

Manny's Sneeze

Many things puzzled Manny Morrison. He came from over Mabou way and folks from Mabou tend to have a powerful curiosity. One thing in particular was of interest to Manny. He wondered why it was that you always close your eyes when you sneeze. Some folks say you just can't do it. But Manny wondered if you *could*. So he started tryin'. Every time he felt a sneeze comin' on, he'd think to himself, "OK now. Get ready. Here it comes." And then he'd sneeze, but no matter how hard he tried, his eyes would shut just before the sneeze, out she come.

Now, besides being curious, Mabou folks are a persistent lot and Manny was one of the most. He kept at it. In fact, he started using pepper so he'd have more opportunity to sneeze than he'd normally would. He got so good at sneezin', the Guinness Book people were startin' to take a serious look at him, thinkin' there just might be a world record in all of that. Manny's folks, on the other hand, were worried. They thought he might be losin' brain cells by the truckload cuz some of those sneezes were downright explosive.

Anyways it all came to a head one Saturday evenin' when a whole bunch of Manny's friends and family were over to his house for some singin', fiddle-playin', story-tellin' and what not. There was Manny sittin' on the couch in the big livin' room, chock full of people and all kinds of noise going on, when someone passed Manny an hors-d'oeuvre, smoked salmon it could have been, and it happened to have a touch of pepper on it.

Well, Manny's nose had grown overly sensitive to pepper, given all the hard usage it was gettin', so right away, Manny felt a big sneeze start up somewhere in the back of his head. So he says to himself, "I'm going to give it a good try here. If I can keep my eyes open with all these witnesses, then by gawd, people will know I done it." Manny opened his eyes really, *really* wide, threw his shoulders back, spread his legs apart, held his chin up... and then he sneezed. Well. The sneeze itself would have claimed an honorable mention in that year's edition of Guinness, and maybe in the Farmer's Almanac as well, but the most amazin' thing was that Manny *succeeded*. Yes sir, he kept his eyes wide open. And when he sneezed they shot right across the room and landed in the deviled eggs. Manny jumps up and yells, "My eyes! They're gone!" And his younger brother, Billy, yells back, "No they're not, Manny. They're right here in the deviled eggs."

So, that's the story and the reason your eyes always close whenever you sneeze.