

Father Knows Best
Halloween
Oct 26 1950

CAST:

ANNOUNCER
HUSBAND (2 lines)
2ND ANNCR

JIM, father
MARGARET, mother
BETTY, teenaged daughter
BUD, teenaged son; not too bright
KATHY, youngest daughter; age nine
CARETAKER, rural accent (3 lines)
plus a CAT, an OWL, a DOG, and a COW

KATHY: Mo-ther? Is Maxwell House really the only coffee in the world?

MARGARET: Well, your father says so, and your father knows best.

MUSIC: FANCY HARP GLISSANDO INTO THEME (IRVING BERLIN'S "LET'S HAVE ANOTHER CUP O' COFFEE") ... THEN IN BG

ANNOUNCER: Yes, it's FATHER KNOWS BEST, transcribed in Hollywood, starring Robert Young as father -- a half hour visit with your neighbors the Andersons, brought to you by Maxwell House, the coffee that's bought and enjoyed by more people than any other brand of coffee at any price. Maxwell House, always good to the last drop.

MUSIC: UP FOR TAG ... THEN IN BG--

SOUND: APPLAUSE

MUSIC: UP FOR INTRODUCTION ... THEN HALLOWEEN-FLAVORED BEHIND ANNOUNCER--

ANNOUNCER: (JOVIALY MACABRE RECITATION FROM JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY'S POEM "LITTLE ORPHANT ANNIE")

An' all us other chil'n, when the supper things is done,
We set around the kitchen fire an' has the mostest fun
A-list'nin' to the witch-tales that Annie tells about,
An' the Goblin that gets ya if you don't watch out!

(NORMAL VOICE)

It's Halloween in Springfield and the white frame house on Maple Street looks dark and deserted. Maybe that's because it is dark and deserted. The Andersons, you see, are heading home after a weekend in the country with their friends the Palmers. And at the moment we find them, that is, their car is parked on a muddy and rain-spattered road between-- Well, how am I supposed to know where they are? They don't even know themselves. Like this:

SOUND: STEADY RAIN ON ROAD ... THEN IN BG

JIM: (CALLS) What does the sign say, Bud?

BUD: (OFF) I don't know. It's dark out here.

JIM: (CALLS) Well, light a match.

BUD: (OFF, HADN'T THOUGHT OF THAT) Oh. Okay.

JIM: (TO MARGARET) I don't know what's the matter with that boy. He doesn't have enough sense to come in out of the rain.

MARGARET: If he did, he couldn't read the sign, could he, dear?

JIM: Hmm? ... Hm. (CALLS) Can you see it now, Bud?

BUD: (OFF) Yeah.

JIM: (CALLS) Well, what does it say?

BUD: (OFF) "No trespassing." ...

JIM: (TO HIMSELF) That's a great help. (CALLS) All right, come on back.

BUD: (OFF) Okay.

KATHY: (UNHAPPY) Daddy?

JIM: (EXASPERATED) What is it, Kathy?

KATHY: My feet are cold.

JIM: Well, put them in your pocket. ...

KATHY: (AN APPEAL) Mo-ther!

MARGARET: (GENTLY) Jim, that wasn't very nice.

JIM: She's done nothing but complain for the last three hours: she's hungry, she's sleepy, she's tired, she's cold--

BETTY: Father?

JIM: (WEARY) Yes, Betty?

BETTY: So am I. ...

JIM: Fine, I'll make a note of it.

SOUND: CAR DOOR OPENS

BUD: Boy, it's sure wet out here.

JIM: Well, get in and close the door. Don't just stand there.

BUD: Shove over, will ya, Betty?

BETTY: Bud, you're getting me all wet!

BUD: You poor thing. How would you like to get out every two minutes and look at a dopey sign?

JIM: Bud, stop complaining and shut the door!

BUD: I'm not complaining, dad, but just because she gets a few drops of water on her--

JIM: Shut the door!

BUD: (RESIGNED) Holy cow.

SOUND: CAR DOOR SHUTS ... CAR STARTS BEHIND--

JIM: Once we get back on the main road I'll have you home in thirty minutes.

BETTY: That's what you said two hours ago.

SOUND: CAR IN GEAR ... RUNNING AUTO INTERIOR BACKGROUND

JIM: Well, I'm certainly not going to change my mind now. If you hadn't spent so much time lollygagging with the Palmer boy, we wouldn't have had to take this shortcut.

BUD: (WITH CONTEMPT) Shortcut. Ha!

JIM: What was that?

BUD: Oh-- (CHUCKLES NERVOUSLY) Uh, nothing, dad. I was just thinking.

