The editor, it seems, was "piqued with the Devil."

IF AT FIRST YOU DON'T SUCCEED, TO HELL WITH IT!

by Charles E. Fritch

Editor,
MAGAZINE OF FANTASY
Dear Sir,
Enclosed is a short story, PACT WITH THE DEVIL, for your consideration. A fact which may not surprise you is that it concerns a man who sells his soul to the devil. A fact which may surprise you is that, unlike the stories in your magazine, this one is based on personal experience.

Sincerely,
Peter Piper

MAGAZINE OF FANTASY INTEROFFICE MEMO:
Ed—
This is a kind of interesting twist on the old theme. Thought you'd like to look at it.

Frank

MAGAZINE OF FANTASY INTEROFFICE MEMO:
Frank—
You thought wrong. The notion that devil's food is actually made by devils in competition with angels who bake angel food cake hasn't to my knowledge been used. However, it's still a pact-with-the-devil story. You KNOW how I feel about pact-with-the-devil stories!

Ed

From MAGAZINE OF FANTASY:
Dear Mr. Piper,
Thanks for letting us see your latest story. Unfortunately, it does not meet our needs at the moment.

The Editors

Editor,
MAGAZINE OF FANTASY
Dear Sir,
Enclosed is a short story in which a packing plant worker inadvertently gets trapped in a seafood container. I call it PACKED WITH THE DEVILISH.

Sincerely,
Peter Piper

MAGAZINE OF FANTASY INTEROFFICE MEMO:
Ed—
Here's another Piper story. Do you think he's putting us on?

Frank
MAGAZINE OF FANTASY INTEROFFICE MEMO:
Frank—
I am not, not, NOT publishing any more pact-with-the-devil stories, not even if they're disguised. Send it back! 
Ed

From MAGAZINE OF FANTASY:
Dear Mr. Piper,
Thanks for letting us see the enclosed story. We felt this one was too far out for us.

The Editors

Editor,
MAGAZINE OF FANTASY
Dear Sir,
Here's one you might like. It's entitled SO ROUND, SO FIRM, SO FULLY PACKED (WITH THE DEVIL).

Sincerely,
Peter Piper

MAGAZINE OF FANTASY INTEROFFICE MEMO:
Ed—
Persistent, isn't he? What'll I tell him on this one?

Frank

MAGAZINE OF FANTASY INTEROFFICE MEMO:
Frank—
You might try telling him to go to hell.

Ed

From MAGAZINE OF FANTASY:
Dear Mr. Piper,
Sorry we can't use the enclosed story. The writing is readable, but once again the problem is the theme. Is there some reason you insisting on writing pact-with-the-devil stories?

The Editors

Editor,
MAGAZINE OF FANTASY
Dear Sir,
Funny you should ask. The answer is yes. I have tried to

explain it in the enclosed short story, PETER PIPER WAS PICKED IN THE PARK FOR A PACT WITH THE DEVIL. As you may suspect, it is autobiographical.

Sincerely,
Peter Piper

MAGAZINE OF FANTASY INTEROFFICE MEMO:
Ed—
I wasn't even going to show you this one. But then I got to thinking. I know it's crazy, and he's probably some kind of a nut... but suppose the devil is actually forcing him to write pact-with-the-devil stories and he has to have one published within a time limit or his soul is snatched off to Hades?

Frank

MAGAZINE OF FANTASY INTEROFFICE MEMO:
Frank—
I never told you this before, but I have a pact with the devil myself—not to buy any more pact-with-the-devil stories!

You're the last person I expected to be taken in by a ruse like this. Under the circumstances, my previous suggestion to you seems more valid than ever. Tell him to go to hell.

Ed

From MAGAZINE OF FANTASY:
Dear Mr. Piper,
I've enclosed an interoffice memo spelling out our senior editor's feelings about the theme you seem to have chosen for your life's work. Sorry.

The Editors

Editor,
MAGAZINE OF FANTASY
Dear Sir,
Your suggestion that I go to Hell is superfluous. My time is up, and I haven't sold any of the stories. I imagine I'll be seeing you there in person one of these days.

Till then,
Peter Piper
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MAGAZINE OF FANTASY INTEROFFICE MEMO:
Ed—
No story this time. Just the enclosed letter. I have an uncanny feeling we won't be hearing from him again.
Frank

MAGAZINE OF FANTASY INTEROFFICE MEMO:
Frank—
I hope you're right about that. Would you believe I was beginning to have nightmares about pact-with-the-devil stories? There was PARKED WITH THE DEVIL—about this cab driver whose passenger has horns and a forked tail. Then there was PARCED WITH THE DEVIL, about two thirsty men who meet in a bar, and one of them is guess who? And FUCK WITH THE DEVIL, in which a hockey player doesn't go to Hades until Hell freezes over. And so forth.
Anyway, I feel much relieved. Maybe we should tell more writers where to go!
Ed

To Lucifer Satan
EARTH STORIES MAGAZINE
Hades
Dear Sir,
Enclosed is a story which might be of interest to you for your magazine.

Sincerely,
Peter Piper

From EARTH STORIES MAGAZINE:
Dear Mr. Piper,
While we encourage the submission of stories from our newer tenants, we cannot use the enclosed. We have decided that unless they are sufficiently different, we are not going to run any more pact-with-the-editor stories.

Lucifer Satan

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