

Gloria 1

SUSAN. Yes, of course. *(Mike picks up his duffel and starts up the steps. Susan follows and puts out her hand. They shake over the railing.)*

MIKE. Tell Sam I'm very sorry I missed him.

SUSAN. I will.

MIKE. Oh, Carlino's phone number, in case Sam ...

SUSAN. Just put it next to the phone. *(Mike does so.)*

MIKE. It's off the hook.

SUSAN. ... Jesus! I left the fire department hanging on the line!

MIKE. Here. *(Hands it to her.)*

SUSAN. Thanks!

MIKE. I gotta —

SUSAN. Go, go! Thank you! *(As Mike exits, Susan hurries to the phone. Into phone:)* Hello?! ... Hello, are you still there? ... Oh! I am so sorry! ... No, I'm glad you stayed on the line, you're the fire department. ... No, no, the fire's out. Sorry. ... I'm sure, a friend came and put it out. *(We hear the street door open and close, then see Mike go off past the windows.)* ... No, some idiot left a wrapper in the ashtray and it caught fire ... *(The hall door opens slowly, silently. Then — Gloria enters. She wears glasses and is pretty in a dark, sullen kind of way. She stands at the top of the steps, watching Susan.)* ... Yeah, a kid. ... No, not mine! If she were, I'd strangle her. ... Thank you. ... Goodbye. *(Hangs up.)* Christ!

Start GLORIA. I'm not a kid. *(Susan starts, then she puts on her coolest, calmest, most sarcastic voice.)*

SUSAN. I'm sorry, Gloria, I didn't hear the buzzer, or I would've let you in.

GLORIA. Sam says I should let myself in, so you don't have to run up the stairs to open the door. He says you trip. I saw the soldier you had down here. Aren't you afraid Sam'll be jealous?

SUSAN. Why, was he handsome?

GLORIA. For a fat, bald guy. *(Gloria goes straight to the icebox, opens it, grabs a Coke, and walks away, leaving it open.)*

SUSAN. Did you open the icebox?

GLORIA. Yes.

SUSAN. Is the door closed? *(Gloria gets the opener from the sink, pops open the bottle, and drinks it down.)*

GLORIA. Uh-huh.

SUSAN. I didn't hear it shut.

GLORIA. Maybe it didn't, then.

SUSAN. Will you check?

GLORIA. Okay.

SUSAN. Well?

GLORIA. You're right. It didn't shut.

SUSAN. Will you shut it, please?

GLORIA. It's right next to you.

SUSAN. I'd appreciate it if you'd shut it *for* me.

GLORIA. Sam says I'm not supposed to do things you can do yourself.

SUSAN. You opened it, you shut it. (*Gloria goes to the icebox and slams it shut.*) Why, thanks. I'd ask why you didn't notice it was open the first time, but maybe you're not used to your glasses yet.

GLORIA. (*Turns purple.*) I don't wear glasses.

SUSAN. Just like you don't leave gum wrappers in the ashtray?

GLORIA. What?

SUSAN. Just like you don't smoke cigarettes down here when we're not home? The place stank to high heaven last night when we came back.

GLORIA. I don't know what you're talking about.

SUSAN. Look in the sink, Gloria. Or do you have to get those glasses adjusted first?

GLORIA. I told you I don't wear glasses!

SUSAN. Sam said you did.

GLORIA. Probably so you wouldn't get jealous.

SUSAN. Of *you*?

GLORIA. (*Whisks off her glasses and sticks her face close to Susan.*) Feel!

SUSAN. (*Grabs the sides of Gloria's nose.*) What made the two dents on the sides of your nose, pigeons?

GLORIA. I was wearing sunglasses.

SUSAN. In the rain? (*Gloria explodes, sweeping her arm across the kitchen counter and knocking the ashtray to the floor.*) Pick that up. (*Gloria is about to throw down the Coke bottle next, but at the last moment she opens a drawer and throws its contents — forks, knives, spoons, etc. — onto the floor instead.*)

GLORIA. You want me to tell Sam about your boyfriend? (*Grabs up the package Mike left behind.*) "Lieutenant Michael Talman, War Department, Washington, D.C." He left a package on the safe. I'm sure he'll be back, though, right?

SUSAN. Pick up those things you threw on the floor.

GLORIA. Pick them up yourself. (*Susan keeps her cool. She gets down onto the floor. She feels around, gathering everything she can find into one pile. Gloria stands at the top of the steps and watches.*)

SUSAN. You should go now, Gloria. I don't need you today. In fact, I never want to ... I don't want you to come down here again. *(Beat. Gloria sees Susan miss things by inches.)*

GLORIA. You're missing —

SUSAN. Just go upstairs to your apartment.

GLORIA. But you keep missing the —

SUSAN. Go home, Gloria!

GLORIA. ... I can't. My's mother's got someone with her. *(Susan stops, realizing what Gloria means.)*

SUSAN. Well, if you're gonna help, help. *(Gloria comes down the steps and picks up a large knife that Susan has missed twice and puts it into Susan's hand.)*

GLORIA. Watch it, it's sharp.

SUSAN. Thanks. ~~*(Gloria picks up the rest of the cutlery and puts it back into the drawer.)*~~ Is anything broken? **Stop**

GLORIA. I never throw things that can break.

SUSAN. Where'd you learn that trick?

GLORIA. My father. Every time he and my mom'd fight, he only threw things that wouldn't get busted: coffee cans, buckets, the phone book. My mother finally got wise and said, "Can't you break just *one* thing?" So he broke her nose. *(Sound: Door buzzer.)* Do you want me to get the door? *(Sound: Door buzzer.)*

SUSAN. *(Deadpan.)* Well, I can't do it, I might trip. *(Gloria runs up the steps. Sound: Doorbell rings again.)*

GLORIA. Coming! *(Gloria opens the door, revealing — Roat. He seems to have become a man of about seventy, eccentric in appearance, even a little crazy. He wears a hat over white, tousled hair. His voice is old and husky.)*

ROAT. Is Sam Hunt at home?

GLORIA. Uhm ... *(Roat has now pushed past Gloria.)*

ROAT. Where is Mrs. Roat?

SUSAN. I beg your pardon?

ROAT. Mrs. Harry Roat, where is she? *(Roat is now coming down the steps, quickly.)*

SUSAN. There's no Mrs. Roat here. You must have the wrong address.

ROAT. No, this is the address.

SUSAN. Wait, what are you / doing? Gloria?

ROAT. This I know for certain is the right address. Out of my way, please. *(Roat pushes past her and exits into the bedroom. From offstage.)*

I know what I'm looking for!