

LIFTING THE 'VALE - What's that sound?

Those three words have caused more than a little stress over time. When your sweet wife utters the warning, "what's that sound?" in the middle of the night, your job is to strap on your gun belt, struggle into your bullet proof vest and go on out there to face what ever "the sound" might be.

Chances are, it's nothing more than the rafters creaking from temperature change, but your anxious wife believes it to be a pride of rabid lions, so best "hop-to-it" because you aren't going to get any sleep until you get a written clearance from someone credible that indeed the coast is clear.

But occasionally the sound is heard by the male member of the family unit and he is concerned but can't convince the rest of the residents of his household that there is anything serious going on.

I believe I hear the belt slipping in the new Ford Explorer and I don't think anyone should be driving it until I can get it repaired.

"Dad, I drove the Ford to school today and it's running just fine, except now it has a dead battery."

Why can't they hear what I hear---a slipping belt which means that the alternator is not working

and the battery will probably die, soon?

"What's that funny smell?"

It's a dead short in your vacuum cleaner cord. Can't you hear it zapping away? If the circuit breaker doesn't kick immediately, there will most certainly be a fire.

Wow, what's with your car? It sounds like it's about to roll over and die. Better shut it off fast. Didn't you notice anything wrong?

"No, it sounded kind of different, so I just turned up the radio."

"The dishwasher isn't working properly anymore."

It's because you are running dishwasher in the sink at the same time the dishwasher is filling. There's not enough water to do both.

"How do I know when the dishwasher is filling?"

Just listen. Stick your head under the sink; you can't possibly miss it.

"I'm not sticking my head under the sink every time I'm running the dishwasher. You men just hear sounds that women can't hear."

Did the furnace come on today?

"Now, how am I supposed to know that?"

Did you hear it?

"What does it sound like? I don't sit around listening for those kinds of sounds."

There's something in the garbage disposal, I report.

"Now how can you tell from over there?"

Because it reminds me of what it sounds like when you run the lawnmower over a pile of rocks.

Please don't drive the car until I can get it in to fix the transmission. Didn't you hear that terrible racket it's making?

"Yeah, that's really loud, I could hardly hear. I really had to turn up the radio to even hear my music."

I remember my father asking us to please not flush the toilet while he was in the shower because it always left him without water.

"How can we tell when you're in the shower, dad?"

Listen, was always his response. My sister never did get that figured out.

I must admit that Da Wife is getting much better. She actually notices that high pitch screaming sound that her hairdryer emits when it's bearings are shot and it's about to freeze up.

As I get older, sometimes I speculate as to which sense I'd rather lose first. Vision seems pretty critical. Not easy to drive if you can't see the road. But on the other hand, not being able to hear could prove to be a pretty serious handicap. Fire alarms, sirens, and cooking timers might prove problematic--- let alone all those poignant sound waves emanating from Da Wife's lips.

Oops, what's that? I think I hear the garage door going up. I've got to clear all this junk off the kitchen table before she comes in and realizes that I've been doing nothing but writing since she left his morning. I'd have been dead meat years ago if it weren't for my good hearing.

James Edward

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