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VELASCO. (*Hobbling up step and moving to couch.*) I'm sorry but I need some aspirins desperately. (**VELASCO** catches sight of **MOTHER** who is furtively trying to escape up the stairs to the bedroom.) Hello, Ethel.

MOTHER. (*Caught, stops and tries to cover her embarrassment.*) Oh, hello, Victor... Mr. Victor... Mr. Velasco.

VELASCO. (*To CORIE.*) Did you hear what happened to us last night? (*To MOTHER.*) Did you tell her what happened to us last night?

MOTHER. (*Horried.*) Why...? What happened to us last night? (*Composes herself.*) Oh, you mean what happened to us last night. (*With great nonchalance, moving down the stairs.*) Yes... Yes... I told her.

VELASCO. (*At couch.*) Did you know my big toe is broken?

MOTHER. (*Smiles.*) Yes... (*Catches herself.*) I mean no... Isn't that terrible?

VELASCO. I'll have to wear a slipper for the next month... Only I can't find my slippers... (*Sees them on MOTHER's feet.*) Oh, there they are...

MOTHER. (*Looks down at her feet, as if surprised.*) Oh, yes... There's your slippers.

VELASCO. (*Sitting on sofa and putting foot up on coffee table.*) It took me forty minutes to walk up the stairs... I'll have to hire someone to pull me up the ladder. (*To CORIE.*) Corie, could I please have about three hundred aspirins?

(**CORIE** crosses to stairs.)

MOTHER. (*Appealing to CORIE.*) A broken toe... Isn't that awful!

(**CORIE** ignores her and goes into bathroom.)

VELASCO. That's not the worst of it. I just had a complete examination. Guess what else I have?

MOTHER. What?

VELASCO. An ulcer! From all the rich food... I have to take little pink pills like you.

MOTHER. Oh, dear...

VELASCO. You know something, Ethel... I don't think I'm as young as I think I am.

MOTHER. Why do you say that?

VELASCO. Isn't it obvious? Last night I couldn't carry you up the stairs. I can't eat rich foods any more... (*Very confidentially.*) and I dye my hair.

MOTHER. (*Moves to couch.*) Oh... Well, it looks very nice.

VELASCO. Thank you... So are you...

MOTHER. (*Sitting next to VELASCO.*) Oh... Thank you.

VELASCO. I mean it, Ethel. You're a very unusual woman.

MOTHER. Unusual...? In what way?

VELASCO. (*Reflectively.*) It's funny, but I can hardly feel my big toe at all now.

MOTHER. (*Insistent.*) Unusual in what way?

VELASCO. Well, I took a look at you last night... I took a long, close look at you... Do you know what you are, Ethel?

MOTHER. (*Ready for the compliment.*) What?

VELASCO. A good sport.

MOTHER. Oh... A good sport.

VELASCO. To have gone through all you did last night. The trip to Staten Island, the strange food, the drinks, being carried up to my apartment like that. And you didn't say one word about it.

MOTHER. Well, I didn't have much chance to ...I did a lot of fainting.

VELASCO. Yes... As a matter of fact, we both did... If you remember... *(Remembering, he begins to laugh.)*

MOTHER. Yes... *(She joins in. It is a warm, hearty laugh shared by two friends. After the laugh gradually dies out, there is a moment of awkward silence and then with an attempt at renewed gaiety, MOTHER says:)* Mr. Velasco... Where are my clothes?

VELASCO. Your clothes...? Oh, yes... *(Takes piece of paper out of pocket.)* Here. *(Gives it to her.)*

MOTHER. I'm sure I wore more than that.

VELASCO. It's a cleaning ticket They're sending them up at six o'clock.

MOTHER. *(Taking ticket.)* Oh, they're at the cleaners... *(After a moment's hesitation.)* When did I take them off?

VELASCO. You didn't... You were drenched and out cold. Gonzales took them off.

MOTHER. *(Shocked.)* Mr. Gonzales??

VELASCO. Not Mister! ...*Doctor* Gonzales!

MOTHER. *(Relieved.)* Doctor... Oh, *Doctor* Gonzales... Well, I suppose that's all right. How convenient to have an M.D. in the building.

VELASCO. *(Laughing.)* He's not an M.D. He's a Doctor of Philosophy.

MOTHER. *(Joins in laughter with great abandon.)* Oh, no...

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pirins.

VELASCO. Thank you, but I'm feeling better now.

MOTHER. *I'll* take them. *(Takes aspirin and sip of water.)*

VELASCO. *(Gets up and hobbles to door.)* I have to go. I'm supposed to soak my foot every hour...

MOTHER. Oh, dear... Is there anything I can do?

VELASCO. *(Turns back.)* Yes... Yes, there is... Would you like to have dinner with me tonight?

MOTHER. *(Surprised.)* Me?

VELASCO. *(Nods.)* If you don't mind eating plain food.

MOTHER. I love *plain* food.

VELASCO. Good... I'll call the New York Hospital for a reservation... *(Opens door.)* Pick me up in a few minutes... We'll have a glass of buttermilk before we go. *(Exits.)*

MOTHER. *(After a moment, turns to CORIE on stairs and giggles. Takes grapes from coffee table.)* You know what...? I'll bet I'm the first woman ever asked to dinner wearing a size 48 bathrobe.

CORIE. *(Lost in her own problem.)* Mother, can I talk to you for a minute?

MOTHER. *(Puts down bunch of grapes, gets up and moves right.)* I just realized. I slept without a board... For the first time in years I slept without a board.

CORIE. Mother, will you listen—?

MOTHER. *(Turns to CORIE.)* You don't suppose Uzu is a Greek miracle drug, do you? *(Flips grape back and forth and pops it into her mouth like knichi.)*

CORIE. Mother, before you go, there's something we've got to talk about.

MOTHER. *(Moving to CORIE.)* Oh, Corie, how sweet... You're worried about me.

CORIE. I am *not* worried about you.

MOTHER. *(Looks in mirror.)* Oh, dear. My hair. What am I going to do with my hair?

CORIE. I don't *care* what you do with your hair.