

The Long Road to 42nd Street v.3

A full-length play

By Garrett M McCann

CAST OF CHARACTERS

NORMA JEAN

DARLIN'

WOMAN 1

ANGEL

MANAGER

CHORUS GIRL

WOMAN 2

HOUSEKEEPER

MS. STANLEY

MOTHER

MAN 1

CHARLIE

ART

MAN 2

OFFICER MERCY

PHILLIPE

TIME

MID 1980S

SETTINGS

A series of motel rooms.
Backstage of the Majestic Theatre.

ACT 1

SCENE 1

Lights up on the interior of a dirty motel room somewhere off I-40 outside Amarillo Texas. Your typical roadside motel. They are all the same, aren't they? There is a full bed, a nightstand with a lamp and phone, and a small tv. Stage left there is the front door and upstage right is the door to the bathroom. Norma Jean sits on her bed, smoking her last cigarette. After a moment, her daughter, Darlin', comes running in the front door!

DARLIN'

MAMA! MAMA! I found 'em! See, I told ya there were in the car! I told ya I'd find them! Mama, look! My tap shoes! I knew I brought them! I would never go anywhere without them! Look, Mama! Here they are! My tap shoes. You said I left them but they were in the car under the seat! I would never go all the way to Broadway without my tap shoes. That would be like going to church without your Bible! I mean I think it would be like that. We haven't been to church since I was six and now I'm eight! Can you believe that Mama! I'm almost all grown up! And I've been waiting my whole life to go to Broadway. Oh thank you, Mama, for taking me! I can't believe I'll get to see a real life Broadway musical in real life! I'll be up there one day, Mama! You listening mama? I'm gonna be an actress. And a dancer. And a singer! That's what they call a triple threat, Mama! One day I'm gonna be up there, Mama, and you're gonna watch me and I'll be up on stage.

(She stand on the bed ready to perform!)

Look, Mama! I'm gonna do it for you! I'll be up there and I'll be like *(Singing,)* "One! Singular Sensation! Every little step you take!" What's that from, Mama? You know what's that from?

NORMA JEAN

Chorus line, baby.

DARLIN'

I knew that! A Chorus Line! My favorite! I will be up there in my leotard singing *(Singing,)* "On a steep and very narrow Stairway! To the beat of a metronome!" or "The Music and the Mirror-" or "Tits and Ass-

NORMA JEAN

Darlin'!

DARLIN'

I'm sorry Mama! But that's the song! *(Singing,)* "Tits and ass won't get you jobs, unless their yours" But I don't have any. When will I get tits mama?

NORMA JEAN

Your just a baby, Darlin.

DARLIN'

But I'm big for my age. Doesn't everyone say I'm big for my age.

NORMA JEAN

Don't be in a rush to grow up.

DARLIN'

But I wanna be an actress mama! And I need tits to be a good actress! I can't wait til I get tits of my own.

NORMA JEAN

They ain't all they cracked up to be.

DARLIN'

Why is that mama?

NORMA JEAN

People treat you different when you become a woman. One day your a kid then you grow some breasts and everyone stops treatin' ya nice.

DARLIN'

OH! I know a musical I can be in without any tits! (*Singing,*)
"TOMORROW! TOMORROW! I LOVE YA TOMORROW!" I can be in Annie now!
Right mama!

NORMA JEAN

Yes, Darlin', you can be in Annie.

DARLIN'

IT'S ONLY A DAY AWAY!! That's so true, Mama! Cause today is today and tomorrow is tomorrow but when you go to sleep and wake up then today's tomorrow becomes tomorrow's today and then tomorrow is still a day away! Isn't that right, Mama?

NORMA JEAN

That's right! It never ends.

DARLIN'

Mama look! I'm gonna be a dancer. See! (*She starts "tap dancing." Singing,*) "In olden days a glimpse of stocking was looked on as something shocking but now god knows..-"

(There is a beating on the floor below)

NORMA JEAN

Shut up!

(Another beating)

NORMA JEAN

Yeah you too pal! Go on, Darlin'. Keep dancing.

(She does. Singing and dancing. After a second there is a knock on the door.)

NORMA JEAN

What the hell?

(She gets up and answers the door. A young woman with big hair, harsh makeup and lace is on the other side.)

NORMA JEAN

What do you want?

WOMAN

Well, hello to you to.

NORMA JEAN

What?

WOMAN

I'm gonna need your little brat to take five, capisce.

NORMA JEAN

Who are you?

WOMAN

What difference does it make? I'm next door. Trying to get some business done and it's hard to get ...excited.. when Shirley Temple over here is going all Hooray for Hollywood at 2 in the morning.

NORMA JEAN

Give the kid a break. She's just excited.

WOMAN

Why?

DARLIN'

Mamas taking me to Broadway!

WOMAN

Really now?

NORMA JEAN

Yep. We are on our way to New York City. She's just excited. She doesn't mean no harm.

WOMAN

(to Darlin')

You ever been to New York before?

DARLIN'

Nuh-uh!

WOMAN

You'll like it.

DARLIN'

(amazed,)

Have you been?

WOMAN

Sure have!

DARLIN'

Is it as amazing as they say it is? Is it really the city that never sleeps?

(We hear offstage yelling ala "Whats the hold up,etc)

WOMAN

I'm coming I'm coming. Listen. Just give us five minutes. (she looks off disgusted in the direction of her room.) This won't take long. Then Shirley Temple can play all 76 of her trombones all night.

NORMA JEAN

Thanks.

DARLIN'

Hey ma'am!

WOMAN

Yes, Twinkle Toes.

DARLIN'

What's your favorite musical?

WOMAN

(honestly,)

South Pacific.

NORMA JEAN

Night.

(Woman walks away and NORMA JEAN closes the door)

DARLIN'

Am I a brat?

NORMA JEAN

No baby. But it's time to settle down. Come get into bed. It's late.

DARLIN'

Are you gonna call Grandma again?

NORMA JEAN

I'm gonna try.

(Darlin gets under the blanket and Norma Jean grabs the phone and dials. No one answers. She hangs up the receiver.)

DARLIN'

No Grandma?

NORMA JEAN

She must.. Not be home.

DARLIN'

I miss Grandma!

NORMA JEAN

Me too, baby. Me too.

DARLIN'

I miss Daddy too.

NORMA JEAN

You do?

DARLIN'

Yeah. I wish he could come to New York too.

NORMA JEAN

He can't sweetie.

DARLIN'

I know. You said.

NORMA JEAN

Why don't you close your eyes, Darlin'.

DARLIN'

I'm not sleepy!

NORMA JEAN

Why don't you try!

DARLIN'

I don't want to!

(She gets up and runs around the room.)

NORMA JEAN

Darlin'!

DARLIN'

I'm too excited!

(Norma Jean chases Darlin' around the room, all the while, Darlin' sings,)

DARLIN'

Do, a deer, a female deer. Re, a drop of golden sun. Mi, a name, I call myself-

(There is a loud rhythmic thumping sound. NORMA JEAN realizes what it is and grabs Darlin' and covers her ears.)

NORMA JEAN

Come here darlin'. Don't listen.

(There are a couple more thumps. But right before it "gets going" it stops.)

NORMA JEAN

Oh. That didn't last long.

WOMAN

(Through the wall.)

Okay, Shirley Temple! Action!

DARLIN'

(Singing,)

I'm gonna wash that man right outta my hair!

(She sings and dances away from NORMA JEAN.)

(Lights out.)

Scene 2

Lights up in the same motel room. The next morning. Norma Jean and Darlin' are asleep when there is a knock at the door. We hear a voice in a deep eastern European or Russian accent.

VOICE

Housekeeping?

(Another knock)

VOICE

Housekeeping?

(Another pause then the door starts to unlock. This older woman comes in. She is carrying towels. She notices Norma Jean and Darlin' sleeping and sneaks to the bathroom. She closes the door behind her and turns on the light. She rummages around the bathroom, cleaning. She makes a noise that wakes NORMA JEAN. She looks around in her daze then realizes someone is in her bathroom. She pulls a gun out of her bag and slowly walks over to the bathroom. Suddenly the door opens and the housekeeper comes out. It scares both of them.)

NORMA JEAN

AHH!

HOUSEKEEPER

Housekeeping! No Shoot!

NORMA JEAN

God! What are you doing here?

HOUSEKEEPER

Housekeeping. Towels.

DARLIN'

What's going on?

NORMA JEAN

Go back to sleep?

HOUSEKEEPER

I clean?

NORMA JEAN

Didn't you see us sleeping? Why would you come in?

HOUSEKEEPER

I clean?

NORMA JEAN

NO! You don't just walk into a room.

(Bickering continues as the woman from last night appears in the doorway.)

WOMAN

Whoa Whoa! what's going on?

