HERE ARE TALES THAT WILL USHER YOU INTO

THE HAUNT OF

FEAR

NO. 15 OCT

FEATURING...

THE OLD WITCH

THE VAULT-KEEPER

THE CRYPT-KEEPER

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THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!

Hee, Hee! Can't resist me, eh? Love my cooking, eh? Well, come on into the haunt of fear again, and I'll whip up another mad-mag-recipe in my cauldron! Yep! It's the old witch, your reeking restaurateur of the revolting... your macabre menu-maker... your sniver-chef... your creeps-cooker... your madness-mixer... your scream-stewer... and so forth! So fasten your drool cups for another serving of sheer horror, and I'll begin the tasty tale I call...

CHATTERBOXED!

It was a brisk day in November, 1941! The man lay sprawled on the cold sidewalk where he had fallen! His face was ashen-white... his lips blue! The crowd around him formed quickly... anxious eyes peered down at him...

What happened? He just keeled over! Somebody looks like he just got an ambulance! Dead!
Several minutes later, an ambulance, its siren screaming, pulled up to the curb beside the prostrate figure.

One side! Let me through! All right, back up! Give him air!

The white-coated ambulance doctor knelt over the man lying on the gray sidewalk. He listened with his stethoscope... felt for a pulse... then shook his head... this man is dead!

A hush fell over the people seated in the funeral parlor’s chapel. The coffin lid was opened, the voice of the orator began to drone; Jacob Filbert’s funeral services had begun...

And so... in final peace... Jacob Filbert’s remains will be laid to rest! But he leaves behind the love... the devotion... the kindness he practiced while he lived...

The funeral orator’s voice droned on and on, interrupted only by the pitiful sobs of the mourners before him! Suddenly, a shriek echoed through the funeral chapel...
And as Jacob Filbert sat up, the chapel was filled with cries of terror! Women mourners, tripping on their black dresses, scrambled for the exits! Men pushed after them! A girl fell, screaming, and the others trampled over her...

Sheer horror gripped the mourning gathering! All eyes stared at the open coffin! A white veined hand reached up, grasping the coffin lid...

Some, rooted with mortal fear to the spot where they stood, just stared at the pale figure rising in his coffin! Suddenly, Jacob's eyes blinked open! Color rushed to his cheeks! He looked around...

The doctor stroked his chin thoughtfully! Jacob Filbert hung his head...

"What's goin' on?" "Good Lord! He's alive!"

Some, rooted with mortal fear to the spot where they stood, just stared at the pale figure rising in his coffin! Suddenly, Jacob's eyes blinked open! Color rushed to his cheeks! He looked around...

"What's goin' on?" "Good Lord! He's alive!"

"You suffered what is commonly called a cataleptic fit, Mr. Filbert! Cataleptic fits closely resemble death!"

"But doctor! I might have been buried alive!"

"Doctor! Telephone! Mrs. Condriak!"

Jacob Filbert's family physician, Doctor Henley Bendiner, picked up the phone...

"Excuse me, Filbert! Oh, yes, Mrs. Condriak! Is that so? No?! Hmmm! Oh, dear! Really! Well, I'll tell you what you should do! Take a pot and boil up..."

"Ten minutes later..."

"Good-bye, Mrs. Condriak! Er... I could've been where were buried alive!

"Yes! No telling how long a cataleptic fit will last! And it is rare that a physician can tell the difference between it and actual death!"

"Telephone, Doctor! Mrs. Rereffus!"

"Oh, excuse me, Filbert!"

"Good-bye, Mrs. Condriak!"

"I was saying, Condriak! Er..."

"I could've been where we, Filbert?"

"Really! Well, I'll tell you what you should do! Take a pot and boil up..."
Fifteen minutes later...

Yes, Mrs. Rereffus! You do that! Yes, good-bye, er...

Is it possible that I may have more of these attacks, doctor?

Quite possible, Mr. Filbert! We must be very careful to see that we avoid what almost happened yesterday. We must...

Telephone, doctor! Mrs. Chevuk!

Oh! Excuse me, er...

Good-bye, doctor.

