

BEAUTY STANDARDS

Sandra de Helen and Kate Kasten

A Play in One act

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CAST OF CHARACTERS:

- 1 Any woman
- 2 Another woman

SETTING:

Simple, plain stage. Or, an elaborate "Ladies Room".

TIME:

Now.

AUTHORS' NOTES:

When reading this play for the first time, you might think this is about a couple of neurotic, self-hating women. Nope. It's a funny piece that gets a LOT of laughs, because we have all internalized the standard of beauty that are a part of western society.

1

I never could wear shorts. My knees are so pudgy.

2

I just can't wear shorts because of these saddlebags. No matter how much weight I lose I can't get rid of them.

1

All the pounds go straight to my hips and no matter how much I diet, at my age the flab just stays there.

2

I don't have any hips to speak of. I tried fanny shapers but they emphasized my fat stomach. At first I thought I had them on backwards.

1

I can't wear slacks, I'd feel too much like a cow.

2

I feel like a kangaroo with this big pouch. I've done so many sit-ups I could do them in my sleep.

1

As tall as I am, if I put on weight I look like a barn.

2

And I wouldn't dare wear a two-piece bathing suit with such horrible scars.

1

And of all the places to have scars! Once when I fell asleep under the hair dryer I was resting my head against my arms and the dryer got too hot and melted that plastic right into my skin. I knew I should have used a blow dryer.

2

My body is literally covered with stretch marks. I look like a walking fishnet.

1

If I don't wear opaque tights, I look like a walking map of Venice.

2

I don't know what to do about these big veins in my hands. they say if you keep your arms up, the veins'll go down, but I mean!! This bra just cuts into my back. I wish I could take it off.

1

Well, I can't go without a bra because one of my breasts is even smaller than the other one. My doctor advised me to correct it with birth control pills, which really helped. I didn't have any trouble with the pill for a long time the way some women do, except for a small blood clot in my arm which the doctor treated with blood thinners. But after awhile ...

2

Do you get dry patches on your elbows? I do. And they're darker than the rest of me. I have to rub them with lemon halves to bleach them out and then put Vaseline on them so they won't flake off on the insides of my good blouses.

1

Oh I'm sure no one notices. Have you ever seen a woman with such muscular arms? I don't dare exercise or I'd look just like Arnold Schwarzenegger.

2

My arms hang funny. They're just like bow legs.

1

Oh, they're supposed to hang that way. See how your fingertips come to below your hip line? That's a well-proportioned arm. Mine are too short.

2

You've got short arms. Me, no neck. That's me, old no-neck. People tell me I have a good head on my shoulders and they're right. It just sits there.

1

Feel lucky! My scalp is such a funny color. It's so pale! If I part my hair down the middle people think they're talking to a skunk.

2

You know, I've been admiring that little mole by your mouth ...

1

I hate that mole!

2

I always wanted a beautiful mole.

1

It just calls attention to my overbite.

2

I'm thankful I have all my own teeth, but I wish I didn't have this wide gap. When I was little all the kids called me "bunny" because of it.

1

I can't even see that gap. I have such a square jaw and such big teeth, I have to catch myself when I smile too widely. And when I do smile my upper lip just disappears.

2

I think your lips are lovely. Look at mine. Crooked. Now, my ears are fine if you look at them one at a time. But this one is not only bigger than the other, it's an inch and a half higher up on my head.

1

Let me see. You can hardly notice it. But look at my ears. I don't have the right number of flaps. Don't you think they look like monkey ears?

2

Oh that's silly. Anyway, you have such beautiful eyes. Mine are colorless. I have to wear tinted contacts under my glasses.

1

Oh I wish I could wear contacts. One of my biggest problems is glasses. People tell me I have pretty eyes, but what good are they if no one can see them? Another reason I don't like them is they emphasize my nose.

2

Well, my nose flashes like Rudolph's because my complexion is so ruddy. If I were pale or dark I could add blusher, but me, I have to tone my face down.

1

I wish I were naturally rosy like you. I have to use that indoor tanning stuff in winter or I'd look so ghastly I'd be afraid of walking into a room and scaring people to death.

2

Your complexion is clear at least. Zits! Every other day I get a new one. Look, there's Mt. St. Helens about to erupt now.

1

Two little pimples! At least your skin isn't dry and wrinkled like mine.

2

I have such a low forehead that my eyes nearly bump into it if I look up. Everybody thinks you're a dolt unless you have a nice high forehead like you.

1

Oh it just calls attention to my hollow temples. If you ever need a skull for a Halloween party, just call me up.

2

I used to have such beautiful hands when I was young. They were the one thing I had to be proud of.

1

Oh, I think you should be. Of course, I bite my nails. But even when I let them grow they still didn't look pretty to me. I never got those little half moons you're supposed to have ... And I have such a lot of hairs on the tops of my fingers.

2

I can't even see it. The hair on my legs is a real problem. If I shave I get an ugly red rash, and if I don't, well!

1

I have to clip the hairs from my nose or I'd look like a Neanderthal. I even have hair around my nipples.

2

I pluck. I pluck my warts, my eyebrows, my nose, ears. Once I even plucked my legs.

1

Well, people are always asking me why I pluck my eyebrows so close, and I don't!

2

I wish I had your problem. Big bushy eyebrows are the curse of my family! Fortunately, we only get one each.

1

My eyelashes are so thin. When I was seven I cut all my eyelashes off. Can you imagine? Of course when you're seven you don't need eyelashes.

2

That's true. I wish I had either longer eyelashes or none at all. Mine are just useless. I can't put mascara on, it falls in my eyes.

1

My face is too narrow for my big broad shoulders. I feel like a pin head.

2

I wish I had a nice strong chin. Mine is non-descript and overpowered by my crooked lips.

1

Oh, you're too sensitive. Your chin is perfect for the shape of your face. And your hair is so pretty and soft. Mine is so thick and oily.

2

Tell me about hair problems. I wrote the book. My hair has been too everything: thick, thin, oily, dry, limp, fully, curly, straight. My hair has never done anything I wanted it to.

1

But feel how thick it is. Feel this. Who'd want to run their fingers through that?

2

Well, I don't know about that, but I bet people could put their hands around your waist, it's so small. I don't have a waist.

1

But it doesn't do me any good to have a little waist. I can never show it off on account of my navel. How I'd love to have a belly button that went in instead of out.

2

Well I guess I'm lucky, my navels are both innies... Scars and stretch marks created a second one.

1

I'm really stuck in summer. Can't wear sandals -- my second toe is so much longer than the big one.

2

(Still regarding her navels) They're both grotesque.

1

Look, isn't it pitiful?

2

(Absently) Yeah.

1

Well, I wish we didn't have to worry about things like that.

2

We do have to worry about it as long as people pay attention to that stuff. And they will look.

1

Well, I just wish they'd look at something else

(THEY LOOK AT EACH OTHER'S BODIES -- down and then up -- meet each other's eyes and quickly look away, into the fourth wall mirror, at themselves. Each looks herself down and then up and then glances at the other in the mirror, and, embarrassed at being caught looking, quickly looks up toward the ceiling. Scene ends with them studying the ceiling. Their concentration on the ceiling should make the audience look up to see if something is going on up there.)

LIGHTS FADE OUT