

# PAGEANT PERFECT

## By Kelly Meadows

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## CHARACTERS

24 females, 11 males, extra players as needed; many of these parts are small and can be doubled – many of the players appear only in the pageant scene, and therefore can play the other characters who do not.

### CONTESTANTS

MISS ARIZONA - MARIANNE SAPLEY

*The pageant's driven her crazy – literally*

MISS CALIFORNIA - TERRI O'HARE

*Will win the pageant by any means*

MISS COLORADO - JUDY DELMONTE

*There are three girls with this name*

MISS IDAHO - SARA GRANGER

*You can hate her – in fact, you will! But she's still pretty*

MISS KANSAS - JUDY DELMONTE

*Another Judy DelMonte?*

MISS MONTANA - HELENA BRIDGER

MISS NEBRASKA - JUDY DELMONTE

MISS NEVADA - JOAN JONES

*She'll never win Miss Congeniality*

MISS NEW MEXICO - JUANITA MONTANEZ

*Family pressure threatens to destroy her good time*

MISS NORTH DAKOTA - MARY JO GOMPERS

MISS OKLAHOMA - JAN SMITH

MISS OREGON - LENNIE DRYDEN (a male role)

*"Miss" Oregon? Ha!*

MISS SOUTH DAKOTA - DOROTHY PARKES

MISS TEXAS - LINDSAY McCAIN

*The proverbial girl next door; has becoming Miss Texas gone to her head?*

MISS UTAH - JANE SWELLINGS

*Party up!*

MISS WASHINGTON - MATILDA MATTHEWS

MISS WYOMING - CARRIE WAKES

### In Corpus Christi, Texas:

HERBERT McCAIN – LINDSAY's father

ROSE McCAIN - her mother

*They love to bicker, but deep down.... deep, deep down, they're still in love... or are they?*

ROGER HICKMAN – LINDSAY’s fiancé

*Only thinks of himself, which hinders LINDSAY from only thinking of herself*

WOMAN 1, WOMAN 2, and WOMAN 3

*Three women at Lindsay’s party. Boy do they love to eat...and fight*

A YOUNG MALE GUEST

OTHER GUESTS at the party

**In Hollywood, California:**

JEREMY BREWSTER - *President of NatruLook Cosmetics*

*A sexist hog, but then, we’re all good at something*

“RAGS” UPTON - *his associate*

*Tries to be realistic, but... what’s the “Rags” for?*

“SISSY” SINCLAIR - *his associate*

*Loves putting on make up, but can it salvage that face?*

MARCI SINCLAIR – *Sissy’s cousin*

*MISS CALIFORNIA’s very feminist friend, by necessity*

**In Las Cruces, New Mexico:**

MR. MONTANEZ – *JUANITA’s Father*

MRS. MONTANEZ – *JUANITA’s Mother*

*Is family honor more important than their daughter’s happiness?*

*Darned right*

**In Salt Lake City, Utah:**

JIM-BOBBY BAKER - *the pageant host*

*In his 33rd year as host, but this crop of contestants is testing his patience*

BRIGGS CARLSON - *the pageant announcer (voice only)*

*Serious voiceover, even his wife has never seen him*

JUDGE - *at the pageant (other silent judges are advisable, but optional)*

*Can he be bribed? Only with enough money*

CAMERAMAN

AUDIENCE MEMBERS *(advisable, but optional)*

## PROP LIST

### ACT 1 SCENE 1

Lindsay wears a twist tie ring

### ACT 1 SCENE 2

Sissy Sinclair needs a purse, small mirror, and make up  
Brewster, Upton, and Sinclair should have briefcases and other  
“business office” items  
Brewster needs a check to write and a contract for Miss California

### ACT 1 SCENE 4

Upton needs a paper that symbolizes a picture of Miss Idaho

### ACT 1 SCENE 5

Mr. and Mrs. Montanez bring out a photo album

### ACT 2 SCENE 1

Miss Nevada gets flowers as third runner up  
Jim-Bobby needs cards (index perhaps) to interview contestants  
Upton needs money to stuff in the judge’s pocket  
Miss Oregon needs a wig to pull off

### ACT 2 SCENE 2

Mr. and Mrs. Montanez hand Juanita a travel pamphlet

### ACT 2 SCENE 3

Roger brings flowers to Lindsay

## PRODUCTION NOTES

Despite the play's title, most of the women involved in this play are not "Pageant Perfect." In the real world, most of us aren't beauty queens. Much of the humor in this play comes from the fact that no matter how hard they try, they are about as far from perfect as can be. (And that some of them aren't really trying at all.) There are several spots in the play that mention that the contestants in this particular pageant are being judged on factors other than beauty, so in many cases, the more tasteless and graceless the outfit, hair and make up, the more effective it can be.

This play has a lot of characters and several settings, however many of the locations can be portrayed very simply, and many of the characters can be doubled.

The two main sets should be Lindsay's living room and the pageant itself. Lindsay is from a typical middle class family. Scene one is set up for a party, the other scenes in her home are just the usual.

The pageant scene can be ornately decorated depending on time and budget, or simply a sparsely furnished stage with a bit of a backdrop. In either case, it should do its best to convey the glamour of a beauty pageant. A small section with a few audience members should be as far away from the main action as possible, but still visible from the "real" audience.

The set for NatruLook Cosmetics can consist of a few office chairs and a desk. The Montanez family home can be a rearrangement of Lindsay's living room, and their scene in act two can take place in front of the curtain, or in a small part of the stage if it's too difficult to reset everything in a timely manner. In fact, that short scene can take place while the rest of the stage is being reset for Lindsay's home.

There are a lot of opportunities for many players to have small parts, or for characters to be doubled. Sixteen females will be needed to portray the contestants. Practically all of the contestants can play a different role elsewhere in the play. With a younger cast, it gives an actress the opportunity to play a pageant contestant in that scene while perhaps playing an older character in another scene. Also anyone not specifically involved in Act 1 Scene 1 can most probably appear as an anonymous party guest in that scene. Silent characters, if available, can appear in the pageant scene as judges or other audience members.

Essentially, this is an “everything that can go wrong, will” play. Characters are motivated by greed and the promise of personal glory, but most of them aren’t willing to take the steps they need to get it. Those that are willing to go the extra mile lean towards bribery, cheating, and lying to get what they want.

The play follows these basic stories:

Lindsay McCain, Miss Texas, going for the pageant crown despite the protestation of her boyfriend, and getting way too full of herself in the process. Her parents, in a loveless marriage, over time decide to rekindle their romance.

Terri O’Hare, Miss California, becomes a pawn in the game of NatruLook Cosmetics, who try to buy her a victory so that she can endorse their product as a winner.

Juanita Montanez, Miss New Mexico, is pressured by her parents to win in order to uphold the family tradition.

Many of the other characters and contestants have their own quirks, and much of the success will rest on each contestant, as well as the other characters, exploiting this to the fullest...for instance, Marci being overly “feminist,” Miss Nevada being surly, Mr. Brewster being a chauvinist pig, and the pageant host Jim-Bobby Baker’s reacting to the contestants outbursts.

## SYNOPSIS

The pressure is on as the young contestants have been starving themselves for months. But there’s a lot more riding on the outcome of the 33<sup>rd</sup> Miss Western America. There’s ego, bribery, and family honor.

Take nineteen-year-old Lindsay McCain, Miss Texas. Once the girl next door from Corpus Christi, she’s now catapulted into a semi-national spotlight. If she doesn’t watch out, she’ll use her fame to become as obnoxious and hard to get along with as her parents. When Rose and Herbert McCain throw her a surprise party, she comes in with a surprise of her own – a new fiancé she met at the previous pageant in Austin.

Over in California, contestant Terri O’Hare is hired on as the spokeswoman for the financially ailing NatruLook Cosmetics. Well, sure, she has to win the pageant first, but that should be easy. Offer the judges a bit of money and we’ve got a deal. All she has to do now is

walk a straight line and hold her chin up – oh, and stop chewing all that gum! Wanna bet?