Jacob Filbert was frightened...Terribly frightened! He rushed to his brother's house...

Not home! Hmph! He's never home! Always out, gallivanting! Just when I need him!

As Jacob came in the front door of his own home...No, Sadie! Really? Hmph! Always blabbering... That telephone...

You're kidding! She did? Oh, wait until Mary hears about this! Go on! Tell me more!

Suddenly Jacob Filbert's face brightened! He grinned... Of course! That's it! That's the way to make sure I'm not buried alive!

Mr. Filbert hurried to the undertaker! The plan was forming in his mind. The solution.

So you see, if I do have a cataleptic fit, and you do bury me alive... I'll be able to let my family know! They'll come and dig me up!

All right, Mr. Filbert! We'll follow your instructions to the letter.
Finally, Mr. Filburt completed his arrangements...

"I'll pay my bills in advance. Every month! Satisfactory?

"Fine! We'll take care of everything, Sir! Would you like to pay for December now?

"Yes, Sir! Perfect! Perfect!"

"Then Mr. Filburt went into the chill November air feeling confident that his problem was solved...

"Wait for the dial tone!"

Early the next month, it happened! A car careened crazily across a deserted street and smashed into a brick wall! The impact of tons of steel and shattering glass echoed into the night.

When the ambulance doctor examined the unfortunate driver...

This man is dead!

That's Jacob Filburt! I recognize him!

Doctor Bendinere assured Mrs. Filburt... "No, Mrs. Filburt! He's dead all right! The crash did it! It's definitely not a cataleptic fit!

Then... sob... I suppose we... sob... might as well go ahead... sob... with the funeral!

The undertaker, however, insisted that he follow Mr. Filburt's instructions...

The arrangement with Mrs. Filburt! Your husband demanded it! I'm going to see that it's carried out!

But really Mr. Boxer! The other thing! Isn't that a little ridiculous? Bury Jacob with a connected telephone?"
And so on that cold Saturday in early December, Jacob Filburt's coffin was lowered into the grave.

Silence closed in as the mourners left and the grave was covered over. The thin telephone wire coming from the fresh mound of cemetery earth swayed in the wintry wind.

Night crept over the gray headstones like a black phantom. All was still... except for the whine of the wind streaming past the wire. Then came dawn. Towards afternoon...

HELP! HELP ME... SOMEONE!

For Jacob Filburt had had a cataleptic fit; he'd suffered it while driving! That's why he crashed! But the crash hadn't killed him! He was alive... buried alive...

Jacob felt it, beside him: the cold black instrument: the telephone.

And then Jacob lifted the receiver! The dial tone began to hum. He counted the little holes carefully to make sure he'd dial the right number.

And then Jacob felt it, beside him: the cold black instrument: the telephone.
You think you're clever, don't you? Okay! So you know what's going to happen! YEP! Eileen, right at that moment was on the phone talking to Sadie.

No, Sadie! REALLY? Didn't cry at all! Of all the nerve! And I thought she was my friend! WHAT GALL! HMMPH! Well, I'll tell her.

Naturally...

Buzz-buzz... Buzz-buzz...

No answer! Gasp! He's never... Gasp! Home when... Gasp! I need him! I know! Gasp! Doctor Bendiner!

Okay! Okay! So pin a wooden medal with leather trimmings on your nose! So you figured this out, too! YEP! The dog was on the phone consoling one of his complaining patients.


Buzz-buzz... Buzz-buzz...

Busy! I should... Gasp! Choke... Have... Known! What'll I do? Yes! That's it... That's it...

Okay! Okay! So pin a wooden medal with leather trimmings on your nose! So you figured this out, too! YEP! The dog was on the phone consoling one of his complaining patients.

So, smart-alecs? Got it figured out? What's gonna stymie him now? After all, Jacob can always dial the operator! Hee, hee! You never thought of that, did you? Well, Jacob did! In fact, he's waiting for the dial tone right now.
But the dial tone didn't come because minutes before... thousands of miles westward...

*LOOK UP THERE* PLANES HUNDREDS OF THEM!

GODD LORD

DEAD. GASP! NO DIAL TONE! THE PHONE IS DEAD. OPERATOR GASP OPERATOR CHOKING.

