

START

GLORIA. (*Quietly, coming down stairs.*) Who was that man who was in here?

SUSY. That was Mr. Talman . . . he's an old friend of Sam's.

GLORIA. Oh, I see. Is the grocery list ready?

SUSY. Yes. It's by the phone. And five dollars . . . can you see it?

GLORIA. (*Picking them up.*) Yes, I have it. What else?

SUSY. Nothing else . . . (*Cheerfully.*) my job for today is to defrost the icebox . . . if you'd like to help me. (*Wasting no time, Gloria goes straight to the refrigerator, switches it to defrost and, leaving refrigerator door open, starts towards stairs.*) What did you do then?

GLORIA. Switched it to defrost, of course.

SUSY. No—that's not how we do it.

GLORIA. It is too. I've done it for Mother—hundreds of times.

SUSY. Not with this one. If you switch this one to defrost the milk freezes solid and all the jars crack open. We have to do it Sam's way. We just pull out the cord at the back and take everything out and put two pans of boiling water into the freezer.

GLORIA. (*Overlapping.*) Okay, do it Sam's way then. I'll go to the A & P . . . (*As Gloria reaches stairs.*)

SUSY. Did you close the door . . . of the icebox? (*Gloria glances from the open refrigerator to Susy and back.*)

GLORIA. Yes.

SUSY. I didn't hear it shut.

GLORIA. Okay, then, it's open.

SUSY. (*Calmly.*) Then will you shut it, please.

GLORIA. Can't you shut it yourself? It's right by you. (*Susy pretends to be busy at sink—hums to herself.*)

SUSY. That's the girl . . . thanks.

GLORIA. For what?

SUSY. (*Surprised.*) Oh! I thought you closed it!

GLORIA. Well I didn't.

SUSY. (*Letting go.*) Now look here, Four-Eyes! I thought I'd made this clear. When I open the icebox I close it and when you open . . . (*At the name "Four-Eyes," Gloria goes into a controlled rage. She knocks an ashtray off side table and then stands facing Susy, waiting for a fight. Susy, quietly:*) Did you drop that by mistake?

GLORIA. No.

SUSY. Then pick it up . . . now! (*Gloria goes to table, picks up jar, but seeing it is breakable puts it back and throws knives and spoons, etc. onto floor instead.*)

GLORIA. (*Through her teeth.*) Don't you ever call me that again. (*Loudly.*) AND I DO NOT STEAL?

SUSY. Steal? Who said anything about stealing?

GLORIA. (*Loudly.*) You did! I know Sam wouldn't say a thing like that. You told Mother I'd stolen a doll of yours. What would I want with a silly doll?

SUSY. I never said anything of the kind. And whatever you threw down then—pick it up! (*Shouting.*) At once! (*Gloria now goes right round the sink and closets, systematically dropping everything she can see [which will not break or damage] onto the floor. As she does this, she shouts angrily.*)

GLORIA. And don't you shout at me! . . . I—don't—like—being—shouted—at! Understand? (*Susy puts her hands to her ears and shouts.*)

SUSY. You stop that—whatever you're doing—stop it! You little . . . sawed-off shuttlecock! (*Gloria stops dropping things and stares at Susy, a coffee pot still in her hands.*)

GLORIA. (*Quietly.*) What did you say?

SUSY. (*Quietly, ashamed of herself.*) I'm sorry, Gloria, I—shouldn't have said that. (*Gloria lays down coffee pot.*)

GLORIA. What does it mean?

SUSY. Nothing. It just popped out—see what happens when you push someone too far? . . . (*Gloria moves towards Susy.*)

GLORIA. I know some dirty words too, you know . . .

SUSY. . . . And I wouldn't have called you Four-Eyes either if . . .

GLORIA. So why did you?

SUSY. Doesn't Sam call you that?

GLORIA. Sam likes me. He can call me what he likes.

SUSY. Oh, I see, thanks. I'll tell him.

GLORIA. What will you tell him? (*No reply, then slowly.*) If you tell Sam anything about this—I'll tell him!

SUSY. What?

GLORIA. (*Slowly.*) About that man—who was here just now!—I heard!

SUSY. What do you mean—I heard? (*Gloria notices Mike's package on the safe. She picks it up and reads.*)

GLORIA. From M. Tal-man . . . Ari-zona! . . . Well!

END