JIM: Well, stop thinking out loud. ... This is a very good shortcut. (QUIETLY) If I can ever find it. ...

MARGARET: Oh, dear. It's too bad this had to happen. It was such a nice weekend, wasn't it, Jim?

JIM: (UNENTHUSIASTIC) Yes.

MARGARET: The Palmers are wonderful people, aren't they?

JIM: Oh, they're nice people, all right, but Will didn't have to knock himself out that way.

MARGARET: He was merely trying to be pleasant.

KATHY: He scared me.

MARGARET: Oh, he didn't really, Kathy. He was just having fun.

BETTY: (DOUR SARCASM) Some fun. You bet. Ha cha. ...

MARGARET: (ADMONISHES) Betty--!

JIM: Well, let's face it, Margaret. Just because it's Halloween he didn't have to have ghosts popping out of the closet every time you opened a door.

KATHY: And I was scared. I don't like ghosts.

JIM: Oh, Kathy, for the eight millionth time, there's no such thing as a ghost.

KATHY: There isn't?

JIM: No.

KATHY: Well, you just said he had 'em in all the closets.

JIM: He had sheets in all the closets.

KATHY: You mean they weren't real live ghosts?

JIM: There is no such thing as a "real live" ghost.

BETTY: How about a real dead ghost? ...

JIM: Betty, you keep out of this.

BETTY: I was only trying to help.

JIM: You've helped quite enough, thank you. You and Marshall, the mechanical wizard.

BETTY: Now what did we do?

JIM: The gas gauge doesn't work, the radio doesn't work, nothing works!

BETTY: Marshall said it just needed a fuse.

JIM: (WITH CONTEMPT) "Marshall said--" He works one week at a filling station and that makes him an expert mechanic!

MARGARET: (UNEASY) Um, Jim? How do you suppose Will did that thing with the bridge table?

JIM: What thing?

MARGARET: Well, where the bridge table floated in the air. It was very clever.

JIM: I don't know, I suppose he had wires hooked on it or something.

BETTY: I didn't see any wires.

KATHY: There's another sign!

JIM: Where?

KATHY: Over there.

JIM: Well! Maybe now we'll find out where we are.

SOUND: CAR SLOWS TO A STOP

JIM: (BEAT) Bud? ...

BUD: Oh, no, dad. Do I have to go out again?

JIM: A little rain isn't going to hurt you.

BUD: But I'm wet clear through now.

JIM: Then you can't get any wetter. ... Go ahead, Bud.

BUD: (EXASPERATED) Holy cow.

SOUND: CAR DOOR OPENS AND SHUTS AS BUD CLIMBS OUT

BUD: (MOVING OFF) What they need in this family is a seeing-eye duck. ...

KATHY: Daddy?

JIM: Now what?

KATHY: If there aren't any ghosts, why do people say there are?

JIM: Because they don't have anything better to talk about.

MARGARET: I know you don't believe in those things, Jim, but there was a chair in my Grandmother Williams' bedroom--

JIM: (WEARY) And it rocked back and forth and back and forth.

MARGARET: It certainly did.

JIM: You've told me about it eight thousand times and there's still a logical explanation for it.

BETTY: Maybe the termites were pacing up and down. ...

MARGARET: Betty, that isn't funny.

JIM: The floor was probably crooked or the chair was standing in a draft. It could have been anything. But it was not being rocked by a ghost.

KATHY: I'm scared! (MOANS UNHAPPILY) ...

BUD: (OFF) Dad?

JIM: What's the matter, Bud?

BUD: (APPROACHES) Hey, Dad, you know what?

SOUND: CAR DOOR OPENS

JIM: Don't stand out there in the rain. Get inside.

BUD: Okay. Move over, will you, Betty?

BETTY: Oh, you're a pest.

SOUND: CAR DOOR SHUTS

JIM: Well, Bud?

BUD: What?

JIM: What did you find out?

BUD: Hmm? ... Oh. Well, remember the sign that said "Bensonville, twelve miles" and you said now you knew where you were?

JIM: What about it?

BUD: That's it. ...

JIM: What?

MARGARET: (DISMAYED) Oh, Jim!

JIM: You mean it's the same sign?!

BUD: Sure. On the bottom it says "Blossom loves Rocky" -- with a skull and crossbones. ...

JIM: Bensonville?

BETTY: (ANNOYED) Father, we were here two hours ago!

MARGARET: (THE SAME) Jim Anderson--

JIM: Margaret, it was an honest mistake. When I took the right turn, I guess I should have taken the left, that's all.