The Montanez family has a long tradition of winning beauty contests – back to the medieval days, when the winner was decided by war instead of judges. Can daughter Juanita handle the pressure? Her parents paint a grim scenario for anyone who disgraces their family's winning ways.

As things get closer, Lindsay's new found beau tries to talk her out of pursuing the title so they can get married immediately. She might, if only her father didn't forbid her to see him. All the girls, we find, have one issue or another, but they all agree on one thing – they hate Miss Idaho. And, well, they should. After all, she's pretty.

Jim-Bobby Baker, the pageant host, has more than enough to deal with as the young "beauties" parade past him, sharing way too much of themselves as they reveal their deepest secrets, their fondest dreams, and threatening to boycott the swimsuit competition (which they do). Truly, this set of young women isn't afraid to speak their minds.

Which one isn't a "miss"? Which one isn't a woman at all? Will this pageant truly be judged on the beauty inside? And when, for crying out loud, will this pageant be over so they can get something to eat? As the tension mounts, only one girl will walk away a winner, while the others will just walk away. From the opening parade of states through the four finalists, and the surprising conclusion, *Pageant Perfect* provides a fresh and hilarious look at today's "modern woman".

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### ACT 1

### SCENE 1

**AT RISE: Corpus Christi, Texas: the McCain family living room is set up for a party, with decorations, a buffet table full of food perhaps, a sign that says “Congratulations Miss Texas,” and the like. HERBERT and ROSE McCain, along with several friends and acquaintances of all ages, are awaiting the arrival of LINDSAY McCain, 19, who has just won the Miss Texas beauty pageant. One end of the stage should have the front door, with a window to look out. While people stand around talking, three middle-aged women in particular are munching from the goodie-table and watching the door. The more they eat, the better.**

FIRST WOMAN: **(crunching a chip)** Where is she?

SECOND WOMAN: **(excited, and with a big dollop of food herself)**  
It's almost eight. Lindsay should be here any minute!

FIRST: **(excited as well, perhaps too much so)** I'm so happy for her.  
Our own Lindsay McCain, winner of the Miss Texas beauty pageant!

THIRD WOMAN: **(also with a face full of food)** I don't like it. It's just perpetuating the myth that women are nothing to men but pretty, petty playthings.

SECOND: You're not perpetuating any myth with all that sour cream running down your chin.

THIRD: **(stuffing more into her mouth)** You know what I mean.

FIRST: You're just jealous. When you entered Miss Texas they put you in a special category for livestock.

SECOND: **(to first)** When you entered Miss Texas, Texas wasn't even a state.

FIRST: **(dreamy)** Just think! She comes from our own town of Corpus Christi! And now, after a weekend of partying and celebration, it's off to the Miss Western America Pageant.

SECOND: I'm so happy for her! I wish it would happen to me some day.

FIRST: **(like a schoolteacher)** Not until you put down those chips and sour cream.

THIRD: And get a face-lift, a tummy tuck, and a nose job.

SECOND: Isn't that your third plate of food tonight? You wear it well.

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THIRD: (**offended**) I beg your pardon!

FIRST: (**to THIRD**) She's right. You've been eating all night. And you don't even like this family.

THIRD: I don't like a family that would let their daughter cheapen herself by entering a contest that judges on nothing but looks, figure, and personality.

SECOND: I understand that. You're up to strike three already.

FIRST: (**dreamy**) Now she gets to spend a whole year traveling all over the state of Texas. And if she wins, all over the western United States. Fargo, Omaha, Tulsa, Wichita...

THIRD: Kind of makes you glad you're ugly. (**walks away**)

FIRST: (**shoots THIRD a dirty look, then continues**) Hollywood, Las Vegas...

SECOND: It doesn't matter. She probably won't win.

FIRST: What makes you say that?

SECOND: Because once she butts up against this snack table, she's had it.

***(They mingle, and the action focuses on her parents, HERBERT and ROSE McCain, who are waiting impatiently near the door.)***

HERBERT: After all this money I spent on her, she could at least condescend to show up on time.

ROSE: It's a surprise party, Herbert.

HERBERT: I hope she didn't do anything stupid like fall in love. You *know* what kind of people are running around in Austin these days. And she'd better not have anything pierced.

ROSE: So there *are* still secrets between mother and daughter! (**HERBERT glares at her, so SHE changes the subject**) I'm so excited for her! This is a marvelous opportunity.

HERBERT: I don't know. It seems like she's throwing away her life. (**looking at his wife**) Beauty doesn't last, you know.

ROSE: It only needs to hold on for a year. After that she can wither away like an old prune.

HERBERT: Like you did?

ROSE: (**belts him, and gets louder, gaining the attention of others around them**) It's probably the result of living in a loveless marriage, Herbert.

HERBERT: How could I find love... you never let me out of your sight.

ROSE: Well, now is your chance. I'm not wearing my glasses.

HERBERT: Or your teeth! (**ROSE elbows him. They suddenly notice everyone's stopped what they're doing to listen to the argument. HERBERT looks out the window; notices LINDSAY**)

**out the window, calls to the crowd)** Everyone be quiet. She's coming!

THIRD WOMAN: Now? I was just beginning to enjoy myself. **(to everyone else)** I told you it would never last.

ROSE: It's lasted 23 years. Twenty-three long, unhappy, miserable years. Now give me a minute while I put on a happy face. **(ROSE and HERBERT both turn around and come back smiling)** There! And by the way I've been having lunch with the mailman.

HERBERT: Stop, Rose-

ROSE: Stop? I'm just-

HERBERT: No, stop. We have a common enemy! Who's that with her?

ROSE: It's just the cab driver, I'm sure.

HERBERT: She just kissed the cab driver.

ROSE: So did I. **(HE glares at her)** Oh, well not *that* one! **(defending herself further)** I was out of tip money! **(looks again)** They do seem a bit close, Herbert.

A FRIEND: **(looking out the window)** Ew, look at that. They're-

HERBERT: Quiet!

**(Lights go out, and LINDSAY enters with her new fiancé, ROGER HICKMAN.)**

EVERYONE: **(lights up)** Surprise!!!

LINDSAY: **(overwhelmed)** Wow! I certainly didn't expect to see all of you here! **(goes to some people)** Mom, Dad, Tom, Elaine, thank you all for coming- **(up to THIRD woman, changes her attitude)** Who are you?

THIRD WOMAN: You don't know me. I just came for the buffet table.

LINDSAY: Great! I'm starving. **(goes to help herself, second woman screams)**

SECOND WOMAN: Noooooo!

LINDSAY: What?

SECOND WOMAN: **(in front of the food)** Not until the pageant is over! I won't have you going to the finals in Salt Lake City looking like a milk cow.

LINDSAY: It's a tortilla chip. **(SECOND WOMAN glares at her)** Just a tortilla chip. **(off the cuff, as SHE scoops one up)** With sour cream, ranch dip, guacamole, lots of cheese, and some green onions for nutrition.

SECOND: **(knowingly)** That's how it starts.

LINDSAY: You've got it all wrong. This pageant isn't about beauty. It's a celebration of the woman within. You should have seen all the nerds and geeks there.

HERBERT: (**looking over ROGER, suspiciously**) Lindsay, who's this you brought with you?

LINDSAY: (**shoving food into her mouth**) Oh! I almost forgot. This is my fiancé, Roger Hickman. (**SHE shows off a ring**) Roger, I want you to meet my parents.

ROGER: It's a pleasure.

HERBERT: (**in shock**) You're engaged?

ROSE: Dear, how come we haven't met this young man?

LINDSAY: I just met him myself. At a party after the pageant.

ROGER: (**thinks it's cute**) A wild party!

ROSE: And you got engaged?

ROGER: (**defensive**) Lindsay and I are right for each other.