In fact, the air in Jacob's coffin gave out long before the little orange light on the 'trouble-switchboard' indicated that a phone was off the hook somewhere! So the shrill voice of the operator fell on deaf ears in that dark underground horizontal phone booth. For Jacob was suffocated...

This is the operator. I'm sorry! Our circuits are busy! Please hang up...

No, fiends! The dial tone didn't come because at that moment, the nation's phone centers were tied up with army, navy, and newspaper calls! The wires were jammed! All circuits were busy...

*PLEASE...GASP...CHOKING* NOT MUCH AIR... LEFT!

OPERATOR GASP... A DIAL TONE... SO I CAN...

PLEASE GASP... CHOKING. GASP... DIAL THE OPERATOR... BURGLE...

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This is the operator. I'm sorry! Our circuits are busy! Please hang up...

THE JAPANESE HAVE JUST BOMBEDED PEARL HARBOR!

Hee-hee! Yep, kiddies! Like I said in the beginning... it was 1941! I thought you were pretty shrewd. Eh? Thought you had it all figured out? Well, I hope I outsmarted you as for Jacob. Well, he and his telephone are pretty decayed by now! I still get a call from him once in a while though!

Usually, I'm not home... so he leaves a spirit-message! And now, the vault-keeper awaits with his little number! Dig you later! Got another grim fairy tale for you! Bye now!
REMEMBER THE STORY ABOUT THE THREE HOLES IN THE GROUND CALLED 'WELL, WELL, WELL' HEH, HEH, HEH!
NOW, YOUR VAULT-KEEPER BELIEVES IN DEFLATION! SO COME INTO THE VAULT OF HORROR, SIT YOURSELF DOWN ON THAT BUCKET, AND I'LL BEGIN THE TALE OF ONE HOLE IN THE GROUND CALLED...

all Washed Up!

It was an old well, no one used it anymore. The water deep below its slimy-walled sides shimmered in the moonlight! A musty odor of stagnation and staleness drifted up from the blackness beneath its stone rim! The moss-laden water bucket hung silently on the frayed rope coiled about the weatherbeaten handle! Insects swarmed beneath the rotted shed that stood over it! A twig snapped nearby... a figure moved out of the darkness... toward the well! A woman...

$dB... $dB...
She came up to the well and leaned over it! The moonlight glinted on her tear-stained cheeks! She looked down at the stagnant water far below...

How long can we go on like this, Harry? People are talking! They say... So, they say you don't intend to marry me!

A second figure came out of the shadows and moved to the side of the unhappy woman! A man...

They're wrong, Marcia! I want to marry you, but I can't— not yet! I'm not ready!

When, Harry? When will you be ready?

As soon as I've saved up enough money! I've got a job now! It won't be long before I get a promotion! Then...

You've put it off and put it off! Always the same excuse! You haven't the money!

I understand. Every—thing, Harry! Perfectly! I'm sorry you never gave me a ring! I would give it back... now!

Marcia! We're finished, Harry! I'm tired of waiting! Gregg called me today! He's back in town! He wants to see me! He wants to know if I'm... free...of ties! I'm going to tell him... yes!

Marcia! Come back! Wait! Good-bye, Harry! I'll see you around...

The woman disappeared into the gloom! The man stood...staring into the blackness where she'd vanished! The silence closed in again! A breeze stirred the well bucket! The frayed rope creaked...

Gregg Sanders? That rich no-good @##*! He always wanted Marcia! Now he's going to take her away from me!
Marcia’s laughter rippled through the still night air. Gregg took her in his arms...

Gregg! These last few weeks have been wonderful! Just wonderful! I’ve loved every minute of it!

It doesn’t have to end, Marcia! It could go on and on... like this... if you’ll say yes!

Marcia turned away, staring down at the shimmering well-water far below...

Are... are you proposing to me, Gregg?

Yes, Marcia! I’m asking you to marry me! What do you say?

Marcia pulled away from Gregg. She smiled...

I’m not sure I love you, Gregg!

I’ll make you love me, dearest! Just give me the chance! Say you’ll marry me!

