

SUCKER

"You're fat. You do nothing but eat, drink, defecate and inflate," she said.

Harry flinched at the down-the-nose oh-so-superior voice. He stopped whipping up the mash with his fork and stared at what he could see of his reflection in the kitchen window. Observing a face hanging like a bag of melted butter, he then turned to study her.

She was leaning on the counter sipping at her fifth gin of the evening. How dare she call him fat? Her thighs rocked when she walked and her breasts sat like boulders on the mountain of her stomach. He felt the anger roil in his gut and claw its way up into his chest. He'd really had enough.

"And you're a snotty-nosed bitch," he said, breaking out in a sweat at his temerity. He waited then, hardly daring to imagine how she might react, but even more angered at his own fright. She laughed a dry hacking laugh and gazed at him as if he was something she'd just stepped in.

"You are a corpulent slug, darling."

It was the darling that did it. She'd called him that when they'd first been lovers. Over the years the word had changed from a term of endearment to one of contempt. He stepped towards her but she was too drunk to notice. She noticed when he stuck the fork in her eye, though.

The fork still in her eye, dripping mashed potato and other fluids, she staggered into the sitting room. Harry opened a draw and made his selection. The Ken Hom cleaver was a favourite of his, as was the filleting knife he'd honed down to razorlike sliver of metal. He listened to her nasal squealing for a moment before following her in.

All over the carpet - all over her lovely cream thirty-three pounds a yard carpet. The eye liquor had all run out and now it was blood dripping from the handle of the fork. He must have jammed the tines right into skull behind as the implement showed no signs of falling out. Harry moved in and thought about the conger eels he'd gutted in his boat-trip days. The thing to do was to cut them into pieces small enough to bag and put in the chest freezer. Each piece a meal in itself. He was humming to himself by the time she finally stopped screaming. The doorbell rang when he was getting really artistic with the filleting knife. He wiped his face on a towel and went to the door, opened it, and stuck only his head round.

"Good morning, sir! I'm here to demonstrate the Tyson Supervac 2000," said the little man on the step.

"Don't want none," said Harry, closing the door.

"But, sir. The lady of this household specifically requested a demonstration. We don't force our wares on people who don't want them, I assure you."

As the little man spoke he leant against the door. There was something manic in his expression. Here was a salesman who had been put off once too often. Harry felt that dull roil of anger again. Spending his money. That damned carpet, a mortgage he could hardly afford, the fucking useless ornaments that ate tenners then gathered dust, and now a vacuum cleaner they didn't need. Before he fully understood what he was doing he had opened the door and let

the interloper in.

Dragging his large wheeled-case behind him the salesman shot past Harry into the hall, grinning widely at this unprecedented success. Harry closed the front door and turned. The salesman's grin fell away when he saw the blood, and the cleaver clutched in Harry's right hand.

"Go on then, demonstrate," said Harry.

"W - w - where would you like me to demonstrate, sir?"

Harry pointed with the cleaver to the sitting room. "In there."

The salesman was frightened, but his expression hopped to an utterly new level of fear and horror when he dragged his case into the sitting room. "Oh my god. Oh my god."

He turned, searching for somewhere to run, but there was no way round Harry. Harry used his huge gore-spattered belly to barge the salesman into the room.

"I'll go away. I'll go away. I didn't see anything!"

"Demonstrate," said Harry.

The salesman stared at him in disbelief, then turned and gaped at what had been spread across the white carpet.

"No ... no ... you can't mean ..."

"Demonstrate!" Harry shouted, swiping his cleaver at the salesman. The salesman ducked back, dragging his case with him. He stepped in a stack of fingers, stumbled, and sat down in a pool of intestines. His expression twisted, there was horror there, sickness. For a moment it seemed he might cry. Harry picked up his filleting knife and stepped closer, then something clicked.

"The Tyson Supervac 2000 is at the ... cutting edge of house-cleaning technology." The salesman stood and looked around himself. "Not only can it be used to vacuum carpets, but it can also be used, with boost control, to clear leaves, and even blockages in drains."

