

Cookie Ladies

Bea Kowalski	a woman in her sixties
Mattie Morelli	Bea's friend
Gabriel Morelli	Mattie's grandson

SCENE TWO

Narrator: In Scene Two it's Saturday evening. Bea and Mattie are playing cribbage and eating pie at the kitchen table. Gabriel is sitting in a rocking chair stage left watching TV on a portable television set.

Mattie: Fifteen two, fifteen four and a pair is six. Ha, I'm out. Skunked you.....

Bea: You didn't skunk me. I made it around the corner.

Mattie: Okay. But I beat you. You owe me a quarter.

Bea: (She pays Mattie the quarter.) This is the last time I ask you to dinner. You eat my food and I end up paying you. You hear that Gabriel? Your Grandma beat me again.

Gabriel: Maybe you should go to Vegas, Grandma. You'd make a real killing at the cribbage table.

Mattie: Do they play cribbage in Vegas?

Gabriel: Sure.....at the senior citizen home.

Mattie: Ah. You think you're so smart, don't you? How'd you get to be such a smart kid?

Gabriel: I don't know. Must have learned it from my grandma. That was good pie Mrs. Kowalski. Thanks.

Bea: There's more if you want.

Gabriel: No. I'm full. Hey, grandma, is it okay if I cut out? Some of the guys are gonna shoot hoops down at the park. I told 'em I'd come over after dinner.

Mattie: What guys?

Gabriel: Just guys, Grandma. Kids from my class. No body special. Say Mrs. Kowalski is Leon around?

Bea: No.....he's away 'til tomorrow...maybe Monday.

Mattie: If you're lucky, maybe he won't come back at all.

Bea: No, he'll be back. If nothing else to get his money.

Mattie: What money?

Bea: He asked me to hold some money for him for the weekend. He was going out of town, and he didn't want to leave it upstairs.

Mattie: Hasn't he ever heard of a bank?

Bea: It was too late to make a deposit....he said. So, what the hey.....I put it in the vault.

Gabriel: Vault? You have a vault in your house, Mrs. Kowalski?

Mattie: Yeah..... a real good one. It's the first place a thief is going to look when he breaks into a house.

Bea: Oh...yeah....and you know so much?

Mattie: I know a freezer is no place to store savings. I use the first National Bank on Charlotte Street.

Bea: I don't keep my savings in the freezer.....just the grocery money. It's better than keeping my cash in my purse all the time.

Mattie: My purse is never out of my sight. (pats purse on the table) I'd like to see somebody try and snatch it. He'll get a face full of hair spray.

Bea: Well...my freezer is never out of my kitchen and it's a lot harder to snatch than a purse. (To Mattie) Do you want to play another hand? Give me a chance to break even?

Mattie: No. I'm gonna quit while I'm ahead. (To Gabriel) What business are you doing with Leon?

Gabriel: No business. He said he was going to get me tickets to a Knicks game.

Mattie: Why's he giving you tickets? Don't he have any grown-up friends to give things to?

Gabriel: Sure, he does. He's just being nice, that's all. He's paying me back for helping him when he was laid up..

Mattie: I thought you said he paid you for running those errands.

Gabriel: He did..... this is something extra. He got the tickets for free.

Mattie: Nothing's for free. A ticket here.....a ticket there, pretty soon he owns your ticket.

Gabriel: Geeze.....you always look for something to worry about. It's no big deal. (Hears for the door) Don't wait up for me Grandma. We're going to go to the late show.

Mattie: Hold on. Don't you be too late getting home. I don't want you sneaking into the house after Midnight.

Gabriel: It's Saturday night, Grandma. I don't have school. And curfew *is* midnight. I don't have to sneak in. (He leaves)

Mattie: Kids! Always have to be on the move.

Bea: That's the truth.

Mattie: I wish he was still little. I could tuck him in bed at night with his cars and his trucks and know he'd be there in the morning.

Bea: He's growing up. It's hard.....I know.....but sooner or later you'll have to let him go.

