

MISS UNIVERSE

Setting: Stage right, living room. Center stage, kitchen. Stage left, bedroom. Set with typical furniture.

Cast: **Bun**, 13 year-old girl. **Momma** and **Daddy**, parents.

Living room and Kitchen are lit at curtain, enter **Bun** to kitchen, places backpack on table, enter **Momma** immediately. **Bun** moves to the refrigerator. There is an awkward silence.

Momma: Hi, honey.

Bun: Hi, Momma.

Momma (Lifts the backpack.): Not much homework today.

Bun (Rummages in the refrigerator, pulls out a soda.): Dad's root beer.

Momma: Bun, we need to talk.

Bun (Ducks behind the refrigerator door.): Yeah, Momma?

Momma: Bun, the -um- school called this afternoon. Is there something you'd like to tell me?

Bun (Closes the refrigerator door.): This afternoon?

Momma: Yes, they said you weren't in school.

Bun: But I *was* in school this afternoon.

Momma (Sighs.): That's true, Bun, but you weren't in school this morning, were you? And you left here at seven-thirty. Now is there something you'd like to share?

Bun (Sits at the table with her head down.): Oh, Momma.

Momma: Look at me, Bun, you can't be skipping school. Not even half a day. Honey?

Bun (Almost hysterically.): Oh, Momma! Am I so ugly?

Momma sits close to Bun trying to decide if she should console or admonish her when Bun throws her arms around Momma.

Bun: Why can't I look like you, Momma? Do I look like Daddy?

Momma: Sweetheart. (Stalling, silently laughing; dries Bun's tears with a napkin.): You look exactly like I did in high school.

Bun: I do? You were ugly then, Momma?

Momma: No Bun, and neither are you, you're a very beautiful young lady. Now sit up here and tell me what this is about. Where did you go this morning? (**Bun** tries to put her head back on the table, but **Momma** props up her chin.): What happened today, HoneyBun?

Bun (Blushing.): We went to Stacey's house, her parents work all day.

Momma (Alarmed.): Who's *we*?

Bun (Crying again.): Oh, Momma. Oh, *Momma!*

Enter Daddy Front door (Indicates his daughter's distraught condition, **Momma** shrugs and waves him to the living room. **Daddy** grabs a newspaper and starts for the recliner, then decides to impart some special fatherly wisdom): It'll all be fine by the time your married, Bun.

Bun: Oh, *Daddy!* (Her forehead bangs off the table.)

Daddy: Oh my God! (He heads for the recliner followed quickly by **Momma.**) What on Earth is going on?

Momma: I'm not really sure yet. Bun skipped school today with someone and now she's crying she's ugly.

Daddy: Ugly? She's the most beautiful girl in the whole world. Did you tell her that? The little degenerate; (points at Momma) chip off the old block.

Momma: I told her she looks just like I did in high school.

Daddy (Frowns, remembering.): You were the most beautiful girl in the whole world!

Momma: Let me refresh your memory, mister. In tenth grade you thought I was the most beautiful girl in the whole world. You wouldn't even glance my way in the ninth grade.

Daddy: You were ugly then?

Momma (Punches him.): You men.

Daddy: Must have been a productive summer break between ninth and tenth grades.

Momma: As I recall, it definitely was.

Daddy: Good, then. Bun only has a couple more months and she'll see--- some---augmentation? (Tries to read the paper.)

Momma: No, Mr. Specious, Bun is almost a full year younger than I was in each grade. (Guiltily.): We kind of started her schooling a bit early.

Daddy: Oh. (Peeks at the paper, then back.) Oh no!

Momma: Yeah. Listen, I've got to get back in there, you're no help at all. Some productive augmentation of all things. (Momma crosses to kitchen and sits.): All right, Bun, out with it, who is he?

Bun (Sipping her soda.): You listen to my phone calls, whom do you suppose?

Momma: Hey, that's not fair! Let's just say I overhear some of your histrionics. You do tend to get pretty excited at times, young lady.