MARGARET: Kathy said we should have taken the left turn.

JIM: Since when does a nine-year-old child know more about roads than I do?

MARGARET: Now! ...

JIM: Well, if you're going to be insulting about it--

SOUND: JIM TRIES TO START THE CAR BUT THE ENGINE WON'T TURN OVER ... CONTINUES
IN BG

MARGARET: If you'd only stop someone and ask--

JIM: Like who? We haven't seen a soul since we left Mansfield and that was
three hours ago.

SOUND: ONE FINAL ATTEMPT AT STARTING CAR

JIM: Now what's wrong with the fool motor?

BUD: (HELPFUL) Maybe you flooded it, dad. Pull way out on the choke.

JIM: (SARCASTIC) Bud, would you like to drive?

BUD: Okay.

JIM: Oh, stay right where you are. ...

BUD: But you just said--

JIM: I was driving cars before you were born and I can drive rings around you
right now.

BUD: Well, sure, but--

BETTY: Father, is the switch on?

JIM: (DEEPLY ANNOYED) The switch is on, contact, roger, wilco, wahoo -- only
it won't start! ... Now are you happy?

MARGARET: Jim, you're losing your temper.

JIM: (LOSING HIS TEMPER) I'm not losing my temper! I'm calm! I'm cool! And I'd
like to take Marshall Palmer and stuff him down the nearest well!

BETTY: Why blame it on Marshall? He was only trying to help.

JIM: The two of you fussed around with this car for two hours and you've
wrecked it! Does it take two hours to put gas in a car?

BETTY: (BEAT, WEAKLY) Gas? ... You didn't say to put gas in the car.

JIM: What?

BETTY: Well, we just checked the tires and polished the chrome and-- You
didn't say to put gas in it.

JIM: (DEFLATED) Oh, Margaret, no--

MARGARET: Betty, how could you have done a thing like that?

BETTY: Well, I didn't know he wanted us to get gas.

MARGARET: (EXHALES WEARILY)

JIM: Margaret, I've been a good husband and a good father, but so help me--

KATHY: (SCREAMS)

SOUND: FAMILY ALL TALKS AT ONCE, BRIEFLY ("Kathy?" "What's the matter?" ET CETERA)

KATHY: (TERRIFIED) Daddy! Daddy, I saw it! It was a ghost!

JIM: Kathy-- Kathy, you're choking me.

KATHY: Oh, Daddy, I saw it!

JIM: Kathy, stop it.

KATHY: (DISTRESSED) Oh! Oh!

JIM: (AN APPEAL) Margaret?

MARGARET: Kathleen, stop choking your father, please. ...

KATHY: Oh, but I saw it, mommy! It was big and white! And it had big, long wings!

BETTY: (SCARED) Mother?!

MARGARET: Are you all right, Jim?

JIM: (DAZED) I don't know. I, er-- I think she's been taking lessons from Strangler Lewis. ...

BUD: I don't see any ghost.

KATHY: It was over there, Bud. It had three heads, and a long white beard, and I saw it out the window!

BUD: Hey, there is something.

KATHY: It's the ghost! Oh, daddy!

JIM: Now - now just a minute. Bud--?

BUD: I don't think it's a ghost, but I saw something.

JIM: I don't see any-- (SEES SOMETHING) Oh, yes.

BETTY: (SCARED) Father?!

MARGARET: (CONCERNED) Jim?

JIM: Oh, there's nothing to get upset about, Margaret. It's probably just a billboard or a sign or something.

BUD: It's a house.

BETTY: What?

BUD: Sure! Now I can see it. It's a two-story house -- and it's got pigeons on the roof.

JIM: (DRY) Ghosts -- with three heads. ...

MARGARET: (EXHALES IN RELIEF)

JIM: All that excitement about a farmhouse and a few fluttering pigeons. You ought to be ashamed of yourselves, all of you.

SOUND: CAR DOOR OPENS

MARGARET: Jim, where are you going?

JIM: I'm going to see if I can't wake somebody up. (MOVING OFF) I've got to borrow some gas.

MARGARET: (APPREHENSIVE) But, Jim, don't stay away too long, please.

JIM: (OFF) I'll be right back!

MARGARET: Er, Bud, maybe you ought to go with your father.

BUD: What for?

MARGARET: Well, it's very dark out there and he might not be able to find the way.

BUD: I don't know the way any better than he does. ...

BETTY: Bud, why don't you stop arguing?

BUD: I'm not arguing. And I don't see you jumping out in the rain.

