

## Asleep And Places Like It

Morning Broke In  
The Gargolyle's Day Off  
Aunt Panorama's Ant-O-Rama!  
Neb's Cave  
Electric Edward  
Rolling Gang  
Walter Under The Bridge

### Morning Broke In

*(SFX Birdsong)*

*Narrator:* Morning broke in on Nostrils O'Blique and beat him around the head and shoulders with shafts of golden sunlight. And the merry chirps of birds filtered through his hairy earholes and registered themselves at his desk-like brain (*SFX counter bell struck smartly*) in the form of little urgings to wake up, go outside, and inspect his property!

“Ahhhhhhhh!” thought Nostrils, raising his head from the pillow . . .

“Ahhhh, Saturday! And I don't have to get up and go to work today! Well, I'd better get up and get busy!”

He leaped out of bed and, without a thought of brushing his teeth, sprang for the bedroom window. He threw up the sash, thrust his head out into the bright spring air and inhaled deeply.

Every blade of grass for fifty feet around bent itself in the direction of the bedroom window, bowed over by the small waft of chalky sidewalk air that rushed in to replace the moist and dewy mixture of sweet and pleasant gases displaced through Nostrils' nostrils.

"Uh oh!" thought the lawn, "Saturday morning!"

He had a special machine designed to carry out this gruesome business with as much noise as possible. During the week it rested in a place of honor in the garage, lording it over the humbler tools and enjoying the esteem and respect of other less spectacular machines. It was a sturdy, well-made lawnmower, lacquered green, with three-speed self propulsion.

While Nostrils hummed merrily in the garage, the lawn was in an uproar of terror, anger, bitterness, frustration, despair, hopelessness, and apathetic giddiness. Some individual blades were trying to tear themselves up out of the lawn and run down the sidewalk on their roots. Some had swooned and lay limp and senseless. Others only pretended to faint, to avoid being chewed by those terrible teeth. Some blades giggled hysterically, some tried desperately to go to seed, some broke out in

a cold green sweat.

There was a small clump of dark green grass which had been spared the chop for several weeks because it was gathered at the base of the massive utility pole that served to connect the house of Nostrils with the rest of humanity. This clump sent a ripple of green thought billowing out to each blade in the whole lawn. . .

“Blades and Sprouts! Leaves and Leaflets! Simmer down for a moment and listen to us! Now, it doesn't look good for us, it's true! It looks as though we have once again grown beautiful green heads, only to have them, again, snapped off by the Snarling Many-Tooth!”

The lawn clung to itself and shuddered, lamenting and rustling.

“ But listen up oh Vegetation! We are all the same tissue, we are the same moisture, the same peelings! Listen and assimilate, Mulchy Stuff! Hear us Old Roots and give us a strong current! Think of the sweet and pleasant gases we have given this wretch, who comes today to shear off our heads! Who seals up our pores and shellacs us over with his own foul gases - grotesque, oily structures . . . gases filled with choking lumps of wax that make the broad leaves wither and turn gray and black at the frost time, rather than brightening into fine vegetable red and vegetable gold! Think of the Poisonous shriveler! His Wheeled Growlers and Smokers! Do you think he may someday feel his kinship with us? Is that what your expectation is? You imagine some Saturday will find him rushing out here to throw himself outstretched upon the lawn he calls his own, to cry . . . "Friend! We are moisture together! Let me breathe my carbon dioxide on you!" Is that what you think!?”

In the garage, Nostrils' mower roared into its version of life and the two of them prepared to clip the backyard.

“NO!” billowed the clump . . . “He will not! He will come instead as he has in the past and as he comes today, with his Dragon, even now!

But we can save our own true selves! We can do it! We all must be together in this! So, Old Roots, you must draw in more power, you must tap the forests and the wildlands! We need a great surge, a great surge of energy! To bind us! To tighten our grip on the sod! Don't Panic! Some of us may suffer in this so we must resolve to act quickly! Roots! Bring 'er up to wide open! All of you greeneries, tune in on the Creature and his Monster and follow us!

And as Nostrils rounded the second ninety degrees of his first great rectangle . . . a movement in the corner of his eye startled him and he threw the shiny chrome gear lever into neutral and took a few steps in the direction of what appeared to be something twitching in the grass at the base of the pole. The mower putt-putted in place; Nostrils stopped and stared intently.

A piece of sod about three feet by two was . . .pulling itself up into an arch, tearing itself free

and separate from the rest of the lawn. It bristled and looked very fierce!

Nostrils continued to stare and this frozen attitude of his turned out to be a mistake. Even then an unfamiliar dull ripping sound from behind him. . . well, it seemed to come from all directions at once. And in fact, it did!

He spun around. Other sections of lawn were rearing upward, undulating up! Nostrils saw that he was ringed round by . . . animated chunks of sod!

“What th’ . . . ?” he said, “What th’ . . . ?”

But the angry lawn was not to be cowed by this outburst. Instead, the remark seemed to stir it to further action and the circle of rearing sod bits began to inch closer and closer, again trembling, but this time in a green rage! The lawn beyond the circle had also begun to tear itself up into strips, and all at once, or so it seemed, the whole lawn came alive and closed in on Nostrils, how put up a valiant fight with his machine . . . but . . . well . . .

In the weeks that followed, while the hubbub caused by Nostrils' disappearance grew, peaked, and dwindled . . . no one noticed a green lacquered lawn mower . . . being slowly squeezed up out of the ground . . . in a dark corner . . . of the backyard.

## **The Gargoyle's Day Off 14.5 minutes**

*(SFX wind rising and falling for several seconds - a rainstorm begins)*

**Narrator** (begins slowly in a soft, deep voice): Far above a dark river, at the top of a towering cathedral wall, sits a stone sculpture of something. It might be a winged ape resting its chin in its hands. The gears of the sun run the course of the seasons over and over; rain and hard weather come and go. Year after year the ape's expression softens.

*(SFX Rainstorm fades slowly during following lines)*

On a warm June night, a storm rages over the ancient city. The howling wind whips hard rain against the ape's eyes. . . and from behind those eyes, a thickly insulated germ of awareness listens, straining to hear the murmuring of unknown clockworks in the sub-foundation, in a hidden chamber . Old gears are coming around at last to the end of another cycle. . . only one unpolished tooth away from completing an ancient round. Then the final cog on the smallest wheel clicks into place . . . and a little hammer comes down sharply upon a tarnished silver bell. The clear tone is carried up the great stone wall . . . .

*(SFX Silvery bell tone)*

. . . to the waiting figure, hunched over a drain, to the little murmur in the center of the gargoyle's head.

There is a crackling, crunching sound. . . and a little grinding noise.

*(SFX) Rock surfaces grinding together)*

The head. . . wasn't it. . . looking straight out. . . just a moment ago?

A man on a canal boat thinks he sees a great winged ape crouched on a windowsill. He sees it come down to the ground moving with startling quickness, upside down, scuttling like an insect down the huge wall. An old cycle has come round again. It is the gargoyle's day off.

It darts out over the curve of a flying buttress, following its slope to the ground. Over the fence

it rolls and drops in to the river. A few minutes later it pulls itself out of the water on the opposite bank and disappear into the long park.

It is after two o'clock in the morning. One hundred and twenty years have come and gone since it last had the chance to stretch its stone legs. It disappears into the shadows lumbering and capering, all of its joints grinding together like millstones.

*(SFX In the background we hear grinding crunching sounds that should correspond in a way to the description given.)*

One year, two hundred and forty years ago, a group of civic –minded gentlemen came upon a statue of a gargoyle where there had been none before. These civic-minded gentlemen immediately fell into a deep suspicion.

*(SFX indignant French muttering)*

The idea that a huge stone gargoyle would suddenly materialize in the middle of a sidewalk in the middle of the park was a puzzle and an indignity of considerable proportions.

Leaving two of their number with the statue, they set out to contact the authorities.

Five minutes later, when an officer arrived at the scene, both men and the statue and disappeared and were never seen again.

*(SFX Unintelligible astonished muttering)*

One hundred and twenty years between chances to work out the kinks.

*(SFX Gradual build-up of mob noises and feet running)*

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Some centuries earlier, the gargoyle had been observed climbing out of the mud on the north bank, and a mob of angry, frightened people had begun chasing it up and down the dark, narrow streets. The front few runners were very fast; they were young men armed with iron bars and swords and they pelted after the lumbering gargoyle, right on his heels. Up a hilly side street and around corners to the left and right they plunged, and the stone race showed no sign of tiring, and only eight frontrunners tilted after him.

*(SFX Shouting mob and clattering boots)*

The rest of the mob was just beginning to struggle up a steep cobblestone dead end street, puffing and wheezing as they came, when suddenly there was a loud muffled explosion, like a single enormous clap of distant thunder.

*(SFX Crumpled explosion. Loud grinding sound followed by shrill screams and hoarse bellows, which stop abruptly)*

When the terrified crowd began slowly to make its way up the cobblestone street, no more than thirty seconds later, a thin trickle of blood rounded the top of the hill and ran down to meet it. When the people peered timidly around the corner . . . they found no one there at all. No one in the street; no one in the courtyard. But the wall at the end of the street was drenched in blood to a height of seven feet. And on the ground, scattered all over, they found bent and broken weapons. . . and a shoe with the foot still in it.

Different stories grew out of that encounter but none of them connected the stone monster in any way to the beautiful cathedral on the island.

