

“I don’t believe it,” cried Hank from beneath the floorboards. “I could’ve sworn I had my toolbox down here! The last time I used that thing was when I had to fix our repulsive, kitchen sink. Repulsive isn’t even the right word for that mushy green-colored ooze I found and removed from the pipes.”

“That’s why I married yah,” replied Betty. “You always do such a *great job* at handling the dirty work in the house.”

“Don’t encourage him,” came a voice from across the yard. Evelyn Springfield had just arrived home from a long afternoon at her neighbor’s church. The Trinity Methodist Church had Bingo every Tuesday afternoon, for the last 25 years. Evelyn had been going since her husband passed away, six years ago. Judith, her neighborhood friend, had suggested she go as an excuse to ‘get out of the house.’ Evelyn loved the fact that it gave her something to do. She’s met multiple other women by going to Bingo. Some of whom she talks to almost every other evening, others simply share a cab with her. Altogether, it was an opportunity to socialize.

“Good afternoon, Evelyn,” remarked Betty. Did yah come home heavy pocketed?”

“Oh yeah! I won just enough to buy myself today’s paper.”

“Hello there, Evelyn,” Hank muttered from under the porch. “Say, did I lend you my toolbox? I feel like I did. My memory isn’t quite what it used to be.”

“Hank, you are right. I did borrow your hammer to put up that old painting I found. I’ll tell yah what. I was thinking about ordering a pizza from Jerry’s tonight. You two should come over around 5:00. You can pick up your toolbox, Hank, and Betty and I can chat about things that old ladies like us like to chat about.

Transition to Middle:

Hank’s belly growled and hissed. A sound so disturbing, anyone else would already have their doctor on the phone. This was normal for Hank, especially after devouring 5 slices of Jerry’s extra cheesy, mushroom pizza.

Betty grimaced, “Hank, I think it’s time we head home. You can take your Tums and put your feet up before bedtime.”

“I suppose your right, Betz,” Hank answered. “Say, Evelyn, you said you still had the toolbox in the house, right?”

“Why yes I did.” Evelyn motioned for Hank to accompany her, “Mind following me up to the attic? That’s where I found that old painting.”

“Not at all,” Hank replied while his stomach continued to make disturbing noises.

“I’ll wrap the extra slices in foil and put them in your fridge, Evelyn,” Betty offered.

On the way up Evelyn’s stairs, Hank noticed that the carpet was slightly moist, almost spongy. With each step his sock sank into the carpet and became more and more wet. “Hey Evelyn, did you notice that your steps are wet. You may have mold problems.” Evelyn was already at the top of the stairs, rounding the corner for the attic. Hank continued up the last two stairs and also rounded the corner.

An old, wooden step ladder hung right in the middle of the hallway. Covered in cobwebs and dust, the stepladder looked like it had seen better days. There were 4 rungs, 3 of which were still in workable condition.

“How did you ever get up there on that old thing,” Hank asked.

“A little bit of courage, coffee, and carefulness,” Evelyn shot back.

“You are a crazy woman,” Hank insisted. “Here give me a hand and I should be able to get up to at least the first rung.” Evelyn boosted Hank up onto the dangling ladder. Hank grabbed onto the ceiling gap and swung himself up into the attic. It was pitch black and the only thing Hank could see was a window at the opposite end of the attic. The door looked opened and a cool wind nipped Hank on the shoulder. “Whew it’s chilly up here, Evelyn. It looks as if your window may be open.”

“Yeah, I leave that open to let the hot, damp air escape,” Evelyn replied. “Would you mind shutting it for me, Hank?”

“Um, I could try,” Hank answered. “I’m just not sure that these 2x4s will hold my weight. Maybe we could get George over here tomorrow to do that for you.” “Yeah, I suppose, but you’re so close! “Please, Hank,” Evelyn begged.

“Oh, alright. Mind handing me a flashlight?”

“Sure,” Evelyn responded. “However, the one I have doesn’t have a working pair of batteries to go with it. I’ve been meaning to go to the store, but it just keeps slipping my mind.”

Hank looked across the darkness in the attic trying to focus his eyes on the soft, pale moonlight streaming in through the opened window. After a few seconds his eyes began to adjust just enough to make out a path to the window. “Evelyn, I think I can make out a path in the moonlight, I’m going to go ahead anyway.”

“Be careful, Hank,” Evelyn said cautiously.

“Cccrrreeaakkk,” the first piece of wood whistled at Hank as he placed his weight on top of it. “Cccrrriick,” the next board remarked as his body shifted it’s weight from the first to the second.

“SLAM!” the attic door slammed shut. Hank didn’t know what had happened. Just as he was turning around to yell down to Evelyn, he noticed a shadow shift close to the window.

“Hello? Evelyn?”

“Grrrrrwwrgfkeghh,” came an unusual, intimidating sound from near the shadow.

“Oh it’s probably just a raccoon or a squirrel that happened to get through the window,” Hank thought to himself. “Evelyn! What happened to the attic door? Evelyn?” No answer. Hank turned his body around, bones and boards both creaking and cracking. He shifted his weight back onto the first board and then bent down toward the door. He reached for the security lever and...

Just then his left leg was surrounded by what seemed liked a gigantic rubber-band covered in hair.

“HELP!” screamed Hank as he tried to twist and pull his leg free. His right leg began to kick at his left. Then all of a sudden his right leg was surrounded with the hair in an equally tight grip. The grips around his ankles were so tight, blood was barely flowing toward his feet. Hank could feel his toes becoming numb. They were getting colder and colder, even with the vast amount of long, dense hair surrounding his legs.