Yes, Gregg! I’ll... I’ll marry you!

Sweetheart!

Harry clenched his fists and swore silently as he watched from his hiding place...

I won’t let you have her, Gregg! I won’t! She’s mine! Mine!

After Marcia went off down the path toward her house, Gregg leaned over the well and grinned. He was too busy with his own thoughts to hear the crinkle of the leaves behind him...
Harry brought the rock down on Gregg's head again and again! Soon it felt as if he were pounding an old moth-eaten pillow.

She's mine... Unggg... Mine? Unggg? I won't... ugh... let you... Unngg... have her!

Harry knelt and slipped the ring from Gregg's finger...

I could rock it! It'd be enough to get married on!

Harry stared down at Gregg's lifeless body lying before him. Then, something caught his eye! Something sparkling...

His diamond ring! It... it must be worth a fortune...

Harry pushed Gregg's body over the stone rim of the well. For a moment, it hung there... precariously...

Down... you go...

Harry pushed the ring into his breast pocket and lifted Gregg's body.

Now to get rid of you, Gregg... where they'd never think of looking for you...

There was a second or two of silence, and then a muffled splash far below! Harry peered down at the rippling murky water... suddenly...

There was a blast...

The ring spiraled downward crazily! Harry lunged for it, almost going over! It was too late...

The ring spiraled downward crazily! Harry lunged for it, almost going over! It was too late...

Blast it! Ank...
A light blinked on in Marcia’s house; a window rattled open. Harry ducked into the shadows. Who... who’s there?

Several minutes later, Harry slowed down to a walk, breathing heavily. He’d gotten out of there... fast...

That gasp... ring! I’ve got to. Gasp. Go back and... gasp... get it!

It’s no use! I can’t locate it!

Several times during those nights of probing, the hooks would catch onto the body below, and Harry would be forced to snap the string and begin again...

Blast it! Caught again!

Once, Harry’d pulled hard, and a bloated whitened hand lifted upward from the muddy surface... Good Lord!

During the days that followed the murder, Harry would visit Marcia... to comfort her.

He never intended to marry you, Marcia! Can’t you see that now? I... sob... suppose you’re right... sob, Harry!

And as the weeks went by...

Oh, Harry! I’ve been such a fool! Can you forgive me?

Forget about him, Marcia! It’s all over! Let’s pick up where we left off!
Meanwhile, Harry continued to fish for Gregg's ring with no success...

It's no use! There's just one alternative...

And so, about two months after the murder... one dark night, Harry came to the well with a coil of strong rope...

It's the only way! I've got to go down there and get it!

Harry slid the rope around one of the beams that supported the well shed and tied it securely.

Then he slipped over the stone rim of the well and began to lower himself, hand under hand, down into the dark, musty shaft.

Phew! What a smell!

The stench of the stagnant water below seared Harry's nostrils. Soon he reached its murky surface...

I hope it's not too deep!

The water rose slowly. It had reached Harry's chest when his feet touched something soft...

I'm standing on the body!

Harry took a deep breath and ducked below the surface. He reached downward for the ring...

It must be here... somewhere...
Marcia sat bolt upright in her bed as the hysterical shrieking echoed through the stillness of the night.

She slipped on a robe, hurried downstairs and out into the darkness.

Marcia began to pull with all her strength. Harry continued to shriek. Little by little he came out of the water and then she saw it...

The splashing and screaming were indeed coming from the well! Marcia peered over the edge far below. Harry was trying to pull himself upward.

Harry! Help me, Marcia! Pull! Pull! He's... He's... He's trying to drag me under!

Pull... Marcia! Pull! Oh, Lord... The rope...

Harry! Harry... It's Gregg!

And as the rope snapped under the strain, the two of them disappeared into the dank murky water! Marcia stared in horror as the last few bubbles rose and broke across the stagnant surface...

Heh, heh! And that's my little yarn for this time, kiddies! Harry and Gregg ended up in the drink... together! Well-water yuh gonna do? As for Marcia... she was left high and dry! By the way... before you go on to the old witch's niche, let me offer you a cool, refreshing, thirst-quencher! That is... if you hold your nose! Bye, now!
THE OLD WITCH'S
GRIM FAIRY TALE!