HOUSEKEEPER

I'm sorry. I came in to clean
And she pulled a gun. I'm so
scared. I just wanted to bring
towels...

NORMA JEAN

She just walked into the room
while we were sleeping and
started creeping around what
What do you expect me to do?

WOMAN

WHOA! Everyone calm down! Svetlana. Come here.

(The housekeeper hurriedly walks over to the woman. She pulls out some money and gives it to her.)

WOMAN

Thank you for the towels.

HOUSEKEEPER

Thank you, Miss.

(Housekeeper runs off. NORMA JEAN starts trying to catch her breath. The Woman goes over to Darlin'.)

WOMAN

Hey, Shirley Temple, take this and go get something sweet from the vending machine.

DARLIN'

Wow! You mean it?

WOMAN

Yep. Whatever you want.

DARLIN'

Like an Airhead?

WOMAN

Yep.

DARLIN'

Or two?

WOMAN

Why not. You're a growing girl. Now go. And don't get lost.

(Darlin' runs off and Woman closes the door. She crosses to the bed and sits down on the end.)

WOMAN

Come on, Mama. Come sit down. It's alright, mama.

(She grabs the gun away from NORMA JEAN and sets it aside.)

NORMA JEAN

I... I should go apologize.

WOMAN

'Lana is fine. She's been through much worse. Believe me. These motels are like the twilight zone.

NORMA JEAN

I didn't mean to scare her. I just thought that....

WOMAN

Just thought what?

NORMA JEAN

I thought it was my husband. Thought he'd found me.

WOMAN

I take it that would be a bad thing.

NORMA JEAN

Yeah.

WOMAN

What's the deal?

NORMA JEAN

I'm sorry. You're very nice but I don't know you like that.

WOMAN

ANGEL.

(Angel holds out her hand and Norma Jean politely shakes.)

NORMA JEAN

I told you last night we were leaving.

ANGEL

Yep. Headed to the big apple.

NORMA JEAN

Darlin' has always wanted to go.

ANGEL

She's a good kid.

NORMA JEAN

She's a handful.

ANGEL

She's a kid. Of course she's a handful.

NORMA JEAN

I'm just trying to do what I can.

ANGEL

You seem like a great mom.

NORMA JEAN

How would you know?

ANGEL

Well, you're driving your kid all the way to New York. That a world away from Amarillo. My old lady never did anything like that.

NORMA JEAN

But I feel so dirty.

ANGEL

Why?

NORMA JEAN

Cause I'm lying her.

ANGEL

All good mothers lie to their children.

NORMA JEAN

She's just a kid. She won't understand.

ANGEL

Why don't you tell me what's wrong?

NORMA JEAN

I can't.

ANGEL

I won't tell her. I'm good at keeping secrets. Otherwise I'd have a lot of angry wives chasing after me.

NORMA JEAN

But I just can't tell you all the history I'd have to-

(She stops speaking.)

ANGEL

What?

NORMA JEAN

I just remembered. I am never going to see you again.

ANGEL

That's very true.

NORMA JEAN

So, here's the deal. I told Darlin' that we are going to New York on vacation to see a Broadway Show. That's not entirely true.

ANGEL

Meaning?

NORMA JEAN

We aren't on vacation. We are running away.

ANGEL

From your husband.

NORMA JEAN

Exactly.

ANGEL

It's not a total lie. Are you going to see a show while you're there?.

NORMA JEAN

Hah! Not unless you got ticket money hanging out in that bra or something?

ANGEL

No. I'm sorry. I left my Cats money in my other braseere.

NORMA JEAN

I don't know what I'm going to do. I may have bitten off more than I can chew.

ANGEL

Does your husband know where you are going?

NORMA JEAN

He thinks we are going to go see a show then come right back. I hope to blend into the crowd before he ever finds us. I mean New York has like 6, 7 million people? It's like trying to find a needle in a haystack.

ANGEL

Is he that bad?

NORMA JEAN

He's bad for me.

ANGEL

Bad, how?

NORMA JEAN

He's suffocating, then mean. And overbearing and.. forgiving.
And charming and- and- That's why I had to get out.

ANGEL

I'm not following.

NORMA JEAN

I don't have the energy to explain. All I know is I had to get
out. We had to get out. Before it was too late.

ANGEL

Too late for what?

NORMA JEAN

Why do you care? Are you sadistic? Or just nosy?

ANGEL

Hey, what can I say? I like to hear people's stories. I'm a good
listener. Think of me as an emotional peeping tom. When are you
leaving?

NORMA JEAN

Gonna try and get on the road sometime today.

ANGEL

Well then! Let me be the one to give you a proper send off.

(Angel hops up and pulls out a flask from her pocket.
She opens it and hands it to Norma Jean.)

NORMA JEAN

Oh come on. It's too early for that.

ANGEL

Nonsense. I little sip won't hurt. Besides, I haven't been to bed yet. It's still Friday night for this girl. Come on!

(Norma Jean takes the flask and takes a drink.)

NORMA JEAN

Thanks.

(Norma Jean goes to hand it back.)

ANGEL

Keep it. Sounds like you got a hell of a journey ahead of you. You need it more than I do.

(Angel goes to leave and Darlin' comes running in.)

DARLIN'

Look! I got two Airheads! One blue and one red!

ANGEL

Good job, Shirley Temple.

DARLIN'

Are you leaving?

ANGEL

Yep. Going back to my room. You have a wonderful time in New York okay?

DARLIN'

Okay.

ANGEL

I was great to meet you. You too Norma Jean. You better get a move on. It looks like rain.

(ANGEL winks and exits.)

(Lights out.)

SCENE 3

Lights up on a new motel room. The decoration may have changed but the room remains pretty much the same. A hell of a storm rages outside. Thunder rumbles throughout the scene. The door opens and Darlin comes in carrying their bags. She puts them down then calls out the door.

DARLIN'

Mama! How long are we going to stay here? I thought we were going to New York, Mama. I don't want to sleep here. Mama? Mama?

(Norma Jean comes in from outside. Her hands are covered in grease. She's been trying to fix the car. To no avail.)

NORMA JEAN

Yes, baby?

DARLIN'

How long are we gonna stay here?

NORMA JEAN

I don't know, baby.

DARLIN'

Is the car broken?

NORMA JEAN

I think so.

DARLIN'

Can you fix it? Want me to try?

NORMA JEAN

No, baby. Just settle in.

DARLIN'

I bet Daddy could fix it.

NORMA JEAN

Well Daddy ain't here. Is he?

DARLIN'

But he could fix it! We should call Daddy!

NORMA JEAN

We are not calling him.

DARLIN'

But I don't want to stay here. I don't want the car to be broken.

NORMA JEAN

Darlin'. Come here. You're growing up. And it's time we had a talk.

DARLIN'

Ewww.

NORMA JEAN

Not that talk. Listen, as we get older, there are going to be things that we have to do that we don't necessarily want to do. But guess what, we still have to do them.

DARLIN'

But that's not fun.

NORMA JEAN

You're right. It's not. And not everything is going to be fun. Sometimes being an adult means dealing with lots of things that aren't fun.

DARLIN'

I don't want to be an adult.

NORMA JEAN

Me either baby. But we all grow up. And it's time for you to grow up just a little. Can you do that for me?

DARLIN'

Uh huh.

NORMA JEAN

So you understand when I say that sometimes we have to do things we don't want to do.

DARLIN'

Like stay in this gross room.

NORMA JEAN

Exactly. Now do me a favor and lets try and get comfortable. Okay?

(NORMA JEAN sits on the bed and picks up the phone. She reluctantly dials. After a couple rings someone picks up.)

NORMA JEAN

Mom? Hey, Mom. It's me. Yes, everything is fine. Well, sort of. The car is busted mama. I don't know. I just know it ain't workin. Yeah, Seems like our weekend trip will take a bit longer than expected. A lot longer. Now, you know I ain't got money for that. Well, that's why I'm callin. I need you to send me some- Don't say no, Mama! Now listen. We passed a Western Union right down the street. Just send me fifty dollars so I can get the car looked at. If I knew that, I wouldn't need to take it to a mechanic, would I? Mama, I-

(Thunder rumbles. Darlin' starts to get antsy. She starts to up and dance to a song in her head.)

NORMA JEAN

Again, if I had the money do you think I would be bothering you? Listen, Ma! We broke down outside of Joplin. There's a Western Union right down the street. I can walk there. Just help me out ma! Oh, come on, you cheap little-

(Large lightning strike and huge thunderclap. Lights go out. Then come back on. Darlin's screams. The phone line is dead. Norma Jean tries the receiver over and over but it's dead!)

NORMA JEAN

Ma! Ma! Hello! Damn!

DARLIN'

What's wrong?

NORMA JEAN

Phones dead.

DARLIN'

What do we do?

NORMA JEAN

Go tell the people at the front the phone isn't working.

DARLIN'

On it!

