nurse Jones?

CONNIE

I've been passing gas for five years now. Ha, he, ha! I'm sorry, that's just an old anesthetist's joke.

DR

But you're a young anesthetist, Nurse Jones.

CONNIE

So right, you big dear. (Puts HELEN's legs in stirrups.)

DR

Please reattach the fetal monitor. (CONNIE does.) Hmm, A very strong signal. Surprisingly so. Big signal, hearty laugh. All for the good.

HELEN

Did we finish the boys' names, Hubie?

HUBIE

No. We left out my favorite. Gingold!

HELEN (smiling)

Gingold!

HUBIE

Gingold!

HELEN

Gingold! (her smile abruptly becomes a grimace) Yech.

HUBIE

But you forgot the nickname, my dear.

HELEN

Ahh.

DR

Ahh.

CONNIE

Ahh.

HELEN

What is the nickname?

HUBIE

Gingy. Now that's kind of ringy, hah?

HELEN (rapturously)

My gorgeous Gingy!

HUBIE

My golden-haired Ginky!

HELEN

But what if he's not a blond?

DR

Then we'll send him back. Ha, ha, ha.

HELEN

Ha, ha. We'll send him back. (Grabs HUBIE fiercely by the lapel.) Is he serious? There's nothing I'd put past this guy.

HUBIE

Now Helen, just ree-lax! Practice your breathing. Feel any kicking?

HELEN

Lots.

HUBIE

Lets breathe rhythmically together.

HELEN & HUBIE

Ah-foooooooooo. Ahfooooooooooooo. Ah-fooooooooooooo. Ahfoooooooooooooo.

(Each time they exhale, they shake their heads.

Breathing should be relatively slow at this point, but with exaggerated sound.

They continue practicing as

CONNIE and DR. BENGALI talk.)

DR

Creepin' curry sauce!

All this heavy breathing. Reminds me of a petting party I once went to in the back room of the New Delhi Deli. Nurse Jones, I know I told them to do their breathing, but tell me -- what's the good? Don't they know the best medicine's to loosen the buckle and let loose a chuckle?

CONNIE (pats him on the shoulder)

Take heart, Doctor Bengali. Remember when they laughed at natural childbirth?

DR

Yes, it's true.

CONNIE

And then they poked fun at Birth Under Water, Birth on Stage, and Birth on a Hang Glider. Now think of how common and accepted these methods are today. There'll come a day, I'm sure, when every obstetrician's black bag will carry a rubber chicken.

DR

I hope so, Nurse Jones. For the sake of the little babies. I hope so.

HELEN

Yaaah! Yaaah! Ah-foo. Ah-foo. Ah-foo. Ah-foo. Huff, huff, huff, huff. Have I delivered yet, Dr. Bengali?

DR

Soon, my little alfalfa sprout. The fun has just begun.

HELEN

Yaaah! Yaah! Give me something. Give me something! Something to kill the pain.

DR (to CONNIE)

Well, don't just stand there. Offer her our selections.

CONNIE

We have Woody Allen, Joan Rivers, Steve Martin, the great Indian comic, Jawaharlal Calcutta, and lots more. Anything in particular you'd like to hear?

HELEN

Yaaah!

HUBIE

Couldn't we give her at least some Tylenol? I mean, I'm getting a little concerned now and --

(CONNIE starts a Jawaharlal Calcutta tape.)

DR

My son, do you really think I would allow your wife to continue in this state?

HELEN

YAAAAAH!

DR

Has not my life been one selfless act of devotion after another toward the eradication of pain, neuritis, neuralgia, and birthing blues through the healing balm of laughter?

CONNIE

You tell it like it is, Doc.

DR

Indeed. Nurse, administer a decibel and a half more Calcutta.

CONNIE

Yes, Doctor.

DR

And-now I will examine you again.

(Lifts coverlet, and examines.)

Hmm, eight centimeters dilated, HOW YOU DOIN' IN DERE, BUBBY? YAH? GOOD! (to HELEN and HUBIE) He says he's playin' jump rope with the umbilical cord, and we should all take our time.

