

Phantom Energy

by Robert Swartwood

She called it phantom energy. She said it was costing us money every month. A few cents here and there, sure, but it all added up.

"Everything adds up," she said, walking around the apartment and unplugging random things. "Like this record player. How often do you actually use this thing?"

She yanked the cord.

"And this toaster. I can't even remember the last time we made toast."

She yanked another cord.

I didn't say anything. I thought it was only a phase. I let her have her way.

Then I came home one day after work and sat down and pressed the power button on the television remote.

The television didn't come on.

I got up and walked to the TV and found that it had been unplugged. So had the DVD player. So had the stereo system.

I went room to room. Everything had been unplugged.

I found her upstairs in the bedroom. She lay fully clothed on top of the bed. Her head shifted slightly when I opened the door.

"Shh," she whispered. "Can you hear that?"

"Hear what?"

"Just listen."

I listened.