With this the salesman opened his case and removed from it a brushed aluminium vacuum cleaner with a transparent plastic dust compartment. In the sides of the case were various hoses and attachments. He selected a transparent hose and connected it in place. On the end of the hose he fitted a plastic nozzle.

"The Tyson Supervac comes with its own rechargeable power pack, but for the removal of heavy soil we recommend you plug into the house power supply."

He held up a three pin plug. The expression on his face was sick and his hands were shaking. Harry nodded to the power point. The salesman went over and plugged in, then returned to his cleaner.

"The Tyson Supervac has adjustable power setting. The lowest power setting is for conventional carpet cleaning. Drain cleaning and leaf clearing come at the upper end of the scale." He pointed at a slide-switch and pushed it halfway over.

"The 2000, unlike the earlier 1500, has a silent running mode. For heavy soil though we recommend you don't use this as there may be some loss of power."

After this little speech the salesman stared at the mess for a long time. He then pressed a button and the vacuum cleaner roared into life. With a look of distaste he lowered the nozzle to the carpet.

Harry was impressed. This was certainly a very efficient cleaner. Two kidneys, one after the other, went up the pipe with a sound like someone spitting pips. A length of intestine disappeared with a sound like air being blown through the neck of a burst balloon. Of course it didn't take long for the transparent dust compartment to fill.

"You'll find the Tyson Supervac 2000's dust compartment clean and easy to use. See: just detach it from the cleaner and take it to your dustbin."

The salesman stood holding the dust compartment. He had a piece of liver stuck on his cheek and his suit was spattered with blood. His right eye was twitching. Harry gestured with his cleaver then walked behind the man with the filleting knife at the back of his neck. The contents of the dust compartment slithered into the dustbin. On the fourth emptying the salesman was walking a little unsteadily and breaking into the occasional giggle.

"The Supervac 2000 can be bought on extended credit. You can own a Tyson Supervac 2000 for six months without paying a penny! That's six months of superior cleaning for nothing. You'll never want to part with your Supervac!"

The fingers rattled as they shot into the dust compartment. Squares of skin went in with a dull popping. Her hair jammed in the pipe for a moment until the salesman hit boost, then it shot inside. But even the Tyson Supervac 2000 couldn't suck up the skinned skull with its dinner fork still in place. It stuck on the end of the nozzle and only dropped off when the cleaner had been turned off and wound down to a stop. It dropped on the floor with a leaden thud.

"Should you encounter any problems with this item we recommend you contact us on our helpful and friendly customer services line."

The salesman stared at the skull, then at the skinned ribcage and some of the larger lumps. "Never pick them up. Not no way," he said, and giggled.

Harry held out a roll of bin bags for him, then followed him as he made three trips to the dustbin.

"Now the carpet," said Harry.

"The Supervac ... " The salesman stared at the blood soaking and clotting the carpet. "... has this handy wash-vax attachment which can be used to clean heavily soiled carpets and even upholstery ..." He stared at the sofa on which, until only moments before, two blubbery breasts had sat like huge blancmanges. "... all you need is the Supervac recommended carpet cleaner, which can be obtained at concessionary prices by registered owners."

The salesman got himself into motion. He lifted the pipe he had been using, removed the plastic nozzle and fitted a long stainless steel attachment. He turned the cleaner on.

"But before I demonstrate the wash-vax!" He turned towards Harry with a deranged expression on his face. "Let me demonstrate the power of The Supervac 2000 for drain cleaning!" He turned the vacuum cleaner on and pushed the power setting to its highest.

"I don't want -" Harry managed before the stainless steel pipe was in his eye.

He yelled and dropped his knives. There was a sucking thump and a ghastly sensation. With his right eye he watched in horror as his left eye shot up the transparent pipe.

"Feel the power of Supervac!"

Harry grabbed at the pipe, stumbled, slipped on blood-slick carpet, and felt the pipe ripping away from his face. He felt it tear a strip of skin from the bottom of his eye down to his chest. He bellowed as he went flat on his face. The pain hit then and he bellowed again.

"With turbo boost!"

Harry struggled to get up, felt the back of his trousers rip and something cold intrude between his buttocks.

"Supervac 2000! Will remove even the most stubborn blockage!"

Harry deflated.

ENDS.