(Darlin' runs out the front door. Screaming,)

DARLIN'

Hey! The phone's not working!

(Thunder crashes. Darlin' screams and runs back to Norma Jean.)

(Lights out.)

SCENE 4

The next day. The same motel room. Norma Jean paces in the room while Darlin' plays with toys or something.

DARLIN'

You wanna play ma?

NORMA JEAN

No baby.

DARLIN'

What are you doing?

NORMA JEAN

Nothing. Just play with your toys baby.

(Finally, a knock comes on the door. Norma Jean rushes to answer. Standing at the door is the maintenance guy for the motel. A tall, handsome, effortless charming man. But Norma Jean is too worked up to notice.)

NORMA JEAN

About time.

WORKMAN

Good morning to you too.

NORMA JEAN

The phone isn't working.

WORKMAN

So they said. I'll tell ya, I don't know what I'll be able to do. That kind of stuff is up to the phone company. Apparently a lightning strike took out the phones for half the county last night. Was a hell of a storm!

NORMA JEAN

Can you at least take a look at it?

WORKMAN

Might as well.

NORMA JEAN

Please, hurry. I have to make a call.

WORKMAN

That is traditionally why people use the phone.

NORMA JEAN

Smartass.

WORKMAN

Guilty.

(The workman comes in and puts his tool kit on the bed. Darlin' walks up to him.)

DARLIN'

Hi.

WORKMAN

Well, hello there, little darling.

DARLIN'

How did you know my name?

WORKMAN

Huh?

DARLIN'

That's my name!

WORKMAN

Little?

DARLIN'

No! Darlin', silly!

WORKMAN

I knew that! I was just goofin'. Pretty name, Darlin'.

NORMA JEAN

Baby, don't distract the man.

WORKMAN

Oh, she ain't no trouble at all.

DARLIN'

What's your name?

WORKMAN

I'm Charlie. Pleased to meet you. And what about Miss Furrowed-Brow over there? What's her name?

DARLIN'

Oh, that's Mama.

CHARLIE

I know its Mama, but what's-

NORMA JEAN

It's Norma. Norma Jean.

CHARLIE

Norma Jean? Now, that's Marilyn Monroe's name isn't it? You aren't Marilyn Monroe is disguise are ya?

NORMA JEAN

Sorry to disappoint. No, my mama was pregnant with me when All About Eve was in theaters.

CHARLIE

Marilyn was in that picture?

NORMA JEAN

For like two seconds. But my mom could tell she was going to be someone important. And she was right. My mother's always had a sense about those kind of things.

DARLIN'

She told me that I'm gonna be an actress!

CHARLIE

What did she say about you?

NORMA JEAN

Can you just fix the phone please?

CHARLIE

Aye, Aye, Captain.

(Charlie begins to take a look at the phone.
Inspecting the cord, etc.)

CHARLIE

So, who do you have to call that is so important that I have to come up and mess with these wires before I tell you there is nothing I can do?

NORMA JEAN

I don't remember signing up for an interview.

CHARLIE

I'm just trying to make conversation.

NORMA JEAN

I was trying to call my mother. We've had some car troubles and I needed to talk to her.

CHARLIE

Sounds like you need a mechanic. Not your mother. I know a pretty good one.

NORMA JEAN

I can't go to a mechanic.

CHARLIE

Why not?

NORMA JEAN

Well, mechanics like money and I don't really have a whole lot of that laying around at the moment.

CHARLIE

I can help you with that. I may not look like much. But I'm pretty well connected in this town. Mikey at the shop owes me a favor anyway.

NORMA JEAN

A favor?

CHARLIE

Yeah. I helped him fix his roof when a branch fell through it last summer.

NORMA JEAN

That was nice of you.

CHARLIE

I'm a nice guy. How about when I get off I come back here. We push your car down to the mechanic and I'll pick you up in my truck and we'll get some pizza. How's that sound kiddo?

DARLIN'

Pizza!

CHARLIE

That's a yes! What do you say, Mama?

NORMA JEAN

Thank you very much, Charlie, but I don't need any help. Just get the phone working and I'll be fine.

CHARLIE

I told you. I can't get the phone working.

NORMA JEAN

Then we'll use a payphone.

CHARLIE

Those are out too. We gotta wait on the phone company to fix the poles. So you can't wait for the poles to get fixed or you can come get some pizza. What do you say?

NORMA JEAN

I'll think about it. If there isn't anything you can do then I think we are done here.

CHARLIE

Fair enough, Miss Monroe. If you need anything else, call the front desk. I'll be on my way. Nice to meet you Darlin'.

(Charlie starts to leave.)

NORMA JEAN

What time do you get off?

CHARLIE

I'll be back at 6.

(Charlie smiles and exits.)

DARLIN'

Who was that?

NORMA JEAN

Someone trying to help.

DARLIN'

Why is he trying to help?

NORMA JEAN

I don't know.

(Lights out.)

SCENE 5

Same motel room. The next day.
Darlin' is playing in the room
while Norma Jean sits in front of
a fan. Darlin' stands on the bed
and grabs a sheet and wears it
like a dress. She begins singing.

DARLIN'

(Singing,)

I COULD HAVE DANCED ALL NIGHT.
I COULD HAVE DANCED ALL NIGHT.
AND STILL HAVE BEGGED FOR MORE.

NORMA JEAN

Don't fall down. I'm not taking your ass to the hospital.

DARLIN'

(Singing,)

I COULD HAVE DANCED, DANCED, DANCED-

(Charlie comes in the room with bags of food from the
grocery store.)

CHARLIE

What a beautiful voice! You're an angel, Darlin'.

DARLIN'

Thank you! See Mama, I already have a fan.

NORMA JEAN

I'm your fan, Darlin'.

DARLIN'

Yes, but you're my Mama. You have to like me cause you're my
mama.

NORMA JEAN

That's not true. Ask Grandma.

CHARLIE

I got some food.

NORMA JEAN

Thanks for that. But I would have gone to get it myself.

CHARLIE

It was no trouble. Here I got some sandwiches and a cupcake for the kid.

NORMA JEAN

She doesn't need a-

DARLIN'

CUPCAKE!

NORMA JEAN

I see what you did.

CHARLIE

Just trying to be nice.

(Darlin' tears into the cupcake.)

NORMA JEAN

You've helped more than you had to. Seriously. I don't want to impose.

CHARLIE

It's nothing.

NORMA JEAN

Did you talk to Mikey?

CHARLIE

Yes I did. He said he had to order a part for your engine. Might take a couple days for it to come in.

NORMA JEAN

A couple days? He didn't say that yesterday when we were there! He said it would done today! What happened?

CHARLIE

Apparently the problem was worse than he thought.

NORMA JEAN

What did he say was wrong with it?

CHARLIE

I'm not a car guy. I don't know all the technical terms.

NORMA JEAN

Well, that's not acceptable. We have somewhere to be. I'm going to go down there and see what's what.

CHARLIE

Jeannie! Whoa! Whoa! I already told you what he said. Plus the shop is closed now. It's after five. Just let the man do his job.

NORMA JEAN

But we can't just sit here, Charlie. What do you expect me to do?

CHARLIE

I don't know. Relax? Enjoy the fabulous amenities and the Riverside Motel here.

NORMA JEAN

Charlie, I'm not laughing.

DARLIN'

Mama. I'm hungry.

(Norma Jean grabs a sandwich out of the shopping bags.)

NORMA JEAN

Here you go baby.

DARLIN'

It's cold.

CHARLIE

There is a microwave in the office.

NORMA JEAN

Come on baby.

CHARLIE

No come on, She's a big girl. She can do it herself.

NORMA JEAN

I'm going with her.

CHARLIE

She can handle it. Right, Darlin'.

DARLIN'

I can do it Mama!

NORMA JEAN

Fine. Just stay where I can see ya.

(Norma Jean follows Darlin' to the door and stands in the doorway through the next conversation.)

NORMA JEAN

Hey! Don't run.

CHARLIE

She's a big girl. Don't be too hard on her.

NORMA JEAN

I know how to handle her. We just gotta get on the road soon.

CHARLIE

What are you in such a hurry for?

NORMA JEAN

I, uh, I guess I'm just antsy. I haven't left this room in two days.

CHARLIE

Haven't I been taking good care of ya'll?

NORMA JEAN

Yes. And I've said thank you.

CHARLIE

I know you have. It's just nice to be appreciated, ya know.

(Charlie moves over and puts a hand on Norma Jean's shoulder. She swats it away.)

NORMA JEAN

Hold on now.

CHARLIE

Come on, baby. I didn't mean nothing by it.

NORMA JEAN

Now, like I've said, I appreciate all you've done but we're not talking about any of that other stuff. I'm a married woman.

CHARLIE

A married woman running away from her husband.

NORMA JEAN

That's neither here nor there.

