**TOBY**

**Jack the Stripper – Female Actor 1 – “PAULA**”

**Context** – While attending a Hen do for her friend, PAULA has discovered (mid act) that the stripper is actually her son JACK and his manager is her daughter JENNA. PAULA confronts them backstage (the dining room of a suburban house) and orders that they cease operations on pain of chucking them out of the house.

PAULA Before you pack that, perhaps you should take a good look in it and see if you're proud of who's looking back. Now, I wont be long. I'll meet you outside.

*She continues to exit*.

JENNA  Perhaps YOU should take a good look as well?

JACK  Jenna!

PAULA   What did you say?

JACK   She said nothing.

JENNA  You heard me.

JACK  Don't.

PAULA  How dare you?!

JENNA  Someone needs to say it.

PAULA  I don't know what has got into you lately, but when your father hears-

JENNA Don't, Mum! Don't threaten that. Dad doesn't care. Don't you get it? He knows what we do and he doesn't care. He supports us.

PAULA  He wouldn't support this.

JENNA  Really? Then why did he go with Jack last week to help him pick out a new costume?

*Paula glares at Jack.*

JACK   He didn't actually...well, I...I needed a ride...and then my card declined.

PAULA  He paid for the outfit?!

JENNA  Yes. Because he SUPPORTS us. In WHATEVER we choose to do. Unlike you.

PAULA  How dare - do you know what I have sacrificed for you and your brother? I have given you EVERYTHING.

JENNA  We're not saying you haven't. We're not. It's just...Mum, you've changed. You're not the same as you used to be.

PAULA Of course I am.

JENNA  No, you're not. You're...I'm sorry to say this, but...you're starting to turn into Nana May.

PAULA  I am nothing like my mother!

JENNA  Yes. You are.

PAULA  I can't be. She's...she's a...

JENNA  A prude?

JACK  Old fashioned?

JENNA  Judgmental?

JACK  The Grinch that stole Christmas?

PAULA  Yes! All of the above.

*Pause*.

PAULA  And that's what you think of me, is it?  *(pause)* Right.

JENNA  It's not all the time, Mum.

JACK No, not all the time. And we still love you.

JENNA Of course we do. More than anything. But we don't feel that we can talk to you anymore.

PAULA You can talk to me.

JENNA  Really? Even if it's something you don't want to hear?

*She indicates the costumes. Pause*

PAULA  No. I am not my mother. And I resent you implying that I am. Now finish packing. We're going h-

JENNA Look, Mum!

*Jenna picks up the mirror and holds it right in front of Paula.*

JENNA Take a good look. What do you see? Nanna liked twin sets too, didn't she? How many do you own now?

PAULA Not...not that many.

JENNA  Really? And what about all those bright lip sticks you used to love? What happened to them?

PAULA Nothing...I-

JENNA  And when was the last time you even wore heels? You're at a party for God's sake!

PAULA  People grow up, Jenna!

JENNA Do they? Or do they just grow old?!

Pause.

JENNA  I'm sorry. That was...I just...

Jack  You still look nice, Mum. You do. Really nice.

JENNA  I never said she didn't. But the old mum would have hated looking just nice. Wouldn't she? What did you used to say?

Jack  Jenna-

JENNA  Mum?

PAULA  That nice is what people say when they don't want to say boring.

JENNA  Exactly.

*Pause.*

JACK Are you okay?

PAULA  Apparently not.

JENNA  Mum-

PAULA  I'm turning into the one person I swore I would never be. Do you know how that feels?

(pause)

No. You don't.

*Paula thrusts the mirror back at Jenna*.

PAULA  I can't look at that anymore.

(pause)

How could I let this happen?

Jack  It's not that big a dea-

PAULA  Do you know, when I was your age, Jenna, I traveled through Europe, and I sunbathed topless on every beach I came across. Topless! I didn't care how busy it was. Or how cold. I still did it. Because I was finally free of my mother's shadow. You can't imagine how freeing that felt. To not constantly feel like you're being judged. Or that every mistake you make is an embarrassment to the family. Finally, I could just let everything...hang out. And now? Now I'm judging my own daughter for the very same thing. I'm not just boring, I'm a hypocrite.

JENNA Mum, you're not -

PAULA  I am! Clear as day. And for my sins I will have to start to accept the truth. That we are all destined to turn into our mothers. No matter how much that terrifies us.

JENNA  Mum-

PAULA  I suggest you live now whilst you can. Before...before you too end up looking like this.

*She picks up the mirror again and stares into it.*

Oh, God.