

# LITTLE MISS SUNSHINE

By Michael Arndt

## SYNOPSIS

Little Miss Sunshine is a comedy about dysfunctional family members who are determined to help their little girl win the Miss Sunshine Contest. But she isn't exactly beauty contest material, they're late to the contest and her grandfather/coach taught her a burlesque dance as her talent. No problem. Refuse to lose!

An overworked mother lives in Albuquerque, New Mexico, with her motivational speaker husband, her pudgy, seven-year-old daughter, her teenage son who has taken a vow of silence, her foulmouthed father-in-law and her suicidal, homosexual brother. When the little girl learns she qualified by default for the "Little Miss Sunshine" beauty contest in Redondo Beach, California, in two days, the whole family sets off on the 800-mile road trip in their VW Microbus.

When the van breaks down, they must continuously push-start it and jump in to make the contest in time. Throughout the road trip, family members suffer numerous personal setbacks, revealing the need for each other's support. The grandfather dies from an apparent heroin overdose. To avoid being delayed by post-mortem arrangements, they smuggle his body out of the hospital, only to be pulled over by a policeman due to the VW's continuously honking horn, and he nearly discovers the grandfather's body in the back of the van. Throughout the ordeal, the mom attempts to keep everyone, including herself, calm and sane.

After a frantic race to get to the contest on time, the little girl is almost disqualified for being four minutes late. The family quickly realizes their girl is out of her league and tries to talk her out of competing. But she won't quit and goes on stage, joyfully performing her grandpa's choreographed burlesque dance to Rick James' "Super Freak." The judges and organizers are scandalized and want her off the stage, but her family joins her, dancing with her to show their support. Security closes in.

Will the girl and her family end up in jail or back on the road home in their ailing VW bus?

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