

GWEN is watching TV. One ankle is heavily bandaged.

STELLA

(Off.)

Mom? *(Pause.)* Mom!

(Enters.)

Oh, here you are. Hi, Mom. Why don't you ever lock your door? I've brought you some cookies. You're looking cosy. What have you been up to?

GWEN

Hello, Stella. What a nice surprise. I wasn't expecting you.

STELLA

(Notices bandage.) Oh, my God! What happened? What did you do to your foot?

GWEN

It's only—

STELLA

Is it broken? How did you do it?

(Picks up TV remote, mutes TV sound, and puts remote in her pocket.)

GWEN

I'm fine—just a minor mishap. Wasn't looking where I was going. Stumbled and cracked a little bone. Not to worry.

STELLA

Not worry! Of course I'm worried! What made you stumble? Have you seen the doctor?

GWEN

Stella, slow down. Of course I've seen the doctor. I'm all right—

STELLA

When did it happen? Why didn't you call me?

GWEN

Stella dear, I... am... fine! It just happened.

STELLA

But at your age such an injury can be serious!

GWEN

It's the kind of silly thing that can happen at any age. I'll be good as new in a couple of weeks.

STELLA

Mom—

GWEN

Now if you want to be helpful you can trot out to the kitchen and make us both a cup of coffee.

STELLA

Sure, Mom, coffee coming up.

GWEN

How are the children?

STELLA

But first, I'll just...

(Goes to window and calls.)

George! George—can you come in here?

(To Gwen.)

The kids are fine. But Laura's getting so involved with volunteer work; I'm afraid she'll... We were going to bring your great-grandson along, little Jason junior—

GWEN

I know Jason is my great-grandson—

STELLA

But I'm sure glad we didn't. The way you always romp around with him, he'd break your other leg too.

GWEN

I didn't break a leg!

GEORGE

(Enters breathlessly.)

Something wrong, Stell? You okay?

STELLA

Of course I'm okay. It's Mother. Look at her!

GEORGE

Oh, hi, Gwen—you looking well. What's up?

GWEN

Hello, George. I'm—

STELLA

Looking well! Look again, Poopsie—Mom's broken her foot! She's in agony!

GWEN

Now, Stella—

GEORGE

Gee, I'm sorry. I didn't—

STELLA

So, what did you “stumble” on?

GWEN

Well, I had only—

STELLA

I bet it was this stupid rug. I've told you that one day you'd trip or skid on the damn thing. Really, Mom, we've got to get the thing out of here; it's a major hazard.

GWEN

I like my rug!

STELLA

And then there's the bathroom. The old clawfoot tub is lovely, but it's a killer. We really should replace it with a nice sit-down shower.

GWEN

Really, I...

STELLA

This place is so cluttered. And it isn't just the rug! Look at the coffee table... it's far too low; just the kind of hazard to catch you on the shin and trip you up. *(Scooping up the scatter rug and holding it out to George.)* Here, get rid of this in the storage room.

GWEN

But I don't... Your father bought that rug in a bazaar in Bombay on our honeymoon—

STELLA

And take the coffee table.

(To GWEN.)

We'll find a taller one for you. And this...

(Indicating a floor lamp.)

It's so tippy; the least little push and over it'll go.

GEORGE

Hm, the power cord is a bit frayed.

STELLA

And lying there on the floor like that, ready to catch a foot...

GEORGE

I can fix that.

STELLA

That stack of magazines... let's get them tidied up; they could so easily topple over or skid around.

GEORGE
Where do I start?

GWEN
Whatever happened to the bit about somebody's home being her castle, huh?

GEORGE
(Indicating GWEN's leg.)
Well, you've already got the draw bridge down.

GWEN
I really prefer to rearrange my furniture myself.

GEORGE
Aw, c'mon, Gwen. Stella is right.

GWEN
Of course she is... as always.

GEORGE
We just want to... We worry about you.
(Beat.)
What are you sewing?

GWEN
Just taking up the hem of this old skirt. If you must know, that's what made me trip.
(Pricks herself with needle.)
Ouch!

STELLA
There! Now that's enough of that. You know you can't see well enough to sew.
(Takes the skirt from GWEN.)
I'll finish this for you tonight. Actually, Mom, you'd be smart to wear pants instead.

GWEN
Well, I do... sometimes.

STELLA
They're so much safer to walk in. And then you'd only need socks; they're easier to put on than stockings.

GEORGE
(Struggling with magazines and dropping some.)
Damn!

STELLA
You don't have to grab all of them at once.

GEORGE

Look, if we're going to move all this stuff around, I'll call the others in; they're waiting in the car.

(Goes to window.)

Karl! Candice! I need some help here.

GWEN

But you can't just—

(Her cuckoo clock strikes, startling STELLA and GEORGE. The clock strikes 12.)

What's the matter—you think my cuckoo clock is dangerous too?

Enter KARL and CANDICE.

KARL

Hi, Mrs. Butler. What's going on? Moving out?

GWEN

Well, Stella seems to think—

STELLA

We're just getting rid of some old stuff so Mom won't get hurt again. See, she's already broken her foot.

CANDICE

Oh, Mrs. Butler. Is it sore? Does it hurt much?

GWEN

Can't feel a thing.

KARL

Yeah, same thing happened when I broke my arm—in two places. Hurt like hell. But once you get it in a cast it's okay; all it does is itch—usually where you can't get at it.

GWEN

Oh, when did that happen?

KARL

Last summer. I'd slipped on some rocks over in Pringle Park.

GEORGE

He wasn't paying attention. Was watching some heavy necking on a park bench.

KARL

They weren't necking—at least not heavy. I was just curious 'cause they both had grey hair.

STELLA

I hate to interrupt, but could we get this show on the road?