

As best he could, under the verbal tornado, the young clerk injected, "Sir, we're terribly sorry, but we acted on your instructions."

Finally the customer, really furious now, said, "I wouldn't stay in the best suite in this — — hotel now that I know how badly managed it is," and stormed out.

I stepped up to the desk, thinking the clerk, who had taken one of the worst public tongue-lashings I'd seen in some time, would be upset. Instead he greeted me with one of the finest "Good evening, sir"s I'd ever heard. As he went through the routine of processing my room, I said to him, "I certainly admire the way you handled yourself just a moment ago. You have tremendous temper control."

"Well, sir," he said, "I really can't get mad at a fellow like that. You see, he really isn't mad at me. I was just the scapegoat. The poor fellow may be in bad trouble with his wife, or his business may be off, or maybe he feels inferior and this was his golden chance to feel like a wheel. I'm just the guy who gave him a chance to get something out of his system."

The clerk added, "Underneath he's probably a very nice guy. Most folks are."

Walking toward the elevators, I caught myself repeating aloud, "Underneath he's probably a very nice guy. Most folks are."

Remember those two short sentences next time someone declares war on you. Hold your fire. The way to win in situations like this is to let the other fellow blow his stack and then forget it.

Several years ago, while checking student examination papers, I came across one that especially disturbed me. The student who