HERBERT: (**arms around them both, concealing his distaste for the situation, but not very well**) Now, I know you're young and know everything, but don't you think you're jumping into things a little too quickly?

LINDSAY: I thought about it all night.

SECOND WOMAN: Better than that than she come home from the pageant and live the rest of her life a spinster.

FIRST WOMAN: *You did.*

SECOND: At least I *got* to the pageant. You couldn't even make captain of the chess club.

FIRST: My bishop took your queen and you never forgave me. Ten moves.

SECOND: Cheat.

FIRST: Wuss!

SECOND: My queen wasn't on that white square and you knew it!

ROSE: Ladies! (**moves them out of the way**) We need to talk to our daughter. Now Lindsay, I know we're at a party, and I know we're at *your* party, and (**sweetly**) I know you've just been crowned the most beautiful girl in the state of Texas – (**not so sweetly**) but this is really zapping my zucchini!

LINDSAY: Mom, didn't you and Dad get engaged after just a few days?

ROSE: Yes we did, come to think.

LINDSAY: (**oblivious**) And you've had 23 wonderful years together.

ROSE: We had *five* wonderful years together. Five so-so years, and (**gets more and more hateful as SHE goes on**) 13 wretched, anguished, miserable, loathsome – (**catches herself**) anyway, let me see that ring!

LINDSAY: Oh it's just a twist tie from a bag of burger buns until we can afford the real thing.

HERBERT: I'll have both your buns on a platter if you don't-

FIRST WOMAN: You leave her buns alone until after the pageant. She needs them just the way they are.

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LINDSAY: Stop it, both of you! I'm nineteen years old. I'm old enough to know what I'm doing. I love Roger and we're marrying right after the pageant. (**primps a bit**) Unless, of course, I win.

THIRD WOMAN: (**dropping by HERBERT**) Remember what they say: beauty or brains, pick one.

ROSE: Lindsay got both, (**looking at HERBERT**) because somebody didn't get either.

HERBERT: Lindsay, you give me no choice. I'm your father, and I will not allow you to marry a man you just met at some cheesy party less than 24 hours ago.

LINDSAY: (**getting a bit infantile**) It was not a cheesy party! It was a veggie party. Roger and I are going to eat healthy after we get married! (**SHE says, while pushing SECOND WOMAN out of her way and taking a big swath of chips and dip. The WOMAN scowls, so LINDSAY defends herself**) I said, *after* we get married.

HERBERT: Lindsay, I want you to be careful. I don't want you to make the same mistake I made.

ROSE: You didn't make a mistake, Herbert. You married much better than I did.

LINDSAY: My future is my decision. This is the modern world now, and women are capable of making their own decisions and taking charge of their own lives.

HERBERT: That must be some cow pie in the sky garbage they taught you at the pageant.

LINDSAY: Yes, it was! They taught me to stand up for what I believe in. And I believe in Roger!

HERBERT: Lindsay! You will not marry this man.

LINDSAY: (**childish**) You never let me do anything!

HERBERT: And I won't have you talking to me that way! I'm not one of your loser friends!

YOUNG MAN: (**taking the attention**) Hey guys, he thinks we're losers.

HERBERT: You know what I mean.

YOUNG MAN: No, Mr. McCain, I don't. (**very calm, and annoying, taking center stage**) Perhaps you could explain to us why you let your daughter associate with losers. Maybe that explains why she picked a barb bag loser like Roger. Since you invited us losers to the party, and since all she knows are losers, maybe that's why she picked a loser like Roger to spend the rest of her life with, dude!

HERBERT: Oh great, a psychology major gone berserk. I'm gonna *dude* you right up your-

THIRD WOMAN: Now *this* is a party!

HERBERT: Yes, it is. And for the rest of the evening, we're going to have a good time. (**nobody moves**)

ROSE: **(to the crowd, demanding)** You heard the man. Have fun!  
**(looking to HERBERT)** Someone might as well. **(music starts a bit and people start talking again, but LINDSAY is pouting in a corner, and ROSE approaches her)** Lindsay, this is your party. Now you get out there and enjoy yourself. **(SHE doesn't move)**  
Now! **(SHE goes to ROGER)**

ROGER: You don't think they'll be a problem, do you?

LINDSAY: Oh, no. I know how to deal with Daddy.

ROGER: That's good. Because the minute I saw you, I knew you were the girl for me.

LINDSAY: And I know you're the man for me.

ROGER: I love you Lindsay. And I'm going to apply for a job just as soon as the Krispy Kreme opens tomorrow.

**(The three WOMEN come by.)**

THIRD: You looked simply marvelous on TV last night. Stunning!

SECOND: How do you know? You didn't even watch the show.

FIRST: Bitter! All I have to say.

A FRIEND: Did you get a lot of dough?

LINDSAY: **(giddy)** Let's just say I've never seen so much money in my life!

FRIEND: What are you going to do with it?

THIRD WOMAN: **(everyone starts bunching up around her)** Give it to the needy.

SECOND WOMAN: The symphony!

FIRST: The Association for the Beautification of Corpus Christi!

SECOND: **(to FIRST)** You could donate to that by moving out!

FIRST: **(getting her back)** Bishop takes queen.

THIRD: **(interrupting)** The airport, we could use another runway.

FIRST: The church choir!

A FRIEND: The botanical gardens!

SOMEONE ELSE 1: A bigger parking lot at the mall!

SOMEONE ELSE 2: A new sports complex!

SOMEONE ELSE 3: **(everyone's getting in on this)** Bail for my sister!

FRIEND: **(hopeful, after a pause)** I'll take some.

LINDSAY: **(a bit snooty)** I'm keeping it. **(everyone looks unhappy)** All of it. **(walks away)**

ROGER: **(to everyone else)** We're going to use that money to set up when we get married.

FIRST WOMAN: I think *someone* needs to find a job.

HERBERT: **(walking in on this conversation)** I think *someone* needs to find somewhere else to go.

ROGER: **(a bit too familiar)** Not getting along with the misses, are ya?

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HERBERT: I was referring to you, my young man.

ROGER: Oh yes, we haven't met formally. I'm Roger Hickman. And I'll just call you Dad. **(extends his hand)** It's a pleasure...Dad.

HERBERT: If you don't leave immediately, I'm going to call the police.

ROGER: **(still trying to be suave)** Uh...Dad!!

HERBERT: You heard me. Get out!

ROGER: You can't do this to me. I'm engaged to your daughter.

HERBERT: That's *exactly* why I can do this to you! **(people start to notice)**

ROGER: **(as HERBERT is tossing him out the door)** What about Lindsay?

HERBERT: I don't think she'll be leaving the house for a very long time... **(HE pushes ROGER out and slams the door)**

ROGER: **(from without)** Daaaaaad!

LINDSAY: Daddy!

HERBERT: I'm sorry honey, Roger had to leave suddenly.

LINDSAY: He's got nowhere else to go!

SECOND WOMAN: **(slipping some food into her purse)** He's a mooch! I wouldn't trust him.

LINDSAY: Some party!

THIRD WOMAN: **(loves the conflict)** I'll say!

LINDSAY: You can't do this to me. I'm Miss Texas. I'm the pageant queen! **(taking control, as everyone is stunned by her outburst)** I am this state's ambassador of charm, personality, and good will! It's not like I won Miss Wyoming or some piddly ol' state where nobody lives. Texas is a vast, untamed country, and I am its queen. I beat out some hefty mamas for this title and I want the respect that is due someone who has overcome obstacles and come out on top. So from now on, I am no longer Lindsay McCain. I want to be addressed as Miss Texas!

ROSE: **(lets her calm down for a bit, knocks on her daughter's head to see if anyone's at home)** Uh, Miss Texas?

LINDSAY: Yes, Mrs. McCain?

ROSE: Miss Texas... **(changes her approach)** Do you want me to send you to your room?

LINDSAY: **(drops the façade)** Oh, all right.

ROSE: Good. Now it's your party. Have some fun.

