

The Zenith



Muffy cowered in the corner of the room, as far away from the Zenith Hi-Brite TV console as possible. It seemed to be asleep. No hum emitted from the wrap-around speaker; no horrible snakes appeared on the picture tube. And yet, it might be just waiting for her to make her next move. Last time she tried to sneak past, it lunged for her, its Transitron tubes spewing lethal cathode rays. She slipped on the floor – those darn socks! – and she missed being flattened beneath the unit’s genuine Tahitian Walnut veneer by a whisker. Fortunately, its six-foot power cord confined it to its side of the room. Abruptly, a servo-motor in the machine’s innards whirred to life and a ghostly image appeared on the picture tube. Holy smokes! It was Dad! “Hello Muffy,” he said in a voice that was as disembodied as his image. “You have been a bad girl. You were supposed to watch the cartoon program and let the TV alter your mind so you just like us would be. But no! You had to resist! That was very not smart. Now we will have to use the harsher method.” Dad waved his arms – which looked a whole lot like tentacles all of a sudden – and the flowers atop the TV console turned into tentacles, too! They wriggled and writhed and reached aggressively for Muffy. The Zenith, too, inched closer to the poor frightened girl, with Dad’s contorted face seeming to lead the way. However, so intent was he on his quarry that he forgot about the power cord. Halfway across the room, the plug popped out of the outlet, and Dad let out an angry “nertz!” as the screen and its all-powerful tubes suddenly went dead. What a close call *that* was!