HELEN

We should NOT take our time!....He's playing what?!

DR (listening to Calcutta)

Shh! This is a good one.

(They hear Calcutta telling a joke: "Why did the Minihaha bird walk half-way across the

road?...She wanted to lay it on the line!"  
DR. BENGALI and NURSE JONES laugh uproariously.  
Even HUBIE and HELEN find this funny laughing a bit.)

DR  
Oh!...Holy Shiva!

CONNIE  
What, Doctor?

DR  
We forgot to shave her!

CONNIE  
You're right. I'll do it right now.

HUBIE  
Shave her? Nobody shaves for a birth anymore.

DR  
We do in the Good Humor Method. A smooth departure brings baby laughter.

(CONNIE places three cans of spray-type  
dessert topping on a table near HELEN's bed.  
CONNIE takes one, lifts the coverlet, and commences  
foaming up HELEN's crotch.)

HUBIE  
Well, I won't permit it.

(HUBIE grabs one of the cans. Speaking to CONNIE)

Stop, or I'll shoot!

CONNIE  
I'm only doing what's best for the--

(HUBIE shpritzes CONNIE in the face.)

DR  
This woman is a professional! How dare you interfere!

(DR. BENGALI sprays HUBIE, who backs off.  
Then DR. BENGALI rests his can near HELEN,  
who grabs it while he isn't looking. DR. BENGALI  
inspects her, his head fully under the coverlet.  
When he emerges, HELEN sprays him.  
A full whipped cream fight ensues, with whoops and shouts.  
The action settles down, and DR. BENGALI  
speaks tenderly to HELEN.)

And how are you now, my pet?

HELEN  
I do feel better. But something's about to happen.

CONNIE

Uh-oh, something's about to happen.

HUBIE (to CONNIE)

I didn't get any of that on film. Would you be kind enough to shpritz Dr. Bengali?

CONNIE (again flirting for the camera)

Surely, Shirley.

(She squirts DR. BENGALI in the face.)

DR (tasting it with a finger)

Mmm! No cake?

HELEN

Ohhh. Hubie, read to me from the newspaper. I have to get my mind off the pain.

DR

Ach! Newspapers aren't funny.

HELEN

I feel out of it, Doctor. I need something to get me back to Earth.

DR

Have it your own way. But you're disrupting my method.

(Talks to CONNIE, who then administers a small dose of laughing gas to HELEN.)

HUBIE

(pulling a newspaper from his jacket pocket under his green smock)

Here. Comics?

HELEN

NO, the front page.

HUBIE

Well, we just distributed an assassination manual in Guacamole.

HELEN

Guacamole?

HUBIE

Yeah. Oh, the State Department says it's nothing serious -- you know, just stuff like how to terminate an avodado with extreme prejudice.

HELEN

Ha, ha, ha! That's great! what else is happening?

HUBIE

Congress defeated the Equal Rights Amendment for the eighth time.

HELEN

Why?

HUBIE

Senator Powell of Arkansas said here, "This amendment would force men to give birth. Now that this is foreseeable, through gene manipulation, the Equal Rights Amendment would pose a great threat to the freedom of male Americans."

DR

More babies means more laughs for everybody. I don't see the problem.

HELEN

That's rich. Imagine you giving birth, Hubie!

HUBIE

Yeah, that's pretty rich! Imagine me.. (seizes the newspaper). Gene manipulation! I don't know if I care for this. (shows concern)

HELEN

Oh Hubie, you'd make a wonderful mother.

HUBIE (surprised and suddenly proud)

Yeah, I am the nurturing type. (To HELEN) Say that again.

(HUBIE jumps on the bed, getting ready to film HELEN speaking.)

HELEN

You'd make a wonderful mother? Mm! Mm! Ha! Ha!

(CONNIE gives HELEN more laughing gas, as HUBIE descends from the bed.)

Oooh, oooh, oooooh! When is it going to come out!

DR (To CONNIE)

Hit it.

(Connie plays a snatch from The Beatles "IT Won't Be Long.")