Once every hundred and twenty years, the gargoyle has a day off. It comes to life and climbs down from the great height of its perch on the rain gutter. It walks across the river bottom and climbs out into the park, where it runs and capers in a silent, joyous, reptilian sort of way through the trees and walkways.

*(SFX Concertina music evoking a leaping cavorting gargoyle)*

A pair of new lovers happen upon a new statue in the park. They stop and lean on it. There's not much time for passion, the sun is coming up. When they leave, the sky is clearing and the day is new and bright. There are now the beginnings of some real traffic on this pathway.

Around nine, there is a break in the flow of people: the gargoyle stops pretending to be a statue and plunges into the ornamental shrubbery.

*(SFX Concertina music sells and becomes slightly discordant)*

The gargoyle goes on for a little way, trying to get its bearings to find the southern edge of the

park and beyond it the river.

Suddenly, the air is filled with voices. The gargoyle stumbles out into a clearing where it is confronted by a great number of children and their parents.

*(SFX Crowd sounds where appropriate)*

It finds itself face to face with a tall silent figure with a large fiberglass head and a face like the muzzle of a huge cartoon dog!

Long black ears, large round black nose, huge protruding white buck teeth! Yes, it's . . .  
Goofy!

And there is Mickey and right over there, Donald Duck. Each of the big-headed figures is surrounded by flocks of merry children and their beaming parents, jockeying for position. There must be thirty video cameras. Look at Mickey and the embarrassed pre-teen! What is that thing over by Goofy?

The gargoyle has come crashing out of the underbrush on the very day of the opening of Le Mond de Disney, whose ancestors lived not far from the ancient city.

Somehow, it is the most natural thing in the world for a towering stone figure that both lumbers and capers to come bursting out of the thicket. It is a huge figure in the world's most realistic gargoyle costume.

*(SFX Huge cheer from a crowd of a hundred or so people and rushing of feet)*

The crowd surges forward to greet this new treat, and in the tiny instant that passes for the gargoyle to realize that the crowd is surging forward, it also becomes aware of an amazing, overpowering feeling of sweet and tender regard, which radiates from the crowd like light piercing darkness, so different from other mobs.

*(SFX Music and excited crowd sounds build and fade)*

It took hundreds of little children on its worn stone knee that day. It was photographed and videotaped continuously, cheek to cheek with toddlers, cocking his head from side to side, beaming through his big ape grin.

*(SFX Stone surfaces grinding together)*

The Disney people were delighted with the man in the world's most realistic gargoyle suit. The executives at Disney had passed down the word that there was going to be a special unannounced surprise visit by someone very important. This unofficial message had reached quasi-official channels and had been the subject of emails to and from department heads.

So when the gargoyle showed up, everyone applauded with great enthusiasm and relief. Everyone wanted to have their picture taken with the gargoyle. The old gargoyle didn't mind.

*(SFX Happy parade-style music, laughing children, rhythmic rock-scraping sounds)*

And, as the sky began to darken, the gargoyle had an escort of skipping children and chuckling parents down to the river's edge. Many cheered when they saw that it seemed like it was intending to enter the water. At the sound of the cheer, it turned to the mass of people and cheered back . . . a very eerie sound, a high-pitched scraping sound

*(SFX Gargoyle cheer) which startled the crowd into silence for a second before the cheering resumed.*

Then the gargoyle walked straight into the river and sank . . . like a stone.

Later, of course, it was realized that the special event was to have been the evening arrival at the Festival de la Publicité of the CEO, not the sudden appearance of an eight foot gargoyle.

Over the course of the day, the gargoyle had been video-taped by several hundred tourists of different nationalities. Eventually, many of these tapes were accumulated and studied. But the tapes have produced more mystery than they have dispelled. There is footage of the gargoyle doing some kind of hopping dance, bouncing back and forth from foot to foot. The sound of those feet hitting the ground is unexplainable. The earth rumbles and vibrates as each foot hits the concrete.

*(SFX CRUNCH, CRUNCH!)*

There are left-over crumbled sections of the terraces and pavement damage.

But some of the most interesting footage reveals how children took to the big stone thing, sitting in its lap, kissing its grainy, cold, weather-beaten cheek. The tapes show it picking up one-year-

olds, giving them a tender if kind of mechanical little squeeze and depositing them gently on the ground again.

In an official office, group of investigators and specialists view the tapes and talk about things like reptilian incremental head movements.

**Official sounding voice:** “. . . the head snapping around in steps, freezing for the merest instant before tilting or going on to the next step in the sequence. The whole effect has an illusory hydraulic smoothness, one seemingly smooth movement made up of a lot of little ones.”

*(SFX thoughtful group murmurs)*

**Another voice:** “This grinding massiveness in the sound, like blocks of granite being turned on each other. A deep rumbling sound that seems to come from the joints as they move in their sockets!”

*(SFX thoughtful group murmurs)*

**Narrator:** But one investigator is not paying attention. He is staring out the window at the cathedral roof towering above the little island in the middle of the river.

*(SFX desk drawer opening)*

He takes a pair of binoculars from a drawer and peers closely the rough them. . . focusing.

He sees a soft smile on an old stone face.

*(SFX Peppy concertina music up)*

**Aunt Panorama's Ant-O-Rama! 17.5 mins**

**Narrator:** One day, way off in the green distance someplace there lived a very purposeful little old lady who stood in her daughter's basement, and hurled jars of tomatoes at the wall.

*(SFX whoosh and glass jar striking wall three times on italicized words in next line. SFX throughout where deemed appropriate)*

**Aunt Panorama:** Where's all the *fun* I'm supposed to be having? Where's life's rich *experiences*? Is this what I've been working for all these years? *Phooey!*

**Narrator:** So saying, she wiped some tomato from her forehead and ran away from home. She didn't have any money so she decided to take up residence in a storm drain for awhile until things began to pick up. In time she made a little friend there in the rubble; an ant, whom she had saved from being dragged off into slavery by a gang of big red ants. She called the ant Three-Pants because he had six legs. Three-Pants became her faithful insect companion and confidant and actually came to "talk" to her in a way, which sounded a little like bacon frying in the distance.

But, one morning after a particularly severe thunderstorm, the little old lady emerged from her drain and stood for a little while looking down at the grey steaming wreckage at her feet.

**Aunt Panorama:** Why do I spend these long wet evenings hanging on the concrete by my fingers and toes? There must be more to freedom and adventure than this!

**Narrator:** So, off she walked in search of freedom and adventure. But just at that moment, Three-Pants was asleep in a crease in the sock on her left foot. He was jolted awake by her purposeful shuffle and quickly looked around for something to hang on to with his powerful jaws. Her ankle . . .

The little old lady began to leap up and down on her right foot, holding her left foot with both hands. She shrieked and hollered and bounced around in a circle for a while . . . long enough for a passing stranger to stop and admire the spectacle.

**Passing Stranger:** Very nice! Very lively! Here . . .this is for you! Bye!

**Narrator:** He produced a coin and flipped it onto the roadway. Then he walked away. The little old lady stopped hopping and stared at the coin. She dropped her right foot and took a step closer to the

bright little disk.

**Aunt Panorama:** What's this? Why, Three-Pants, I do believe that man was paying us for. . . . entertaining him! Here, look at this coin . . . it may be difficult for you to understand, but, apart from this one particular coin, there are millions and millions of others exactly like it, down to the tiniest groove and subtlety of feature! What do you think of that, eh? Isn't that amazing? That's called money!

**Narrator:** Well, the ant didn't really think it was all that remarkable, being an ant and cunningly and intricately detailed himself, and exactly the same, more or less, as millions and millions of other ants, down to the tiniest groove and subtlety of feature. But he sizzled a little and nodded respectfully.

The little old lady took the coin between her thumb and forefinger and held it at arms length . . . and as she did, a chance beam of sunlight bounced off it and, reflecting upwards, struck her square in the center of the forehead. And all at once, emblazoned upon her brain were all the capitol cities of all the world's metropolitan peoples; the teeming jungles of stairwells, the gaspings for breath, the innumerable escalators and exit signs, stadiums and state fairgrounds telescoping into each other.

And there upon a background of industrial battlefields and roadside advertising, a vast map of hundreds of thousands of tiny points of light, each light representing a thousand paying customers, who knows, maybe more!

**Aunt Panorama:** Of course! Yes! Three-Pants, we must get more of these coins, and I think I just might know how!

**Narrator:** And the spunky little bug wiggled his antennae and nodded his hard chitinous face-plates up and down.

**Aunt Panorama:** Three-Pants . . . you say that you personally know millions and millions of other ants! True? Good! Here's what I want you to do! Call as many of your little ant pals as you can and tell them to come here! Right here, where we can 'all have a little chat! Quickly, now!

**Narrator:** A tiny crackle of electricity leapt between the tips of Three-Pants' antennae and immediately, ants began pouring up out of the ground. They came in a tide and washed right up to her

feet. She reacted quickly.

**Aunt Panorama:** Yagh! Yiiii! Eeeek! . . .uh, thank you, my friends! I wasn't expecting . . . so many of you all at once! Ahem . . .I'm offering you a chance to become the heroes of the insect world! Everyone of you! And let me tell you how! By combining our talents and abilities we could accomplish something really great. . . These talents and abilities are magnified many times over by the sheer vastness of the multitude of ants who are able to be here with us today! Which great multitude, with the help of my insect companion, Three-Pants and his devotion, ingenuity and brilliant organizational and managerial skills, will have the opportunity to build the most spectacular, the most wonderful, the most incredible insect variety program the world has ever seen!! What do you say! Heroes every one of you! Let's put on a show!

