

MATTIE: Eight o'clock! I have to feed Mr. Puss!

ALTHEA: Hurry back, dear.

MATTIE. (*Excitedly.*) I'll be right back.

(MATTIE crosses downstage while lights go out on ALTHEA and LEIF at the ping pong/puzzle table. A pin spot narrows on MATTIE, who now faces the audience. She holds an opened can of cat food in one hand and a spoon in the other.)

START

(Continued, speaking to the audience.) I don't have any special way to work a jigsaw puzzle. I wish I did. I wish there was some kind of trick I could tell you about, like the tricks I learned at the group home for how to get spaghetti stains out of linoleum. That would be lemon juice and elbow grease.

(Beat, smiles.)

Elbow grease isn't a real grease. It's what you say when you work hard. Well, that's what you do with a jigsaw puzzle, I guess: you give it a whole lot of elbow grease! Work, work, work, work, take a breath, go pee-pee, work, work, eat some pizza – sausage and mushrooms – work, work, work. Get sleepy, have some coffee, feed your cat so he doesn't get grumpy, work, work, go pee-pee again, work, work. And then it's over and you can take it apart and put it away and go get some sleep and watch Animal Planet and *Fashion Nine One One*. Is that a trick? I'm not sure. Althea has nimble fingers.

(She twiddles her fingers.)

Have you noticed?

END

(Lights go down here and come up on the basement. CONNIE MORRELL stands near the door, flanked by LEIF and ALTHEA, who