

GRACE AND GLORIE

GRACE. These young people today and their automobiles. Why do they insist on driving so fast?

GLORIA. Danny was only twelve years old. He wasn't driving, I was. Would you like salt on your egg?

GRACE. *(After a moment)* Yes. Lots of salt. And lots of butter on the toast.

GLORIA. *(Salting the egg)* Too much salt and butter, Grace. They say it'll take ten years off your ... *(Realizing what she's saying, she shakes on more salt.)*

GRACE. Ter'ble thing to lose a child. My Carroll died when he was a baby. Went in to check on him one morning and he wasn't breathin'. Doctor come. Said these things just happen. Few years later Duane was out huntin' with his Daddy. Tripped over some barbed wire buried under the snow? Gun went off. He was ten years old. Got so I hated to let the little ones out o' my sight. Thought I was goin' to lose 'em all. Guess I did, though, didn't I? Collin in the war. Ronnie in a minin' accident near Cumberland. Only one to really grow up was Roger Lee. Always said, Roger Lee was born hangin' on and he hung on to life longer'n all the rest of 'em. Guess my only comfort is I'll be seein' 'em all real soon now.

START → GLORIA. *(Carrying a tray to the bed)* Here we are. One stiff, soft boiled egg, and one piece of black toast drenched in butter.

GRACE. Looks pretty as a picture.

GLORIA. Do you really believe that? About seein' your children in another life?

GRACE. Course I do, don't you?

GLORIA. I ... No.

GRACE. S'pose next you're goin' to say you don't

believe in God. You and Bernice Wallace. Why is the good Lord sendin' so many heathens 'cross my path?

GLORIA. Come on, Grace, eat your egg.

GRACE. Try as I might, I ... I'm just not hungry.

GLORIA. Not hungry! After I risked life and limb on that stove? Come on. You have to keep up your strength. *(A beat)* Okay, okay.

GRACE. I'll probably have an appetite later. Just put it on that shelf above the stove. It'll keep warm there.

GLORIA. Speaking of which, it is more comfortable in here. I think I'll heat some water for the dishes.

GRACE. The water's already hot.

GLORIA. You have a water heater? I didn't –

GRACE. There in the stove. Lift that lid on the right side. Use a pot-holder! You see? A wood stove not only cooks the food and warms the room. It also heats the water for the dishes. Without usin' one speck o' 'lectricity or one drop o' that A-rab oil.

GLORIA. I'll wash up these few things.

GRACE. Just leave 'em. You said you had a reception to go to.

GLORIA. *(Carrying an enameled dish pan to the stove)* I have a few minutes.

GRACE. And you're probably used to one of them dishwashin' machines.

GLORIA. Yes, but I think I can figure out how to wash a pot.

GRACE. Careful now. That water gets mighty hot.

GLORIA. I know it does.

GRACE. Use that ladle there.

GLORIA. Grace, I can do this, okay?

GRACE AND GLORIE

GRACE. 'Course you can. You are a college educated woman. *(Ladling the water into the pan)* 'Cept that pan's metal, honey! I wouldn't try holdin' it while you was –

(GLORIA screams and runs to the sink.)

GLORIA. SHIT! Shit-shit-shit-shit-shit-shit-shit-shit SHIT! *(She throws the pan into the sink. Stands there fanning the air with her burned hand)* I'm sorry, Grace but there are times when "good gravy" JUST DOESN'T CUT IT!

GRACE. Honey, would you please just leave!

STOP →

(We hear a deafening siren blast.)

GLORIA. That does it! *(She opens the door. The chickens cackle)* Shoo! Get out of my way. I SAID GET! *(There's a piercing rooster crow, a huge fluttering flare-up, GLORIA screams, runs back inside and slams the door)* THAT THING ATTACKED ME! ON IT'S WORST DAY, NEW YORK WAS NEVER LIKE THIS!

GRACE. Honey, I mean it. It was thoughtful of you to come here today but now I want you to get your things and go home!

GLORIA. I've upset you. I'm sorry. I'm all right now. Just let me clean up these few things.

GRACE. You really don't –

GLORIA. Where do you keep the soap?

GRACE. Under the sink. *(GLORIA reaches under the sink. She yanks her hand back and screams)* Honey! Honey, what is it? *(GLORIA runs to the chair, sits)* Did you hurt yourself? Did –