

SIDE #5

Doublewide, Texas

JOVETTA, CAPRICE

*A spotlight comes up downstage left, Joveeta Crumpler, vivacious and driven, seated in an office chair, wears a business suit and tailored blouse, excitedly roll into the light, a phone in one hand, a stapler in the other.*

JOVEETA. I'm freeeeeeee! Wa-hooo! *(Stops. Hits speed-dial on her phone. Downstage right a spotlight comes up on a bar stool with a cell phone on it. As the phone rings, Joveeta joyfully shoots a few staples into the air and mutters to herself.)* Come on, come on! Pick up, pick up! *(Overly made-up, wearing leopard print leggings, high heels, a very low-cut sleeveless shell, a tattoo on an upper arm and way too much cheap jewelry, Caprice Crumpler, Joveeta's outlandish mother, dressed in clothes ridiculously too young for her age, saunters in stage left with a longneck beer bottle in her hand. The sound of laughter and glasses clinking are heard in the background as she answers the phone.)*

CAPRICE. You got Caprice, now where's the party?

JOVEETA. Mama, you're not going to believe what happened to me! It's something I always – hold it. I distinctly hear bar glasses clinkin'. Are you down at that seedy honky tonk already?!

CAPRICE. No, I'm at prayer meetin'. Joveeta, what do you think? And the Stagger Inn is not seedy! It's a fine establishment and if you weren't so uppity, you might be welcomed here to knock back a few yourself.

JOVEETA. And how many have *you* knocked back this afternoon?

CAPRICE. I'll have you know, I haven't had a single drop today. *(Swings the beer.)* And when did you become such a nag?!

JOVEETA. You're not starting in on that again, Mama. Now listen, I'm calling because I've got exciting news!

CAPRICE. Well, take a number, so do I! See, Ricky Lon Mangum dropped in for a pick-me-up, and the glow from the Lone Star beer clock was shinin' just right on my delicate facial features. He came over and said he'd like me to do a TV Commercial for his mattress store! Ricky Lon's finally gonna make me the star I was always meant to be!

JOVEETA. Mama, you're hallucinating. Get out of that bar now, cross the street and ask Tubby Gunnels to drive you home on his lawn mower again.

CAPRICE. Did you call just so you could make another futile stab at runnin' my life or do you want to know about my big television debut?

JOVEETA. I am trying to tell you I am making a big change in my life!

CAPRICE. Well, that's real nice, but I can only think it's gonna pale next to me finally bein' discovered.

JOVEETA. (*Whacks the phone with a stapler several times, then:*) Could you stop talking about yourself and listen for a minute? This morning Mayor Pudney accidentally included me on an email announcing Lomax Tanner got the job of City Manager that should've been *mine*! Mama, I have finally hit the glass ceiling in the city government of Tugaloo, Texas.

CAPRICE. (*Distracted, yells offstage, annoyed.*) Millard Cryer, you are *not* takin my place in the darts tournament! My daughter is havin' another crisis and I think she is finally goin' over the edge! (*Into phone.*) Okay, I'm back.

JOVEETA. I am forty-eight years old with a checked matrimonial record behind me and my prospects for an exciting life are drying up faster than the beer I can almost smell on your lips from here.

CAPRICE. (*Calls.*) Millard, I am warning you! If you can't let me perform my motherly duty, I will nail you with my next dart and your wife will have to *do without* for a month! (*Into phone.*) I'm still here for you, Shug, but could you just spit it out so we can get this over with?

JOVEETA. Well, before you race off to more *important* things, I just wanted to tell you that I went into Pudney's office and reminded him of everything I do for Tugaloo and get no credit for. Then I told Pud where to stick it and quit my job – effective today.

CAPRICE. (*Attention finally caught.*) You did *what?*!

JOVEETA. After that I called that headhunter who contacted me last month about that job at Cut-Rate Caribbean Cruises out of Galveston. Guess what? She said *she* was just about to call *me* to offer me the job. It's *mine* if I can get there by Friday! Talk about *meant to be*! This is my chance to get out of this rut and do something meaningful with my life!

CAPRICE. Little Girl, you need to think long and hard about this.

JOVEETA. Oh, I have, Mama! I'm finally free and I am outta here, but before I go, (*Shoots staples again.*) I'm wasting staples that belong to the City of Tugaloo and there's nothing Pudney or any of them can do about it! (*Laughs hysterically, hangs up, gives herself a big push, rolls off stage left.*)

CAPRICE. (*Shakes her head.*) Joveeta's playing with fire talkin' off the Mayor like that. There's gonna be trouble ahead .... (*Takes a slug from the bottle.*) but we'll handle it. 'Cause when you mess with one Crumpler ... (*Throws her shoulders back.*) you mess with the *whole* trailer park! (*Blackout.*)