BETTY: Of course not. Girls don't do things like that.

BUD: Why not?

BETTY: They just don't, that's why not.

BUD: (BEAT) Boy, is that a racket. ...

MARGARET: (GENTLY REPROVING) Bud--

BUD: "I go first, I'm a girl." "I get this, I'm a girl." Who takes care of the men?

KATHY: Girls! ...

MARGARET: Bud, this is hardly the time for a battle of the sexes.

BUD: I wasn't fighting, but good gravy--

JIM: (OFF) Margaret?!

MARGARET: (CALLS) Is everything all right, dear?

JIM: (OFF) Honey, it's a house all right, but it isn't exactly what we figured. It's-- (APPROACHES) Well, it's a - a sort of an empty caretaker's cottage.

KATHY: What's an empty caretaker? ...

BETTY: It's a cottage, dopey, and it's empty.

KATHY: Ohhh.

MARGARET: Jim, why would a farm have a caretaker's cottage?

JIM: (EVASIVE) Well, that's what I was saying. It, er-- It isn't exactly a farm. It's a-- Well, just figure it's like anything else, that's all.

MARGARET: (QUIETLY INSISTS) Jim, what is it?

JIM: Well, it's a-- The Pleasant View Cemetery.

MARGARET: (DISMAYED) Oh, no. ...

MUSIC: FIRST ACT CURTAIN

SOUND: APPLAUSE

ANNOUNCER: Well, on Halloween night, most of us won't be in quite such a fix. Instead the pumpkins will glow on the table when the children come in from their chilly rounds, eager for the cookies and doughnuts and fresh, sweet cider. And you know who else'll be there to drink a cup or two of steaming coffee? The world's greatest coffee expert. Yes, ma'am, that Number One expert will be on hand, because he's your husband. Now we could say we're the experts: our Maxwell House Coffee is America's favorite brand. But we know the final judge is that man of yours, and if you'll pour him a cup of Maxwell House, we're mighty sure he'll say:

HUSBAND: Best coffee I ever tasted.

ANNOUNCER: In fact, if he doesn't, we'll give you your money back. You see, we know there's no coffee tastes like Maxwell House, because no coffee's made like Maxwell House. We're proud as can be of that wonderful good-to-the-last-drop flavor, so we'd like you to buy a pound and start serving it to that husband of yours, and if he doesn't say it's the coffee for him, why, you send us the can and unused portion and we'll gladly refund the price you paid. Our address is right on the front of that familiar blue tin. Find out just how much the world's greatest coffee expert -- your husband -- enjoys Maxwell House Coffee: always good to the last drop.

MUSIC: TRANSITION ... THEN BEHIND ANNOUNCER--

ANNOUNCER: A few chill moments have come and gone, and we find the Andersons' brave little band huddled on the porch of the caretaker's cottage. The rain keeps pouring down on the battered roof, and in the eaves pigeons flap their restive wings. Or is it a belfry? Or are they bats? Well, anyway, the Andersons aren't worried -- not in the least. Chins up, shoulders back, they march fearlessly into whatever awaits them. Like this:

SOUND: WIND AND RAIN BACKGROUND

KATHY: I don't want to go in!

MARGARET: Kathy, there's nothing to be afraid of.

KATHY: I don't care. I don't want to go in!

JIM: Well, would you rather stay out here on the porch all night and freeze to death?

KATHY: Ohhhh, I'm scared.

JIM: Kathy, I don't know what's gotten into you. This isn't just a cemetery. It's a - a monument of which we should all be proud. Those are the graves of Civil War heroes -- men who died for their country.

SOUND: FLAPPETY-FLAP! OF BIRD FLYING BY

BETTY: (SCARED) Father!

KATHY: (EXCLAIMS IN TERROR)

MARGARET: (BEAT, DRY) What were you saying, dear?

JIM: Uh, let's see if we can get inside.

BUD: (OFF) Dad?

JIM: Any luck, Bud?

BUD: (APPROACHES) No, I tried the windows on the ground floor and they're all locked.

JIM: (IRONIC) Oh, fine.

BUD: I found a shovel out in back, though.

JIM: That's nice. ... If we can't dig our way in, at least it'll make a pleasant souvenir of the evening, won't it?

BUD: Well, I just thought if there's a shovel around, maybe that means somebody lives here.

JIM: (DRY) Thank you, Sam Spade. ...

BUD: Hahaha! Haha! Say, that's a good one. "Sam Spade," 'cuz I found a shovel. Haha! ... Haha! Get it, Betty?

BETTY: (SOUR) I got it, and you can have it. ...