HEE, NEE! IN VAULT OF HORROR NO. 27, I TOLD YOU BLOOD-THIRSTY LITTLE FiENDS A STORY I CALLED, 'A GRIM FAIRY TALE'. MY IDIOT EDITORS WENT SO WILD OVER THAT ONE (THEY'RE BOTH IN CAGES, NOW!), I'VE DECIDED TO TELL YOU ANOTHER! I CALLED THIS LITTLE CHILDISH CHILLER...

MARRIAGE VOWS!

ONCE UPON A TIME... LONG, LONG AGO... THERE LIVED IN A TINY KINGDOM A KIND-HEARTED KING AND HIS BEAUTIFUL DAUGHTER... PRINCESS BUTTERCUP! NOW PRINCESS BUTTERCUP WAS MADLY IN LOVE WITH A HANDSOME PRINCE FROM A DISTANT KINGDOM... BUT WHEN SHE ASKED HER FATHER IF SHE COULD MARRY HIM, HER KIND-HEARTED FATHER REPLIED...

BUT FATHER, DEAR! I LOVE PRINCE DASHING WITH ALL MY HEART AND SOUL... AND FINGERS... AND TOES!

I KNOW, BUTTERCUP; DEAR! BUT OUR PEOPLE ARE STARVING! OUR KINGDOM IS POOR! A ROYAL MARRIAGE AT THIS TIME WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE! YOU SEE... I'M BROKE!
I know, I know, but unless my people are relieved of their misery and woe, you cannot marry! We cannot be happy unless the populace is happy!

I can't, Buttercup, the royal treasury is empty, clean, busted... flat.

Can't you hire jesters to go around and make the people happy, Father? After all, I do love Prince Dashing with all my heart and...

Can't you borrow money, Father? I do love Prince Dashing with all my heart and soul... and fingers... and toes!

Never! The only one that I could borrow money from is King Blackheart... our black-hearted neighbor...

Ugh! Him I hate! You get the picture, Buttercup!

And so, beautiful princess Buttercup could not marry handsome Prince Dashing at least not until the people of her father's kingdom were better off and happy. But the longer she waited, the worse things got. The people got unhappier and unhappier and unhappier... sob.

Sob... Father! What will I do? I have waited... and waited! The people have gotten unhappier and unhappier! And I do love Prince Dashing with all of my heart and soul... and fingers... and toes!

This is no longer a question of your happiness, my child. Our kingdom is in a crisis! It is the people I am thinking about!

The people? But what about poor little me... and Prince Dashing... whom I love with all of my heart and soul...

The people come first, my child. It is their happiness you must be concerned about! After they are happy, then you can be happy. But now... they starve! They walk the streets in rags...
Finally the kind-hearted king could stand it no longer! Things were worse than ever! So one day...

Daughter, dear! I've decided to swallow my pride! I've decided to ask our black-hearted neighbor, King Blackheart, for a loan!

Oh, Daddy! Then maybe I can marry Prince Dashing, whom I love with all of my heart and soul and...

Yes, Daughter! If I'm able to borrow enough, and my people are happy, then you could marry... er... what's his name?

Prince Dashing... whom I love with all of my heart and soul and...

So, kind-hearted King Kindheart and his beautiful daughter, Princess Buttercup, rode to the neighboring kingdom to see Black-hearted King Blackheart. Now, King Blackheart had never met Princess Buttercup! He never knew his neighbor had such a beautiful daughter!

So you need money, eh, King Kindheart? Well, I think a loan could be arranged.

You do? Oh, Daddy! On one condition, of course!

EH? One condition? Anything? Anything!

My condition, King Kindheart, is that you give me your daughter's hand in marriage!

What? But she loves another! No! No! No! Heh, heh! Either that your daughter's hand... or no loan. Never! Never! Can I speak to my daughter for a minute... alone?
Black-hearted king blackheart left kindhearted king kindheart and princess buttercup alone. You can't expect me to marry him, father! I love prince dashing with all my heart and soul, and...

But I don't love black-hearted king blackheart! I love prince dashing with...

