

CAMELOT COURT

By Rita Weinstein

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STORY OF THE PLAY

The date is October 22, 1962. The place is the Camelot Court Trailer Park, somewhere in rural south Florida. Corryann Driggers, "sixteen and never been kissed," feels completely trapped by the poverty of her surroundings. Miss Ethel, her elderly mentor and neighbor, tells her there's never been such a time to be young. President Kennedy is leading us into a new world of space travel and the Peace Corps, Dr. Martin Luther King is preaching a message of love - it's a new world being born.

But maybe not. Russian missiles have been discovered in Cuba, just 90 miles away, and they're aimed at the US. Conflict over the missiles has brought the world to the brink of nuclear destruction. Under the threat of imminent death, everyone in Corryann's small world begins acting on his fears, missed opportunities, and failed dreams.

A handsome, idealistic, morally questionable drifter named Jack, and a practical, idealistic 16-year old African-American named Christopher Columbus (C.C.) Washington, suddenly enter Corryann's life. Violence follows, and Corryann's loss of innocence mirrors that loss for an entire nation. But there is a legacy of hope left as Corryann and C.C. set out together to seek a better future. *(Produced by the Group Repertory Theatre; Los Angeles, California.)*

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(5 M, 4 W)

CORRYANN DRIGGERS: Young, innocent girl, almost 16.

BEN DRIGGERS: Her half-brother, 7.

JESSE LEE DRIGGERS (the Major): Her father, 42.

RAYLEEN DRIGGERS: Her stepmother, 26.

ETHEL FARRADAY: Neighbor, retired teacher, 63.

ARLISS: Camelot Court's "good time" gal, 26.

CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS

(C.C.) WASHINGTON: African-American boy, 16.

JACK: An idealistic drifter, 22.

OCIE: Tavern owner, 65.

TIME: Late October, 1962.

PLACE: The Camelot Court Trailer Park, somewhere in rural south Florida.

SETTING

An imaginary state highway is off SR. Two mobile home facades, with peeling paint and cracked windows, face an open, central yard bounded by a few scraggly cabbage palms. The trailer SR belongs to the Driggers family; the trailer SL, to Ethel Farraday. The trailers have been there forever, set on stacks of concrete blocks. A telephone pole topped by a street light stands between them. A clothesline runs from the pole to one of the trailers. Several rusty lawn chairs sit under tattered awnings that extend from the trailer fronts. A TV antenna rises from a pole in the ground beside Ethel's trailer.

PROPS

ETHEL: Basket of wet laundry, clothes pins, face cream, curlers, towel, lipstick, shawl.
CORRYANN: Watch, school books, pail, radio, shoebox with mirror and hair pins, pencil stub and crumpled piece of paper, leather jacket, quarter, small case.
RAYLEEN: Small book, Bible, watch, suitcase, purse with compact and lipstick, coffee pot, bottle of cola.
OCIE: Brimmed hat, cup of coffee, doughnut.
JACK: Bedroll, switchblade, rag.
MAJOR: Bottle, cash, flask, worn tight-fitting military uniform, rusty revolver, handkerchief.
ARLISS: Book, mason jar of clear liquid, slip of paper.
BEN: Pail, books, tablecloth.
CC: Penny with a hole in it.

(See back of script for sound effects.)

ACT I
Scene 1

(AT RISE: ETHEL FARRADAY comes out of her trailer with a basket of wet laundry under her arm. She glances toward the highway at the sound of a SCHOOL BUS coming to a stop, then starting away again. A DOG BARKS. Ethel smiles and begins hanging her clothes on the line. The voice of CORRYANN DRIGGERS, is heard offstage.)

CORRYANN: *(Offstage.)* Why, yes, Frankie, I'll marry you. Annette will just have to get used to it. But first I want you to meet my best friend, Joley, who will absolutely DIE ... *(More BARKING OF DOG.)* You old dog, you! Keep your big feet off my "you-knows." You'll flatten 'em back down! Git! *(SHE enters from SR, her back toward Ethel, shooin' the unseen dog.)* Git! Oooh, look at me! *(SHE tries to brush mud off her dress.)*

ETHEL: Hi, honey.

CORRYANN: Hey, Miss Ethel.

ETHEL: I've been watching the clock all afternoon, waiting for you to get home from school. Well?

(CORRYANN begins to help ETHEL with the laundry.)

CORRYANN: Well, what?

ETHEL: Corryann Driggers, don't you be playing cat and mouse with me. The Carter boy, the one you said was eyein' you in class on Friday. What happened?

CORRYANN: I didn't exactly say he was eyein' me. He ate lunch with Susie Overhill. I ain't -

ETHEL: Now ...

CORRYANN: I'm never goin' to have a boyfriend! Sixteen and never been kissed. *(SHE flops into one of Ethel's lawn chairs.)*

ETHEL: Almost sixteen doesn't count, honey. Today's the 22nd of October. You have nearly a week yet. I wouldn't worry.

CORRYANN: A week to nothin'. Rayleen and the Major say they're right sorry, but they ain't - don't have - money for a party. Even if they did, who'd want to come here, anyway? Miss Ethel, sometimes I just want to die. If I could get away, if I could have been born someplace else, some other time ...

ETHEL: Some other time? Why, honey, there's never been a time like this to be young. An American boy just sailed around the world in a space ship ... and we got to see it with our own eyes! I got such a chill up my spine when that little bitty shining thing soared straight up into the sky. What was it you said?

CORRYANN: I don't remember.

ETHEL: Don't be silly. You put it in that lovely poem you wrote for the occasion. Come on, now.

CORRYANN: I said, "The bright fire billowing from its tail and the fiery sun glancing off its head gave it the appearance of an angel seeking the way back to heaven."

ETHEL: And what do we call that kind of imagery?

CORRYANN: Don't you ever quit?

ETHEL: No, ma'am, never. Just because they don't pay me to stand in a classroom anymore doesn't mean I've given up helping you young folk along. You want to be stuck here the rest of your life? You want to end up here like me?

CORRYANN: (*Reciting.*) "Metaphor: A figure of speech in which one object is likened to another by speaking of it as if it were that other, as, 'He was a lion in battle.'"

ETHEL: Good girl. You have a way with words, honey. That's what I'm trying to say. In the whole history of the world, when else could you see such a sight so you could say something so beautiful about it? (*CORRYANN shrugs.*) When I was born, the Wright brothers were still making bicycles. Now President Kennedy says we're going to the moon.

CORRYANN: You believe that?

ETHEL: Yes, ma'am, I do. Just don't go telling folks around here I said so. They already think I'm a communist for teaching Maybelle Washington how to read.

End of Freeview

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