

VERA, having lured **SYLVIA** to her side of the room, tilts the pegboard on the wall. The bookshelf swings open before **SYLVIA** can get to it.

SYLVIA lets out a cry of despair just as **BRIDGET** manages to hang the picture and turn around. She sees the lingerie inside the bookshelf and presses herself against the wall.)

BRIDGET. WHOA! Nana? What's that?

SYLVIA. (wildly) That's mine!

BRIDGET. That's yours?

SYLVIA. Well, yes. Kind of.

BRIDGET. (stumbling off her chair) What do you mean that's yours? Nana, that is a lot of –

SYLVIA. Oh, don't ask questions, Bridget! An old woman is entitled to her little oddities.

VERA. Oddities, schmoddities. Having ten cats is odd; this is suspicious! (enjoying the idea) Did you steal this off the back of a truck?

SYLVIA. Vera! How could you accuse me of doing something like that!

VERA. (still inspecting the coat rack peg) I always wondered why you never let anyone hang their jackets up themselves!

BRIDGET. You never let us hang anything up...anywhere.

(Beat. **BRIDGET** and **VERA** look at the closet. **SYLVIA** looks nervous. As one, all three start towards the door. **BRIDGET** gets there first and opens it. Nothing happens.)

Is there something in the closet, Nana?

SYLVIA. Yes, it's your Christmas present. Stop snooping.

VERA. How can you see anything without turning on the light?

(VERA reaches up and yanks the light cord.

The fake panel painted to look like a closet slides to the side, out of sight behind the wall.

On a platform, the hidden interior of the closet rolls forward like a mechanized tongue, the lingerie spinning slowly on its circular rack.)

SYLVIA. Now you've gone and ruined everything.

BRIDGET. Nana, what is all this? Is it some sort of... fetish?

SYLVIA. No!

VERA. Are you running a brothel?

SYLVIA. Listen, just because I happen to have a *few* lingerie articles –

BRIDGET. A *few*? Nana, you could clothe all of the Rockettes for a slumber party and still have outfits to spare!

SYLVIA. I am not running a brothel, and I'm not clothing the Rockettes –

BRIDGET. So what exactly are you doing?

SYLVIA. *(resentfully)* Well, I wasn't going to tell you, but clearly you two busybodies have given me no choice –

VERA. Quit stalling and get to the juicy details – Do you have all of these naughty nighties for a raucous love affair you haven't told me about? I know! You're having a fling with that sculpted piece of man-meat on the force, aren't you?

BRIDGET. Let's leave Tom out of this for a minute, okay?

SYLVIA. I made all of these.

BRIDGET. Come again?

SYLVIA. I make lingerie. And then I sell it.

BRIDGET. Sell it? What do you mean by "sell it"?

SYLVIA. Oh, Bridget. You know - people come into the apartment and give me money in exchange for the lingerie. The company is actually getting quite popular -

BRIDGET. Company?

SYLVIA. Yes! "Saucy Slips, Etc."

VERA. Say that again?

SYLVIA. *(She is deaf.)* Saucy Slips, Etc.

BRIDGET. Are you kidding me? Saucy...Saucy Slips?

SYLVIA. Etc. Lingerie designed specifically with the senior citizen in mind!

BRIDGET. *(exasperated)* Why didn't you just call it Nana's Naughty Knickers?

VERA. No, no, don't change the name. Saucy Slips, Etc. has a good ring to it!

SYLVIA. *(flattered)* Thank you! I actually, I had flyers made up -

BRIDGET. For what?

SYLVIA. To hand out to people, of course. Last night was Bingo night at the Presbyterian Church down the block. I attended the festivities handed out the flyers. To my target audience! Here, I'll show you - *(SYLVIA disappears into her bedroom.)*

BRIDGET. *(catatonic)* I need to sit down. *(BRIDGET sinks onto the couch.)*

(SYLVIA re-enters with a box of flyers, plops it down next to BRIDGET and hands a stack to her and VERA.)

SYLVIA. Ta-da!

BRIDGET. *(reading out loud)* "Saucy Slips, Etc.: Designing lingerie that'll fire men up for a price that won't burn a hole in your wallet..."?

VERA. I don't have my damned glasses on, what's this say?

SYLVIA. (*Looks at her paper. Happily.*) No sales tax charged.

BRIDGET. You're not charging retail sales tax?

SYLVIA. No. New York sales tax is much too steep, and since I'm not giving any of the money to the government, it wouldn't be right to tax my clients.

BRIDGET. Nana, I'm almost afraid to ask you this. Do you have a license to sell things on private property?

SYLVIA. (*laughing*) Oh apple pie, you're adorable. Of course I don't!

VERA. What'd she say? I think my hearing aid just died on me –

BRIDGET. Nana!

SYLVIA. That's why Mr. Schmidt, our landlord, can't find out about any of this. He's dying for an excuse to evict me.

BRIDGET. Nana...what you're doing is illegal. You're breaking the law.

SYLVIA. Well I don't see how anyone could find out about it.

BRIDGET. You just advertised publicly at a senior citizens' Bingo game!

SYLVIA. All of my clients know perfectly well not to breathe a word to anyone. And since I never file the extra income in my taxes, I really don't –

BRIDGET. What? (*She stands up, spilling the flyers that were on her lap.*)

VERA. I actually *didn't* catch that, dear. (*fiddles with hearing aid*)

BRIDGET. Now you're breaking *several* laws. Nana, you can't do this.

SYLVIA. You see? This is why I didn't want to tell you! I knew you wouldn't understand.

VERA. Forget her – why the heck didn't you tell me Sylvie?

SYLVIA. I did, Vera. I tried to tell you. Several times. I don't think you heard me, though –

VERA. Huh? You what?

SYLVIA. I did tell you. I told when I first opened the business: I said "Vera, I'm going make lingerie for my living."

VERA. Oh! I thought you said you would make lasagna for Thanksgiving. When I never got any lasagna, well, I was disappointed. Now it all makes sense.

BRIDGET. (*is getting a headache*) How long did you say you've been...doing this?

SYLVIA. Going on six years now.

VERA. No lasagna for six years. I kept waiting!

End

SYLVIA. After your grandfather died I was – well, I was bored, to be perfectly honest. So I thought – "Hey, Sylvia! You know what you should do? You should get a hobby." And then I realized that I hate knitting, and I can't bake, and nothing really seemed very interesting to me – and then I thought of –

VERA. Lingerie?

SYLVIA. Exactly!

VERA. Bras on the brain –

SYLVIA. I was always happiest when I had a job, so I thought – why not make my own business? It was rocky at first, but after a few years I started to get a steady clientele, starting with one particularly good customer who has been with me since day one.

BRIDGET. Who?

VERA. (*pouting*) Well it sure as hell wasn't me. (*reflecting*) And all this time I thought those old broads you always had coming and going were part of some elaborate nude painting you were doing!