

—Country Philosopher—

The incredible hulk

When I hold in my breath I am simply one gorgeous human being. But something dreadful happens when I let the air out. My stomach plops from just below my chest and rests in a position just above my knees.

I hate my stomach. It resembles a 200-pound goiter and I find that the only females interested in 200-pound goiters are those in the medical profession. So last week I started on a diet and I would like to tell you about the most miserable ordeal I have ever suffered through:

First, I conditioned my mind. This is an absolute essential when going on a diet. An individual is aware that there will be a certain strain on the will power and that a great deal of restraint will be called for. It's really very simple. You just make appetizing foods unappealing to yourself. You repeat, over and over, "I hate strawberry shortcake."

I spent 2 days conditioning my mind and then I started on my diet. For breakfast I had one half of a grapefruit. Now one half of a grapefruit is one half too much. What a lousy, foul edible. And some moron had the audacity to call it a fruit.

Then I had a cup of black coffee. I

usually like my coffee with cream and 3 teaspoons of sugar. Black coffee is a devil's brew. It is obscene and should be banished from the world forever.

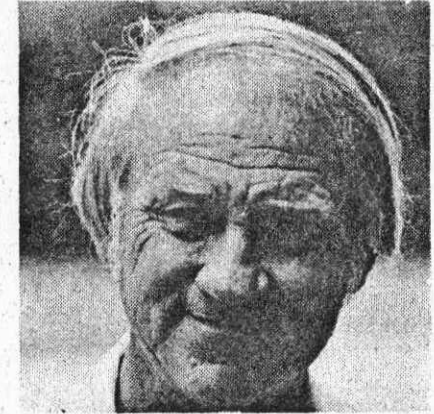
I got up from the breakfast table and I was starved to death. How would I ever make it to lunch? My 200-pound goiter started rumbling in protest. My knees felt weak and I could actually feel my blood becoming thinner.

At 11 o'clock in the morning I decided it would be a lovely time to have lunch. I sat down at the dining room table and looked at my plate. There was a dejected looking radish, a microscopic bit of lettuce, and a hard boiled egg. In 2 swift, rapid bites my radish and lettuce were gone. I was horrified to find how easily I had consumed two thirds of my lunch. Certainly this food had not alleviated my hunger. I was literally starving to death before my own eyes. I took that poor egg and crammed it in my mouth. The shell was a little too crunchy but I needed all the substance I could get. I looked down at my plate and realized my lunch had disappeared. Tumultuous roars arose from my stomach. My brain kept repeating, over and over, "HAVE SOME STRAWBERRY SHORT-

CAKE...GO AHEAD...NOBODY WILL SEE YOU." I thought momentarily of eating the plate but decided that starving to death was preferable to being strangled by a furious wife.

How in the hell could I possibly live until dinner? I started hallucinating. Huge banana splits floated before my eyes. Chocolate eclairs danced along the walls. I thought of storming into a supermarket and screaming, "THIS IS A HOLDUP." I would keep everyone at bay with a machine gun while I ate everything in the store. I would go up one aisle and eat every last candy bar. I would turn the corner and eat all the soap and toilet paper.

It was one o'clock. I was rushing things a trifle but I sat down to eat my dinner. What strange trick of fate was this? On my plate was an exact replica of my breakfast. One lousy, finky grapefruit and a cup of black poison. Somehow the coffee and grapefruit disappeared. Who could have imbibed them? Surely it couldn't have been me because I was lying on the floor dying swiftly from starvation. I began crying and feebly banging my head against the wall. If only somebody would come in and



feed me intravenously. By golly...how I would enjoy a big bottle of glucose.

Something twanged in my brain. I screamed, "TO HELL WITH THIS INHUMAN, DEBAUCHED, FIENDISH DIET." I raced across the room to the refrigerator and I ate everything I could get my hands on. The tomato disappeared. The lunch meat. I ate a loaf of bread, the chocolate pie, 16 cold biscuits, and the bloodworms we had been saving for our fishing trip. I ate a pound of butter, 6 heads of lettuce, and a dish of Alpo.

Well, I'm my old self again. And I was wondering if there is a female somewhere out in this big, big world who is turned on by 200-pound goiters? If there is, you better hurry and get your name in.

I thought we might have dinner together.