Nevertheless, I must obtain the loan. I'm concerned about our people. I must consent to give black-hearted king your hand in marriage!

And so, when king blackheart came back into the room...

...all right, king blackheart! Your condition will be met!

Er...when will you want the marriage to take place?

As soon as possible! Next month!

You will come to the castle next month on this day! The royal marriage will take place then!

Sob... sob... Good! Now, now, pretty buttercup! Do not be unhappy!

I hate you, king blackheart! I love prince dashing with all my sob... and sob...

Come, daughter! Till next month, then!

So, kind-hearted king kindheart and his beautiful daughter, princess buttercup, returned to their own kingdom.

Sob... sob... You must be brave, buttercup! You must think of our people! Remember! Their happiness comes first!
News of the coming royal marriage was announced throughout Kind-Hearted King Kindheart's kingdom.

Hear ye, hear ye! Be it known that on Tuesday, August fifth, Good King Blackheart will take Our beloved Princess Buttercup's hand in marriage!

Days passed, a week went by. Princess Buttercup remained in her room, crying her eyes out. Sob... Sob!

Come, my child! See how happy our people are! See how happy you have made them!

The wedding date drew near. Then, on the eve of the royal marriage day...

I have it! I have it! A way out, Father!

Tell me, daughter! Tell me!

The next day, the wedding day. Steeple bells tolled. People danced in the streets. Soon, King Blackheart's coach appeared...

Here he comes! One side! Look! Bags of gold!
The bags of gold were distributed to the populace...

There! The last one, now, let's get on with the ceremony, King Kindheart.

King Kindheart led King Blackheart into the castle...

This way, King Blackheart! No tricks, King Kindheart! I've kept my part of the bargain.

...down a long dark corridor...

And I will keep my part, King Blackheart! A bargain is a bargain! In here.

Ah! The chapel!

The chapel was filled with royal guests! Near the altar stood Princess Buttercup at her side stood Prince Dashing...

What's this, King Kindheart? I am to have your daughter's hand in marriage — not him!

That's right, King Blackheart! There's to be a double ceremony today.

Prince Dashing will marry Buttercup...

What?! But...

King Kindheart extended a velvet pillow; King Blackheart stared at it in sheer horror.

And you... you will have my daughter's hand in marriage.

Good Lord!

Hee, hee! Hee! They made the old boy, King Blackheart, go through with it, too, kiddies! And after that, everybody lived happily ever after. Prince Dashing with one-armed Princess Buttercup... and Blackhearted King Blackheart with his handy wife! Hee, hee! And that's my fairy tale for this issue! Grim? That's what I told you! Bye, now!
The Crypt of Terror

HMMPH! FAIRY TALES? WHAT NEXT? PRETTY SOON THAT OLD HAG WILL BE TELLIN' FUNNY-LITTLE-ANIMAL HORROR STORIES! WELL, NOT ME! I'M FROM THE OLD SCHOOL! STRAIGHT GORE... THAT'S MY LORE! YEP, IT'S YOUR CRYPT-KEEPER READY TO DIG UP ANOTHER TALE OF TERROR FROM MY COLLECTION. SO SIT DOWN ON THAT SAMPLE-CASE AND I'LL BEGIN THE BLOOD-CURDLER I CALL...

DEATH OF SOME SALESMEN!

Mr. Thatcher, you're a salesman... a traveling salesman! For two years now you've been driving these backwoods roads, hustling your line! You go from farmhouse to farmhouse, making your pitch! Sometimes you hawk a sale... mostly not! Today looks like one of your bad days...

Your name is Stuart Thatcher? You're a salesman... a traveling salesman! For two years now you've been driving these backwoods roads, hustling your line! You go from farmhouse to farmhouse, making your pitch! Sometimes you hawk a sale... mostly not! Today looks like one of your bad days...

'No! No, I said! Well, thanks... anyway, I'll drop by again!'
Some of these backwoods roads are smooth. Some are pretty sad! Like the one you're on now! It's muddy and rutted! Your beat-up old car rocks and rolls! The sky above you is bleak and grey! You curse softly to yourself...

Looks like rain, drat it! And here I am in the middle of nowhere!