**Narrator:** A great sizzling cheering rose from the carpet of ants that covered the ground for yards and yards in all directions

**Aunt Panorama:** Good! Excellent! Ah, but what shall we call ourselves? Hmm, we need something catchy . . . "Ant World"? No, that's no good . . ."Ant Kingdom"? Nah! Wait! I've got it!!"

**Narrator:** Billions of dry little feet stopped their compulsive skittering.

**Ant Panorama:** We'll be . . ."AUNT PANORAMA'S ANT-O-RAMA!"

**Narrator:** And that, ladies and gentlemen, was the beginning of the most spectacular, the most wonderful, the most incredible insect variety show the world has ever seen! With the help of the faithful Three-Pants, Aunt Panorama, as she called herself, enlisted the aid of a truly enormous number of ants from all over the countryside!

And, later that evening, a Holiday Inn marquee began to undergo an unscheduled transformation. The words, "Congratulations, Deb and Bucky!" began to slip from their slots letter by letter, and the horizontal guidelines began to fill in with a new message:

"AUNT PANORAMA'S ANT-O-RAMA!"

And shortly afterwards, there were screams and shouts and the sounds of pushed over chairs, and fifty-seven people came running out of the Rainbow Lounge, attached to the motel, followed by about a million bewildered looking ants in all different sorts of circus costumes, and

Aunt Panorama, who sputtered through her false mustache. . .

**Aunt Panorama:** No, wait! Really, it's OK! Come back! Just a show!

Oh dear, I should have foreseen this! Not as many people have had the opportunity to become as fond of ants as I have become. Hmm . . . I know! No doubt there are booking agents in some of our larger cities who will know how to maneuver us into the public eye!

**Narrator:** And so it happened, several days later, that Aunt Panorama took a seat across from two worldly-looking gentlemen.

**Worldly Gentleman:** Yeah, this "ant circus" idea of yours sounds . . .yes, interesting. But, when can we expect to see this . . .heh, heh . . . Ant-O-Rama?

**Aunt Panorama:** No time like the present, eh, gentlemen?

**Narrator:** She whistled sharply. Immediately, there was a buzzing, sizzling sound that seemed to come from under the baseboards and, without further ceremony, the room began to fill up with ants, all carrying little bundles. One of the gentlemen gave a yell and tore all the buttons off his suit, climbing on top of his desk. But in five minutes . . . they were convinced.

**Different Worldly Gentleman:** But . . .how is this possible?

**Aunt Panorama:** Oh, I give them an idea or two and they take it from there!

**Narrator:** And did they ever! Why, there were thousands of carpenter ants putting up little canvas bigtops! Ant aerialists, ant tumblers, ant clowns with tiny red noses, ant tight-rope walkers! Ant jugglers, juggling ten crumbs at once using two pair of arms! Ferocious Ant Lions! Fat Ants! Rubber Ants! Bright Red Fire Ants swallowing fire!

**Worldly Gentleman:** That's amazing! Sign here, here, here, here, and here!!

**Narrator:** And it wasn't long before "Aunt Panorama's Ant-O-Rama" was a household name and, as she had foreseen, their efforts were rewarded with a mountain of gold coins. They were on all the talk

shows:

**Shrieking Announcer:** It's time for "*Morning Overload*"! With your host, Dick Ricolous!

**Dick:** Folks, say hello to the one and only Aunt Panorama! . . . I can't tell you what a thrill it is to have you and all your little friends on the show with us today!

**Aunt Panorama:** Thank you, Dick!

**Dick:** I couldn't help noticing there, that you were borne in by a huge swarm of ants! Do they carry you everywhere you go, lying down like that?

**Aunt Panorama:** Goodness no, Dick . . . certainly not!

**Dick:** Well, they must be very devoted to you! Let's talk about some of your more recent extravaganzas . . . casts of hundreds of thousands of players! How about your reconstructions of historical events . . . coronations . . . sieges . . . the . . . the Siege of Stalingrad in a frozen food locker! Remarkable!"

**Aunt Panorama:** Thank you!"

**Dick:** And the naval battles! And floods! And what about your Metropolitan Earthquake Series?! Incredible! All those little ants, fleeing for their little lives, clutching tiny bundles, wearing little life preservers! And that remarkably expressive make-up! Why, it must take a very steady hand and an eentsy-beentsy brush! And how long did it take them to learn to walk on their hind legs like that?"

**Aunt Panorama:** Well, Gordon . . . making up a million ants for one of those wartime romance and aerial bombing of the kind that are so popular these days, you know, well, let's see . . . the whole city is constructed out of leaf-mould, twigs, cellophane, scraps of aluminum foil . . . Whole thing takes about a day.

**Dick:** Whuh! One day!?! You mean . . . one day? You can't be serious!

**Aunt Panorama:** Yes, of course! I know my ant friends to be enormously resourceful little devils and dear pals, as well as being a fine means of locomotion. They quickly learned to apply their own make-up and build their own sets!

**Dick:** What? You mean everything? The Taj Mahal?

**Aunt Panorama:** Yes, certainly!

**Dick:** Yankee Stadium in your version of "Pride of the Yankees: The Lou Gehrig Story"

**Aunt Panorama:** Of course! And today we're working on a reconstruction of VE Day on Manhattan Island at the end of World War Two! Real happy stuff! Not so much like some of these catastrophes my sponsors and producers keep insisting! on! They say that nowadays nobody will settle for anything less than the Irish Potato Famine or the Titanic going down or something!

**Dick:** Well, be that as it may, Aunt P., most people think of ants as just a lot of little troublemakers; I'm like most people, I guess . . . I hate ants! I don't mind at all seeing 'em get blown up, or machine-gunned down, or buried under molten lava! So . . . keep up the good work!

**Narrator:** Later, Aunt Panorama mulled over the interviewer's remarks.

**Aunt Panorama:** Hmmm . . . my contract does bind us to accept subjects and themes which have been shown to appeal to the viewing public. I think it is time for a little talk. Come, Three-Pants!

**Narrator:** But at the studio . . .

**Worldly Gentleman:** Look, lady . . . you have no choice anymore! Too much money involved now! You have a responsibility to your stockholders!

**Aunt Panorama:** You'll tear up that contract and write out a new one or . . . or I'll sic my ants on you!

**Worldly Gentleman:** Haw, haw, haw! Yer bluffing! There are no ants in this building!

**Aunt Panorama:** Are you . . .sure? And even as she spoke, there came a buzzing, sizzling sound from under the baseboards!

**Worldly Gentleman:** OK, OK! Alright! But we've got other plans for you! We thought you might pull a stunt like this one. So we've prepared a little surprise for you! You play along . . . or we sell your contract to the government!"

**Aunt Panorama:** Oh, no!

**Worldly Gentleman:** Yeah!! Heh, heh, heh . . . You don't think much of that do you? Hah! Your ants will be subjected to a thousand pointless experiments! You'll be forced to bug rooms! Any resistance at all and you'll be hunted down mercilessly! Heh, heh . . .

**Narrator:** Aunt Panorama sighed heavily and looked around the room . . .

**Aunt Panorama:** Ahh! Well, Three-Pants . . . it seems that show biz is not for us after all, little pal! Gentlemen, I am announcing my retirement from the entertainment industry as of right now!

**Worldly Gentleman:** Quick, Harry . . .sign that government contract!

**Aunt Panorama:** Too late, gentlemen!

**Narrator:** And immediately their trouser cuffs swelled over with angry, biting ants, which ran up their legs.

Aunt Panorama and Three-Pants left them there, dancing and shrieking, and immediately boarded a steamer bound for South America . . . and were never seen or heard of again.

Except that the natives now tell stories of a very purposeful little old lady, who lives deep in the rain forest and talks to the insects and other animals. They call her . . . Gramma of the Jungle!"

### **Electric Edward**

*(SFX Music up: "Over The Sea" on carnival calliope)*

**Narrator:** At one time in the not-too-distant past, it was popular for young men to shock themselves

with electric shock machines at carnivals and circuses. This was done as a test of strength and endurance – it was done to impress the girls.

When Edward's grandfather was a young man of eighteen, he decided to impress the girl who would later become Edward's grandmother. It was May and the Sells-Floto circus had arrived the previous evening on the outskirts of Renfrew, Minnesota.

As they moved closer to the booth with the flickering blue sparks, they heard the barker, standing before a brass and copper torso of a smiling man. The brass man's arm was extended as if in invitation to shake hands.

*(SFX Calliope music swells. Narrator continues in barker-type style voice)*

Hurry, hurry hurry! Step right up, step right up! Who'll be next? Only costs a nickle! So hurry, hurry, hurry! He's unbelievable! He's amazing! He's elec-trifying! He's Electric Edward!

Here he is, folks . . . your opportunity to experience, first hand, the wonder of the new Age of Electricity! Yes! That ethereal fluid that flows through the earth like a great dragon! Step right up, folks, and grasp the lightning from the sky . . . if you dare try! Feel that primeval power for yourselves! Produced for you upon this stage by means of a harmonious blending of beauty and efficiency. . . a gracefully woven sphere of gleaming copper wire which we set to spin inside a perfectly circular ring of magnets! Touch the lightning from the sky! If you dare try! Step up, step up and take him by the hand. . . if you can! Who'll be next? Who'll be next? Only costs a nickle! These elemental bolts will make your hair stand on end! your eyes will bug out, your body will tremble violently all over! It's wonderful!! So . . . who'll be next? Hi, there, young man! Only costs a nickle! Thanks, son! Now . . . all you have to do is . . . step up to Edward here . . . walk up to him, that's right! Now, grasp him firmly by the hand and say, "Hello, Edward!" while I pull this switch! Ready? Here we go!

