

With Fiends Like That...

By now you are no longer surprised when one of your socks goes missing. Or when your phone runs out of charge at precisely the wrong moment. You realize that there are evil forces at work misgoverning the affairs of humans. When I tell you that those do-it-yourselfers who suspect a loose wire in their instant pots, who take it upon themselves to open up the machines and indeed find loose wires, who put the wires in place, causing the pots to work again (to their immense satisfaction), and whose balloons are pricked the next day when they find the instant pots as broken as before, you expect this -- just another manifestation of evil creatures. What you may not know is that these fiends are collected within the same organization. Last night there was a meeting of all departmental heads. The chief fiend asked the supervisor in charge of socks whether he had met his monthly quota. The supervisor was pleased to report "10% more than last month!" The supervisor in charge of iPhones reported a 25% increase in battery crises. The chief fiend chortled in approval and shifted his gaze to the supervisor in charge of do-it-yourselfer misery. That supervisor stammered and turned beet red (OK, he was already beet red) and had to confess that there had been a 75% drop in do-it-yourself incidents. The chief fiend slammed his hand on the table, causing smoke to rise around the resulting indentation. "What do you think this is, the Salvation Army?" The supervisor backed away and said he would get to the bottom of the situation. The supervisor returned to his office to find his one underfiend, Marvin, preparing to set out on his night of work. Marvin was pudgy and wore glasses. You'd think he was an accountant, except for his red skin and tail. Perhaps even then. The supervisor turned invisible and followed Marvin from house to house. At the first house, he saw Marvin point a finger at an instant pot and heard a sizzling sound. Very good! The second house, the same thing. The third house, Marvin zapped a microwave, and there followed a string of houses with microwaves getting zapped by Marvin. Then it hit the supervisor "Wait a second! No one fixes microwaves! These are just random machines he's zapping!" The supervisor materialized and confronted Marvin "You idiot! What are you wasting your time? Didn't you get the message? If it ain't fixed, don't break it!"