The rain continues! Suddenly your car sags awkwardly to the right! The engine coughs and stalls! You're over your wheel hubs in a puddle...

Oh...!! Stuck! Now what?

You sit there, in the middle of that rain-flooded muddy backwoods road, counting to ten! Then you look around...

Must be a farmhouse somewhere near here! Maybe they can put me up!

You peer through the gloomy downpour! Then you see it! The house! It stands black and somber, outlined against the grey sky.

Hey! What luck! There's a house... up on that hill! I'll make a break for it!

You leap from your stalled auto and start for the house! The raindrops slam against your face! Your clothes begin to sop up the wetness! You splash through the rain-swarmed puddles.

Hope they've got a phone so I can call in for a tow!

And then you're on the porch! The house is old and weatherbeaten! The shutters are broken and hang crazily from rusted hinges! The blinds are drawn! There's no sign of life! Behind you, the rain pours noisily off the porch roof.

Looks deserted? Well! I'll knock anyway.
YOU FROWN YOUR FIST ON THE PLENTY DOOR, THE SONG CHES THROUGH THE HOUSE, FOR A MOMENT ALL IS STILL, SAVE FOR THE RAINDROPS, THEN HEAY FOOTSTEPS APPROACH, THE DOOR BREAks OPEN...

YES? HELLO! I WONDER IF YOU CAN HELP ME! I'M A TRAVELING SALESMAN, AND MY CAR...

YOU FOLLOW THE NICE OLD COUPLE INTO THEIR KITCHEN, YOU LOOK AROUND AND GASP, YOU'RE AMAZED! THAT OLD HOUSE WITH SUCH MODERN APPLIANCES...

THE OLD WOMAN WHO HAS ANSWERED THE DOOR GRINS, SHE STEPS BACK, HER FACE BEAMING:

A SALESMAN! COME IN!

MY CAR STALLED DOWN ON THE ROAD, THE WIRE MUST HAVE GOTTEN WET!

EBAN! IT'S A SALESMAN!

I'LL BE RIGHT THERE, HENRIETTA!

EBAN! I WOND ER IF YOU PEOPLE HAVE A PHONE!

EGH, NO PHONE! NO PHONE! SALESMAN, EH?

OH, THAT'S TOO BAD! I THOUGHT I MIGHT CALL IN FOR A TOW! I'M STUCK... DOWN AT THE ROAD!

CAN WE OFFER YOU ANYTHING, MR. . . . MR. ...

THATCHER, MA'AM! STUART THATCHER? I'M WITH THE JACKSON COMPANY! A CUP OF COFFEE WOULD HIT THE SPOT. IF IT WOULDN'T BE TOO MUCH TROUBLE!

COME INTO THE KITCHEN, MR. THATCHER!

NO TROUBLE AT ALL, MR. THATCHER!

THATCHER! MY! YOU CERTAINLY HAVE ALL THE LATEST CONVENIENCES, FOLKS!

OH, YES! YOU SEE, WE'VE TELL 'EM ABOUT THE FIRST ONE, HENRIETTA! THE ONE THAT SOLD US THE REFRIGERATOR!

THE OLD WOMAN'S FACE DARKENS; SHE STARES AT YOU, WHISPERING HOARSELY...

OH, YES! THE REFRIGERATOR! EBAN AND I'D SAVED FOR YEARS, MR. THATCHER! PUT AWAY EVERY GENT WE COULD MANAGE 'TIL WE ALWAYS WANTED ONE! THEN THAT SALESMAN CAME. THE ONE THAT SOLD US THAT ONE!

THE DIRTY NO GOOD CROOK!
You shift uncomfortably in your seat, Stuart Thatcher? There's something strange about this old couple, but you can't put your finger on it... Crook? It didn't work, Mr. Thatcher! The refrigerator didn't work! He cheated us! Took our lives' savings!

That's too bad, I... I'm sorry!

That's why, from then on... We vowed that if any other salesman tried to sell us anything... We'd make sure it worked first!

That's wise! Tell 'im 'bout the freezer, Eban!

Ebán points to the large frozen-food locker standing next to the refrigerator.