*(SFX Voice: "Hello, Edwa . . ." cut off by a loud crackling burst of humming electricity)*

There were a few seconds of electrical humming and crackling, an eerie blue light of jumping sparks, and the strong tang of ozone. The barker peered closely at the writhing teenager, whose right hand was clamped in a friendly but desperate grip with the hand of the cheerful brass torso. He was looking for danger signals such as wisps of smoke or signs of searing from metal framed glasses. He released the switch.

Narrator as barker: How about that! Wasn't that wonderful!? Yes indeedy! Look at that, folks, he's speechless! Must have made quite an impression! Well, now . . . who'll be next? He's amazing . . . he's unbelievable . . . he's . . . Electric Edward!!

*Narrator's original voice:* And this is why Edward's grandfather became such an electrical enthusiast. And when people asked him in later years why he spent so much time in his workshop inventing electrical gadgets, he would reply, "Because I have grasped the Lightning from the Sky!"

Later on in life, but before becoming a grandfather, he had his own company. He developed a line of Two-Potato Electrical Products, starting with the Two-Potato Clock. These clocks were powered by an electro-chemical process involving the elements, zinc and copper, and the phosphoric acid naturally present in each and every potato and many other vegetables. The zinc loses two electrons while the copper in the wire reacts with the phosphoric acid to release hydrogen ions, which gain the electrons. Electricity is set to flowing, enough at least to fire up a digital clock. So into business he went. And he fully expected great success because he had the confidence of one who knows he can be sure of the clear and enduring difference between zinc and copper.

He was ambitious. At first, his two-potato clock produced enough electricity to trigger an LED gadget. Soon, however, he began to investigate the hybridization of new and larger vegetables. He hooked up multiple vegetables. There were Two-Potato calculators, and Twenty Potato radios, and soon, Two Hundred Potato televisions. He proved that if you could hook up two thousand potatoes and add an engine and wheels, you could drive down the road with it. He was perhaps best known as the man who invented the world's most efficient refrigerator, which actually ran on the electrical power generated by all the vegetables in its own crisping drawer.

*(SFX Electrical humming sound)*

But in the end, he over-reached himself and it all came crashing down around him.

Four one hundred and eighty pound turnips had been hooked up in sequence with large gauge multi-strand copper and zinc cables and were running a small thousand watt space heater. Suddenly, the right two turnips began to spin like tops, each in the opposite direction. The two left turnips began to smolder and to give off a smoky smell. Then the two right turnips pinned homeowner Art Kartoffelkopf against the wall of his den, while the two left turnips set fire to all the curtains in the room. If it hadn't been for the quick action of Kartoffelkopf's wife, Pat there would most certainly have been a tragic outcome to this real-life drama.

*(SFX Screams and shouts)*

She rushed into the burning room and seized the right two turnips by the greens, yanking them away from her husband, and tearing free the cables. Then they quickly threw a thick tablecloth over the burning vegetable, dragging it from the house and throwing it into children's swimming pool. Art and Pat Kartoffelkopf escaped alive from their brush with danger, but Two-Potato Products was as dead as a door nail from that day forward. Public trust was shot; you can't manufacture trust. Edward's grandfather retreated to the various outbuildings of his farm and tinkered dispiritedly, dejectedly.

Edward was raised on that farm. It was close enough to a center of commerce to make for sensible commuting so Edward's father, Edward, and his mother, Grace had jobs in the neighboring city. And there they lived, with Edward growing bigger everyday.

Then, one day . . .

*(SFX Earthmoving vehicles and gradual build of anthemic music, ending with the word's "grandfather's farm.")*

. . . when Edward was about five years old. . . a huge bulldozer appeared among the soybeans. Tripods and long lines of yellow cord materialized followed by more bulldozers and other machines, and in time, way off in the distance, peeking over the horizon, there appeared the top of an enormous high-tension tower, then another and another, coming closer and closer, and then going farther and farther in a straight line on into the distance and over the opposite horizon. And, in time, people got used to the dust and the trucks. And then, finally, even they disappeared and the line of towers settled in and began to look normal.

*(SFX Music fades, almost disappears, but then, over the following narration, resurges stronger than ever before fading after the words, "pouring through them.")*

Then, one day, way off on the other horizon, directly opposite the line of towers, there appeared . . . yet another high-tension tower, and soon another and more, until this new line of towers ultimately bisected the first line at right angles and continued on beyond it to disappear over the opposite horizon.

And so it came to pass that Edward, the grandson, lived all of his childhood growing-up-outside-exploring years playing at the intersection of two massively powerful high tension lines, with

thirteen separate cables of cracklin' good electrical energy – thick braided ally cables with the droning, humming power of tons of burning coal, enormous waterfalls, and controlled nuclear explosions surging and pouring through them.

*(SFX Music combines with crackling electrical high voltage sounds, ends with a burst.)*

When Edward was nine years old, he discovered that if he held a fluorescent lighting tube up in the air under the junction of the two lines, it would glow by itself there, with its ends free and unconnected to anything solid. In fact, these tube would glow for anyone under the high-tension lines, but when Edward actually touched the two ends, making contact with the four little prongs, the tube would low brighter. He could eventually make them pulse to music. And afater a while, the tubes would glow for Edward even if he took them far away from the two intersecting lines of great steel towers.

When he was ten years old, he discovered that he could jump-start cars if the battery wasn't in too bad a shape. He used to surprise people with this ability. One time his fifthe grade teacher was stuck in the school parking lot with a groaning battery.

*(SFX Groaning battery, car being turned over, won't catch)*

He is care wouldn't start and he had the hood up and was staring disgustedly at his battery with an expression on his face that he usually saved for inside the school building. Edward came up to the open hood, reached in, took hold of the two terminals and grinned, “ Now try it, Mr. Kessler!”

*(SFX Car roars into life.)*

“What did you do to it, Eddy?!”

“I just sorta goosed it a little, Mr. Kessler!”

One day during Edwards eleventh summer, he happened to be in the nearby city at a Seven Eleven when a fat man in a damp, light blue suit discovered that he'd left hjis lights on in his car whele he was in the store, reading magazines off the rack without buying them. When Edward came upon him, the man in the suit had reached the point of bitter resignation. But he agreed to turn her over one more time at Edward's urging.

*(SFX Car roars into life.)*

“What did you do?” asked the amazed fat man, and he sat for a bit and talked with Edward while the care idled and belched fumes.

“Here, kid . . . I may have a business proposition for you, one involving your amazing electrical abilities . . . here's my card! Write your name and number on it and give it back to me. That's it! I . . . we might both be able to profit by working together.”

This man was Frederick Babylon, better known as “User Friendly Fred,” owner, land television commercial representative for Nincompute, the city's largest source for used computers of all kinds and in all conditions. Only that morning, one of his commercials had run during breakfast, while Edward's grandfather fiddled with the horizontal and vertical holds on his ancient television set. As he watched the fat man drive away, Edward could hear the commercial replaying in his mind.

*(SFX Music up, obnoxious voice raps the following)*

Hiya everybody! I'm User Friendly Fred!  
With another friendly message to the center of your head !  
For all you men and women! For all you boys and girls!  
Y'know, it's hard to make sense in today's grown-up world!  
Unless you get a lean, mean screen you don't make the scene!  
Get a new computer, bruder, and the girls'll think you're cuter!

*(SFX aggressive music behind obnoxious yelling)*

*Fred's voice:* “Down here at Nincompute we are thrilled to offer you a complete selection of pre-driven computers! All shapes! All sizes! All price ranges! From an early fifties room-size steam driven model to this equally powerful little teeny-weeny fully functional job, the Earmite 450! Just stick it in your ear and it latches on and immediately begins to fill your mind with information! So come on down, we're easy to find! I got a friendly little message for the center of your mind! And I guarantee that each and every one of my computers will compute, repete, dispute, refute, impute, beet root, zoot

suit, and skeet shoot the livin' bejeepers out of any other used computer, on any other lot, in any other city, in any other country in the world!”

At this point in the commercial, the camera zoomed in on the enormous smile of User Friendly Fred. Edward thought the fat man's smile seemed a little forced.

And as he drove away, User Friendly Fred was already hatching a plot of sabotage that would shake the world of used computers to its foundations. Already he was picturing the next pre-driven computer industrial trade show and how, right at the crucial part of his competition's presentation, all of the demo screens blank out and the whole system crashes and burns! All he has to do is to teach this kid to apply his talent to scrambling programs. The surge the Edward could generate would penetrate ordinary shielding and ruin everything it touched. And it would be positively undetectable!

(maybe add some supporting imagery)

Several days later, Frederick Babylon paid a visit to Edward's home. He was there on the porch when Edward arrived home from school and pumped his hand with enthusiasm. Edward was surprised and curious. But as User-Friendly Fred began to outline his idea to young Edward, he sensed a disturbing lack of interest despite generous financial inducement. User-Friendly Fred had always believed that people like Edward existed. . . electric people. Fred was a television pitch man who actually felt the confidence he exuded. He *knew* he could make the sale. He was a real persuasive guy.