BUD: What's the matter with her?

KATHY: I want to go home!

JIM: We can't go home, Kathy. There isn't any gas in the car. And I'm not walking twelve miles in the rain to get any, either.

MARGARET: Jim, we can't just stand here all night.

JIM: I have no intention of standing here all night. First, let's see if we can't--

SOUND: DOOR SQUEAKS SLOWLY AND EERILY OPEN

MARGARET: (SCARED, NERVOUS) Ji-i-im! ...

JIM: (TAKEN ABACK) It's - it's just the door opening, honey. That's all.

BETTY: Who opened it?

KATHY: I want to go home! ...

JIM: I hear one more peep out of you, so help me--

MARGARET: (TERRIFIED) Jim! What happened to Bud?!

JIM: I don't know, he was right-- (CALLS) Bud?!

BETTY: (SCARED) Mother!

BUD: (OFF) You want me, dad? ...

JIM: How'd you get down there?

SOUND: BUD'S STEPS ONTO PORCH

BUD: (APPROACHES) I don't know. I guess I fell off the porch. ... Who opened the door, dad?

JIM: How do I know? But it's open, so we don't have to worry about that any more.

SOUND: HEAVY GUST OF WIND ... DOOR BLOWS SHUT

BETTY: ... It used to be open.

SOUND: JIM'S STEPS TO DOOR

JIM: Now, that's funny.

SOUND: DOOR KNOB RATTLES VIGOROUSLY

BUD: It's locked, huh?

JIM: (DRY) No, I just like to rattle door knobs. ...

BUD: How could it be open one minute and locked the next minute?

JIM: Er, the wind. That's all it is. The wind blew it shut.

BETTY: Who blew it open?

JIM: Betty, stop asking silly questions.

BETTY: What's silly about that?

JIM: Bud, let's see if--

SOUND: DOOR SQUEAKS OPEN AGAIN

MARGARET: (NERVOUS) Jim?

BETTY: (THE SAME) Father?

JIM: (TAKEN ABACK) Never mind, Bud. It's - open again.

BUD: (THE SAME) Holy - cow. ...

JIM: All right, everybody. Let's get inside before the darn thing changes its mind again.

MARGARET: (QUIETLY) Jim, if this is a haunted house--

JIM: (ADMONISHES) Margaret--

KATHY: I don't want to go into the haunted house.

JIM: Kathy, stop being ridiculous. There's no such thing as a haunted house.

MARGARET: Jim, I know you don't believe in ghosts and haunted houses--

JIM: Margaret, you don't either. No sensible person does.

MARGARET: Of course, dear. But why did the bridge table float in the air at the Palmers'?

JIM: (PATIENTLY) It was a trick, Margaret, just like all the other stupid things Will Palmer did. Tapping on the floor and weird voices. You saw how he did those.

MARGARET: But he didn't explain about the table.

JIM: He forgot, that's all. And if you don't mind, I'd just as soon forget, too. Let's go inside.

SOUND: THE FAMILY'S STEPS INTO HOUSE ... IN AGREEMENT WITH FOLLOWING--

JIM: All right, Kathy.

KATHY: (TEARFUL) I'm only a little girl. I'm only nine years old. ...

MARGARET: (SOOTHING) Angel, nothing's going to hurt you.

JIM: Er, turn on the lights, Bud.

SOUND: BUD'S STEPS TO LIGHT SWITCHES ... CLICKETY-CLICK! OF LIGHT SWITCHES AS BUD TRIES A FEW ... CONTINUES IN BG

BETTY: Mother, is it all right if I just wait in the car?

JIM: You're staying right here with us. (BEAT) How about it, Bud?

SOUND: LIGHT SWITCHES STOP CLICKING

BUD: Nothing happens.

JIM: Well, we'll get a light somehow.

BETTY: (STARTLED GASP)

JIM: Now what's the matter?

BETTY: (DISGUSTED) I just walked into spider web. Ewww! ...

JIM: Please stop complaining and close the door.

BETTY: (EXASPERATED) Jumpin' creepers.

SOUND: DOOR CLOSES

KATHY: (TEARFUL) All I wanted to do was get into the sixth grade. ...

MARGARET: (SYMPATHETIC) Kathy--

BUD: (OFF) Dad?

JIM: Hm?

BUD: (OFF) There's an oil lamp over here.

JIM: Fine! Now we're getting somewhere.

BUD: (OFF) But there isn't any oil in it. ...

JIM: Bud?

BUD: (OFF) Yes, dad?

JIM: (IRONIC) See what else you can find that isn't any good. ...