HERBERT: **(nobody moves, because of course, this has been a bit of a wash, not to mention very interesting. HERBERT finally picks up the slack)** Hey, you heard the old broad... **(leads several in saying along with him)** parrrrrrrr... tee!! **(Music starts up, and the people dance for a bit, then the lights go down.)**

SCENE 2

**AT RISE: Hollywood, California: the headquarters of NatruLook Cosmetics. This can be a small office with a table and some chairs, or an ornate office with a big desk, leather chairs, and the like, depending on budget, stage space, what have you. If there's a curtain, this scene can take place in front, while the McCain scenes take place on the full stage. At this meeting are the company president, JEREMY BREWSTER, and his associates, 'RAGS' UPTON and SISSY SINCLAIR. BREWSTER has been president of this company for a long time, and it's obvious the other two have been around for a while as well. They should all be in business attire.**

BREWSTER: As you know, I have called this meeting for a very important reason.

SINCLAIR: **(putting on makeup; SHE should spend most of this meeting looking in a small mirror and redoing her face)** We know. What gives?

BREWSTER: Miss Sinclair, will you stop looking at yourself and look at me?

SINCLAIR: It's a woman's duty to be pretty.

BREWSTER: Stop it. That's old thinking and you know it.

SINCLAIR: We ran it in our last ad campaign just three weeks ago. I bought into it.

BREWSTER: Well it flopped. Our sales are dropping, people aren't buying our products, our commercials aren't working, and, frankly, we don't know what's happening out there.

UPTON: Maybe it's because we produce cheap crap.

BREWSTER: Thank you, Mr. Upton, but that's not what I meant.

UPTON: Yes it is. We make stuff in Shanghai paying Chinese women ten cents an hour. It falls off your face like snow melting in Miami.

SINCLAIR: **(wiping something off and starting over again)** Yes, we never could find someone on a hidden camera interview to say she used it. Look at me, I use it all the time.

UPTON: See, I told you it doesn't work.

BREWSTER: Miss Sinclair is far past an era that any amount of makeup can salvage. Now, we aren't going to get anywhere by looking at our past mistakes. NatruLook Cosmetics needs something new. A new product, perhaps, or a new image. Something that will make people see us in a new light.

SINCLAIR: Any ideas, Mr. Brewster?

PRESIDENT: If I had any ideas, I wouldn't have called this meeting. That's what I brought you in here for.

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SINCLAIR: You're the company president, you tell me.

UPTON: **(to SINCLAIR)** No, don't try the blue. Really... please... don't try the blue **(to BREWSTER)** If she tries the blue I quit. I can't watch.

BREWSTER: Miss Sinclair, how many times do I have to tell you not to try the blue at a staff meeting?

SINCLAIR: Blue is my color. I like blue. And if you don't want to be bounced on your butt out of here on harassment charges, Rags, I suggest you let me go with the blue.

BREWSTER: Rags?

UPTON: Don't ask.

SINCLAIR: He's obviously never asked you to wash his-

BREWSTER: **(taking control)** Mr. Upton, Miss Sinclair, I really hate to say this, but... it's a jungle out there. If we're going to survive, we're going to have to find something, or someone... **(an idea comes to him)** that's it!

UPTON: What's it?

BREWSTER: Someone! A name! A celebrity. Yes! An endorsement. Someone pretty, bouncy, and stupid enough to use our product.

SINCLAIR: **(still not happy with how SHE looks)** I'll go for the stupid. Even the blue doesn't work.

UPTON: How are we going to find a celebrity to endorse our lowly line of cosmetics?

BREWSTER: Money. She doesn't have to like the makeup. She has to like the check. And besides, for the ads, we'll put her in Estee Lauder.

UPTON: Oh!

BREWSTER: Yes!

UPTON: Oh! I had it, but that blue distracted me. **(holds a paper up in front of SINCLAIR)** Last week was the Miss California Pageant. And the winner...

BREWSTER: The blonde bombshell...

SINCLAIR: **(pushes paper away)** She's an idiot.

BREWSTER: Yes, she is. Terri O'Hare. From right here in West Hollywood.

SINCLAIR: Idiot.

UPTON: Our future!

SINCLAIR: Idiot.

BREWSTER: Perhaps you should stop saying that while you're looking in that mirror.

SINCLAIR: I'm peering over the top at you. She's a friend of my cousin, Marci. I've met the girl, and she's an idiot. I doubt she could even read a cue card.

BREWSTER: Miss Sinclair... or Sissy, as I've heard it said...

UPTON: Sissy?

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SINCLAIR: Rags!

BREWSTER: Whatever. She doesn't have to read, she doesn't have to act, and she doesn't have to perform. All she has to do is sit there and look pretty.

SINCLAIR: Like me.

BREWSTER: Like you. (*whoops*) No, not like you!

UPTON: Well we better move on it! Everyone forgets who Miss California is about five minutes after she wins the crown.

BREWSTER: But! (*a bit sneaky, something up his sleeve*) Mr. Upton, but! they won't forget... if she wins the Miss Western America Pageant... will they?

SINCLAIR: I will. I never watch that crap. But I do like Olympic boxing.

UPTON: If she's such an idiot, as "Sissy" puts it, won't she bomb out in Miss Western America?

BREWSTER: (*still knows more than HE lets on*) No, Mr. Upton, she will not.

UPTON: How can you be so sure? It's all a popularity contest. Your legs aren't right, you get a run in your hose, you pig out on Doritos, or you trip on your evening gown, you're history.

BREWSTER: Mr. Upton, Miss Sinclair, or Rags and Sissy if you must, if the fate of NatruLook Cosmetics depends on Terri O'Hare winning Miss Western America, we're going to go to Salt Lake City and make sure that Terri O'Hare wins Miss Western America. Now we need a plan of attack. NatruLook has a 50-year history of coming out on top and we can't afford to close down our company just because some pageant judge is gawking at the wrong set of legs.

UPTON: Isn't that cheating?

BREWSTER: It's not cheating, it's bribery.

UPTON: In Salt Lake City? They'll never let you get away with bribery in Salt Lake City.

BREWSTER: It may take an Olympian effort, but bribe we must. Now, Sissy, you call your cousin Marci and get Miss O'Hare's buns, stems, and tulips up here in this office so we can talk money. Big money. Mr. Upton, you can start working on an advertising campaign. (*to SINCLAIR*) And by the way, that blue doesn't work.

SINCLAIR: Mr. President, may I say something?

BREWSTER: Sure. My door's always open.

SINCLAIR: (*matter of factly*) You're a sexist hog.

BREWSTER: The entire cosmetics industry is built upon the fact the any man, when given the opportunity, is a sexist hog. Frankly, I prefer women without make up. An all-natural girl, you might say. But I thank you for the reminder. And speaking as a sexist hog, (*more emphatic*) that blue doesn't work.

**(UPTON makes a face at SINCLAIR.)**

SINCLAIR: Rags! **(which takes the sneer off his face)**

**SCENE 3**

**AT RISE: The McCain's living room, a few days after the party. There's a knock on the door, and LINDSAY goes to let in ROGER. They both act like they're sneaking around.**

LINDSAY: My parents aren't here. You can come in now.

ROGER: Good. I need to talk to you.

LINDSAY: I need to talk to you too. My parents aren't too happy about our plans.

ROGER: I noticed. You father is intolerant, judgmental, and possessive. I think he's smothering you.

LINDSAY: Roger!

ROGER: You can deny it all you want. It's just your defense for being raised in an intolerant, judgmental, and possessive environment. Besides that, once he sees what kind of person I am, I'm sure he'll change his mind.

LINDSAY: I hope so. It wouldn't look too pretty if Miss Western America wound up not speaking to her parents. And Miss Western American *has* to look pretty. There, I'll tell him that! **(dreamy)** Just think. I'm off for an exciting week in Salt Lake City!

ROGER: What's so exciting about Salt Lake City?

