

FALLING (AND NOT GETTING UP)

By Bobby Keniston

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

Mildred should be dressed as a sweet old lady. She is giving a testimonial for her "Life-Saver Button" that she wears around her neck. She talks directly to the audience as though talking to a camera for a commercial. As she talks about other characters, she can do their voices. This monologue should move relatively quickly, and have a great amount of energy.

This piece is dedicated to Tracy Sue, for always being able to make me laugh. I hope this monologue does the same for her.

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AT RISE: MILDRED, by all appearances, a sweet old lady, addresses the audience as though for a commercial for her "Life-Saver" button (similar to the products on TV), which SHE wears around her neck.

Hello my dears. My name is Mildred, and I'm here today to tell you about the amazing "Life-Saver Button" (*SHE indicates her necklace*) and how it truly is a life-saver. I'm a woman who treasures her independence, and the "Life-Saver Button" allows me to stay in my own home, yet gives me and my family the peace of mind that comes with knowing someone is always there for me in an emergency.

I never thought I'd need a button like this. I used to laugh at all the commercials with those feeble old women falling over, yelling their heads off about how they couldn't get up! That's not going to be me, I said to myself. I'm never gonna need to push some button to alert the authorities, who have plenty of better things to do, that I had a slip and fell in my kitchen while making a plate of nachos that I shouldn't be eating in the first place, not with my blood pressure the way it is. Well, I'm not laughing anymore.

(Very seriously) Six months ago, I went into my kitchen to get a glass of water. I had just done my daily twelve miles on the elliptical machine, and was feeling pretty good, even though I was all sweaty and stunk to high Heaven. As I went to the sink, my cat, Mr. Fourpaws Hufflepuff, ran between my legs, and tripped me. I fell hard to the cold kitchen floor, and I don't know if it was the twelve miles, or the force of the fall, but I **COULD NOT GET UP**. I was as helpless as a beetle on his back. I just lay there kickin' my legs around, trying to roll over on my tummy and see if I could push myself up with my arms, but it wasn't happening. The wind was knocked out of me for a bit, but when it came back, I started to

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holler for help, of course. Mr. Fourpaws Hufflepuff jumped on my chest and just stared in my face, not looking sorry at all. And then he starts knitting, the way cats do, digging his claws into me. I tried to shoo him away, but he just looked at me as if to say, "Ha, ha, old lady! Look who's in charge now!" And then he laughed. Well, his eyes laughed. I could tell. He's always been a wicked cat, that one.

It wasn't until five hours later that he finally got bored tormenting me, and wandered off. I was beginning to panic. Five hours is a long time to be stuck on the floor, especially for a woman like me. I've always been so active!

Then I heard the screen door in the kitchen open and slam, and my best friend Gladys called out, "Yoo-hoo! Mildred? I've got your cookie platter!" I loaned her my best cookie platter against my better judgment, because she USED to be my friend. That platter had a great deal of sentimental value to me, and I should have known better than to lend it to a nitwit like Gladys. Because the second she saw me on the floor, she screamed her fool head off and dropped my cookie platter on the floor, smashing it to pieces. She cried out, "Oh, Mildred! What happened?" I said, "What it look like?," pretty steamed about the platter. "It looks like you've fallen and can't get up." Well, that put a bur in my craw, because of all those "old lady" commercials, so I told her, "No! My stupid cat tripped me, and I just can't seem to move right now!"

Well, Gladys, idiot that she is, rushed over to try to help me, and I was about to warn her that her shoe was untied, but it was too late. She tripped on her shoelace, and came crashing down, her fat face hitting me right in the stomach! Once again, the air was knocked right out of me, but I just about lost it nonetheless. I told her to get off me with as much air as I could muster. She turned her head out of my stomach, and started whining. "Mildred, I can't move! I can't get up!"

"Well, this is a fine mess!," I said, none too sympathetic. Well, her voice breaks even worse, almost on the verge of tears. "I was only trying to help," she said, "And here you are yelling at me." I told her I hadn't

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asked for her help, and I sure didn't ask her to smash my best cookie platter, and drive her thick skull into my stomach! That really set her off, and she started wailin' like a branded cow, and started telling me that she probably broke her hip, and that my home owner's insurance should have to cover her medical costs, and all that nonsense. Who invited her over? She barged right in! It's my fault that she can't tie her shoelaces and weighs a ton?

She finally calmed down a bit, and we were both just laying on the floor for the next three hours. Gladys complained about how much I smelled, and I reminded her that at least I worked out and took good care of myself, and wasn't a fat pig like her who was sweating from just lying on the floor. I think it was about that time we decided it would be best if we weren't friends anymore. Still, we were stuck in this situation together, so we might as well be civil.

After another hour, I hear my screen door slam open again, and it's Gladys's dead-beet son, Thaddeus. It's shameful! He's a forty-one year old man who still lives with his mother and does nothing but play video games all day. He's got a long, greasy-looking ponytail, and is at least fifty pounds overweight. He calls out, "Mom? Are you over here! When are you starting dinner?" As if Tubby wasn't old enough to make his dinner! Well, Gladys starts acting like the Calvary arrived, instead of her loser offspring. "Oh, Thad! Thank goodness you've come." He looks down at us on the floor, and his face takes on the expression of a befuddled elephant, and he says, "Hey, what are doing on the floor?" Gladys chimes right in with "We've fallen, and we can't get up!" And, once again, that makes me mad, and I so I yell out, "No! My evil cat tripped me, and then your fat cow of a mother, who can't tie her own shoelaces, came crashing down on top of me!"

Thaddeus looks at us a second, and then starts laughing like an asthmatic hyena. "I'm sorry," he said, "but you should see how you look!" And Gladys, just when I thought she couldn't get any stupider, starts laughing with him! Can you imagine? It was at that moment that I noticed Thaddeus wasn't wearing any shoes! He comes into my house barefoot, the slob! He starts over to help us, and wouldn't you know it? He steps on a piece of broken glass from the smashed cookie platter!

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He starts hopping around on his good foot, crying like a little baby, until his good foot lands on another piece of glass, and he comes crashing down on his mother, who is then smashed more into me! Gladys starts screaming, "What are we going to do now! Who's going to come looking for us now!?" Thad was our only hope!" Some hope, I thought.

Finally, Tubby rolls off his mamma, and starts dragging himself to the door, supposedly going for help. He reaches the door, pushes it open and starts to pull himself outside with his arms, and the door slams on him. Well, he starts crying again, but over the sound of his blubbering, I can hear sirens. Turns out one of my other neighbors, the crazy guy with the blue hair who never goes outside, called the cops when he heard Gladys and I screaming. The police pull up, see this strange man slammed stuck in my screen door, and they get on their megaphone, telling him not to move or they'll shoot, and Thaddeus starts screaming "Don't shoot! Please, I'm too young to die!" It took the police forty-five minutes to approach the house and find us all.

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