BUD: (APPROACHES) Isn't any good for what?

JIM: Just-- ... Never mind.

BUD: Well, gosh, I was only trying to--

SOUND: DOOR CREAKS OPEN

BETTY: (SCARED) Mother!

KATHY: Now I'll settle for the fifth grade! ...

JIM: What's wrong with that stupid door? Bud--?

BUD: Don't look at me, dad. I wasn't anyplace near it.

JIM: I know you weren't. I was merely-- (SOUND: JIM'S STEPS TO DOOR) Oh, here's what it is. It's just a loose screw.

BETTY: I knew there was a screw loose some place. ...

JIM: Ya see this, Margaret? (SOUND: DOOR CLOSES) The latch is unfastened. When the wind blows, the latch slides over and the door opens.

BUD: Why couldn't you open it before?

JIM: Because the latch gets hung up when the door bangs shut, and stop bothering me! There's nothing mysterious about it.

KATHY: I'll be happy to finish the fourth grade. ...

MARGARET: (UNEASY) Jim, it's very cold in here.

BUD: (THE SAME) Yeah. Kind of clammy.

BETTY: (THE SAME) Wouldn't it be warmer if we all just sat in the car?

JIM: We'll get a fire started in here and that'll take care of everything.

MARGARET: Jim--

JIM: Honey, there's nothing in here that can hurt anybody. A nice friendly fire in the fireplace; it'll make all the difference in the world. How about getting some wood, Bud?

BUD: Here's a whole pile of newspapers.

JIM: Good!

BUD: Hey, you know who's gonna run for president? Coolidge. ...

JIM: Bud, let's get the fire started and stop with the jokes.

BUD: What jokes?

JIM: Just-- ... Oh, get some wood.

SOUND: DOOR CREAKS SLOWLY OPEN

MARGARET: Jim, I know it isn't anything to be worried about, but that door gives me the creeps.

JIM: Well, I'll fix that.

SOUND: JIM'S STEPS TO DOOR, WHICH CLOSSES ... THEN JIM GRABS A WOODEN CHAIR AND WEDGES IT UNDER THE KNOB BEHIND--

JIM: Get this chair wedged under the doorknob and--

SOUND: JIM FINISHES ADJUSTING THE CHAIR

JIM: There we are. Now I'd like to see it open. Come on, Bud, let's get going with the wood.

BUD: Where do I get wood?

JIM: I don't care where you get it, just get it.

BUD: (MOVING OFF, EXASPERATED) Good grief.

JIM: Well! That's a novelty.

SOUND: QUIET WHINE OF CAT

KATHY: Daddy--?

JIM: Kathy, you know I can't stand that.

KATHY: What?

JIM: Stop whining.

KATHY: I wasn't whining, daddy.

JIM: Hand me some of that newspaper, Betty, will you please?

BETTY: What a time to read. ...

MARGARET: (GENTLY) Betty, help your father build the fire.

BETTY: Okay.

SOUND: QUIET WHINE OF CAT

JIM: (ADMONISHES) Kathy--

KATHY: Yes, daddy?

JIM: You're whining again.

KATHY: I didn't even make a sound!

BETTY: Here's the paper, father.

JIM: Thank you.

SOUND: NEWSPAPER CRUMPLED ... THEN RUSTLES IN AGREEMENT WITH FOLLOWING--

JIM: We'll have some light in here in just about two seconds.

BUD: (APPROACHES) How's this for wood, dad?

JIM: Fine, Bud. (BENDS TO LIGHT NEWSPAPERS) There we are. (EXHALES WITH SATISFACTION) That's a little better, isn't it?

SOUND: DURING ABOVE, NEWSPAPERS LIT ... CRACKLE OF FIRE ... THEN IN BG

JIM: Let's have the wood, Bud.

SOUND: OWL SAYS, "HOOT, HOOT" ... THEN TRILLS, "HOO-OOOO-OOOOO."

BETTY: (SCARED) Father?

MARGARET: (THE SAME) Jim?

JIM: It's an owl, Margaret. (COUGHS A LITTLE) That's all it is. Just an owl.

KATHY: I don't like owls.

JIM: You don't like anything. (COUGHS A LITTLE MORE)

MARGARET: Jim, what is it?

JIM: Smoke. (COUGHS) Doesn't seem to be going up the chimney.

MARGARET: (COUGHS A LITTLE)

SOUND: OWL HOOTS A LITTLE ... FLAPPETY-FLAP OF OWL'S WINGS IN CHIMNEY

JIM: Oh. ... Guess they, er, must have their nest up there.