LINDSAY: I grew up in Corpus Christi, Texas. You make the call.

ROGER: **(on a more serious note)** Lindsay...

LINDSAY: What, Roger? **(pause)** You are coming, aren't you? I have a comp ticket for you.

ROGER: Of course I'm coming. It's just that...

LINDSAY: Yes...

ROGER: You see...

LINDSAY: **(annoyed)** Spit it out!

ROGER: It's just that... if you go and win the pageant... well not to say that I don't want you to win, and not to say that you aren't the most beautiful girl in the western United States, and not to say that-

LINDSAY: Why don't you say what you're *going* to say, rather than what you're *not* going to say?

ROGER: If you win, it means that you'll be busy gallivanting all over the states and I won't be able to see you or spend any time with you for the whole year.

LINDSAY: **(duh!)** Right.

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ROGER: I don't think I can wait that long.

LINDSAY: (**prissy, perhaps tossing her hair**) You're gonna have to. Since I *am* going to win.

ROGER: (**swallowing hard**) I think it's in our best interest if you give up the title of Miss Texas and let the first runner up go to the pageant.

LINDSAY: And give up *my* chance to win? *My* chance for glory? *My* chance for fame? Sorry, but this is about *me*! What kind of psychotic egotist are you anyway?

ROGER: An egotist who's in love with you and can't stand the thought of spending the next year without you.

LINDSAY: Women get careers out of these pageants! They get money. They get their whole life given to them on a platter. And you want me to give it up to marry you? I hardly even know you!

ROGER: That, and I thought we'd better tie it up now before your father busts my lights out.

LINDSAY: My heart is set on this. Ever since I was a little girl and I won Miss Puny Corpus, I have always wanted to win a major American pageant. And I've always wanted to hear the Mormon Tabernacle Choir – live. And you want me to give that up just so we can get married. I can marry you anytime.

ROGER: I'm sorry, Lindsay. I didn't realize that it meant so much to you. I guess I was just thinking of myself. But I don't know what I'm going to do for a year without you.

LINDSAY: You can watch me on TV making charitable appearances and doing guest shots on *The Young and the Restless*. (**a bit overconfident**) You can support me as I begin my career as an actress, model, and all around beautiful woman.

ROGER: I guess so. And knowing that it's you I'm waiting for will make it more bearable.

LINDSAY: Thank you, Roger. I love you. (**they embrace**)

ROGER: Besides, chances are you won't win anyway.

LINDSAY: (**backs off, angrily**) Roger!

ROGER: I've been searching out the winners on the 'net. Have you seen Miss Idaho? Miss Arizona? Oh mama! You have your work cut out for you.

LINDSAY: Roger! (**starts to hit him with a pillow, and ROSE and HERBERT enter while SHE's in the middle of it**) You disgusting, revolting, pigheaded... I don't know why I ever agreed to-

HERBERT: (**authoritative**) What is he doing in this house?

LINDSAY: (**hitting him one more time**) We're arguing. He's disgusting, revolting, pigheaded, and – well, now you made me lose my train of thought.

HERBERT: I told you he was no good.

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ROSE: So the wedding's off?

HERBERT: Of course it's off.

LINDSAY: **(in rebellion, but very sweet, going to ROGER)** It's not off.  
Even if he is disgusting, revolting, and.. and...

ROSE: Was it pigheaded, dear?

LINDSAY: Oh yeah, and pigheaded.

ROSE: Get used to *that!*

HERBERT: **(a bit too absolute)** The wedding's off anyway. It's off  
because I say it's off.

ROGER: We're of legal age. We can get married if we want to.

ROSE: **(to HERBERT)** Try the allowance, dear. That always works.

HERBERT: You marry him and I'll cut your allowance in half.

LINDSAY: Daddy!

ROGER: **(trying to "be a man" but not very good at it)** We're getting  
married, Mr. McCain. Whether you like it or not, I'm going to marry  
your daughter.

ROSE: Then why are you fighting? You should be happy! God knows  
it'll be the last time.

LINDSAY: **(whiny)** Roger doesn't think I can win.

ROGER: I'm sorry. **(to HERBERT, bringing a piece of paper out of  
his pocket)** But have you seen Miss Idaho? Ka-Powie!!

HERBERT: **(looking it over)** Come to think... ka-powie!!

ROSE: Herbert!

HERBERT: Sorry, Rose. **(Hands it to her, and SHE sort of agrees.  
Then to ROGER, back in authoritarian mode.)** Mr. Hickman, I  
made my point clear at our last meeting. You are under no  
circumstances to have any further contact with my daughter.

**(HE starts pushing ROGER out the door.)**

ROGER: When we get married, she'll move out and you won't have  
anything to say about it. Lindsay, help!

**(ROGER's out the door and HERBERT slams it shut.)**

HERBERT: He's quite a blunderbuss for someone who can't stand up  
to an old man.

ROGER: **(knocking, from without)** Lindsayyyyy!

ROSE: That's okay Lindsay. You don't need to rush into anything.  
There's plenty of time to get to know him and think it over.

LINDSAY: I'm not rushing into anything. When I win, we'll have to wait  
a year anyway.

HERBERT: Well, you'd better win then. I won't have you marrying that  
creep.

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LINDSAY: Roger is not a creep!

ROSE: Disgusting, revolting, and pigheaded. That spells creep in *my* dictionary. Or, as you young people say, uncool. And by the way, our generation invented ‘cool’. Yours just appropriated it without permission. **(trying to be consoling)** Roger hasn’t known you long enough to truly be in love with you, dear. He’s a young man with girls on his mind. I’m sure he’s just interested in your body.

LINDSAY: **(defensive, not knowing what SHE’s saying)** He is *not* interested in my body!

ROSE: **(surprised)** He’s not?

LINDSAY: Well... er... uh...

HERBERT: **(much more conciliatory)** Oh, you’re right, Lindsay. What were we thinking? Go ahead and marry him. I approve. And so does your mother. **(ROSE looks confused, but catches on)**

LINDSAY: You approve?

HERBERT: Sure. You’re a young lady now, and I trust your judgment.

ROSE: Yes, listen to your father. If you have the poise, charm, and personality to become a Texas beauty queen, we should be more trusting of you to make your own decisions. So your father and I want you to know that we were wrong and we support whatever choice you make.

LINDSAY: **(confused)** Well, okay. If that’s what you want. **(exit)**

ROSE: That oughta spoil it for her.

HERBERT: I knew there had to be some way around it. **(takes a look at her and smiles)** You know, for a withered old prune, you ain’t half bad.

ROSE: And for a man who’s made my life miserable for 18 of the last 23 years, **(smiles too)** I kinda like you. **(off they go, hand in hand)**

**SCENE 4**

**(Back at the cosmetics company, BREWSTER, UPTON, and SINCLAIR (who is still putting on her blue makeup) are having a meeting.)**

BREWSTER: So what did you find out?

UPTON: Well good news for us, and bad news for the human condition.

BREWSTER: If we don’t have good news, our human condition will be out on the street. What’s up?

UPTON: Sadly, it seems many of the judges are open to accepting gifts.

SINCLAIR: Jodie Thompson, famed writer for *Selfish Woman* magazine, says Terri’s in with a year’s supply of cosmetics.

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UPTON: Tommy Wright, former South Dakota congressman, says Terri's in with a year's supply of Terri.

SINCLAIR: Squat Merlin, editor of *Montana Farmer's Monthly*, says about 10 grand-

BREWSTER: *Squat* Merlin?

SINCLAIR: Very short, Mr. Brewster, very short.

BREWSTER: Well good news. Human nature is as ugly as I thought.

SINCLAIR: So is Squat. **(there's a knock on the door)**

BREWSTER: That must be Miss California. Come in, please!

**(TERRI and MARCI enter, TERRI's sort of a bimbo who chews a lot of gum, wearing shorts or a skirt. MARCI would be more the jeans and t-shirt type.)**

MARCI: Cousin Sissy!

