

GRACE AND GLORIE

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they tear away at the farm. The sound gradually fades into a country morning,)

(The lights reveal GRACE propped up in bed. She's knitting. We hear the squawking of chickens outside, the crash of wood falling.)

GLORIA. *(Off stage)* OW! DAMNIT!

GRACE. What's the matter?

GLORIA. *(Heavy sigh)* JUST A FINGERNAIL.
(Chickens SQUAWK) SHOO! GO AWAY! I SAID, SHOO!
GRACE, THERE ARE CHICKENS ALL OVER THE PORCH!

GRACE. I usually feed 'em this time o' mornin'.
(GLORIA enters with a load of cook stove wood. She's wearing an attractive dress under one of GRACE's old aprons) Still can't figure what you're doin' here so early. Ain't even eight o'clock.

START

→ GLORIA. I just dropped by to fix your breakfast.

GRACE. Oh sure, twenty miles up that mountain and you just stopped by.

GLORIA. *(Dumping the wood in a box near the stove)* What I mean is, I can't stay long. There's a reception later this morning for my husband. He's just been admitted to the Virginia bar and I'm expected to be there to help him celebrate. *(Dusting off her clothes)* Couldn't Roy have brought in some wood? Or does he charge you extra for that?

GRACE. You don't need to build a fire, I'm really not all that hungry.

GLORIA. I'm building a fire because it's freezing in here! *(Stuffing paper into the stove)* And you said you might eat an egg. I'm going to boil you an egg. Did you at least give Roy my list?

GRACE AND GLORIE

GRACE. Last night. He's none too happy 'bout havin' to drive into town this afternoon for a bed pan.

GLORIA. He should have had it here when you got home. Okay, the newspaper's in the stove.

GRACE. Now put in a few o' those kindlin' sticks. Three or four, that's all you need to start.

GLORIA. (*Looking at the stove*) You sure you don't have something we can just – plug in?

GRACE. Don't like my breakfast cooked over 'lectricity. Tastes ... bleh.

GLORIA. (*Stuffing in the wood*) Good god, You're having a soft boiled egg. What difference does it make how you boil the water?

GRACE. Glorie, could I ask a favor? You seem to have acquired the unpleasant habit of usin' the Lord's name in vain.

GLORIA. What? When did I – You mean "good god?"

GRACE. It's just as easy to say "good heavens," or "good gravy."

GLORIA. (*Finding the matches*) Good gravy. Yes, of course.

GRACE. Thank you. Now why don't you light the stove?

GLORIA. And my name is "Gloria."

GRACE. Oh yes.

GLORIA. (*Putting match to paper*) You sure this thing is safe?

GRACE. That's right. Now close the door.

(*GLORIA goes to the cottage door and closes it. GRACE indicates the door on the stove.*)

GLORIA. I knew that. *(She goes to the stove, closes the door)* Look at my hands. They are black. *(She turns to the hand pump)* How does this thing work?

GRACE. Got a handle. Got a spout. How do you think it works?

GLORIA. *(Taking off her wristwatch and pumping)* Humor me, Grace. There's only so much "country" a person like me can absorb in one day.

STOP →

(The stove has started to smoke. GRACE sees it. GLORIA is preoccupied with the pump.)

GRACE. Honey?

GLORIA. Why didn't your husband put a sink in the bathroom?

GRACE. We have a sink in the kitchen. Mr. Stiles didn't believe in excess. Honey, the stove.

GLORIA. When we remodeled our master bathroom I insisted on two sinks. Two sinks and a Jacuzzi!

GRACE. That's wonderful. About the stove –

GLORIA. What about the ...

(She turns.)

GRACE. Now don't get excited.

GLORIA. *(Calmly, firmly in control)* I am not excited. I thought you said that thing was safe.

GRACE. It is, but I –

GLORIA. *(Starting for the phone)* And of course we don't have a phone to call for help.

(The room is quickly filling with smoke.)