CHARLIE

I'm just saying. A little gratitude would be nice.

NORMA JEAN

I said thank you. What more do you want?

CHARLIE

I think you know the answer to that.

(Charlie advances slowly on Norma Jean again and puts his arms around her. He kisses her cheek. She is apprehensive.)

(Lights out.)

SCENE 6

The same motel room a day later.
Norma Jean and Darlin' are still
stuck in this motel room. Charlie
is laying on the bed. Norma Jean
is cleaning up.

CHARLIE

Would you calm down, woman. You're making me nervous.

NORMA JEAN

I ain't doing nothing.

CHARLIE

What you doing?

NORMA JEAN

Nothing.

CHARLIE

Well you doing nothing pretty loud.

NORMA JEAN

I'm getting stuff cleaned up and packed. That car gotta be fixed
any time now. And I wanna be ready.

CHARLIE

We don't know when that car is gonna be ready. Why don't you
stop with that and come here.

NORMA JEAN

You could get up and help. Or go down to the mechanic and see
what's taking so long.

CHARLIE

I'm working.

NORMA JEAN

Yeah. You look real busy.

CHARLIE

If they need me, they'll call me.

(A woman, harsh and aggressive, knocks on the door.)

CHARLIE

Speak of the devil.

MANAGER

Charlie!

CHARLIE

Damn! What do you want?

MANAGER

I want you to get back to work! I ain't paying you to sleep with the guests.

CHARLIE

I am working. What do you want?

MANAGER

37 has a leak in the bathroom. Now go fix it before it starts moldin' up!

CHARLIE

I'm going! I'm going! Damn woman!

MANAGER

Well excuse me for making you do your job but you're right, I'm the asshole. Get outta here.

CHARLIE

Gahh!

(Charlie grabs his toolbag and storms out, grumbling.)

MANAGER

Yeah, you too! God. That man is a piece of work. I don't know what you gals see in him.

NORMA JEAN

What do you mean?

MANAGER

Every couple weeks some single woman checks in and I can't get him out of their room. Thinks this place is his own personal roach motel for skanks. No offense.

NORMA JEAN

Listen, I don't want you to get the wrong idea. He's just helping us out. He helped me get my car fixed.

MANAGER

And he did that because, let me guess, he's just such a nice guy.

NORMA JEAN

It's not like that. I ran into some trouble and as soon as the phone is working we're outta here.

MANAGER

The phone? The phone is working.

NORMA JEAN

What?

MANAGER

Yeah. They got the phones working like two days ago.

NORMA JEAN

No. Because my phone is still not working.

MANAGER

Let me check it for ya. But yeah, the phones came on that same night. They are usually pretty good about getting that kind of stuff back up and running. Huh. Your phone is still dead.

NORMA JEAN

Told ya!

MANAGER

Hold your horses, let me check.

(She crouches down and looks for the chord.)

MANAGER

Ha! Here's the trouble. The cords all messed up.

NORMA JEAN

What?

MANAGER

Someone unplugged it. And messed up the end a little bit but it'll still work, I think. Yep.

(She stands up and tests the phone.)

MANAGER

Works like a charm.

(Norma Jean runs over to the phone.)

NORMA JEAN

But Charlie said-

MANAGER

There you go. I wouldn't believe anything that man says. If there was anyone else in town that wanted his job, trust me when I say he'd be out of here in a heartbeat. What a piece of work.

NORMA JEAN

I don't know what to say.

MANAGER

Well, if it makes you feel better. You ain't the first and won't be the last. Some people never change. Anyway, enjoy your phone. You gonna be staying another night?

NORMA JEAN

No! We are leaving. Now.

MANAGER

You have a car?

NORMA JEAN

It's at the shop. Charlie said they had to order a part and it would be a couple days.

MANAGER

Sure he did.

(She leaves.)

NORMA JEAN

Son of a bitch.

(Norma Jean looks around and finds the note that Charlie put the mechanic's name and number on it. She goes to the phone and dials.)

NORMA JEAN

Hello. Mikey? Hey. This is Norma Jean. Yeah. I came in with Charlie and my car wasn't... Yes. I was just wondering if that part has come in yet? The part? For the car? I don't know, Charlie said ya'll were waiting on a part and it would take a couple days to... It's ready? Oh. Okay. Great. I'll come by and pick it up - wait. How long has it been ready. Oh. I'm sorry I didn't know otherwise I would have been there sooner. Yeah. I'll be by right away. Yes. I'm heading over right now. Thanks.

(She hangs up. In a panic, she starts to throw some belongings into a bag. Then she remembers and goes back to the phone and dials.)

NORMA JEAN

Come on. Pick up. Pick up. Hello. Mom. Mom, it's me. I know. I know. I'm sorry. I know it's been a couple of days. I'm sorry. It's a long story and it doesn't make me look very good. But listen. I need help. I need some money. I know you don't have any money but I need some. Please. I'm headed to Indianopolis tonight and I need you to send some money. I can't come home. Because Mama. I'm not coming home. I can't explain. I don't have time! Mama, just know that I am doing what I have to do. I love you. I have to go.

(Norma Jean hangs up. During the end of the call. Darlin' comes skipping into room.)

DARLIN'

Was that Grandma?

NORMA JEAN

Yes. Come on baby. Come pack your things. We're going.

DARLIN'

We're going where?

NORMA JEAN

New York, baby. Come on pack you things.

DARLIN'

Yay! New York! New York! New York!

NORMA JEAN

Yes, baby. Come on and pack. I have to run down to the mechanic and grab the car. I'm literally gonna run so I'll be back in a couple minutes. I want you to stay here and pack. Don't go anywhere.

DARLIN'

Okay Mama! We're going to Broadway!

NORMA JEAN

Yes, baby. Now, I'll be right back. Love you.

(Norma Jean rushes out. Darlin' starts packing and dancing and singing.)

DARLIN'

New York! New York! *(Singing,)* NYC. Just got here this morning. Three bucks. Two bags. One me. NYC. I give you fair warning Up there In lights I'll be-

(Charlie comes in and Darlin' turns around and stops singing.)

DARLIN'

Hi, Mr. Charlie.

CHARLIE

Well, hey there Darlin'. What are you up to?

DARLIN'

Packing up to go to Broadway! Mama said we're finally going!

CHARLIE

Is that right? And where is your Mama?

DARLIN'

She went to pick up the car.

CHARLIE

Did she now?

(Darlin' is packing absent mindedly.)

CHARLIE

So you're leaving me Darlin'? Ain't that sad! Don't you want you and Mama to stay here with me? Didn't you have fun?

DARLIN'

Mama and I are going to New York!

CHARLIE

But we had some good times right. Remember the pizza. And the pool! Don't you wanna stay with old Charlie?

(Darlin' doesn't say anything.)

CHARLIE

How about I take you to go get some more pizza before you go! Would you like that?

DARLIN'

I like pizza.

CHARLIE

Then let's go get a treat! What do you say, Darlin'? Come give Charlie a hug.

(Darlin' hugs him. She knows something is wrong but doesn't know what. Norma Jean comes in the door and sees them and attacks.)

NORMA JEAN

Get away from her!

CHARLIE

Jeannie! There you are. We've been looking for you.

NORMA JEAN

Darlin' get away from him.

(Norma Jean grabs Darlin' and puts her behind him.)

CHARLIE

Oh come on now, Jeannie! There ain't nothing wrong here. You know me!

NORMA JEAN

Do I? I don't know that I do! Apparently you've been lying to me from the start.

CHARLIE

Oh what did I lie about?

NORMA JEAN

Don't mess with me! I know about the phone and the car and whatever other bullshit that's been flying out of your mouth. We are so outta here.

CHARLIE

Where? With what money! You've been mooching off me since you got here. You ungrateful little-

NORMA JEAN

Where do you get off! I knew you couldn't be trusted. I should have listened to myself! We are outta here!

CHARLIE

Jeannie. Listen, I didn't mean to hurt ya! I love you Jeannie.

NORMA JEAN

Oh please!

CHARLIE

It's true Jeannie. I love you. Stay with me and I'll take care of you.

NORMA JEAN

I can take care of myself.

CHARLIE

Bullshit. You can't take care of nothing.

(Charlie grabs Norma Jean by the arm and holds her.)

CHARLIE

Cause you are weak. What are you doing with your life Norma Jean? You're running away. You're pathetic. And I offer to help you out and this is the thanks I get.

(Darlin runs up and starts trying to free Norma Jean.)

DARLIN'

Get off my mama!

(Charlie slaps her and she falls to the ground.)

CHARLIE

Shut up!

NORMA JEAN

Darlin'!

CHARLIE

Oh she's fine.

(Norma Jean gets away and goes to Darlin'. She's dazed but awake.)

NORMA JEAN

Baby?

DARLIN'

Yes, Mama?