Bun: I know, Momma, it's just that I like him soo much.

Momma (Flatly.): Oh, no. Not!—HoneyBun, Gd has girls lined up at his doorstep. Literally. Yesterday I drove past his house and there were *four* girls huddled on his porch.

Bun: I know, we saw you.

Momma: You did? *You* were there?

Bun: Yeah, I was there. Where else would I be?

Momma (Stands.) Did Gd make you skip? I'll call his mother right now, I'll---

Bun: *Mother!*

Momma (Sits again.): No. No I'm not. I won't, Bun.

Bun (Crying.): It was my fault, Momma. I had Stacey talk Gd into skipping class with me. He didn't even *want* to.

Momma: What on Earth happened this morning, Bun? You have to tell me. Tell me.

Bun (Looks away.): Nothing. We watched soap operas.

Momma: Watched soap operas? You and Gd all alone and you just watched soap operas?

(**Bun** takes a deep breath then hides her face in her hands, sobs.)

Momma: Honey, did you---You didn't---(Whispered.): Oh God, please.

Bun (Blurts out.): *No*, Momma! (Whisper.): I didn't take my *pants* off!

Momma: Your pants!

Bun: *Mommy!* (Jumps up and drags Momma to the bedroom and points.): Sshhh! *Daddy!* (Drops to the bed crying.)

Momma: All right, sorry. (Calmer.): It's OK, honey, but *tell* me what happened all morning.

Bun: It was just---at first---we just kissed. It was so nice, Momma, he's soo---then he---I---I let him---(Whisper.): My bra---(Dissolves into tears.)

Momma (Somewhat relieved, reflects on her daughter's gossamer contours.): But not your jeans?

Bun (Shakes her head.): No, Momma, he only tried once cuz he's supposed to, but I kinda stopped him, then we just watched soap operas for awhile. (Miserably.): He wanted to go back to school. He's not a bad guy, Momma, he never wanted to skip in the first place. It was so nice for awhile, then back at school---ohhh---(Leans over, moans and hugs her pillow.): I should have gone to class, they thought I was in class, but I just had to know. And I heard him---

Momma: What? Heard him what?

Bun: I heard him tell Stanley, he said, (Imitates Gd, deep voice.): Well, Stan, it was better than Miss Shenicks's English class, (Blurts out sobbing.): but Bun's no Miss America!

Momma: Oh, honey. (Rocks Bun a moment.): HoneyBun, this may sound dumb, but, maybe boys shouldn't steal second base on girls who play hopscotch.

Bun (Looks questioningly at Momma, then laughs sadly.): Oh, Momma, I don't play hopscotch anymore.

Momma: No, Bun, but I don't want you playing baseball with---

Bun: With Gd? With other boys? With whom do I get to play baseball, Momma?

Momma (Directly into Bun's eyes.): Honey, just play kickball this year, there's no stealing in kickball. Play baseball---later.

Bun (Pulls on her T-shirt hem.): Next year? Maybe? Oh boy, I sure hope so.

Momma rises and shudders: I don't. I think. (**Daddy enters, Momma** whispers to Daddy.): *Gd.* (Momma exits to recliner.)

Daddy (Acknowledges Momma, sits on the bed and kisses Bun's hair.): Sweetie, Gd is a pretty good kid, but you'll do better to ignore him until the twelfth grade. By then he'll be begging you to go to the prom with him.

Bun (Buries her face in Daddy a moment.): No, he won't, Daddy. Gd *could* go to the prom with Miss America if he wanted to.

Daddy (Stands and paces, picks up a glove and ball.): Hey, I got an idea, Bun; let's go out and have a catch. We haven't done that since softball season ended last summer. The new season starts next week, whattya say, Miss Universe, how about it? (Tosses Bun the Glove.)

Bun: Oh, Daddy. (Hops off the bed and fits the glove.): Glove's a little tight this year. (Daddy tosses Bun the ball.): Softball, huh? I don't know; I have to ask Momma.