

"THE UN-ADOPTION"

By Rob Biesenbach

CAST

Dad - late '30s, glib, smarmy, obviously cruel, self-centered

Mom - late '30s, his perky accomplice, sweet and cruel

Sam - 9 - their son

Lucy 7 - their daughter

(Dad and Mom share quick, familiar banter, anticipating each others' thoughts and finishing each others' sentences. They face Sam and Lucy in the living room.)

DAD

Kids, the reason your Mom and I wanted to talk with you is ... well, we feel you're at an age ... eight years old -

LUCY

I'm seven.

SAM

I'm nine.

DAD

I was averaging. Anyway, we've decided to ... "un-adopt" you.

LUCY

"Un-adopt?" What's that mean?

MOM

You know what "adopt" means, don't you?

SAM

(Eagerly) Yes! That's when you and Daddy picked us out when we were babies because we were the most special kids in the world!

DAD

Sure! (Glib, cheerful) Anyway, "un" means to "undo," so in this case it means we're sending you back where you came from.

LUCY

(Teary and hopeful) You mean, upstairs to our bedrooms ... right?

DAD

(Cheery) No, silly, I mean back to the orphanage ...

(Lucy lets out a wail. And throughout, the children should cry, wail and sniffle as appropriate.)

DAD

Oh come now, it'll be fun! Remember when we rented "Oliver?"

MOM

Oh, honey, don't be ridiculous -

DAD

Lots of singing and dancing -

MOM

They don't have orphanages anymore ...

DAD

Okay, a foster home, then ... the point is, we won't be your Mommy and Daddy anymore ...

MOM

You'll have a new Mommy and Daddy ...

DAD

Or, more likely, a long succession of different Mommies and Daddies ...

MOM

... of varying degrees of devotion ...

DAD

... and competence!

MOM

Unless one of them decides to adopt you themselves ...

DAD

Hey, let's not get their hopes up, dear!

MOM

It could happen!

DAD

At their age? I doubt it! It's not like they're kittens!

MOM

And you'll get to live with lots of different brothers and sisters!

DAD

Not all of whom steal!

MOM

You'll be what's called "wards of the state." Doesn't that sound special?

DAD

Right, and who better to entrust a child to than our government?

Daddy?

LUCY

Call me Robert.

DAD

Were we bad?

LUCY

Oh, heck no! Honestly, you two are the best kids any parents could hope to have ... (chuckles) well, any other parents ...

DAD

Then why, Da- Robert? Why?

SAM

(Pause) Kids, it's like this. We just can't afford you anymore.

DAD

Children are a lot more expensive than we thought!

MOM

And it's only going to get worse - braces ...

DAD

... car insurance ...

MOM

... college!

DAD

Maybe we could get jobs?

SAM

Oh, believe me, we've already looked into that ...

DAD

Unfortunately, it's not legal in this state ...

MOM

Yeah, if only we lived in Texas ...

DAD

What if we ate less?

LUCY

Oh, honey, have you SEEN the grocery bill? To make a dent in that, you'd have to start eating like Calista Flockhart!

DAD

Who?

LUCY

MOM

She's like Mary Kate Olsen, dear.

SAM

What if you sold the boat?

LUCY

Or the beach house?

DAD

Hey, we could go around in circles forever here - "sell the stocks," "sell the vintage car collection," "sell the Aspen timeshare ... "

MOM

Oh, honey, not the timeshare!

DAD

Don't be ridiculous, sweetheart! Now, kids, I don't expect you to understand the difference between assets and cashflow ...

MOM

Plus Robert would really like to turn your rooms into a den.

DAD

Oh, totally! Anyway I think we gave it a pretty good shot, and now it's time to ... cut our losses.

SAM

It's because we're adopted, isn't it?

DAD

Don't be stupid. I think we'd feel the same way even if you were our so-called (do air quotes) "real" children.

MOM

Now why don't you two head upstairs - you've got some packing to do!

(Sam goes to hug Robert, who brushes him back. The kids shuffle out, sniffing.)

DAD

(Calling after them) Leave the sheets and towels, okay?

MOM

Good point - we can sell those!

DAD

Yeah we can!