BUD: (COUGHS A LITTLE) Want me to open a window, dad?

JIM: Yeah, I guess--

SOUND: DOOR SLOWLY CREAKS OPEN

BETTY: (TERRIFIED) Father!

MARGARET: (THE SAME) Jim! The chair! It's gone!

KATHY: (THE SAME) I wanna go home!

JIM: (A LITTLE NERVOUS) Now, just a minute. There - there must be a logical explanation. Chairs don't just walk off by themselves. Do they, Bud?

BUD: (CALMLY) This one didn't. ... You just put it in the fireplace. ...

JIM: What?!

BUD: Well, you said you didn't care where I got the wood.

MARGARET: (COUGHS) Jim, the smoke is getting awful.

JIM: Bud, open the window at the top of the stairs. See if we can't get a little cross ventilation in here.

BUD: (DISGRUNTLED, MOVING OFF) "Bud, do this," "Bud, do that." Sounds like the only name you ever heard of was Bud. ...

JIM: What was that?

BUD: (OFF, AWKWARD) I said, I have to open the window--

SOUND: BLOODCURDLING WAIL OF THE CAT! CRASH! OF BROKEN GLASS

BUD: (SURPRISED) Hey!

BETTY: (SCARED) Father!

KATHY: (THE SAME) I want to go home!

JIM: (WORRIED) Bud, what is it?!

BUD: (OFF) It was a cat. I guess I stepped on its tail. ...

JIM: Well, stop fooling around and open the window!

SOUND: BARK AND LENGTHY HOWL OF A DOG

BETTY: (UNNERVED) Oh, father!

KATHY: (TEARFUL) Daddy? I have a wonderful idea. Let's go hoooooome! ...

MARGARET: (WORRIED) Jim--?

JIM: It's a dog, Margaret. That's all. Just a dog howling at the moon.

BETTY: Dogs howl when somebody dies!

JIM: (DEADPAN) Now there's a pleasant bit of information. ...

KATHY: (TEARFUL) I'm only a little girl!

MARGARET: Kathy, please--

JIM: I'm not having a bad enough time; people jumping every time a dog howls or an owl hoots or a door squeaks--

BUD: (IN CLOSE) Dad?

JIM: (HUGE STARTLED GASP!) ...

BUD: What's the matter, dad?

JIM: Oh, Bud. Why do you have to sneak up in back of people like that?

BUD: I didn't sneak up in back of you.

JIM: You certainly did.

MARGARET: Jim--?

SOUND: MOOOOO! OF A COW ... LONG, LOW, AND OMINOUS

BETTY: What's that?!

JIM: (EXASPERATED) A cow. Just a plain ordinary cow.

BUD: What's a cow doing up this time of night? ...

JIM: Looking for another cow; it's lonesome. ...

MARGARET: (UNEASY) Jim, all those peculiar noises--

JIM: They aren't peculiar noises. We're out in the country, and they're just plain ordinary noises.

MARGARET: But they sound so weird.

SOUND: WOODEN FLOORBOARD CREAKS QUIETLY

BETTY: (UNEASY) Father?!

JIM: (ANNOYED) What's the matter?

BUD: (UNEASY) We - we heard something.

JIM: You're imagining things, all of you! You heard the wind, whistling through the trees.

KATHY: (UNEASY) It didn't sound like the wind.

JIM: All right, what did it sound like like?

SOUND: WOODEN BOARD CREAKS LOUDER

KATHY: (BIG GULP!) Like that! ...

JIM: (UNCERTAINLY) Well, that's nothing. It's just a - a board creaking, that's all.

SOUND: BOARD CREAKS LOUDER ... OWL HOOTS AND TRILLS, "HOOT, HOOT, HOOO-OOO"

MARGARET: (QUIET, FIRM) Jim, we've got to get out of here.

JIM: Well, how? Where are we going to go?

SOUND: DOG BARKS AND HOWLS

BUD: I don't care where. Let's just go!

SOUND: DOG HOWLS SOME MORE

KATHY: (SNIFFLES, WAILS) I'm only nine years old! ...

SOUND: COW MOOS SOME MORE

JIM: (UNEASY) All right, Kathy, we'll leave. We'll leave right now. Not that there's anything to be afraid of.

SOUND: CREAKING BOARD AND SLOWLY APPROACHING FOOTSTEPS

BETTY: Father! It's coming closer!

KATHY: It's a ghost! It's a big white ghost!

BUD: (WEAKLY) Oh, boy.

MARGARET: (PLEADS) Jim--?

