

*At the same time, TOM holds out his hand for a shake and BRIDGET opens her arms for a hug. Beat. They switch, BRIDGET going for a handshake and TOM for a hug. Beat. TOM pats BRIDGET's arm, awkwardly. He exits.)*

Start



**BRIDGET.** What on earth was wrong with Tom going into the closet?

**SYLVIA.** It's like I said! I didn't want him to strain himself. Oh, come on now, Cornflake. I wasn't embarrassing you in front of anybody - Vera probably can't even hear me.

**VERA.** I can, actually. I just wish I couldn't.

**BRIDGET.** It was just weird, that's all.

**SYLVIA.** Nonsense - I didn't want him to over-exhert himself! I take care of all the men in my life in special ways.

**BRIDGET.** Men?

**SYLVIA.** Yes. There's sweet little Thomas, of course. And old Mr. Tompkins, the man at the desk downstairs. I give him treats now and then, as long as he's behaving.

**BRIDGET.** You - what?

**VERA.** There are many things in that sentence you don't want to know about.

**SYLVIA.** And of course there's Mr. Schmidt.

**BRIDGET.** Who's that?

**SYLVIA.** Our landlord.

**BRIDGET.** I thought Mr. Haven was the landlord -

**SYLVIA.** Oh no, dear, not anymore. His son-in-law took over six or seven years ago. Mr. Schmidt.

**VERA.** That penny-pincher! He charges the highest rates this side of the Duck Pond - except for Sylvie, of course.

**SYLVIA.** I got in on the ground floor - rent control

keeps me paying a fraction of what everyone else has to. Mr. Haven never minded, but it really gets under Schmidt's skin.

**BRIDGET.** So how do you take care of him?

**SYLVIA.** I act like Vera. The more senile he thinks I am, the happier he gets. The frailer I act, the closer he thinks I'll be to that rent-free apartment in the sky. Or assisted living. I don't think he has a preference.

**VERA.** Nothing like the prospect of a good funeral to get people light-hearted again!

(*The intercom buzzes. SYLVIA crosses to it.*)

**SYLVIA.** Yes?

**VOICE.** Mrs. Charles? Your dry cleaning was just dropped off. Do you want one of the boys to run it up?

**SYLVIA.** My dry cleaning?

**VOICE.** The frilly stuff you insisted -

**SYLVIA.** (*Cutting him off. Loudly.*) Oh yes! Of course. Well - do you think you could -

**BRIDGET.** Nana, everything okay?

**SYLVIA.** Yes dear! Why wouldn't it be?

**BRIDGET.** You look worried -

**VERA.** She's probably constipated.

**SYLVIA.** Do you think you could send it up later?

**VOICE.** Okay, Mrs. Charles -

**BRIDGET.** Nana, if you don't want them to send it up, I can go get it - (*BRIDGET starts towards the front door.*)

**SYLVIA.** NO! No, dear. No. You've had a long day. You needn't run downstairs and get anything. (*to the intercom*) Yes, are you still there?

**VOICE.** It would seem so.

**SYLVIA.** I'll be right down to get it!

**BRIDGET.** Nana, I could -

**SYLVIA.** (still at the intercom) No!

**VOICE.** No you won't be down?

**SYLVIA.** No! No, yes I will. Be down. But wait for me.

Only me! Over and out!

VOICE. 10-4, good buddy.

**BRIDGET.** Nana, are you sure you're okay?

VIA: I am absolutely fine - but yo

Why don't you go and lie down?

**BRIDGET.** I'm wide-awake, Nana.  
**SYLVIA.** Nonsense! You look tired. Doesn't she look

tired, Vera?

VERA. (*didn't hear the question*) Yes, I am tired, actually.  
SYLVIA. Vera, you help Bridget make up her bed and get settled in while I pop downstairs! Oh, and Bridget, see if you can find the hearing aid batteries for Vera. I keep a spare set here. (*She runs out of the apartment, slamming the door behind her.*)

**VERA.** (*didn't hear*) What? This damn thing keeps shorting out on me -

**BRIDGET.** C'mon Vera, do you know where your batteries are?

VERA. No idea! Hey kid, you want a drink?

**BRIDGET.** It's not even noon, Vera.

VERA. Good point. How about a Bloody Mary? (*She exits into the kitchen with her walker.*)

**BRIDGET.** I have a feeling this is going to be an interesting summer... Okay. Well, if I were hearing aid batteries, where would I be?

**(BRIDGET** begins searching the living room for likely places for batteries. We hear **VERA** rattling around the kitchen. **BRIDGET** checks a small chest of drawers, the bookshelf and a few knick-knacks around the room before moving to the fireplace.)

**VERA.** (*off*) CELERY?

**BRIDGET.** I'm sorry?

**VERA.** What?

**BRIDGET.** What did you say, Vera?

**VERA.** (*poking her head out of the kitchen door*) DO YOU WANT CELERY?

**BRIDGET.** FOR WHAT?

**VERA.** For what? Honestly! You don't deserve celery in your Bloody Mary! (*She's back in the kitchen.*)

(**BRIDGET** faces the fireplace. There are several small decorative boxes on the mantel and she opens each one looking inside for a hearing aid battery.

*She opens the largest box on the upstage side of the mantle. As soon as the box is open, the faux-grate on the fireplace slides to the side.*

*Like a tongue, a rack of geriatric walking shoes made to look like frilly, colorful bedroom slippers rolls forward out of the fireplace.*

**BRIDGET** does not notice, because at the same moment, there is a loud CRASH! in the kitchen.)

**BRIDGET.** (*turning towards the kitchen door*) **VERA?** Are you okay?!

End



(**BRIDGET** absentmindedly shuts the box lid, still facing the kitchen, alarmed.

*The shoe display rolls back into the fireplace.*

*The faux-grate slides back into place.*

**BRIDGET** pauses. Faces the audience. Beat. She looks at where the shoe display had been moments before. She looks at the audience.

CRASH! **VERA** rams her walker into the kitchen door.)

**VERA.** (*Enters with a lemonade pitcher perched on her walker and three large Santa mugs.*) Sylvie might have to get a few more glasses. I seem to have dropped a lot of them. Drink?

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