HELEN

Oh, oh, oh, oh, huf, huf, huf, huf.

(HUBIE joins in the breathing. DR. BENGALI films them.)

DR

Louder! More expression!

HELEN & HUBIE

Buff, huff, huff, huff!

(DR. BENGALI lays aside the camera and goes under the coverlet to examine HELEN.)

We giving birth to a bunch of whipped cream here? Okay, okay. I can see the head.

HUBIE & CONNIE (singing and dancing)

He can see the head! He can see the head!

HELEN

Yaaah!



DR

(Dons a Groucho Marx mask and emerges from beneath the coverlet for a moment, raising his hands, flailing his fingers upwards, and saying:) Biiiiig stuff!

(DR. BENGALI Goes back under the coverlet.)  
Ah! I can see the forehead!

HUBIE & CONNIE (singing and dancing)  
He can see the forehead! He can see the forehead! He can see the forehead!

DR  
Hey, little one. Why did the baby cross the crib? ....To get to the other side! Ha, ha, ha! I can see the eyes!

HUBIE & CONNIE (singing and dancing)  
He can see the eyes! He can see the eyes! He can see the eyes!

DR  
(barking like a police chief on a megaphone)  
Okay, pint-size! Either you come out now, or we're comin' in ta getcha!.... I can see the nose.

HUBIE & CONNIE (dancing and singing)  
He can see the nose! He can see the nose! He can see the nose!

DR  
Oh, no!

HELEN  
My baby! What's wrong?

DR (emerges)  
I thought it would never happen.

CONNIE  
You don't mean..

DR  
It's frowning..

CONNIE  
Frowning! How humiliating. This wasn't in the training you gave me. What can we do?

DR  
Not to worry. We just push it back and start over.

HELEN  
Push it back! Oh noooooo! Hubie, this guy's off his nut. Get me help.

HUBIE  
Be patient, dear. Doctor Bengali knows his business.

DR (going back under the coverlet)  
Back you go, my little sourpuss.....There. Okay. Ready? Here we go again. why did the baby wear red

diaper pins? To hold her diapers up! (tape of baby laughing) Yah! It's working. It's smiling, oh yes, it's laughing. (more baby laughter) It's a girl!

HELEN

A girl!

HUBIE

Our own rope-skipping, ball-playing Hermione! Our sweet little child playing the piano for us, going with us on vacations! Imagine the fun!

DR

Here we come!

(Carries the baby, a doll attached to HELEN by a cord, and places it on HELEN's bosom. She admires it.)  
Helen, may I introduce you to Hermione Midthassel-Kazarnowicz.  
(DR. BENGALI Hums "Tea for Two.")

HELEN

She's even lovelier than her name!

HUBIE

What pretty eyes. (filming in a crouch at bedside)

HELEN

Thank God it's over.

DR

A great first installment. Nurse, get the teapot going.

HUBIE

First installment?

DR (singing)

Tea for two, and two for tea. Me, for you, and you for me.

HUBIE (stands)

Twins!

(DR. BENGALI nods, HUBIE faints dead away, into the arms of CONNIE.)

DR

I knew that was a strong heartbeat -- the two were beating as one. (goes under the coverlet) How's by you, Number Two? The world is ready for you, we got your social security number, your vaccination record, income tax forms, conscription papers, kindergarten registration. It's all here. Come and get it....Uh oh.

CONNIE

This one's frowning too? (Trying still to revive HUBIE.)

DR

No, he stopped.

CONNIE

Must've been something you said.

DR

Must be. (goes back under) Hey, I was just kidding! We got ice cream here. Lollipops.... A Cabbage Patch Doll? Okay kiddo, what's black and white and red all over? A sunburned zebra! (baby laughter) Ha, ha, ha! Here we go. It's moving again.

HELEN

Huff, huff, huff, huff, huff, huff, huff, huff.

DR: Here!

(Baby laughs again, followed by  
DR. BENGALI placing it on HELEN's bosom.)  
It's a boy.

HELEN

Our Gingold! He has Hubie's nose! Oh, isn't he a dear? Where's Hubie?