JIM: (WITH SHAKY BRAVADO, CALLS TO THE "GHOST") All right! We've got you

covered! Er, stay where you are!

CARETAKER: (VERY TIMID, OFF) Are you folks - folks?

SOUND: THE ENTIRE FAMILY EXHALES EXTRAVAGANTLY IN RELIEF ("Ohhhhhhhhh!") ...

JIM: Er, yes, we're, er, folks. Er, who are you?

CARETAKER: (DEEPLY RELIEVED, APPROACHES) Oh, I'm the new caretaker, just moved in tonight. And I'm not sure I like this job.

MARGARET: (ALSO RELIEVED) Oh, Jim--!

JIM: There, ya see? There wasn't anything to be afraid of.

CARETAKER: Well, maybe there ain't now, but I was sure scared before. You see, for a while, I figured maybe you was - ghosts.

MUSIC: CURTAIN

SOUND: APPLAUSE

MUSIC: CHANGES TO THEME ... THEN OUT BEHIND--

ANNOUNCER: When you buy coffee, you certainly want to get the most in flavor for your money. And, you know, the world's greatest coffee expert can help you find it. Yes, ma'am! Just set a steaming cup of Maxwell House Coffee in front of your husband. He's the Number One expert. Watch him smile at the first sip. Listen to him say:

HUSBAND: Best coffee I ever tasted.

ANNOUNCER: Right then, you'll know you found the flavor. You'll know that Maxwell House is your coffee buy. Bring home a pound of Maxwell House tomorrow. See how much your husband enjoys every cupful, and count all the truly good cups of coffee you get from just one of those familiar blue tins. We think you'll be convinced that Maxwell House Coffee gives you the most for your money, because it's always good - to the last drop.

MUSIC: FOR A SUNNY MORNING ... THEN BEHIND ANNOUNCER--

ANNOUNCER: The horrible night is over at last; the Andersons are home, safe and happy; and as they dig into their breakfast cereal, Jim tells them exactly how foolish they've been. Like this:

JIM: I've never been so ashamed of anyone in my entire life. Why, you acted as though we were living in the Middle Ages.

BUD: I wasn't scared, dad.

JIM: (SKEPTICAL GROAN)

BETTY: You certainly were!

BUD: I certainly wasn't.

BETTY: You were just as scared as anybody. Wasn't he, Kathy?

KATHY: He wasn't as scared as I was. I was real scared.

JIM: Of what? Everything had a logical explanation, didn't it?

MARGARET: (UNEASY) Jim--?

JIM: (VERY GENTLE SARCASM) Hello, Margaret! You finally decided to come to the party, huh? You haven't said a word since we sat down at the table.

MARGARET: Jim, there was a phone call before you got up.

JIM: Oh? Who was it?

MARGARET: Will Palmer. He said he hadn't been able to sleep a wink all night.

JIM: Good. Serves him right. What'd he want?

MARGARET: He wants you to call him.

JIM: What for? We just saw him yesterday.

MARGARET: (CAREFULLY) He wants you to tell him how you did that trick - where the bridge table floats in the air. ...

JIM: (REALIZES, WITH DISMAY) Oh, no. ...

MUSIC: CURTAIN

SOUND: APPLAUSE

2ND ANNCR: Tell the kids it's a hot favorite with Hoppy. That's hot Post Wheat Meal. And if you have trouble getting the youngsters to eat a hot cereal, just tell 'em how much Hopalong Cassidy loves that rich brown hot Post Wheat Meal. Post Wheat Meal is chuck full of good solid nourishment. It has a wonderful nutlike flavor. It cooks in just three and a half minutes. And tell the kids it's Hoppy's favorite. Hot Post Wheat Meal! You'll see. You'll all agree: it's the best hot cereal you ever ate!

MUSIC: FANCY HARP GLISSANDO INTO THEME ... THEN IN BG

ANNOUNCER: Join us again next week when we'll be back with FATHER KNOWS BEST, starring Robert Young as Jim Anderson, with Roy Bargy and the Maxwell House Orchestra, and yours truly Bill Forman. So until next Thursday, good night and good luck from the makers of Maxwell House, America's favorite brand of coffee -- always good to the last drop. FATHER KNOWS BEST was transcribed in Hollywood and written by Ed James.

Now stay tuned in for DRAGNET, which follows immediately over most of these

stations.

SOUND: APPLAUSE, WHICH FADES OUT WITH--

MUSIC: FADES OUT

JIM: Robert Young again, reminding you to stay tuned for DRAGNET on NBC.

MUSIC: NBC CHIMES