Mattie: I don't mind letting him go, its where he's going that worries me. Do you know what he told me last week? He said he didn't think he wanted to go to college. He said Leon didn't go to college and he was doing alright.

Bea: What did you say to that?

Mattie: Nothing. My brain froze up. Three years on the honor roll and he pulls this on me.

Bea: Well, I wouldn't worry. Michael went through some crazy stuff when he was that age, but he snapped out of it. Gabriel will too, you'll see.

Mattie: Maybe. It's just that I wish Will was alive. A boy needs a man to look up to. Gabriel loved his Grandpa. He'd listen to him.

Bea: Gabriel loves you, Mattie. He'll come around.

Mattie: Maybe....I hope so.

Bea: I know so. He's a good boy and you've done a good job with him. I know it wasn't easy taking him in after his parents died.

Mattie: Well, what was I going to do? He's my grandson after all. And he wasn't the one driving the car.....

Bea: I know but it's hard enough raising a child when you're young but when you're older and a four-year-old gets dumped into your lap.....it's a little overwhelming.....

Mattie: Yeah.....maybe.....but I never really felt overwhelmed.....until now. He used to come to me for advice but now it's Leon he goes to with questions. 'Leon says this, and Leon says that.' The sun rises and sets on your tenant.

Bea: Well....is that so bad? Leon seems nice enough.

Mattie: Oh, Bea, you think anyone who says please and thank you is nice.

Bea: Well, good manners help. Why don't you like him?

Mattie: He'she's too smiley.

Bea: Smiley? Is that even a word? And since when is smiling a crime?

Mattie: I don't trust anybody who shows his teeth that much.

Bea: (Amused) You're nuts. You watch too many cop shows.

Mattie: Maybe. But you don't watch enough. He's a hustler. I just wish I knew who he was hustling. (Sees brochure) Hey! What's this?

Bea: Oh. It's one of those "homes" Michael wants me to look at. This one's in Teaneck.

Mattie: Wow! Fancy!

Bea: Yeah, fancy prices too. It's got a heated pool and underground parking.

Mattie: Hey, maybe I should take a look. Do they take kids?

Bea: (Looks at brochure) No. It says here that pets are allowed but no kids. Go figure.

Mattie: Pet's are less trouble.

Bea: That's for sure.

Mattie: (Pause. She is cautious) Are you going to do it.... I mean if you can sell your house.....will you move?

Bea: Hey, according to Michael it's not a matter of *if* but *when*.

Mattie: Really?

Bea: Yeah. Isn't that crazy? He says the cops are looking for houses to buy around here. If I wanted to, I could sell this place tomorrow.

Mattie (Forced cheer) So do I have time to throw you a party?

Bea: Are you nuts? I'm not moving. What would I do in one of those places?

Mattie: Read.....watch TV.....play Bingo.

Bea: I hate Bingo..... What's the matter? Are you trying to get rid of me?

Mattie: No. I'm just trying to point out the advantages of being a lady of leisure.

Bea: Quit, trying to be so helpful. I'm just looking at the places to keep Michael off my back.

Mattie: He's worried. He wants to keep you safe.

Bea: I know. I'm worried too. I see what's happening on Bate Street and it scares me. But I'm not ready to give it up. If good folks leave when bad times come that's when the weasels and wolves move in. (Pause) Anyway, how can I move? You'd have nobody to cheat at cribbage.

Mattie: Cheat? I don't cheat, I'm just lucky. I hold good cards.

Bea: Yes. Funny how it happens every time you deal.

Mattie: Okay.....I'll prove it. We'll play another hand....and you can deal.

Bea: No. I'm tired of cards. I'd rather watch a movie. There's a Dirty Harry film on TV tonight.

Mattie: Really? I thought you didn't like Cop shows?

Bea: I don't.....but I like Clint Eastwood.

Mattie: (Laughs) Bea Kowalski you're a dirty old lady. (rises) I'll make the popcorn. You gotta have popcorn when you watch Dirty Harry.

Lights Fade on Scene Two