NORMA JEAN

Come on, get your things. We're leaving.

CHARLIE

Like hell!

NORMA JEAN

Try and stop me you son of a bitch!

(Norma Jean grabs her jacket and her purse and starts ushering Darlin' out of the door. Charlie grabs her again and they fight for control. Norma Jean pushes Charlie into the bathroom and the struggle continues. Soon we hear a gunshot. Then silence. After a tense moment, Norma Jean comes running out.)

NORMA JEAN

Come on baby! We have to go!

(Norma Jean grabs Darlin' and their suitcases and runs out the door. As she is dragged out of the door, Darlin' is singing:)

DARLIN'

(Singing,)

HE HAD IT COMING. HE HAD IT COMING. HE HAD IT COMING ALL ALONG.

(Lights out. End of Act 1)

ACT 2

SCENE 1

Lights up on a motel room. Ms. Stanley opens the door and Darlin' and Norma Jean follow her in.

MS. STANLEY

And here you are ladies. Unit 203. It ain't much but..

NORMA JEAN

(rushing in)

It'll be just fine!

DARLIN'

Mama, this place smells funny.

NORMA JEAN

No it doesn't sweetie. Just come in and sit down.

MS. STANLEY

If you like I can get some air freshener for you. Might brighten the place up.

NORMA JEAN

No we are fine Ms..

MS. STANLEY

Stanley. Ms. Stanley. Well I am here if you anything at all.

DARLIN'

Is there a pool?

MS. STANLEY

Why yes there is!

DARLIN'

Can I go in the pool now?

MS. STANLEY

If it's okay with your mother.

NORMA JEAN

(peering out the window,)

Maybe later. Darlin' why don't you take a nap now. I'll let you know when you can wake up. Thank you so much Ms. Stanley.

DARLIN'

But I wanna go swimming!

MS. STANLEY

Oh, this brings back such good memories. I just love the little ones. Mine haven't been that little in years. Does she want a piece of candy?

NORMA JEAN

Do you?

DARLIN'

Yes ma'am! Gimme Gimme

MS. STANLEY

Here you are, sweetie. (She gives her a candy.)

NORMA JEAN

What do you say?

DARLIN'

Thanks Ms. Stanley.

MS. STANLEY

You are welcome Darling!

DARLIN'

How did you know my name?

MS. STANLEY

Huh?

NORMA JEAN

Her name is Darlin'

MS. STANLEY

Oh, what a beautiful name!

DARLIN'

Thanks Ms. Stanley! Can I go in the pool now!

MS. STANLEY

You're mother said later. Well, let me know if you need anything. And if you get bored of the room. I got a deck of cards down that the desk. I'll teach you how to play bridge. Would you like that?

DARLIN'

I can do a bridge. Wanna see?

(She begins to try and bend over backwards and falls over.)

DARLIN'

I can do it! I learned it at gymnastics!

(She tries again. It's not very good.)

MS. STANLEY

That is very good.

NORMA JEAN

Alright Darlin', stop wasting her time.

MS. STANLEY

It's no problem at all. I'll leave you to it. Let me know if you need anything Carol.

NORMA JEAN

Thanks, Ms. Stanley.

(She exits. NORMA JEAN closes the door behind her and locks the door.)

DARLIN'

Mama, why did you tell Ms. Stanley your name was Carol. Your name isn't Carol.

NORMA JEAN

I know sweetie. But I didn't want to tell her my name. And you don't tell her either. That'll be our secret.

DARLIN'

Oh, is Carol your stage name?

NORMA JEAN

Huh?

DARLIN'

Your stage name? All the famous actresses have stage names. Judy Garland. Marilyn Monroe, Audrey Hepburn.

NORMA JEAN

Uh okay. Carol is my stage name.

DARLIN'

That's so cool! I want a stage name!

NORMA JEAN

What do you want your stage name to be?

DARLIN'

Sparkle. No. Glitter. No. Kitty. No.

NORMA JEAN

Why do all your stage names sound like strippers?

DARLIN'

Mama, what's a stripper?

NORMA JEAN

Never mind.

DARLIN'

How about.... Jasmine!

NORMA JEAN

Jasmine is a pretty name.

DARLIN'

Good. That's my new stage name!

NORMA JEAN

Well that's fun.

DARLIN'

A stage name is the first step to becoming famous. One day all the papers will say Look at the Jasmine! She can dance! Look at Jasmine kick and kick and kick and kick!

NORMA JEAN

Alright Darlin' calm down.

DARLIN'

It's Jasmine!

NORMA JEAN

Okay Jasmine, Calm down. I need you to be quiet.

DARLIN'

Why?

NORMA JEAN

We don't want anyone to hear us.

DARLIN'

Why?

(Suddenly a loud knock on the door.)

DARLIN'

Mama, who's that.

NORMA JEAN

Shush. Darlin' I need you to be quiet. Go in the bathroom please. Please. Go.

(She goes in the bathroom and closes the door. NORMA JEAN freaks out. Then breaths. She goes to look through the peephole.)

NORMA JEAN

Shit. Uh, who is it?

OFFICER

Police. Can you open the door please?

NORMA JEAN

Whats wrong?

OFFICER

Just open the door please.

NORMA JEAN

Shit. Um, sure thing officer.

(She panics and calms again. Then opens the door.)

NORMA JEAN

Hello.

OFFICER

Good evening, ma'am. Are you Norma Jean Wilson?

NORMA JEAN

I um, well, I am.. Yes.

OFFICER

Can I come in. I have some questions.

NORMA JEAN

Of course.

(He enters. NORMA JEAN shuts the door.)

NORMA JEAN

What can I do for you officer?

OFFICER

Well, there's been an incident a couple towns over.

NORMA JEAN

An incident?

OFFICER

What do you know about a "Charles Vince"?

NORMA JEAN

Never heard of him.

OFFICER

Goes by Charlie. Eyewitnesses and the Highway Motor Inn say you shared a room in Virginia together.

NORMA JEAN

Oh, that Charles Vince.

OFFICER

He was found in a motel bathroom. Shot.

NORMA JEAN

Oh my god.

OFFICER

Ms. Wilson. I need to ask. When was the last time you saw Mr. Vince.

NORMA JEAN

I um, I don't know. We parted ways yesterday and I don't know anything else.

OFFICER

Why did you decide to leave?

NORMA JEAN

Well he uh-

(Darlin' comes storming out of the bathroom.)

DARLIN'

Mama I don't wanna hide anymore. I wanna go to the pool.

OFFICER

Why, hello, darling.

DARLIN'

How did you know my name?

OFFICER

Huh?

DARLIN'

Darlin', that's my name! But my stage name is Jasmine! Now I'm just like Mama! Her stage name is Carol. A stage name is the first step to becoming a star!

NORMA JEAN

Darlin'-!

DARLIN'

Stage Name!

NORMA JEAN

Jasmine. Why don't you go to the front and play with Ms. Stanley. She can teach you to play bridge. Then you can come back and teach me, okay?

DARLIN'

Okay. Then pool?

NORMA JEAN

We'll see baby.

(Darlin' runs out the door to the front. NORMA JEAN closed the door behind her.)

OFFICER

Cute kid.

NORMA JEAN

Thanks. She's my everything.

OFFICER

I'll bet.

NORMA JEAN

And I'll do anything it takes to protect her.

OFFICER

Do you remember your last conversation with Mr. Vince?

NORMA JEAN

It was nothing special. I said thank you for being so nice to us. And we left.

OFFICER

So nothing out of the ordinary?

NORMA JEAN

No.

(Officer writes notes down.)

NORMA JEAN

Officer...

OFFICER

Mercy.

NORMA JEAN

Officer Mercy. Who found him? If I can ask.

OFFICER

Housekeeper. Gave her quite a shock.

NORMA JEAN

That's terrible. I'm sure it was a surprise.

OFFICER

It was certainly a grizzly scene. It was too good for him to be honest.

NORMA JEAN

What do you mean?

OFFICER

Well, it was a very anticlimactic end to our investigation.

NORMA JEAN

Investigation?

OFFICER

Yes ma'am. To tell you the truth, we've been looking for Mr. Vince for some time now.

NORMA JEAN

Seriously?

OFFICER

Yes ma'am. He moved counties and we lost track of him but we've been after him for months. Several counts of robbery and attempted robbery. Assault. Sexual Assault. One girl was only twelve.

NORMA JEAN

Jesus.

OFFICER

I shouldn't be saying this but I was looking forward to watching him rot in a cell. I guess I'll have to settle for...

NORMA JEAN

I had no idea. If I had known, I wouldn't have let him anywhere near us.

OFFICER

I know. I can tell you're a good mother. I have to ask. Is there anything I should know about Mr. Vince?

NORMA JEAN

No. No. I'm sorry I don't know anything. But I hope you find out who did this.

OFFICER

Thank you for your time ma'am.