While he was doing his commercials, Fred had always imagined that he, himself, was generating electricity. He visualized his persuasive abilities as electrical radiation flowing forth from out of himself, through the lens of the camera, and into the minds of his viewers, whom he imagined as leaning forward in their chairs, rapt, staring fixedly at him as he stood there crackling away with electrical energy, personal magnetism.

Edward was clearly not at all interested, and User Friendly Fred leaned in toward him, fixing him with his most persuasive piercing gleam. Edward made a slight impatient movement and User Friendly Fred suddenly felt opportunity slipping away from him. He leaned in even farther.

At this point, Edward, as more of a reflex than anything else, reached up and pushed Fred's forehead away with his finger. There was a little crackling noise and an abrupt hiss . . . and User-Friendly Fred began to howl and to leap around the porch holding his forehead.

*(SFX Hiss followed by howling and leaping)*

Edward's mother came out with an ice cube and eventually calmed him down. Muttering, he got into his car, slammed the door, and drove away. He never bothered to come back.

Edward and his grandfather have a few renewable energy projects they are working on together.

User-Friendly Fred has toned down his commercials. He has learned that if he sweats too much on camera, a little brown dot appears in the center of his forehead.

*(SFX Fred's commercial's music comes up, but he stops it when he shouts, "CUT!! Hey! Rub some more makeup on this will ya?" Music swells and fades)*

*Immediately the word was fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar. He was driven from among men, and ate grass like an ox, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven till his hair grew as long as eagles' feathers and his nails were like birds' claws. Daniel 4:33*

### **NEB'S CAVE 22 mins**

Once upon a time, a long, long time ago . . . before people began to unwrap their food, or even to write everything down properly ... there lived a mighty king named Nebuchadnezzar and everyone in his kingdom, which was called Babylonia, thought he was one heck of a king and a fine fellow, too!

He did everything a king was supposed to do, and he did it with style. He had a big golden throne that he sat around on all day. He watched parades from his balcony ... he had people's heads chopped off out on the patio. Everything he did, well. .. it was just right.

"King of kings!" people used to call him ... "Peacock of the universe!" they'd say. "Cleaner than Clean!"

Ahh! He'd like that a lot! And when someone addressed him in this way, he'd invariably ask, "Yes? What is it you want?"

Well, this would go on all day sometimes and before you knew it, it would be bedtime. "Not bad!" thought King Neb, "Not a bad way to live! Not bad at all!"

Not many people know this but there was one drawback to being king of Babylonia was that every springtime you'd have to be publicly humiliated by the priest of Marduk, Bull Calf of the Sun. And then, all the kingdom would give happy little sighs and be refreshed for another year, and the sun would continue to come up and stay out later and later everyday, and the rain would continue to fall, and warm winds would continue to blow, and the crops would poke through the ground, and people would be born and die, and water would continue to run downhill.

"Oh, I can live with that!" said King Neb. And, year after year, he did!

And everything went off without a hitch.

He liked being king. For one thing, wherever he happened to be, he was always pretty much the center of attention. He was visible; whatever it was he was doing, he'd be being seen by someone. Yep, that's what would be going on. First and foremost he'd be being seen. This was what he was used to and he enjoyed it very much.

When the people would sometimes see him ... maybe catch a glimpse of his crown bobbing along on the other side of a hedge over at the hanging gardens, they'd hush their tones and be enormously impressed.

Oh, Neb thought he walked the ground the a tread that made the old earth shake! The things he liked to think about! He liked the things he thought about so much, he thought about them everyday! He'd think, "Hey! This is the largest and most important country in this part of the world! And me? I'm the king! Heh, heh, heh! Look at all those people asking me, what's up!"

Well, for years he had only been able to hear enthusiastic praise from his subjects. Hailings,

greetings, impressed breathing, admiring silences . . . that's all that was available for him to hear.

But ... as time passed ... people began to get used to Neb, especially since anybody who felt like showing up at the ceremony could see him get his face slapped every springtime .. He began to feel as if he were taken for granted. He began to feel uncomfortable if people stared at him in silence for any length of time. His ears began to pick up unfamiliar tones of familiarity and phrases that didn't make any sense to him because they were hard to line up with anything in his experience for comparison. Things like, "Hi, Neb!"

"Good old Neb!"

King Neb felt that something was the matter. He felt his very splendor threatened, but he couldn't tell you what it was that threatened it. "What'll I do?" cried Neb.

Well, he got into a couple of wars and that made him feel better. But he found that even being a victorious conqueror didn't get things back to normal for very long. Folks just got used to having him around.

His image scowled and sulked at him in the mirror and didn't look a bit grand. He'd get so mad he'd grind his teeth until all the people in the court were wondering, "What's with Neb?"

"I wish these people would stop telling me what to do!" said Neb to an advisor.

"But, Neb, baby!" said the advisor. "You're telling them what to do, they're not telling you what to do!"

"It's the same thing!" said Neb. "They're telling me to tell them what to do by always doing what I tell them to do! What's the matter? Aren't you enthused about your king and country anymore?"

And so on. He began to avoid mirrors. His appetite fell off. His hair went uncombed, his beard grew, his breath stank, he glared a lot, his whole attitude about life became very sour indeed. His breathing came in little snarls. Everybody noticed that things had gone down hill.

Well . . . the year went around, same as usual. It was getting close to springtime. Time for Neb to be ritually humiliated ... and he knew it, too!

A group of his surviving advisors came into the throne room to cheer him up a little and remind him of the ceremony and they found him standing on the throne.

The advisors looked at each other and didn't know what to say.

But Neb didn't mind. He bounded off the throne and started shaking his fist at the huge mirror. "SO! You're out to get me, too, eh?" roared Neb at himself. "Well, I'm going to get you for that, if it's the last thing I do! Oh, yeah? Yeah!"

"I am beset!" shouted Neb, staring off into space. "Here I come! Yow! There I go! I can catch up with me if I want to but if I do, I'll punch myself right in the mouth! *How come I have to have all the fun?!*"

And stepping out of his own way, he swung mightily and frightened himself right out of his wits. As he' ran down the hall, yelling and swinging his fists, he glanced back over his shoulder at his retreating figure in the mirror and thought, "There I go!"

Before the huddled advisors had time to say, "Hey! It's time for you to be ritually humiliated!" he gave one last wild shriek and disappeared out of the door. He raced down the avenue away from the palace on all fours, roaring and snapping at the people on the side walk, and pausing to bite anyone who wished him a pleasant afternoon. He caught a commuter train which hurled him deep into the suburbs of Babylonia in no time at all.

When the train rubbed up against the closest dismal looking forest, Neb yanked on the emergency cord and crashed through the train window, galloping off into the dense vegetation. He pelted through the greenery for three days and three nights without stopping, until he collapsed from exhaustion. He had lost his crown, he had lost his reasoning ability, and he had cuts on his knuckles, but he felt sure that he had successfully escaped from himself and the throne of Babylonia. And yet, the fact that he was still there, taking up space, soon became obvious and he fell into a deep depression. He became so dejected that he began howling and sorrowing as if it were a painful and unhappy thing to be anywhere at all. He found a cave to curl up in and he stayed right there in the forest.

In time, he grew very shaggy looking. He lost the use of his thumbs, he grew moss on his back, and he skulked around this cave for years and years with mouthfuls of wild grasses and bull rushes and a sorrowful expression on his face, coming out only to find food and to howl at the moon.

Neb developed a routine, spending each day exactly as he had the day before; same howls, same roars, same moans and groans. And, after a while, he caught the attention of Dagon, the Fish God, who noticed him one night howling away and who thought that this was very interesting behavior in a human. He would float in and visit Neb every once in a while, just to catch his act.

One day, during the seventh year of Neb's shagginess and mental turbulence, Dagon, Lord of Floating Objects, was sitting on a rock in Neb's cave, having a one-sided conversation, when who should walk in but Marduk, Bull Calf of the Sun!

"Marduk! You old rascal!" said Dagon. "How ya been? You're looking well! How are you these days?"

"Oh, supreme, heh, heh! Hello, Dagon! How're they bitin'?"

Dagon chuckled, but his dorsal fin seemed to flair up a little bit. "Ha, hal Good old Marduk! Say, you look like you've put on a few pounds, pal! All that rich living over at the Sun's place, eh?"

"Heh! Same ol' Dagon! So, how's eternal life treating you, Scaly? You know, you look a little peaked, kinda washed out ... hey, listen! If you ever need any help with any of the tides or something, just give me a call and me and the boys'll be right over to give yez a hand!"

"Listen yourself, Bull Breath! The day I need help from you and your bunch a ... "

"Now, now, Dagon, don't get sore ... remember your water pressure ... I know you're powerful and highly regarded and well thought of and so on and so forth, OK? But tell me, what brings you to this neck of the woods anyway?"

"I like to drop in on this shaggy hermit every once in a while!" replied Dagon. "Usually at the

full moon, especially if there's a heavy dew and I'm swimming on the high flood! I kinda like this guy; thought he was a dog the first time I saw him, all shaggy and woebegone, howling away at my sister, the Moon. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Did you know he's the king of Babylonia?" said Marduk.

"What? Him? "asked Dagon. "The king of Babylonia? You're joking?"

"Honest! Yeah, he used to be real dignified and walk around holding his head up high, like this . . . and he'd pass his days surrounded by trembling subjects! HA, HA, HA!"

Dagon roared with laughter, "Those humans ... too much!"

"You said it, pal!" agreed Marduk.

