

SMOKE AND MIRRORS

by Rene Gutteridge

GENRE: Comedy

SYNOPSIS: Jack notices Marla struggling with her identity as she deals with her family and her own expectations of what she thinks it means to be a mother and wife.

DIRECTOR'S TIP: Can you say "stage business"-and lots of it? Brush up on your staging skills because these characters don't sit still! In addition to their perpetual motion, the characters are constantly engaged in some kind of stage business and-on top of that-this drama is heavy on dialogue. As Bette Davis so aptly put it, "Fasten your seat belts...."

TIME: Over 5 minutes

CAST BREAKDOWN: 4

TOPIC: Women, Relationships

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: Proverbs 21:10

CHURCH YEAR SEASON: Any

SUGGESTED USE: Worship Service

CHARACTERS:

JACK—husband, fortyish

MARLA—disheveled wife and mother

KURT—Teenager, a little preppy, which is why the gel is so startling

MARGARET—typical mother-in-law

PROPS: Breakfast table, phone, Eggos frozen waffles, dishes, green gel, ball cap, vacuum

COSTUMES: Modern-day dress

SOUND: Wireless mics

LIGHTING: General stage

SETTING: General

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MARLA is clearing breakfast dishes as Jack is reading the newspaper. KURT comes sauntering through, his hair gelled green. She glances up, seeming not to notice.

KURT: I'm outta here. See you guys after school.

MARLA: All right. Have a good...*(As Kurt walks past her -- as if it suddenly registers - she lets out a yelp. Jack looks up.)* WHAT are you doing?

KURT: I'm going to school. What does it look like?

MARLA: *(Nearly speechless, stuttering over her words at first)* Wha-whi-wh-what's in your HAIR?

KURT: *(Smiling, acting cool)* Cool, huh? I look like an alien or something, don't I?

MARLA: You can't go like that.

KURT: Why not?

MARLA: Because...because...well, because...YOU JUST CAN'T!

KURT: Why? It's not against school rules. *(Getting huffy and angry, turning his back and crossing his arms)* Everybody's wearing it.

MARLA: Well if everyone jumped off a cliff, would you do that too?!

KURT: Today I might.

MARLA: You go wash that out of your hair right now!

KURT whirls around and runs out of the room. MARLA falls into her chair. JACK has witnessed all this and is eyeing her carefully.

JACK: What's wrong with him wearing green gel in his hair? I mean, it's not my style of choice, but for a fifteen-year-old...

MARLA: Not you too! It's awful looking. What will the other mothers think? *(JACK starts to answer but MARLA continues.)* I'll tell you what they'll think. They'll think we have one of "those" kids.

JACK: Oh. What's a "those" kid?

MARLA: *(Shooting him a look)* You know very well what a "those" kid is. *(Sighing, realizing JACK's not getting it)* And a "those" kid has a "that" mother. And I am not a "THAT!"

JACK looks confused. The phone rings. MARLA picks up the phone and looks at the caller ID.