(Officer goes to leave. When he gets to the door,
NORMA JEAN stops him.)

NORMA JEAN

Officer Mercy.

OFFICER

Yes?

NORMA JEAN

He, um... you have to understand... he... he went after my child. My little girl. And I couldn't let him hurt her so... we left. We left and never saw him again. I'm sorry I don't know more.

OFFICER

Thanks, Ms. Wilson.

(Officer goes to leave and is stopped again.)

NORMA JEAN

Officer Mercy.

OFFICER

Yes, Norma Jean.

NORMA JEAN

If you do find the... the MAN.. who killed him. What will you do?

OFFICER

Well, I'd like to give him a firm handshake and a strong drink.

NORMA JEAN

Thanks, Officer.

OFFICER

Thank you Ms. Wilson. We won't be bothering you again.

(Officer exits. Norma Jean sits on the bed and starts to cry. After a while, Ms. Stanley and Darlin' comes running back in)

DARLIN'

Mom! Mom! Mom!

MS. STANLEY

I'm so sorry, Carol. I couldn't stop her. You got yourself a real spitfire there.

NORMA JEAN
(wiping tears away)

Oh, I know.

DARLIN'

Mom! Ms. Stanley showed me how to play cards and now I can teach you but I don't really remember all the rules but I can still show you and-

(Norma Jean grabs Darlin' and pulls her into a deep hug. Darlin' is confused but hugs her mother back.)

MS. STANLEY

Is everything okay, Carol?

NORMA JEAN

Yes. For the first time in a long time, I think it might just be.

(NORMA JEAN embraces Darlin' and smiles at Ms. Stanley.)

(Lights out.)

SCENE 2

Lights up on the same motel room. Early morning. Darlin' is asleep in the bed. Norma Jean is sitting up in bed. She hasn't slept. She looks at her daughter, then reaches over and dials the phone. She listens to the dial tones, not expecting an answer this early, but receives one.

NORMA JEAN

Oh. Mom. Hi. I wasn't expecting you to answer. I know it's early. Not great, if I'm being honest. I keep getting myself in trouble. I need help. No, Mom, I can't come home. I've already come this far. And who would want me back after all of this? No he wouldn't. Maybe I never should have left. I thought I could do this by myself. But no, Mom. If I go back then I'll never be able to leave. You can only muster up all the courage you have so many times. And I think I'm running out of bravery. I can't explain it Ma. I just know this is what I have to do. I just wish I knew how. I need help Ma. I need you to send me money. I had some but I.. lost it. Thank you. Nothing is open right now. But I'll call you in a couple hours from the Western Union. Somewhere outside St. Louis. I'll call you then. What? I mean, yeah. We can wait til tomorrow. If you need to. Well, when you get paid call me and I'll run down to the Western Union okay?

Thanks Ma. Oh I will. I'll tell her you're thinking over her.
And she loves you.

(Norma Jean hangs up the phone. She looks down at a sleeping Darlin' and smiles. They are so close yet so far away.)

(Lights out.)

SCENE 3

Lights up on the same motel room.
The next day. The front door is open. Darlin' is playing on the bed while Norma Jean is getting dressed.

DARLIN'

Mama? How much longer before we get to New York City.

NORMA JEAN

Should be soon baby. I have to run down and pick up the money your Grandma is sending and we will be on our way.

DARLIN'

Is Grandma coming?

NORMA JEAN

No. She's just sending money.

DARLIN'

Like thru the mail?

NORMA JEAN

No, not the mail, Darlin'.

DARLIN'

Then how does it work?

NORMA JEAN

I don't actually know baby.

DARLIN'

Can I come with you?

NORMA JEAN

No, baby. Just sit tight. I'll be back soon.

DARLIN'

Why can't I come with you?

NORMA JEAN

I'll be real quick.

DARLIN'

But I don't want to be here anymore! I'm tired of being in these stinky motel rooms. I wanna be in New York. Why can't we go now!

NORMA JEAN

We will go soon. I promise. Just be a good little girl til I get back.

DARLIN'

I'm sick of being a good little girl! I wanna go now! I want to go now! Now!

NORMA JEAN

Darlin', calm down.

DARLIN'

Now! Now!

(Darlin' begins a full blown tantrum.)

NORMA JEAN

Hey! Hey! No ma'am. I don't think you know who you're talking to. Sit down.

(Norma Jean wrangles Darlin' on the end of the bed.)

DARLIN'

But Mama!

NORMA JEAN

"But Mama" nothing! Now you look here. I need you to be a big girl for me. You understand? You know who cries and screams when they don't get their way? Little girls. You're not a little girl anymore. Remember what I said. Sometimes we have to do things we don't want to do. Now, I know this has been hard. Believe me, I know. But I'm going to need you to be strong for me okay.

DARLIN'

Okay.

NORMA JEAN

That's my girl.

DARLIN'

But we are still going to New York right?

NORMA JEAN

Yes, baby.

DARLIN'

And we are still going to see a Broadway Show?

NORMA JEAN

We will, uh, yes, baby. Now, stay here and I'm going to be right back.

DARLIN'

Where are you going?

NORMA JEAN

I told you. I'm going to pick up money from your Grandma.

(Norma Jean's mother appears in the open doorway.)

MOTHER

No need.

DARLIN'

Grandma!

(Darlin' rushes over to Mother.)

NORMA JEAN

Ma, what are you doing here?

MOTHER

I'm here to help. Hello my Darlin'.

DARLIN'

I missed you!

MOTHER

Oh I missed you too baby!

NORMA JEAN

Ma, I was just headed to the Union why did you come?

MOTHER

Cause you sounded like you were in trouble and that's my job as a mother isn't it. Plus you've never been very good in a crisis.

NORMA JEAN

That's not true.

MOTHER

Oh, Norma Jean, let's not fight. I've been driving all night. Come give your mother a hug.

NORMA JEAN

Did you drive through the night? How long of a drive was it?

MOTHER

I don't know. I slept most of the way.

NORMA JEAN

You slept? Then who drove?

(A man steps into the doorway. Its ART, Norma Jean's husband.)

ART

Hey there Norma Jean.

(Norma Jean, startled, turns around.)

NORMA JEAN

Art. What are you doing here?

DARLIN'

Daddy!

(Darlin' runs to her father and gives him a hug.)

ART

We came to get ya. Your ma said you was in trouble.

NORMA JEAN

I am not in trouble. I just needed some money. Mama, why would you bring him!

MOTHER

Why wouldn't I bring him? I wasn't going to drive myself.

ART

I came cause I was worried about you.

NORMA JEAN

Well, there's a first time for everything. I think you both should leave.

MOTHER

You called for help and we are here to help.

NORMA JEAN

You knew I wouldn't have wanted this. Don't pretend that you're here for my benefit.

MOTHER

Norma Jean, you're being dramatic. I don't know what you're talking about.

NORMA JEAN

Of course you do. I'm not stupid. I've never been stupid. You've wanted me to come home from the time I've left and now you bring him here!

ART

We were just-

NORMA JEAN

HEY! I'm not talking to you!

MOTHER

Don't talk to him like that?

NORMA JEAN

Don't tell me what to do! I don't need you to control my life.

MOTHER

I'm just trying to help.

NORMA JEAN

Then be my mother, not my boss!

MOTHER

Norma!

ART

Ma why don't you take Darlin' on a walk or something.

MOTHER

I've never done anything but what I thought was best.

ART

Come on, take a breather mom.

(Mother and Darlin' start to leave.)

DARLIN'

Can we go to get a snack?

MOTHER

Yes baby.

(Mother and Darlin' leave. Art and Norma Jean are left in a tense silence. Art tries to get close to Norma Jean.)

NORMA JEAN

Don't come near me.

(Art backs off.)

NORMA JEAN

You shouldn't have come.

ART

Well what else was I supposed to do? I got the little gift you left for me.

NORMA JEAN

And?

ART

And what? And nothing! What on earth would make you think I would sign anything like that. How was I even supposed to know anything was wrong?

(Silence.)

ART

Jeannie. Why are you doing this?

(Silence.)

ART

I ain't mad. I just want to understand. Haven't I been good to you? Given you everything you wanted? Damn I didn't think I was doing that bad of a job as a husband.

NORMA JEAN

I'm sorry.

ART

What?

NORMA JEAN

I never should'a married you.

ART

What do you mean? Don't you love me?

NORMA JEAN

No. I mean, I guess, in a way, I do, or did. But not really.

ART

Wow. Not was I was expecting to hear if I'm being honest.

NORMA JEAN

Then you really are a stupid as you look.

ART

It's just so sudden.

NORMA JEAN

That's the thing, it's not. If you knew anything about me-

ART

I know everything about you!

NORMA JEAN

No you don't! How could you? You can't know who am I or what I want if I didn't know those things?

ART

You're not making sense.