SINCLAIR: Good afternoon, Marci. And thank you both for coming to meet with us. Marci Sinclair, Terri O'Hare, I'd like you to meet the president of NatruLook Cosmetics, Jeremy Brewster, and our partner in crime, Rags Upton.

TERRI: Rags?

SINCLAIR: Let's just say you should trust your mother when she tells you to put on clean underwear.

TERRI: **(looks him over and figures it out)** Oh. Okay. **(handing out sticks of gum to everyone)** I'm so happy to meet you.

BREWSTER: **(to UPTON)** Nice set of yams!

TERRI: **(overhearing, not sure if SHE should be offended or not)** What did you say?

BREWSTER: Oh nothing, just some business talk.

MARCI: **(in feminist mode)** He said, "Nice set of yams."

TERRI: What's a yam?

BREWSTER: It's a sweet potato. We're having dinner at the Upton's tonight.

SINCLAIR: Yams are how a much, *much* older gentleman refers to a woman's legs. You were referring to Miss O'Hare, were you not?

BREWSTER: **(peeved)** I certainly wasn't referring to you, Sissy.

MARCI: Mr. Brewster, women are tired of having their lower body parts called yams, stems, or patooties.

UPTON: Patooties?

MARCI: Patooties. Now lets get down to brass tacks.

BREWSTER: Certainly. Miss O'Hare, we would like to talk business with you.

TERRI: *Business* business, or *funny* business?

BREWSTER: (**already resigned to having a bad day**) Sometimes it gets very hard to tell the difference. Let's just say I have a proposition for you.

TERRI: *That* was a poor choice of words.

BREWSTER: So is patooties, but we make mistakes.

SINCLAIR: Oh, I've already told her what you have in mind.

TERRI: (**with conceit**) I know what he has in mind. You're just a disgusting old man.

SINCLAIR: (**getting her licks in**) Old indeed. Disgusting, usually.

BREWSTER: If you are all finished undermining the natural attraction that *most* men have towards *some* women, I will begin in earnest. We here at NatruLook Cosmetics have the utmost confidence that you have what it takes to win the Miss Western America Pageant in Salt Lake City. But we're prepared to take some extra steps to insure that you capitalize on your natural talents. And when you do, we'd like you to join our firm as the spokeswomen for our product.

TERRI: Well...

MARCI: No, Terri.

TERRI: Why not?

MARCI: That's the stuff you wore out on the date with Devon Patton.

TERRI: Oh, that runny stuff? Ewwwww.

MARCI: You kissed him good night and he was wearing more of it than you were.

TERRI: Oh, you're right, it was dripping down his sleeve – how did you know???

MARCI: (**smug, revealing a secret SHE's been keeping far too long**) Because he dumped you right afterwards and I've been seeing him ever since.

TERRI: (**scandalized**) Marci! You man moocher!

MARCI: (**victorious**) *You* couldn't keep him.

TERRI: You stole my boyfriend! I'll never forgive you!

MARCI: You didn't deserve him! (**gleeful**) Devon Patton dumped Miss California for *me*!

TERRI: (**near tears, they're both oblivious that they're in a business office**) How dare he! I gave him the best weeks of my life! You'll never love him like I did! (**changing tune, runs up to MARCI like a schoolgirl**) Call me tonight and we'll dish!

MARCI: Tell me everything!

TERRI: Down to the last kiss! (**looks around, sees the disbelief on everyone's face**) It's ok. We're friends, we're done.

MARCI: (**looks over SINCLAIR**) By the way, Cousin Sissy, that blue doesn't work.

UPTON: That's what I've been trying to tell her.

MARCI: Maybe she'll listen to a woman. Sissy, it doesn't work.

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BREWSTER: Whatever you can do, Marci.

TERRI: Then I guess we're finished here.

BREWSTER: Before you go, take a look at this contract we've drawn up, and see if it's to your satisfaction. **(hands her some papers)**

TERRI: **(looks, her eyes grow big)** Wow. That's a lot of money!

BREWSTER: Yes, but we believe that's what you'll be worth to us when you win the pageant.

TERRI: Well then, I guess I'll sign.

MARCI: I think we should read it first. They might be trying to trick you.

TERRI: I doubt it. They can't tell good makeup from radioactive waste.

**(to BREWSTER, and taking some makeup out of SINCLAIR's hand and looking it over)** You're right. You *do* need me. It's going to take a very pretty face to make *this* look good.

BREWSTER: We have every faith in you, Miss O'Hare. Your victory in the pageant will mean good news for all of us.

TERRI: **(curious)** You keep saying when, instead of if.

UPTON: Well, we feel that a girl like you can easily defeat all of her competition.

TERRI: We are not girls, we are women! **(smug)** That's what they taught us in the pageant.

BREWSTER: You might be an intelligent, charming, and forward looking young woman, Terri, but in order to sell cosmetics, we need you to be a hot babe with a great set of yams. And we think for this kind of money, you can defeat the competition.

UPTON: Uh...

BREWSTER: Yes, Mr. Upton?

UPTON: **(takes a paper out of a folder)** I just downloaded *this* off the internet.

SINCLAIR: **(looks at it)** You pervert!

UPTON: That's Sara Granger. Miss Idaho. **(passes it around)**

BREWSTER: Wow. We *do* have our work cut out for us.

MARCI: **(takes a look)** She may be pretty, but she has nothing on the inside.

SINCLAIR: It's a beauty pageant, Marci. Nobody cares.

TERRI: They promised us that this year Miss Western America will not be judged on looks, but on who is the most beautiful woman *on the inside*.

UPTON: So, we're sunk. We're the *Titanic*, the *Andrea-Doria*, the *Lusitania*, the-

BREWSTER: **(to TERRI, cutting him off)** We at NatruLook guarantee that you will be the next Miss Western America. Don't worry about Sara Granger. **(looks at the picture, longingly)** I'll take care of her.

SINCLAIR: **(grabs the paper away)** You wish.

UPTON: But you have to do your part, Miss O'Hare. Portray yourself with elegance and grace, and let your inner beauty show through.

SINCLAIR: (**looks at the paper, looks at TERRI**) I say we just go for Sara Granger. She's from Idaho, so she's got the yams.

UPTON: I checked into Sara Granger as a possibility. She seems to think she can go straight to the big screen or marry the governor of Kentucky, whichever is more lucrative.

TERRI: Back up a minute. (**everyone scoots their chair back**) No, I mean figuratively. (**they scoot back up**) You *promise* that I'll win?

BREWSTER: Your entire contract is contingent on whether you win or not.

TERRI: So if I blow it, all this money goes down the toilet.

BREWSTER: (**pulls an imaginary handle**) Flush .....  
shhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!

MARCI: (**to TERRI**) Ask for an advance.

TERRI: Right, Marci! I want an advance! (**to MARCI**) What's an advance?

MARCI: Miss O'Hare is saying that she wants some money up front or she won't sign the contract.

BREWSTER: I know what Miss O'Hare is saying! I just wish she did. Well, that's fair. Uh... (**to UPTON**) Do we have any money?

UPTON: Not a lot.

SINCLAIR: I've been eating canned beans and cat food.

BREWSTER: Funny, I just got a substantial raise and a bonus for figuring out a way to lay off 300 people and make everyone else work a 14-hour day. I'll take it out of petty cash. (**writes out a check**) Here you go, Miss California!

TERRI: (**looks it over**) Wow! I'll never have to stoop to buying your stuff again. Come on, Marci! (**out they go**)

UPTON: Jeremy, if *you* go broke, then we're all sunk.

SINCLAIR: Really, save some of your money to bribe the judges. (**TERRI and MARCI enter again.**)

TERRI: Uh... I forgot to sign the contract. It's this cinnamon gum. It just does something to my brain. Do you have a pen?

BREWSTER: (**a bit too lecherous**) There's one in my shirt pocket.

MARCI: (**tired of this man**) I'll get it. (**SHE reaches into his shirt pocket**) Oh, here it is!