When he came, the one selling the freezer... We made sure it worked!

Show 'im, Ebán!

Ebán flings open the freezer lid! You look down! Suddenly, your heart stops! A wave of nausea sweeps over you! Inside that locker is a frost-covered blue-skinned body...

Good Lord! Made sure, all right? Tried it out on him... the salesman...

Worked good? See?

You look around frantically! These people are mad! Ebán pats the new electric stove...

Feller that come with this was real nice! But that first crook was nice also! Can't trust 'em 'jus' cause they're nice! Tried the stove out, too!

You pull down the oven door... Just a crack! You step back horrified! The door falls open all the way! Inside is a brown-crusted well-roasted corpse...

Stove worked good, too! See!

Don't get any ideas about runnin', Mr. Thatcher! This shotgun's loaded...
You turn from the revolting sight of the browned body in the oven and stare into the menacing barrel of the shotgun...

Gasp: Show 'im the grandfather's clock. Eban! Feller showed up tryin' to sell us one of them things one day!

You follow the old man into the hall. The clock stands there ticking loudly. Behind the glass window, a body hangs. Head down... swinging back and forth: a pendulum, a human pendulum...

Goo, Lord! Works good, eh, Mr. Thatcher? C'mon, Mr. Thatcher...

Henrietta prods you with the gun and you follow Eban to a closet...

Feller come along sellin' vacuum cleaners!

Them vacuum cleaners worked good, too!

Choke...

The body hangs head down. Its mouth closed around the fan pipe. Its feet are hooked to the handle: a human vacuum bag...

Care t' see how good it cleans, Mr. Thatcher?

N-no... Th-thanks!

Henrietta scowls and points into the living room. Eban nods...

Tell 'em 'bout the crook with the television set!

Yep! He was just like that refrigerator feller! A crook!

The gun-muzzle nudges you along. You move into the living-room after Eban. The TV console model stands before you...

Durn thing didn't work! Show 'im, Eban!
Eban swings open the console doors as a charred wide-eyed face stares out at you from behind the escutcheon.

Every time we turn 'er on, he begins to smoke!

He kept hollerin' 'bout a picture tube. Remember, Henrietta?

No 'n-never mind! Dirty crook!

Eban shrugs...

That's about all, Mr. Thatcher!

How 'bout the clothes-dryer, Eban?

Eban's face brightens...

Oh, yeah! That! Come on, Mr. Thatcher! Follow me!

Down the cellar!

The cellar stairs are dark! They creak as you go down...

Feller said it'd dry clothes fine!

That one worked, Eban!

That's right, Henrietta! It o'io, didn't it!

There it is, Mr. Thatcher!

Cough...

'S'matter, Mr. Thatcher?

Don't you feel well, Mr. Thatcher?

Eban swings open the clothes-dryer door. Inside, curled up in the drum, is a scorched, blistered body...

S'matter, Mr. Thatcher?

Don't you feel well, Mr. Thatcher?
Eban scurries up the cellar stairs! Henrietta stands, leer- ing at you. . . the gun pointed...

We'll soon see, Mr. Thatcher! We'll see if'n it works!

P-please! I'll... I'll pay you... anything!

You hear the front door slam as Eban goes out! You're scared, aren't you, Stuart? What can you do? These people are maniacs! They mean business...

[Sound effects]

You... you don't want... what I sell, ma'am! I...

Shut up!

The door slams again! Footsteps resound through the house...

Need help, Eban? No! I can manage!

P-please!

Eban comes down the stairs! He carries it under his arm! You feel dizzy... sick! Their voices sound very far away.

What's he sell, Eban? It's called Mother Jackson's little house-wife helper... the handy-dandy meat slicer!

Choke.

Heh, heh! And if you're lucky, Stuart, that darn thing you've been selling may work. Good! They're awful messy when they're not sharp!

Heh, heh! That's my yarn, fans! Hope you liked it! And if any of you traveling salesman are lookin' in, and want the address of a couple of likely prospects, I'll send you Eban and Henrietta's! They'd love to see a demonstration of your article! Bye, now! We'll all see you next in my mag, Tales from the Crypt!