NORMA JEAN

But now I know what I want. What I want is to get away from you.

ART

I feel like I've missed a couple chapters of this story. Will you tell me what the hell is going on?

NORMA JEAN

Well let me fill you in. You are going to go home and I'm never going to see you again.

ART

Why don't you come with me?

NORMA JEAN

No! That would involve me seeing you again.

ART

Jeannie, just come home. Then everything can go back to normal.

(Art put his hand on her shoulder.)

NORMA JEAN

No! I don't want to go back. It took everything I had to leave.

ART

Jeannie.

(Art sits down on the bed. Norma Jean considers sitting as well, but doesn't.)

NORMA JEAN

Don't get comfortable buddy. You ain't staying.

ART

Are you going to let me say anything.

NORMA JEAN

No. Cause if you start talking then you are going to talk me out of it and I'll think I'm crazy just like you always do and I will not be giving you that chance. So get up and get out.

ART

Where is this coming from?

NORMA JEAN

This is me making up for years of mistakes. Of letting you walk all over me. Of doing what I'm told and not knowing myself well enough to expect anything else from my life.

ART

So now it's my fault that you do know what you want to do with your life.

NORMA JEAN

That I DIDN'T know what I wanted to do with my life. I know now. And I figured it out without your-

ART

My what? Norma Jean! This little tantrum you are having has absolutely nothing to do with me.

NORMA JEAN

You're right. What I want for my life has absolutely nothing to do with you! When will you understand that? I don't want anything to do with you.

ART

Then why did you marry me?

NORMA JEAN

I didn't want to marry you. My mother wanted me to marry you. I was getting out of school and it felt like the safest option and I didn't know what else to do.

ART

That makes me sound like some leftover pork n beans in the fridge.

NORMA JEAN

Well...

ART

Norma, you're being crazy. This little adventure is over. We are going home.

NORMA JEAN

No! For the first time I am actually fighting for what is the best for me.

ART

And what's best for you is for you to kidnap our daughter and flee across the country cause you think I'm controlling or something.

NORMA JEAN

See, you're doing it again. You're making me sound crazy. But I won't let you. I'll say it one more time. Get out!

ART

Or what.

(Art pushes her onto the bed.)

NORMA JEAN

(getting back up,)

You are so sad. But, like I said. This has nothing to do with you. This is about my life. And what is the best choice for me to make. So for the first time, I'm getting back up when you push me down. For the first time I am fighting for my future.

ART

Don't pretend your strong now. You've always been weak and that ain't ever going to change. You couldn't even talk to me to my face I had to chase you across the country like some scared little-

NORMA JEAN

Okay, yes. I had to run away to finally get the courage to leave. That was the best I could do. But you have no idea what I've been through since. I've made some mistakes but I'm not scared of you anymore. Not scared of myself anymore. Now, you better go before-

ART

Shut up Jeannie. You are coming home with me and that's that!

(Art grabs Norma Jean as the front door opens and Mother sees it all.)

MOTHER

Get your hands off of her!

(Mother runs in and pulls Norma Jean away.)

ART

Don't be so dramatic! I wasn't doing nothing.

MOTHER

What is going on?

NORMA JEAN

He was just leaving.

MOTHER

Well then you better get on your way. It's a long drive back.

ART

You can't possibly think I... You know how hysterical she gets...

(Darlin' stands in the doorway.)

DARLIN'

Daddy?

ART

Darlin'!

DARLIN'

You're leaving?

NORMA JEAN

Yes, baby he is. Come here.

ART

No baby, let me take you home. You're mama is crazy. You both need to come home. Come here, baby.

NORMA JEAN

Come on baby. Don't you want to go to New York? Don't you want to stay with me?

DARLIN'

Yes, mama.

ART

Baby come here with me. You need to go home.

DARLIN'

Mama said that sometimes we have to do things we don't want to do.

NORMA JEAN

This is not one of those times, baby. Come here.

ART

Come here Darlin'.

(Darlin' looks at both of them. Then runs to her mom and grandma.)

NORMA JEAN

I think you better leave.

(Art leaves.)

(Lights out.)

SCENE 4

Inside of yet another motel.
This time in Jersey, right
across the river from NYC.
Norma Jean, Mother, and
Darlin' all but crawl into
the room. It has been a long
night.

DARLIN'

Mama, I'm tired.

MOTHER

I know baby.

NORMA JEAN

Mama, can you help Darlin' into bed.

DARLIN'

But I don't want to go to bed.

NORMA JEAN

Yes you do baby.

(Darlin' starts to crawl into bed. MOTHER helps her.)

MOTHER

Come on, into bed. Close your eyes. Do you want to hear a story?

(Darlin' nods.)

MOTHER

Okay. Sit back, Darlin'.

NORMA JEAN

I'm gonna go get some ice.

MOTHER

No, baby, stay.

(Norma Jean turns around and sits on the bed.)

DARLIN'

What's the story about?

MOTHER

Well, this story is about a young girl who meets a prince. They fall in love and get married. And soon they got blessed with a beautiful baby girl. And they were both very happy but very scared. And one day, the beautiful prince fled his kingdom. Leaving the young girl alone with her beautiful baby. And the young girl had no idea how to raise a child. Years went by and the baby got older and older and the young girl got older and older until she was a woman with a child and she was still scared. So when another young prince wanted to come and sweep her daughter off of her feet, the mother was thrilled. She could stop being scared. There was someone who could care for my daughter and she would be safe and happy. And I was so happy that she was going to be happy that when she told me she wasn't, I didn't listen.

NORMA JEAN

Mama.

MOTHER

She thought she was doing the right thing. She didn't want her daughter to be as alone and scared as she was her whole life. But she didn't realize that she pushed her beautiful, strong daughter into a miserable life. And she's sorry. I'm sorry.

NORMA JEAN

Mama.

(They embrace. Darlin' had fallen asleep at some point during the story.)

MOTHER

I'm so sorry baby. I should have listened to you when-

NORMA JEAN

It's okay, mama. It's okay. It's over now. We are starting over. Me and Darlin'.

MOTHER

And me.

NORMA JEAN

Ma?

MOTHER

I'm done being scared. I need to start over too. We can start over together. I don't want you to be alone. Is that okay? Can I come?

NORMA JEAN

Of course you can Mama.

(They hug again.)

MOTHER

And Art drove off with the car so I'm kinda stuck with you.

NORMA JEAN

There are worse things.

MOTHER

So. What's the plan for tomorrow when we get to the city.

NORMA JEAN

I don't know. I really don't know. All I know is Darlin' is going to be very disappointed when we end up in Times Square and I don't have any money for a show.

MOTHER

Don't worry about her too much. She's young. She's got her whole life for her dream to come true. And so do you baby. Time for us to start a new life.

(Lights fade.)

SCENE 5

Later that night. The girls are sleeping when someone unlocks the door. In the darkness they enter and close the door. They trip on something and make some noise. Finally they turn the light on and Norma Jean is already sitting up pointing a gun at the intruder. Mother is holding Darlin' in her arms.

PHILLIPE

(Unfazed,)

Well, hello to you too.

(We get a good look at the intruder. He is tall, flamboyantly dressed and disheveled; wearing a scarf.)

NORMA JEAN

Who are you? What are you doing here? What do you want?

PHILLIPE

Whoa! Whoa! One question at a time. What are you doing in my room?

NORMA JEAN

You must have the wrong room. This is our room.

PHILLIPE

No it's not.

NORMA JEAN

Yes it is. I paid for it.

PHILLIPE

Damn! That fossil! I'm going to kill her.

NORMA JEAN

Who?

(PHILLIPE runs to the phone and dials the front desk.)

DARLIN'

Hello!

PHILLIPE

Hello, Darlin'.

DARLIN'

How does he know my-?

PHILLIPE

(in the phone, using a female voice,)

Yes, hello. Hi. This is the guest in 216. (to Norma Jean,) What's your name?

NORMA JEAN

Uh, Norma Jean.

PHILLIPE

Cute. (into phone,) Norma Jean. And I think that you gave me someone else's room and need another room. Yes, Carla, it's me. Who else would it be. What the hell? But this is my room! I've been here for months, Carla! That's not fair! I'm not leaving. Carla, turn your hearing aids up! This is my room and I'm not leaving! OH! Oh yeah! Well that's very Christain of you, Carla. I'll be praying for you too!

(He hangs up the phone.)

PHILLIPE

(Continued,)

Can you believe that. I've been so good to that grey haired crypt keeper and she just gives my room away cause I haven't paid her in a couple days. The nerve!

NORMA JEAN

I'm sorry. But who are you?

PHILLIPE

Depends on who you ask. Ask me, I'm Phillipe. Ask my mother, I'm Phillip. And ask my father, I'm dead. Nice to meet you.

MOTHER

Charmed I'm sure.