BREWSTER: OW!!!

MARCI: Thanks. (**hands pen to TERRI, who signs**)

TERRI: There we go. So, I'll see you at the pageant. (**to SINCLAIR**) And Marci's right about the blue. You need more of a Rosemary Clooney pink. Not that it would help. (**totally oblivious to how rude this is**) Basically, yes, just don't have it any more.

**(SINCLAIR is indignant, TERRI starts to leave, BREWSTER tears a copy off the contract.)**

BREWSTER: Your copy, Miss O'Hare? **(too late, SHE's gone)**

UPTON: **(sighs)** Well, Sissy, Jeremy, I believe we have quite a problem on our hands.

BREWSTER: As I said before, it's a jungle out there. And our money will be the machete.

SINCLAIR: **(can't believe it)** Rosemary Clooney pink!

### SCENE 5

**AT RISE: Las Cruces, New Mexico: the home of JUANITA MONTANEZ, Miss New Mexico. JUANITA is on the couch in between her MOTHER and her FATHER, or in any case, SHE should be between them so they can volley her around like a tennis ball. JUANITA doesn't have a lot to say; but her reactions to her parents' wild stories should speak for her.**

MOTHER: Juanita, as you know, becoming Miss New Mexico leaves you with a great responsibility, not only to the state, but to the entire Montanez family. Both your father's family and my family have a long tradition of winners in the beauty business.

FATHER: Although we have lived in Las Cruces for several generations, we have a tradition of beauty that goes way back to our days in Spain and South America.

MOTHER: For centuries.

JUANITA: **(doesn't believe that)** They didn't have beauty pageants back then.

MOTHER: **(quieting her down)** You need to listen.

**(Hands JUANITA a photo album to page through as they talk.)**

FATHER: In 1320, your cousin, Maria Christina Lopez de Garcia y Montanez, was the family's first beauty queen, crowned at a small pageant held just outside of Seville.

MOTHER: And on my side of the family, Alma Maria Concepcion de Velazquez won a contest in Cordova. The winner was decided not by judges, but by war. Alma Maria was the last one standing.

FATHER: When my family moved to Argentina, our distant cousin Consuela Tomasina Ramirez de Vasco was crowned that country's first beauty queen, and eventually married the viceroy of Argentina.

MOTHER: Our relatives in Mexico produced Ana Solaria Gonzales de Lopez y Rodrigo, who won fifty-seven pageants from the time she

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was six until the time she was 92, when they put a temporary stop to the competition due to the Mexican revolution. Ana Solaria passed the mantle to her daughter, then aged 71.

FATHER: However, our cousin in Barcelona, Rosario Hidalgo de Ortiz, Ordonez, y Montevideo, entered a pageant in 1642 and came in second runner up. The scandal was so great that she was put on a boat to Peru – the only woman on a ship with 27 sailors and 40 kilos of rotten meat.

MOTHER: She was never heard from again.

FATHER: Then there is the disgrace our family had to endure at a pageant in Venezuela.

MOTHER: (**with the weight of generations**) That disgrace we do not speak of.

FATHER: (**overcome with the thought of it**) It is too much to bear.

MOTHER: Not even behind closed doors, in closets, or in the bathtub do we speak of this disgrace. I am only thankful it was your father's side of the family. (**FATHER reacts with horror, SHE cheers up for the next one.**) Now we *do* speak of my niece Susana Luisa who put her mother in the hospital by losing to some floozy bimbo from her own home town.

JUANITA: Mother, that was me!

MOTHER: Oh, yes it was. (**with a mischievous smile**) That is why we speak of it.

FATHER: So you see then how important it is to us. If you win, you will bring honor to our family for years to come.

MOTHER: If you lose... (**turns away**) well if you lose I don't want to think what could happen.

FATHER: Now Juanita, we don't want to put any pressure on you. You just go to the pageant and be who you are.

MOTHER: And if you find that doesn't work, then *change*. You have to be a woman who is willing to do what it takes.

FATHER: A woman who understands the tradition of family honor. And who understands the meaning of disgrace.

MOTHER: (**much more motherly**) Now, you go to Salt Lake and you have a wonderful time.

FATHER: (**changed as well**) Don't even think about us.

MOTHER: But think about Rosario Hidalgo de Ortiz, Ordonez, y Montevideo on a ship bound for Peru with 27 sailors and 40 kilos of rotten meat. (**they exit, FATHER comes back in**)

FATHER: Oh, and Juanita?

JUANITA: (**scared out of her wits about now**) Father?

FATHER: Just go out there and kick some butt! (**exit**)

JUANITA: (**slowly, to herself**) You can keep the meat, but I like the 27 sailors thing.

**SCENE 6**

***AT RISE: A hotel room in Salt Lake City; with LINDSAY, TERRI, JUANITA, and JANE (Miss Utah)***

LINDSAY: This is such a beautiful city, Jane. You're really fortunate to have grown up here.

JANE: Thanks. I'm glad people are finally discovering Utah. I'm so proud we're having this pageant in my state.

TERRI: Me, too.

JUANITA: But Terri, you don't live here.

TERRI: Oh, yeah. **(to JANE)** 'Cause if I did, I'd be Miss Utah, and you'd be a drug store clerk.

JANE: I *am* a drug store clerk.

JUANITA: Everyone here has been so nice. My mother prepared me for a mean competition.

JANE: Everyone except that Nevada girl.

LINDSAY: She's such a sourpuss. I wonder how she won.

TERRI: Well, aren't drugs legal in Nevada? Maybe she's a rich dealer and bought the title.

JANE: Terri, did they skip over the 'intellect' part in the Miss California pageant?

TERRI: Oh, why bother with that? It's California, for cryin' out loud. We have tons!

JUANITA: **(out of the blue)** Pressure!

LINDSAY: What's that?

JUANITA: I can't take the pressure!

LINDSAY: Oh, just go with it. Have some fun.

JUANITA: It's hard to have fun when you're afraid of 'disgracing your family.'

LINDSAY: I've already done that. I'm engaged to a selfish, arrogant pig. I don't know why my father doesn't like him.

TERRI: **(off in her own world)** I just don't know what I'm going to do with all that prize money.

JANE: How do you know you'll get it?

TERRI: Oops! TMI, TMI. **(to JUANITA)** Or DDI in Spanish. Demasiado de informacion.

JUANITA: **(not thrilled)** I appreciate your multiculturalism.

LINDSAY: My idiot boyfriend thinks I should dump this pageant and run off with him right away.

JANE: Well if you lose, you still have to spend a year as Miss Texas, so you can't get married either way.

LINDSAY: I never thought of that. So all this time we've been fighting over nothing.

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JANE: That's how it starts. Next thing you know, you're married. And you're still fighting over nothing.

TERRI: (**looking towards the door**) Oh, it's *her*.

LINDSAY: (**they all get ready to "dish" Miss Idaho, which has apparently been a major sport around here.**) The pretty one. So they think.

JANE: She is so plastic. I've had Barbies who weren't as plastic as she is.

JUANITA: Is she even *speaking* to you?

JANE: If she feels like it.

LINDSAY: She can't look down her nose enough to see the rest of us. I hope she comes in last, just to teach a few things to the men in this world.

JANE: That, and I hate her. (**looks up, as SARA enters and everyone's attitude changes**) Hi Sara! We were just talking about how pretty you always look.

SARA: Well yes, everybody is. (**pretends to be innocent, but we can see right through it**) And here I'm just the girl next door from Pocatello, Idaho.

TERRI: Really? I thought that was just a made up place.

SARA: Like Hollywood. You know, I plan to have a career there.

TERRI: That wouldn't work. 'Cause then I'd be Miss California, and you'd be-

SARA: (**shakes her head**) No, then *I'd* be Miss California. And Miss California would win.

TERRI: Oh, but she will.

SARA: (**with a snooty laugh**) If she bribes her way into it, she might.