"Say, if he's the king of Babylonia, why does he live out here in this crummy cave and go about on all fours and eat bullrushes and other wild grasses?"

"Beats me!" said Marduk. "I think he's a sore head. He took off one spring, just before face-slapping time. Nobody's seen him since, except you and your sister. Even me, the Sun's own Bull Calf, had a heck of a time trackin' him down; all this shrubbery makes it hard for the ol' light rays to penetrate! Hey, by the way, how did you get here, Fishy?"

"Oh, I've got a fine mist waiting for me outside! But, tell me, I'm curious why would Marduk go to all the trouble of tracking down this wretched looking fellow? Because he used to be king of Babylonia?"

"Well, it's like this, y'see Dagon ... since Neb ran off like he did he's thrown the cycle of the seasons out of whack and the people are starting to give my priests a hard time. Nothing serious, just a few, uh, irregularities have started to pop up ...

"Like what, Marduk?"

"Little things, little things . . . leaves turning black in the autumn, instead of red and gold like they're supposed to ... uh, got a river that's started to flow backwards for some reason ... and they have had a couple of bad alkalai storms ... very messy."

"Maybe you ought to talk to the Wind God, eh?" said Dagon, barely suppressing a smile.

"Hey, I did, I did! He says there's nothin' he can do! The timing is off or somethin'. The wheel is out of kilter, you see. Without a king to slap every springtime, there's no wholeness in Babylonia. Things are ... incomplete! Nope! The king must be seen to be a human being like everybody else." replied Marduk.

"Well, look, why don't you just have them set up a new guy and you can slap his face?" suggested Dagon.

"Come on, Dagon, it's not as simple as that! His former advisors say they have no precedent for

the king crashing through the window and running off into the forest on all fours! They say it might be test of their loyalty; they think maybe he's gonna come back. They've adopted the old wait-and-see. The thing is, they really enjoy runnin' the country without him." complained Marduk.

Dagon was beginning to enjoy Marduk's predicament. "What do you think's going to happen?" he said.

"Think! What do I think is gonna happen? Hey, I didn't travel ninety three million miles to stand around and wonder if the clown was ever coming back! I'm here to take him back!" shouted the Bull Calf.

"Like that?"

"Uh ... well, I'll have a little talk with him first. He'll be OK!"

"Maybe he'd rather stay out here and howl at my sister. I don't mind! I've gotten to like the old bird. Why don't you leave him alone? Hey, why don't you come as a revelation before the assembled advisors and tell them to get themselves a new boy?" offered Dagon.

"Look, Dagon, this is real important stuff here! This ain't no pleasure cruise, you know! This guy's the king and he's gain' back whether he likes it or not!" shouted Marduk.

"Yeah? Well, maybe he will and maybe he won't!"

The two gods glared at each other for a moment. Marduk went over to where Neb was curled up, munching bull rushes. 'Hey, Neb!" he called in a friendly manner. "Neb! Hey! It's me, Marduk, your old pal! The Bull Calf! Hey, are you in there Neb? Heh, heh, heh! You remember me! Sure ya do!

"Neb! How ya been? Oh, come on, Neb! You can't be enjoying yourself out here in this crummy cave!"

"Enjoying yourself isn't everything!" snickered the Fish God.

"Dry up, will ya? Listen to me, Neb! You don't want to stay like this! Do ya? Think about it! Come on, how do you really feel about carrying on out here in the woods like this all the time? Roarin' and howlin' all night! Doesn't your throat get sore? Neb? Neb?"

"Don't listen to him, Neb!" interrupted Dagon. "He means you no good!"

"Come on, you could change it all, Neb, you can do it! You could change it all in an instant, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye!"

"Knock it off, Marduk! Look at him! He doesn't even hear you! He's content right here being wretched! He's gotten used to it, so layoff him, will you? He's not going anywhere! He doesn't want to go."

"Outta my way, Fishface, or you'll find yourself floatin' belly-up in a big bowl of chowder!" shouted the enraged Bull Calf.

"Watch it, Marduk! This is Dagon the Fish God you're talking to, not some punk moonbeam. You be careful how you wag that cattle tongue, or it's lunchmeat time!"

"Why, you miserable little smelt! I am the awesome blasting furnace! I am Marduk, the Firestorm!"

"You are a glorified side of beef, and you know it! I am Dagon the Engulfer! Dagon the Gulper-Upper!"

"Yeah? Well, you're gonna be Dagon and Chips in a minute, if you provoke my Horrible Awfulness! I will dry you up and fry you up!"

"Oh, yeah?"

"Yeah!"

"Oh, yeah?"

"YEAH!"

"You and who else?"

"YOU ASKED FOR IT!"

And the two deities leapt at each other with fierce snarls and each turned his terrible power against the other. The air was torn by explosions and hideous shrieks and the cave soon filled up with blasts of steam as Marduk and the Fish God went at it more and more ferociously.

Neb, bewildered by the chain of events leading up to this enormous din and confusion, was terrified. There were blinding fogs! Continuous flashes of lightning! It was too much! Poor Neb stumbled around on his hind feet, trying to feel his way out of the cave! As his ears rung and his head spun, his hands found the opening and out he staggered into the sunlight.

"Hey! What am I doing out here? What am I eating here, bull rushes? What the hell? What is this stuff on my back? Why does it hurt so much to straighten up? How come I'm so shaggy and ragged? Hey, where is everybody? What am I doing out here in the woods? Hey! Where's my crown?" said Neb.

And he puzzled over these questions for a moment and then walked to the nearest highway and thumbed a lift back to Babylonia, which was where he felt he belonged.

*At the end of the days I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my reason returned to me.*

*Daniel 4:34*

### **Rolling Gang 13 mins**

*(Anthemic music; Narrator)*

This is the story of a secret organization; a street gang made up almost entirely of people with non-functioning legs. It is the story of the founder and leader of that little society of chair-bound hell-raisers, a man who met and overcame what is probably the ultimate challenge to personal

mobility, loss of legs.

The rest of the gang came from all walks of life: computer specialists, writers, researchers, mathematicians. But they thought of themselves as activists; they were determined to show that you didn't need legs to make great strides.

One guy was a stunt truck driver in an auto show. He used to jump over three busses in an eighteen wheeler. Big rig, full of chrome and glory, going off a ramp at one hundred and ten miles an hour. He had to do wind-up laps around the track to get up to speed. The trick was to stop before you hit the wall on the other side of the convention center. Sometimes he'd roll her over a couple of times just to slow her down quickly. He'd throw the steering wheel around to the right and spin it back to the left and if he hit the levitator ramps just right, he'd flip the great big rumbling drum of a trailer. He'd send it tumbling and rolling in an explosion of dust from the arena, like a thousand kettle drums in a heavy hailstorm. He'd let the crowd stand there with its mouth open for several seconds after everything was finally still again. Then he'd hit the button on the dashboard that blew out the windshield and out he'd pop through the opening in his little high-powered wheelchair, rolling down the hood onto the ground, spinning his wheels, doing a little victory lap, and finally, with a wave, rolling out the back door.

He was part of the gang alright; he drove the get-away truck. It was an ordinary looking truck and trailer rig, except that, eventually, it changed color everyday, sometimes more than once. It carried extensive files of registrations and local city stickers from all over the country. It carried one hundred and seventy license plates, representing all fifty states with heavy concentration on certain states.

Why such an elaborate disguise? Street gangs show their disenchantment with society in various ways. This particular gang began spray painting the handicap parking symbol on every other parking space in town. They'd just go around, wherever they damn well felt like it and sprayed the symbol all over the place. No parking lot was safe: malls, streets, stadium lots, airports, private residences . . . they were thorough. Before long they went national.

Why did they carry on this way? They were very angry. Wouldn't it bother you not to have access to the real world? To be stuck in a wheelchair at the foot of an escalator or trapped in a subway or barricaded away from a public building? After a while, you might start to feel angry, don't you think?

My friend, Milo, started the gang. One afternoon he was rolling to a stop at the top of an escalator, searching for the hardware department and the speaker above his head was playing an old Cat Stevens song, "I'm Being Followed By a Moon Shadow". It had just reached the line, "if I ever lose

my legs . . . I won't have to walk no more!" As he watched the Legged Ones getting sucked under ground by the falling and rising staircases, he suddenly roared a loud voice, "You're right about that, you know! You won't have to walk no more all right! But you'll still have to move!"

He said a few other things, too. And I really think the store over-reacted. Anyway, things deteriorated quickly and the police came and . . . rolled him away. I think it was then that he began to burn with purpose and invention.

He designed and built some amazing chairs. Originally, he had wanted no part of motorized chairs. But shortly after his run in with the escalator he gave up trying to propel himself with his arms and turned his attention to improving the motorchair. Within six months he had a chair that could go from zero to twenty-five miles an hour in three seconds. Of course, there was still no way to go down the escalator.

That afternoon, he had quickly seen how embarrassing all his yelling was to the Legged Ones. He discovered a truth; he enjoyed their discomfort. His yelling and stylized fierceness was breaking out of him like a wave of bitter pent up emotion, a feeling of great relief washing through him, carrying with it scars and the debris of healing so that he felt healthier somehow. Disorderly, sure! But healthier. Of course he still couldn't walk, but so what? What did that really have to do with how healthy he was?

