

## IT WASN'T LIKE ARTHUR TO GET UPSET

Arthur was the youngest and the only boy in the family. His two sisters, Hilary and Hannah, were ten and twelve years old when he was born. His father died when he was three. So from babyhood Arthur was petted and indulged by his sisters who treated him rather like a doll to be played with, and by his mother who had always longed for a son to spoil. Arthur was quite old before he understood his mother's remark that he was "my best mistake" and he always took it as a compliment as indeed it was.

He didn't learn to speak until he was almost three. He had no need of language as his every want was anticipated by the three adoring women in his life. If he dropped (or threw) his toy out of his pram, it was immediately picked up and restored to him by one of his sisters who were only too happy to oblige with a smile.

In spite of everything being done for him even before he was aware that he wanted it, Arthur grew up into a sunny-natured, unspoiled and undemanding youngster. He was popular at school and was universally liked by his fellow pupils and teachers.

The only thing that he was adamant about was his food. As in everything else he was indulged and was only given food he liked. This led to his having quite a restricted diet as he only liked the traditional meat and two veg and refused anything he considered "foreign". He had never been abroad and had never tried Chinese or Indian take-aways.

By the time he was in his late teens both his sisters had married. Hilary had married James, a banker in the City and Hannah was married to Pierre, a Parisian restaurateur. A few months after their marriage Pierre's sister Madeleine came to England to meet her brothers-in-law. She was a feisty young lady who successfully ran one of Pierre's restaurants. She was *cordons bleus* trained and proud of it. Shortly after she arrived she insisted on throwing a dinner party for Pierre's new family. "I shall dazzle them all with a proper French meal," she boasted to her brother.

Indeed the meal was delicious and everyone praised it fulsomely.

"That was delicious," enthused James, accustomed to lavish lunches and dinners in London. "Whatever was the ingredient in the main dish? It wasn't chicken or game, was it? Some exclusively exotic French dish I assume?"

Madeleine beamed proudly. "Indeed, it is something you will not find in your traditional English butcher's. I brought all the ingredients with me from France in a freezer bag. It was...." here she paused for dramatic effect "calves' brains in a creamy white wine sauce. I am sure you have never had anything like it in England,\_\_\_ no?" Suddenly Arthur got to his feet, threw down his napkin and with an uncharacteristic wail, rushed from the room. The others stared after him in stunned silence. "

It is really not like Arthur to get so upset," said Hilary, lamely.