PHILLIPE

Today has been a real banner day for me, Darlin'.

DARLIN'

What happened?

PHILLIPE

Oh, sweetie, that is a long story. Trust me, my life makes Shelley Duval look like Jennifer Grey. But I'll get through it. You can't keep Baby in a corner. I just need some rest.

NORMA JEAN

I'm so sorry but you can't stay-

MOTHER

Just let him sit for a bit.

(PHILLIPE starts looking through the drawers and finds a new scarf.)

PHILLIPE

A ha!

(He switches scarfs. And for a brief moment, we see a sore on his neck. Norma Jean notices.)

DARLIN'

That looks good on you!

PHILLIPE

Thanks baby!

DARLIN'

Can I wear it?

PHILLIPE

Sure, baby.

(He hands the scarf to Darlin' but Norma Jean intercepts it.)

NORMA JEAN

Stop bothering him, Darlin'.

DARLIN'

But I wanna wear it when I go on stage, Mama.

PHILLIPE

Stage? Where are you going to be on stage?

DARLIN'

Mama and I are going to Broadway!

PHILLIPE

Oh yeah? Isn't that exciting?

NORMA JEAN

We are going to New York City.

PHILLIPE

You got family there?

MOTHER

She will when we get there.

NORMA JEAN

No. That's kind of the point. It's kind of a restart.

DARLIN'

And we are going to see a Broadway Show!

NORMA JEAN

We'll see.

DARLIN'

No! You said!

NORMA JEAN

I know what I said. Now I'm saying we'll see.

DARLIN'

Mama!

NORMA JEAN

Mom.

MOTHER

Come here baby. Let's try and get some sleep.

DARLIN'

No! I don't want to sleep. I want to go to Broadway you said we would! Did you lie to me?

NORMA JEAN

No I didn't lie.

PHILLIPE

Let's take a breath, baby.

NORMA JEAN

We will see one someday. I just don't have the money for that right now.

DARLIN'

But you said!

MOTHER

Darlin'!

NORMA JEAN

Do you remember what I said to you? We have more important things to worry about.

MOTHER

Listen to your mother.

NORMA JEAN

I love you so much. And I promise I'll do the best I can. You've had to grow up so much. I'm so sorry baby.

(Norma Jean hugs Darlin'.)

PHILLIPE

I don't want to interrupt this tense family moment, but if you're looking to get into a Broadway show I might be able to help.

DARLIN'

Really?

NORMA JEAN

What do you mean?

PHILLIPE

I mean, I know someone who may or may not work backstage at the, well, majestic Majestic Theatre where a certain 42nd Street is playing.

DARLIN'

Really? Really? Really?

NORMA JEAN

We can't go backstage though, right?

PHILLIPE

Beg for forgiveness, I guess.

MOTHER

We couldn't possibly.

PHILLIPE

Why not?

DARLIN'

Please! Please! Please!

NORMA JEAN

Why would you do that for us?

PHILLIPE

Cause I'm a nice guy.

NORMA JEAN

I've heard that before.

PHILLIPE

If there is one thing I've learned, it's life is short. And sometimes you actually get to do the things we want to do. Funny, I know.

NORMA JEAN

Mom?

MOTHER

Let's do it.

DARLIN'

Really!

NORMA JEAN

Thank you.

(Norma Jean reaches out her hand to shake his hand but before he grabs it she recoils slightly. PHILLIPE notices.)

PHILLIPE

I don't bite.

(Norma Jean shakes his hand then it moves to a hug.)

NORMA JEAN

Thank you.

PHILLIPE

No problem baby. *(to Darlin')* Now scoot over. You are sleeping in my bed.

(PHILLIPE lays on the bed with Darlin' and Mother. Norma Jean tucks Darlin' in.)

NORMA JEAN

Get some sleep.

(She tucks them in and turns out the light.)

(Lights out.)

SCENE 6

Backstage at the Majestic theater.
The sound of the audience is faint
in the distance. Jaime quietly
leads in Mother.

MOTHER

Wow. That really worked.

PHILLIPE

Told you. You just gotta be a little friendly with the doorman.

(Norma Jean walk in covering Darlin's eyes.)

NORMA JEAN

Maybe a little too friendly.

DARLIN'

Mama! Let me see!

(Norma Jean moves her hands and lets Darlin' see. She
is in awe. She starts to scream excitedly.)

NORMA JEAN

Darlin', you have to be quiet. We can't be caught back here.

MOTHER

She's just excited!

PHILLIPE

Crap! Hide!

(Everyone hides behind a curtain as an actor or a tech dressed in blacks runs by. Everyone peaks back out.)

MOTHER

We are going to get caught!

PHILLIPE

Shh!

NORMA JEAN

I can't believe you actually pulled this off.

PHILLIPE

Well don't sound so surprised! I told you I could work miracles.

NORMA JEAN

Well can you teach me how to do that. I'm going to have to get real good at making miracles real fast.

PHILLIPE

Don't be so hard on yourself. Look around. Look where you are. You've been on an incredible journey and you've made it all the way here. That's pretty-

NORMA JEAN

Miraculous?

MOTHER

No. This wasn't a miracle. I think it's safe to say you've been one of the most unlucky people the world has ever seen. You are here because you worked for it. You didn't uproot your life and go across the county on accident. Getting here wasn't the miracle. You are the miracle. And I'm so sorry it took me so long to see that.

NORMA JEAN

Mama.

(Norma Jean embraces Mother. A sweet moment. Then Darlin' runs in and joins the hug. A sweeter moment.)

PHILLIPE

Oh I can't stand it!

(He runs over and joins the hug.)

NORMA JEAN

Okay. Okay. Enough.

(Everyone breaks.)

PHILLIPE

Well. Shirley Temple, you've made it. You're on Broadway. How do you feel.

DARLIN'

I couldn't be happier! I'm gonna live here. I'm gonna live right here! That'll be my bed and that'll be my living room. And, and, and, I'll be here forever.

NORMA JEAN

Baby, you can't live here.

DARLIN'

You're right, Mama. I'm gonna live out there! (She points on to the stage.) I'm gonna be on the stage Mama!

MOTHER

Yes you are baby!

(The overture of 42nd Street begins.)

PHILLIPE

It's starting!

NORMA JEAN

Look, baby.

(Darlin' runs to the curtain and looks out.)

DARLIN'

Wow!

(The tap dancing starts. We hear the dancers off stage.)

DARLIN'

Look! They're tap dancing! I can do that!

(Darlin' runs to her bag and pulls out her tap shoes.)

NORMA JEAN

Darlin', why did you bring your tap shoes?

DARLIN'

Why not?

PHILLIPE

Well, she's got you there.

NORMA JEAN

Darlin', put those away. You won't need them.

(We hear the sound of someone falling on stage. A Chorus girl comes hobbling backstage holding her ankle.)

CHORUS GIRL

Crap. Crap.

PHILLIPE

Baby are you okay?

CHORUS GIRL

Yeah I'm fine.

MOTHER

Did you hurt your ankle?

CHORUS GIRL

No, I'm fine. My shoe just broke.

PHILLIPE

Do you have another pair?

CHORUS GIRL

In my dressing room. But I gotta get back on stage!

NORMA JEAN

What can we do?

DARLIN'

You can borrow mine?

CHORUS GIRL

What size are they, darling?

DARLIN'

How did you know my name?

NORMA JEAN

They are nines.

CHORUS GIRL

Nine?

DARLIN'

I'm big for my age.

CHORUS GIRL

That'll work! Thanks, kid!

(Darlin' gives her her shoes and the Chorus girl switches shoes and runs on stage. Tap dancing continues.)

DARLIN'

Look Mama! My tap shoes are on Broadway!

NORMA JEAN

I see! Baby, I'm so proud of you!

DARLIN'

Oh Mama! I wanna go! Please! Can I!

NORMA JEAN

No baby. They are doing a show. You can't go out there.

DARLIN'

But I wanna be on Broadway Mama! It's right there!

NORMA JEAN

No.

DARLIN'

(to Mother,)

Please!

NORMA JEAN

Don't ask her!

DARLIN'

Please!

(Mother looks at Norma Jean and smiles.)

MOTHER

We've come a long way, Norma Jean.

NORMA JEAN

You're saying I should let her go?

MOTHER

I'm just saying.

(Norma Jean sighs. She thinks for a moment.)

NORMA JEAN

We're going to get arrested aren't we?

PHILLIPE

Wouldn't be my first time.

(Everyone smiles at each other.)

NORMA JEAN

Okay.

DARLIN'

Really?!

NORMA JEAN

Go on. Dance on Broadway Darlin'!

(Darlin' is too excited. She kisses her mom and runs on stage. The show is interrupted and offstage we hear...)

DARLIN'

Hello Broadway! My name is Darlin'! Look what I can do!

(Lights out.)

(END OF PLAY)