He decided to start a street gang. There were many people like Milo. These were people who had run into one too many curbs, one too many sections of broken concrete, one too many museum entrances up twenty or thirty worn marble steps. They were tired of waiting around to be noticed, they decided to draw a little attention to themselves. This was a gang with a common bond. They agreed that their greatest common linking characteristic was emotional distortion from suppressed outrage at being excluded from every day life here in America. They were pretty steamed. And so these respectable citizens, these responsible individuals, male and female, began to invade and vandalize parking lots.

Just before sunrise, the truck driver would drive in slowly and around in back of a row of stores like he was looking for a loading dock. He'd have a sheaf of papers in his left hand hanging out the open driver's side window and he'd be puzzling over the address on this paperwork. He'd go all around the mall, staring at his invoices and pausing twice around back out of sight of the guards so that the trailer could disgorge a dozen or so motorized wheelchairs with stencils and powerful airbrushes. After about five minutes of nothing unusual, except for a continuous hissing sound and the growing smell of paint, the truck would give up and drive away.

After the Rollers (as they called themselves) had stenciled handicap parking symbols on a week's worth of shopping malls, in different states, often separated by considerable distance, something like a nationwide network of security companies kicked in almost automatically and soon security alerts were taking place and memoranda and little notes all began to flow around and people began to keep their eyes peeled and things got more difficult. In fact, it got to be pretty risky.

I was a witness to one of these raids. It took place on a Sunday afternoon; I was tipped off and sat waiting in my car.

The operation began very suddenly, abruptly, out in the parking lot of the mall. An eighteen wheeler entered the lot, but instead of slowing down as it approaches the core building, it accelerated and skidded sideways, slamming to a stop in front of the main entrance to the mall. But before it had come to a complete stop, just as it was beginning to slow down, doors pop open on the trailer, the two sides and in back, and steel ramps came sliding out to grate, rasp, and rattle like slithery silver tongues with steely bell-like tones. And down the ramps come about twelve powerful wheelchairs, very fast. The chairs are equipped with a kind of an air brush on a crane, and a sheet metal template of the handicap parking symbol. It was like nothing I'd ever seen before. It seemed like everything was happening at high speed, like in a speeded-up film projector.

Later I figured that they'd each sprayed about thirty parking spaces in a little over two minutes, so they averaged about one space every four seconds. Then, boom, they were out of there. The big rig took off like a jack rabbit.

People started getting used to seeing that handicap parking symbol every time they turned around. And of course, the trick became to become more and more audacious and bold in choice of targets. Then, suddenly . . . the raids stopped. What had happened?

Milo had begun to take a class in creative dreaming a month or so before. Lucid dreaming was the goal; control over the events of your dreams. These sessions trained the participants in the ability to effect what happened to them in their dreams. Not dream control, really, more like dream management. For example, you could be trained to remove yourself from frightening dream situations by channeling the flow of the events of the dream away from danger. This was exceptionally beneficial, it seemed, for people getting over bad experiences.

Milo was the most skeptical student the instructor had ever met. But, much to his amazement, Milo found that it worked. And he immediately sought to regain what he had lost. He could walk in his dreams. He could do it again. He remembered exactly what it felt like, and it felt like this. The first couple of time he woke up crying.

Milo made great strides in dream management. He began to indulge some fantasies, have some real leg-based fun. Before very long, he was dream-singing "Now I am the ruler of the queen's navee!" complete with meaningful striding up and down far downstage where the crowd could see the sweat flying off his highly expressive eyebrows, as he belted out his proud story.

He dreamed he was in the desert and it seemed to hum with vitality. He climbed a great desert column of stone a hundred feet up, and as he stood there, the wind come up suddenly behind him and he was blown off the top. He just spread his wings and flew. Just glided around on some thermals and came in for a landing some time later. Then he dreamed he made some dream wings so he could take off from the ground and sail off and plane around like a real bird.

So when Milo woke up, he began to design a new machine, one that would combine the James Bond style jet-pack with the hang glider.

"What I really need," said Milo, "Is some way of hovering long enough to operate the airbrush before opening the hang glider and gliding to safety. The jet-pack, powered by a high concentration of hydrogen peroxide is usually only good for about seventy seconds. If I am too high up when the fuel is spent, I may not survive the landing. Its got to be some kind of folding frame version of a hang glider, which allows the arms to play a part, to hold the frame of the wings rigid."

That was the last time I saw him; he was rolling away humming to himself. That was about six months ago. But, now here's this incident at Mount Rushmore and another at the Washington Monument.

I guess he's back.

*(SFX: walking man with hard-soled shoes; continues for several seconds)*

*(Narrator)*

He's a walker; he's an old fashioned guy, carries a clock. He must cover fifty miles a shift, he sometimes goes sixteen hours straight without a break! He's the watchman . . . he's *(music up)*

**Lou Stairwell: Security**

in this week's radio mystery . . . *(Musical Sting)*

**"Walter Under the Bridge"**

*(Music out, SFX Walking fades - SFX Spring morning bird song. Humming man walking; humming underscores following narration, punctuates it with appropriate emotional responses.)*

When Mr. Unsoveiter walks to work, he crosses the river at about ten minutes to six. One predawn early morning on a brightening spring day, he paused in the middle of the bridge and leaned his forearms on the railing. He stood there for a minute and looked down at the mist layering the river. There was sound rising from below, the gurgling splashing channels through broken concrete and other debris. He leaned over the rail and peered down into the dark moving water. As the sun began to break over the bushy green hill, he was very surprised to see a face smiling up at him.

" Hmm? What a relaxed, cheerful looking guy!" thought Mr. Unsoveiter. "What's he doing down there?"

As he peered more closely, the mist closed in again around the pillars of the bridge and the face faded. Time to go, so he began to shift his weight back to a standing position, when a tear in the mist came floating by and the cheerful guy was there again, just for half a second. Just long enough to say "Hi!" and he certainly looked as if he would have, if he hadn't been under two feet of water.

Mr. Unsoveiter froze. His heart began to pound in his chest.

*(Voice of Unsoveiter)* "There's a dead man under the bridge!"

*(Narrator)* . . . He said it aloud, then he looked around quickly to see if anybody had overheard. Nobody had, of course because there was nobody else there, nobody except . . .

The smiling man was stretched out in an aluminum chaise lounge lawn chair, clearly quite a happy-go-lucky kind of a guy. Mr. Unsoveiter stood shivering in the early morning chill, squinting and blinking until he was able to make out clearly the long stemmed martini glass in the corpse's right hand.

It was Walter under the bridge, but Mr. Unsoveiter didn't know that. Walter had been smiling up at his upraised glass at the moment of his death. He had just then been reading a magazine and had reached the photograph of a woman, a model apparently, striding along and frozen by the camera in mid-stride, when he suddenly gasped and said out loud. . .

*(Voice of Walter)*

"So that's how they did it!"

*(Narrator continues)*

The sweet realization that finally broke out like morning light in his mind, of the truth about how he had been framed all those years ago, poured through him like an electric current, relaxing him, easing his tense frame. He savored the moment for a good, long while and then he began to let go. He let go of his hunched up shoulders. He let go of his scowling forehead. And a great smile began to spread over his face. He leaned back in the chaise lounge and looked out over the river. Then he reached for his martini, gripping the glass tightly by the stem with the thumb and first two fingers of his right hand. He raised it high above his head and stretched his whole body in a toast-like gesture that seemed to shrug off the decades, kind of a triumphant yawn, like the leap at the end of a great, decisive touchdown run. He knew how it had been done and a moment later, the stroke took him.

Four hours later his lounge chair slid into the water, during a sudden downpour of rain.

*(SFX Thunderstorm. Soon fades)*

The same year Walter began serving his prison sentence, Lou Stairwell was a young man with a choice to make. Should he go back to junior college and keep his regular job as night watchman, or

should he quit school altogether to take on even more responsibility in the security business? He thought about this in the week before Christmas while spending eight extra hours per day in a little concrete building at the far distant end of an immense parking lot at an automobile assembly plant in the southern tip of Chicago.

*(SFX Door opening onto blizzard)*

He opened the door and watched the driving snow fill the vast, empty concrete plain that stretched between the main buildings and his tiny sentry pillbox. He listened very carefully because it seemed to him that he could hear seagulls in the distance. Of course, it was snowing much too fiercely for seagulls to be wheeling around making that kind of a racket. And, for a snowy evening the cold was unusually severe. Yet he could hear them. Apparently they were there, floating invisible in the blizzard. A good moment to savor. He had found a puzzle to distract him from concentrating on his big choice and he stood very still, enjoying it.

The wind was terrific and the pelting grains of icy stinging snow roared in on him as he stood in the doorway. The calling of the seagulls was repeated in the distance. His immediate reaction was to start talking to himself, mentally, rapidly, but he stopped. No, he would just listen for a little while, that's what he would do. So for the next thirty minutes, by the clock in the concrete hut, he listened to seagulls which were clearly impossible. The seagulls couldn't be there but they sounded so cheerful when their shrill shrieks pierced the furious wind. It was only after a half hour or so had passed that he realized, almost gradually, that he was listening to laughter in the distance from a children's Christmas party going on in the union's main offices across the road and slightly south of his pillbox. Sometimes, today, while he is walking a round, Lou will call up the memory of those children's voices that he had mistaken for the shrieks of wheeling gulls, twenty-two years before, back in that distant snowfall.

Every night, week in and week out, Lou Stairwell walks his rounds, the rhythmic tread of his passage goes on and on over the wooden floors of warehouses. The reason why he chose this life was simple. It was because of the time. The big attraction . . . the big draw, was time. All the time in the world, laying out there in front of him back then. Lou decided to walk into it. He's been walking through it for thirty-two years. He's walked into it, and around it and, walking, has altered it and made it, in many instances, disappear altogether, like the Dreamtime of the Australian aboriginal people, where there is no time at all. None of it and all of it, sez Lou.