CONNIE (still trying to revive HUBIE)  
He'll come around shortly.

HELEN

He fainted?

DR

He just doesn't understand the joy the future holds..When he does, you'll see a happy man indeed!

HUBIE (coming to)  
What happened?

CONNIE

You fainted dead away when you found out you were having twins.

HUBIE

Twins?

(Faints again. DR. BENGALI administers smelling salts..)

DR

Here, my stricken giant (HUBIE comes to.) Now listen up, bubby, this is a gas. Two smiles every morning! Two lovely bambinos to come home to every night, and a mighty attractive wife -- Oh, don't get the wrong idea, I'm strictly in it for the laughs. (HUBIE remains nonplused) Hey, what's wrong with you? Where's your Americanism?

HELEN

Hubie, come hold a baby.

(HELEN lifts Hermione, and HUBIE takes her gingerly,  
a smile growing on the corner of his mouth.)

HUBIE

I at least gotta sit down. (sits) I can't believe all the work this is going to mean.

HELEN

Don't worry, I'm sure Mom'll move in and help.

HUBIE

I don't feel so good. Got any antacid Doc? And if you tell a joke, I swear I'll punch your lights out.

DR

Hey, don't get so upset. You haven't heard the big joke yet. Tell him, Nurse.

CONNIE

You mean the one about the eight thousand dollars a year day care bill or the one about the seven thousand dollar hospital bill?

HUBIE (starts to swoon)

Oooooooh. (CONNIE supports him, and he regains his composure)

DR

No time to waste. Here come the afterbirths. (places his hands under the coverlet.) One placenta, two placenta, three placenta, four. Five placenta, six placenta, seven placenta more!

(Catches placentas, never seen by audience, under the coverlet, presumably placing them in a basin. Strings, representing umbilical cords, lead from the dolls to under the coverlet)

You know what time it is, Hermione? (speaking to CONNIE.)

CONNIE

You bet, Gingold!

CONNIE & DR

(duet to the tune of Tom Lehrer's "The Vatican Rag")

(together) At first we are so snugly moored,

In mama's harbor we're secured,

Then suddenly they cut the cord

(CONNIE only) These chaps are really off their gourds!

(together) We wind up high on Mom's ab-do-men.

hardly even know the wo-man,

Hey Good Humor, what's it to ya?

We're really born again,

doubly warm again,

doin' the birthday rag!

DR

(Picks up large shears, gag type if possible.)

Here we go, kiddos. (cuts cords, then speaks to HUBIE) You know, we have a special on, Mr. Kazarnowicz -- I throw in a circumcision. Twenty percent off, while the cuttin's good.

HUBIE

I think I'll pass. Besides, what would that do for little Gingy's good humor?

DR

Ah-hah. You're catching on. We must consider their moods at this precious hour. I would not do anything to jeopardize my post-delivery success with these two perfect beauties, Hermione and Gingold Midthassel-Kazarnowicz. And now, Nurse Jones, would you assist Mr. Kazarnowicz in joining his family in the neonatal bed?

CONNIE

Most assuredly, Doctor.

(She helps HUBIE actually get into the bed, alongside HELEN. She also lowers HELEN's legs from the stirrups. HELEN and HUBIE are now sitting up, holding the babies.)

DR

Okay babies, you're graduates of the Good Humor Method. No cryin', no frownin', no tantrums, just clownin'. Got that? Good.

CONNIE

Shall I take them to the Post-Op Playland, Doctor?

DR

By all means. You're gonna love it! Right at your bedside --marzipan water buffaloes, jumpin' colossal candy kangaroos, jelly bean-thunderstorms and more -- all for mama. And little bottles of gin for my tiny ones!

HELEN

Doctor!

DR

Oh, don't worry. No sugar! Ha, ha, ha. Next merry mama, Nurse Jones!

(CONNIE wheels off HUBIE and HELEN in their bed. Lights flash on and off as wild music plays.)

Look out world-- here comes the Good Humor Man!

(DR. BENGALI dances wildly and plays his kazoo.

Blackout.)

THE END