

Praise for
The Smart Dad's Guide to Daughters

As a father to nineteen children (fourteen of them adopted), and fourteen grandchildren (and still counting), I am always on the lookout for books that will help men become all-star dads. Jess and Dale have a slam dunk with their *Smart Dad's Guide to Daughters*. If you want to know why you should take your daughter to the NCAA Final Four, this book is for you. It's a perfect combination of humor, hands-on help, and wise biblical counsel.

—PAT WILLIAMS, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, ORLANDO MAGIC AND AUTHOR OF *LEADERSHIP EXCELLENCE*

Man, what a great offering. Dale and Jess have hit a home run with this down-to-earth guide for dads. It's a book that manages to be both insightful *and* fun to read. Pick it up. Page through it. Put it into practice. Both you and your daughter will be glad you did.

—STEVEN JAMES, BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF THE *KING AND SINGULARITY*

Some guys view fatherhood as a chore. . .but Smart Dads don't. Some guys think frowning is a key parenting tool. . .but Smart Dads smile more than necessary. Most guys don't realize that today's simple joys create the happy childhood your daughter (and you) will remember tomorrow and forever. Thankfully, *The Smart Dad's Guide to Daughters* has figured that part out for you. Seriously, do yourself a favor and buy this book. Use it. Enjoy it. Share it. You, and your daughter, will be very glad you did.

—MIKE NAPPA, PUBLISHER, FAMILYFANS.COM "THE FREE E-MAGAZINE FOR PARENTS"

This little book full of short, easy-to-read chapters is *huge!* I've never read a parenting book so jam-packed with helpful, practical wisdom and ideas—valuable insights that Jess and Dale learned in the trenches of raising their own daughters. You won't be able to implement all the ideas, but if you put even a handful of these into practice, you—and the daughter you deeply love—will be blessed! Thanks, guys, for this treasure chest!

—KURT JOHNSTON, HUSBAND, DAD, AUTHOR, YOUTH PASTOR AT SADDLEBACK CHURCH

When my precious daughter was born twenty years ago she didn't come with an instruction manual. I needed this book back then, but it is just as valuable today. If you have a daughter of any age, read this book and share it with a friend. I have known Dale Reeves for over twenty years. He is authentic, vulnerable, insightful, and funny—my kind of author. Enjoy!

—TROY JUSTICE, SENIOR DIRECTOR OF NBA'S INTERNATIONAL BASKETBALL OPERATIONS

Jess and Dale had me at the table of contents. In a world that sends mixed messages to women, these dads have given us a script for the most important voice in a daughter's life. Indispensable, no matter which stage of parenting you find yourself in.

—BETH GUCKENBERGER, AUTHOR, SPEAKER, FOUNDER OF BACK2BACK MINISTRIES

Parenting is hard. There is no pre-scripted instructional manual to follow. All we really have to fall back on is the grace of God and the collective wisdom of parents who have gone before us. Jess and Dale have a gem here—practical, simple suggestions on how dads can love their daughters better. And to top it off, it's a fun read.

—JOE BOYD, AUTHOR AND PRESIDENT OF REBEL PILGRIM PRODUCTIONS


As a father of two daughters, I've often wondered, *Why don't daughters come with an instruction manual?* Well, in *The Smart Dad's Guide to Daughters*, I found the next best thing (besides the Bible, of course). No joke! This book is witty, practical, full of wisdom, and a great resource for any father serious about having meaningful and unique connections with the daughters God has given him to raise.

—ARRON CHAMBERS, PASTOR AND AUTHOR OF *DEVOTED: ISN'T IT TIME TO FALL MORE IN LOVE WITH JESUS*

As a father of young daughters, my eyes misted up repeatedly while reading Jess and Dale's 101 real-world tips. Amazingly, they get me . . . and my girls! Their brotherly encouragement gave me three things every dad needs: permission to be affectionate, practical tips for expressing that affection, and a greater vision for what that affection accomplishes. I'm more convinced than ever that one of the greatest marks I can make on the world is raising confident women of God—one micro-date at a time.

—NOEL BOUCHÉ, PRESIDENT OF PUREHOPE

FOREWORD BY **REBECCA ST. JAMES**

THE
SMART DAD'S

GUIDE
TO **DAUGHTERS**

> **101 REAL-WORLD TIPS** <
TO IMPROVE YOUR RELATIONSHIP—
AND SAVE YOUR SANITY

**JESS MACCALLUM
& DALE REEVES**

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> CONTENTS <

| | |
|--|----|
| FOREWORD by <i>Rebecca St. James</i> | 9 |
| START HERE | 11 |
| LITTLE PRINCESS | |
| 1. Be unapologetically masculine. | 15 |
| 2. Play dress-up | 17 |
| 3. Be confident in yourself for her sake | 19 |
| 4. Don't underestimate your symbolism | 21 |
| 5. Create theme nights | 23 |
| 6. Get a makeover | 25 |
| 7. Take her to work when you're not scheduled to be there. | 27 |
| 8. Teach her a "boys" sport | 29 |
| 9. Give each other nicknames | 31 |
| 10. Take her to the mall to shop. | 33 |
| 11. Wash, dry, and comb her hair. | 35 |
| 12. Paint her toenails | 37 |
| 13. Teach her "the falling game" to build trust | 39 |
| 14. Take her shopping for a special dress— just the two of you. | 41 |
| 15. Talk to her every day, especially if you travel | 43 |
| 16. Don't be afraid to talk goofy | 45 |
| 17. Always kiss her good night. | 47 |
| 18. Applaud her theatrical efforts | 49 |
| 19. Take her to a Valentine's Day lunch | 51 |
| 20. Set a good example | 53 |
| 21. Encourage dance and the arts. | 55 |
| 22. Read or make up bedtime stories. | 57 |
| 23. Pray with her | 59 |

| | |
|--|----|
| 24. Show her mother respect. | 61 |
| 25. Make sure your wife never feels in competition as The Queen. | 63 |
| 26. Girlie girls can learn to be tough, and tomboys can learn to be tender. | 65 |
| 27. Discipline her when she needs it, without letting her flirt her way out | 67 |
| 28. Be a Mr. Lemon Face. | 69 |
| 29. Hide notes just for her | 70 |
| 30. Protect her from what <i>she</i> fears, not just what <i>you</i> fear . . . | 72 |