Lou remains unimpressed by all the miles he's walked. All those miles for all those years . . . How many times has he turned left into that assembly building with its fifty foot glass wall made up of hundreds of little panes, with about every seventeenth one knocked out?

When he hits that glass wall at three-oh-five, a freight train always joins him there at the north

east corner. .

*(SFX Freight Train)*

. . . and it roars and rattles all the windows at once, swaying and rocking as it rushes by outside, twelve feet away from the building. The huge boxcars pass by at forty or fifty miles an hour, close to the wall of glass, and Lou, on the other side, slows his pace a little so that he can enjoy the deafening company for as long as possible. When the noise is at its loudest and most terrible and the flickering mercury vapor lamp on the far side of the tracks, visible only for fractions of a second at a time, in the gaps between the speeding boxcars, begins to pulse out a steady flashing rhythm like a strobe, Lou, with twelve miles already behind him, slips into the Dreamtime, and the huge vibrating wall of glass and the roaring train melts into background and disappears.

*(Fade SFX)*

Over the years it turns out that whenever many of the law enforcement officials who Lou counts among his friends have a particularly difficult problem, they're tempted to bring it to him, just to talk it out. Lou is often very helpful. From a description of a case he says he goes back to visit the crime itself; anyway, he often comes up with new angles.

Lou threads his way through the most complicated labyrinths of storage stock: canyons of enormous crates, steel files, metal sheets in stacks, springs, boxes, huge and tiny, physical and mental, memories, schemes, dreams and desires. He might be the most ambulating person on earth, with the possible exception of some Indian fakirs who remain in continual motion as a form of devotion. You know, it's not possible to sleep and walk at the same time. "Sometimes it's necessary," says Lou.

One of his early successes at untangling a puzzler was the one they called the case of . . . the Knocker.

A typical victim would be in his apartment, just settling in for the evening, perhaps sitting down in his easy chair. Suddenly, there'd be five loud knocks on his front door.

*(SFX Five loud knocks and appropriate door and walking SFX in following section)*

The fellow'd go to the front door and open it and there'd be nobody there, just the empty hallway.

So he'd go back to his chair and is just lowering himself into it when, again, he hears five knocks. Again he gets up, a little bit faster this time. He opens the door onto an empty hallway that stretches in both directions for several more doors. Pretty mysterious! He goes back toward his chair and immediately there are five more knocks, so the guy spins around, grabs the doorknob, yanks open the door, leans into the hall . . . nobody's there.

Now, at this point the victim is usually somewhere between astonished and enraged; he may hesitate a second but he will step out into the hallway. As soon as he does, he hears the door slam

behind him and the unmistakable sounds of the lock being turned and the security chain being slipped into place.

Even if the victim has enough presence of mind to run like hell down the stairwell and around the back of the building . . . Even if he does this right away he is never in time to prevent the burglary that is taking place inside his apartment. The poor guy bounds up the back stairs and quickly opens the door. He invariably discovers that his valuables are gone. Nothing big, usually, but valuable.

So, one night, these facts were laid before Lou Stairwell as he walked his rounds. After a while he asked what the hallways smelled like. Was there any similarity in the way they smelled?

A day or two later the same policeman was back walking with Lou. In a few instances an unusual smell was noticed shortly after the incidents.

On Lou's advice, hallways all over the city were sprayed with something; not a lot, just a tiny little spritz down each corridor.

Two days later, Ferdinand "Ferdy" Jederman was just sitting down in his favorite chair to listen to Sydney Bachet doing "Minnie the Moocher", when five loud knocks sounded through the apartment.

*(Music and appropriate SFX)*

Ferdy got up, crossed the room and opened the door.

A small brown furry animal came flying through the open door and attached itself to his head.

*(Screaming, shrieking and carrying-on, with music in background)*

Sydney's saxophone slid and mooched along, Ferdy ran around the apartment hollering and the thing on his head emitted a continual high-pitched shrieking sound.

*(Appropriate noises)*

On the third try, Ferdy grabbed his portable phone and dialed 911 as he ran through the apartment. The police had been staking out targeted apartment buildings; unfortunately, this was not one of them. Still a unit was able to reach Ferdy's door within ten minutes, by which time Ferdy had nearly passed out from exhaustion and the thing on his head had shrieked itself hoarse.

It was a little monkey, and after the officers had taken the creature and it's human partner into custody, they explained to Ferdy that his hallway had been sprayed with a tiny amount of cheap synthetic monkey pheromone in order to distract the tiny would-be burglar with frenzied lust.

"Thanks a hell of a lot!" said Ferdy.

So when Lt. Meich was having his fourth cup of coffee one morning about twenty to three, sitting back at his desk, staring once again at the photo of Walter in his chaise lounge, lying there with that big sappy grin, toasting with a glass full of river water Lt.

Meich's upcoming success at figuring out what the hell had happened, the lieutenant raised his own cup and thought of Lou walking through the factory complex on the other side of the city. Lt. Meich pushed back his chair and five minutes later, he was driving out to meet Lou, and to give him the circumstances of the case.

Walter, it turns out had just been released from prison after serving twenty-two years of a forty-four year sentence that a sixty-six year old judge had given him when he was fifty-five. "What?! You're going to lock me up until I'm ninety-nine?!" yelled Walter at the time. In actual fact, he was seventy-seven when they let him out, and they tried to impress on him the generous nature of their decision to do so in order to inspire gratitude. Walter, however, wasn't impressed by anything they did or said, whoever the hell they were. See, he had been convicted of being the inside man on a major bond heist. He had set an alarm five minutes later than he had ever done before in sixteen years of faithful service to his company. During the interval, thirteen million dollars worth of negotiable securities had disappeared. Walter claimed ignorance of the whole thing; according to him he had not deviated in any way from his normal routine of setting the alarm at the appropriate time. He was, after all a conscientious security man with an exemplary record, so he was given the benefit of the doubt, given every consideration.

But, given the responsibility of choosing between the two alternate stories of Walter's involvement, the jury found him guilty. Whereupon Walter really let them have it. He included the judge, the jury, the gallery, the press, and pretty much everybody else in the world in his catalogue of infamy. He put together kind of a verbal World War II, which was where he had learned to curse. The newspapers had a good time with it for one issue, but that was twenty-two years ago and nobody remembers Walter's outburst today. As for Walter, himself, he sat in prison and fumed and every once and a while he'd shout, "What the hell kind of deal is this anyway?"

Lt. Meich tells Lou that the most obvious explanation to Walter's great big grin is that he was in the middle of relishing the thought of getting his cut of the stolen bonds, that they were on the way perhaps and that anticipation and delight were both clearly present on the dead face.

Why was Walter so sure that he had set the alarm at the proper time? Because of the beautiful pedestrian, says Lt. Meich. Walter was adamant that he had set the alarm at 8:15, at the time he always set it. His claim was that he was a thorough guy and wasn't satisfied unless he had two independent indicators of the time. He relied on his own watch, of course, and in the case of this particular alarm, the second clock became, over a period several months, the arrival at the train station across the street from the bank on the corner of a strikingly beautiful young woman with a springy sort of gait, who in two months had always arrived at eight-fourteen, one minute, exactly, before the alarm was to be set.

After the robbery when his watch was examined, it was found to have been set five minutes slow, and he seemed to think that this fact was evidence in his favor.

“This use of an independent means of marking the time is one of the marks of an unusually conscientious security man,” mused Lou.

“Yes, Walter pointed out at his trial, you can always reset, somehow, a mechanical or electrical time piece; you can always doctor a man's watch, so if you can get an independent indicator of the time, one that has proven to be unfailingly dependable over a very long period of time . . . Well, so Walter's story goes, but the very next day I was there myself with the police waiting for the Beautiful Pedestrian. At eight-fourteen there were twenty-four people on the corner; none fit the description that Walter had given.

His supervisor confirmed that on one occasion at least, he, too, had seen a beautiful woman, but that had been a couple of months before the robbery. They had been standing in front of the alarm control panel when he had pointed her out to Walter.”

“Ah!” says Lou Stairwell. “Did you search further downstream for anything that he might perhaps have been reading, something he may have been holding in his hand when he died? “

“Yes, in fact a search was undertaken to find any message that might have been sent to him by his cronies. “

“But you never found any such messages?”

“No, we did not,” confesses Lt. Meich.

“Did you find anything at all that he might have been reading?”

“Just a soggy copy of *Modern Security* magazine. I think it was last year's holiday issue. It was in the crook of his arm. “

“Read the magazine,” says Lou, “Read the whole thing.”

So as the sun is coming up over the city, Lt. Meich is poring over a dry copy of last year's holiday issue of *Modern Security*. And eventually he gets to an article on the Winter Fashion For Charity show that had been organized that year by the wives of some of the bigwigs in the world of security. A picture and a name leap out at him. It is Walter's old supervisor's wife of twenty-two years in a sable cape and boots, a former model "showing that she hasn't lost her touch." Walter's old supervisor had left the old firm for greener pastures a couple of years after Walter's conviction, He had his own big operation now, known all over the world. And here was his still-beautiful wife, "bouncing up the runway with a youthful, springy step."

Lt. Meich's eyes open wide and he reaches for the telephone.

*(SFX touchtone phone tones; music up)*

