

LITTLE MISS SUNSHINE



Little Miss Sunshine is a 2006 tragicomedy, the directorial debut of husband-and-wife team Jonathan Dayton and Valerie Faris, with a screenplay by first-time writer Michael Arndt.

Upon receiving the news that seven-year-old Olive Hoover (Abigail Breslin) has been accepted to compete in the Little Miss Sunshine beauty pageant, the Hoovers decide to travel together in an old van from Albuquerque (New Mexico) to Redondo Beach (California) to support her. This unconventional

blended family consists of parents Sheryl (Toni Collette) and Richard (Greg Kinnear), children Olive and Dwayne (Paul Dano), the drug-addicted grandfather Edwin (Alan Arkin), and the unemployed academic Uncle Frank (Steve Carell), who, after attempting suicide following a heartbreak, must not be left alone.

On the first day of the road trip, the clutch of the van is shot, and they often need to push the vehicle to make it go. After spending the first night in a motel, Edwin does not wake up, and an ambulance takes him to the hospital. The Hoovers are told that he has passed away from a heroin overdose and that they must stay to deal with the time-consuming paperwork. However, in order for Olive to make it to the pageant in time, Richard decides that they should smuggle Edwin's body into the van and leave the hospital.

On the way to Redondo Beach, Dwayne, who has taken a vow of silence until he enters flight school, discovers that he is colour-blind, which makes him unfit to be a pilot. He becomes very agitated and says hurtful things to his family, for which he later apologises.

The Hoovers finally arrive at the competition venue and manage to have Olive registered in the pageant and Edwin's body collected by an undertaking service. The amateur Olive stands out in stark contrast to the other participants, who are heavily made up and seem much more experienced. Richard, despite being a life coach who does not believe in quitting, expresses that he does not want the quirky Olive to participate in the talent show, to avoid her being judged by the audience. Sheryl, however, claims that their daughter should be true to herself and do what she loves. The Hoovers, whose journey has been anything but easy, will have to make a decision as a family.

Little Miss Sunshine was nominated for four Academy Awards. Arndt won Best Original Screenplay and Arkin Best Supporting Actor, while Breslin was nominated for Best Supporting Actress. One of the best features of this road movie is its feel-good attitude; it shows the vicissitudes of a somewhat dysfunctional family whose members, despite life challenges, know how to support each other. The characters, played brilliantly by well-known actors, are unique and highly likeable. *Little Miss Sunshine* is a fun film with good performances, witty dialogue, uplifting music, and a positive message.

You can borrow the DVD from the library.