TERRI: We have the world's sixth largest economy. I think we can afford it.

LINDSAY: Oh, stop it. We're all supposed to be friends here.

SARA: Oh, that's right. Me! And you! Sharing! (**giggles**) I'll think about it. (**exit**)

JUANITA: Oh, I'm sure the pressure is just getting to her. She'll be fine.

SARA: (**pokes her head back in**) I've thought about it. No. (**exit**)

JANE: She looks pretty relaxed to me. She thinks she's got it in the bag.

JUANITA: We have an old family recipe for hot tamales. *Very* hot tamales. I think I'd better call my mother.

LINDSAY: Too late for that. I saw the judges leering at her. That Squat Merlin... somebody *please* call a dentist!

JUANITA: Yeah what's that about? Do they even *have* women in Montana?

TERRI: He's such a squirt. He's not interested in the total woman, he's just judging our bodies. (**checks her watch, or a clock**)

**somewhere**) Now, if you'll excuse me, I have to go meet with some business associates. **(exit)**

JANE: She's been acting a little strange.

LINDSAY: I don't think it's an act.

JUANITA: I think the pressure is getting to all of us. It isn't easy to smile for a week nonstop.

JANE: Exactly. No one understands how tough it is.

JUANITA: A cruise ship in the Caribbean. Just me, a buffet table, and **(sexier)** twenty-seven sailors.

JANE: What about you Lindsay? What would you rather be doing?

LINDSAY: I'm happy right where I- **(there's a loud shriek, coming offstage from MISS ARIZONA, and TERRI enters frantically)**

TERRI: You've got to come out here!

LINDSAY: What is it?

TERRI: Miss Arizona is standing on the window ledge and she's threatening to jump off!

LINDSAY: Whatever for?

JUANITA: **(knowingly)** Pressure!

MISS ARIZONA: **(off)** This is a phony pageant! I can't take it anymore! And I hate my swimsuit!

TERRI: Now *this* is drama! Let's go. **(exit)**

JANE: Come on, we have to stop her!

MISS ARIZONA: **(off)** No, chocolate won't tempt me to come back in!

JANE: Maybe not, but I'm gonna get me a piece! **(they all run out)**

ACT 2

SCENE 1

**AT RISE:** *The Salt Lake Auditorium in Salt Lake City, Utah: just before the pageant, people are making final preparations. CAMERAMAN is setting up, JIM-BOBBY BAKER, the pageant host, is talking with a JUDGE. On one side of the stage are some judges, behind them possibly some audience members, including UPTON and ROGER. The audience can simply be a couple rows of chairs set up, so that the audience (if any) and the judges will be watching the action from the side. The CAMERAMAN can be on the other side, or near a corner, so it doesn't impede the action too much. It's going to be difficult to set up an entire "pageant hall", so some imagination may be necessary. BREWSTER and SINCLAIR may also be present in the audience, but their presence isn't necessary.*

JUDGE: Will Miss Arizona be able to participate tonight?

BAKER: **(at the side of the stage, conferring with the JUDGE out of hearing of the rest)** We hope so.

JUDGE: What about the first runner up?

BAKER: She's doing 10 to 15 for armed robbery in Sedona.

JUDGE: That state is growing way too fast. Okay, we'll manage.

**(BAKER moves on, UPTON, who's chair is right behind the JUDGE; moves up and leans over his shoulder.)**

UPTON: Remember what we talked about?

**(Takes some money out of a billfold or his pocket, and puts it in the JUDGE's hand, trying to do it surreptitiously, so that HE thinks no one can see, but of course the "real" audience can.)**

JUDGE: **(taking it and counting it)** People like you make me sick.  
**(puts it in his pocket)**

UPTON: **(still over his shoulder)** Well, you listen to that money when it's time to cast your ballot.

JUDGE: You're pushy and unethical. I like you.

**(UPTON sits back down.)**

CAMERAMAN: Places! Ten seconds!

***(BAKER exits. If there's a curtain, it closes, if not, lights go down and there's a drum roll shortly thereafter, and an announcer, BRIGGS CARLSON, comes on over a loudspeaker. Music may be played under a lot of the parades and processions, and at various "dramatic pauses.")***

BRIGGS: From the Salt Lake Auditorium in Salt Lake City, Utah, we bring you the 33<sup>rd</sup> annual Miss Western America Beauty Pageant! I'm Briggs Carlson, the voice of the pageant, and now, your host of Miss Western America for the past 33 years, Jim-Bobby Baker!

BAKER: ***(Enters, to a fanfare, taking center stage.)*** Good evening, and welcome once again to beautiful Salt Lake City and the women of the west. Here tonight, seventeen lovely ladies will compete – fiercely at times –

SARA: ***(a slap is heard offstage)*** Ow!

***(BAKER looks quickly in her direction and lets it go)***

BAKER: ...for the title of Miss Western America. This year, we're doing things a little bit differently. Women should not be judged on beauty alone, so this year's pageant will reflect the total woman. The woman on the inside. You may see contestants not typically associated with the old notion of a beauty pageant. Now, during our parade of states, each of our young ladies is going to reveal an intimate secret about herself. ***(some soft music starts up in the background)*** I present to you... Miss Arizona.

MISS ARIZONA: ***(Nervous, enters and approaches the stage. As the women make their speech at center stage, they take spots in the back of the stage lining up in two or three rows, from where they will step out as semi finalists. If, for instance they enter from the left, they should all group together near the back of the stage at the right, so they can promenade across the whole stage.)*** My name is Marianne Sapley, from Tucson. And I just wanted to say that I really haven't had a very good time doing this. I've been put on display like some prized pork loin at a state fair, I've had to have emergency counseling, I've put on 15 pounds, and I really don't feel pretty just about now.

BAKER: Miss California!

TERRI: I'm Terri O'Hare, from Hollywood... Oh, California! And you know when you were in school and the teacher wouldn't let you chew gum and you did it anyway and you always got caught but you wanted to see how long you could go before you did? Well now I can chew whenever I want!

**(Pops a stick in her mouth, UPTON rolls his eyes in despair, BAKER reacts to these speeches, but tries to keep a stiff upper lip during the whole thing, so HE should go quickly from being annoyed, frustrated, or dumbfounded right back to “show host” mode.)**

BAKER: Miss Colorado!

MISS COLORADO: I'm Judy DelMonte, from Denver, Colorado. **(looks to the JUDGE)** The judges know my secrets. **(then to BAKER)** And I believe you do to, Mr. Baker. **(not so sweetly)** Oh, and I'll see you in court.

BAKER: **(slightly shaken)** Miss Idaho!

SARA: **(enters, annoyingly sexy)** My name is Sara Granger, from Pocatello Idaho. But most of you already know that. I don't need any secrets. But it's no secret that this whole pageant is a waste of time, because I'm going to win.

BAKER: Miss Kansas!

MISS KANSAS: **(smiling)** My name is Judy DelMonte, and I'm from Topeka, Kansas-

BAKER: **(confused)** Wait a minute, we already have a Judy DelMonte.

MISS KANSAS: **(a bit combative)** So now you have two!

BAKER: And your secret?

MISS KANSAS: **(angry)** Miss Colorado stole my purse, my driver's license, my credit cards, and my whole identity. **(upset)** It could have been me, Jim-Bobby. You could have kissed me instead of her. **(starts to cry)** I need a court settlement too!

BAKER: There, there, go take your place. **(SHE doesn't move)** Now. **(shakes his head)** And, no, it couldn't have been you. **(big wail from MISS KANSAS as SHE steps aside)** Miss Montana!

MISS MONTANA: Good evening. My name is Helena Bridger, from Butte. My father is a cattle rancher, but he's got nothing compared to these cows. **(indicates the girls behind her)**

BAKER: Miss Nebraska!

MISS NEBRASKA: My name is Judy DelMonte, from Weeping Water, Nebraska.

BAKER: Now wait a minute!

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