CAN YOU SAY GAWKY?

| | |
|--|-----|
| 31. Take her to church | 77 |
| 32. Teach her Sunday school class. . .at least once | 79 |
| 33. Hold hands everywhere | 81 |
| 34. Mind your manners | 83 |
| 35. Hang her pictures in your workplace | 85 |
| 36. Be prepared to buy a lot of hairbrushes | 87 |
| 37. Learn to tell a squeal from a scream. | 89 |
| 38. Bury her hamster/mouse/goldfish with a dignified ceremony | 91 |
| 39. Make the most of her invitations | 93 |
| 40. Take her trick-or-treating. | 95 |
| 41. Coach her team | 97 |
| 42. Enroll her in at least one modeling class. | 100 |
| 43. Treat her friends like adopted daughters | 102 |
| 44. Avoid what she hates. | 104 |
| 45. Put the toilet seat down. | 106 |
| 46. Create surprises. | 108 |
| 47. Ask her opinion, even if it doesn't matter | 110 |
| 48. Hang out in the kitchen with her | 112 |
| 49. Plan a special trip for her. | 114 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| 50. Be Peter Pan | 116 |
| 51. Teach her to lose graciously | 118 |
| 52. Make <i>her</i> pursuits <i>your</i> pursuits | 120 |
| 53. Buy her chocolate | 122 |
| 54. Make the most of whatever you do | 124 |
| 55. Schedule a date night | 126 |
| 56. Teach her to stand up straight | 128 |
| 57. Protect her privacy, including diaries and phone calls | 130 |
| 58. Make up code words | 132 |
| 59. Encourage inside jokes | 134 |
| 60. Never frighten her! | 135 |
| 61. Don't make promises without qualifiers | 136 |
| 62. Notice things like her hair, her clothes, her shoes, her talent | 138 |
| 63. Be swift to apologize when you hurt her feelings, even if you don't understand why | 140 |
| 64. Go on a micro-date | 142 |
| 65. Give her a thoughtful present, just from you to her, on special occasions | 144 |
| 66. Take her with you to tell the barber how he should cut your hair | 146 |
| 67. Teach her your family heritage | 148 |
| 68. Physical affection has no substitute | 150 |
| 69. Verbal affection is just as important as physical affection | 152 |
| 70. Lay out your rules for dating long before the dating years | 154 |

CREATURE FROM ANOTHER PLANET

| | |
|--|-----|
| 71. Listen to her, no matter how tired you are, or how tired she makes you | 159 |
| 72. Celebrate her first period with dignity | 161 |
| 73. Compliment her in front of others | 163 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| 74. Listen to her music in the car | 165 |
| 75. Eat anything she cooks for you without complaint. | 167 |
| 76. Handle boy-craziness with caution. | 169 |
| 77. Remember special days besides birthdays and holidays . . . | 171 |
| 78. Watch her wardrobe closely | 173 |
| 79. Watch out for her first broken heart | 175 |
| 80. Brag about her when she thinks you don't know she's listening | 177 |
| 81. Don't overreact to meltdowns | 179 |
| 82. Help her recognize "feminine competition" | 181 |
| 83. Let her pick out your cologne | 183 |
| 84. If she won't share the inner things, be there for the outer things | 184 |
| 85. Let her teach you something. | 186 |
| 86. Keep dating her in high school and beyond | 188 |
| 87. Teach her how to drive | 190 |
| 88. Try not to embarrass her | 192 |
| 89. Scrapbook with her. | 194 |
| 90. Take her to a major sporting event | 197 |
| 91. Take her for long walks on the beach. | 199 |
| 92. Be her biggest fan. | 201 |
| 93. Be cool around her guy friends. | 203 |
| 94. Look for common ground | 205 |
| 95. Take her golfing. | 207 |

DARN, SHE'S BASICALLY A WOMAN

| | |
|--|-----|
| 96. Create a safe zone for communicating the hard things | 211 |
| 97. Learn to accept defeat | 213 |
| 98. Take her shopping for her first car | 215 |
| 99. Let her edit your book | 217 |
| 100. Get her ready for the real world | 219 |
| 101. Help her move in | 221 |

> FOREWORD <

One of my most precious memories from childhood involves my dad. I must have been eleven or twelve at the time. We went on a father-daughter date to see Amy Grant in concert in Sydney, Australia, where we lived. At the time, I had no idea I would follow in Amy's footsteps by becoming a Christian music artist! I remember scurrying down the street to the show, wanting to keep up with Dad's long legs. I held onto his hand as we approached the huge concert venue. It was so exciting to be there with him, to have his undivided attention that sweet evening. That night, I was a princess, and my dad was showing me, in a unique way, that I was special and dearly loved.

Not too long after that, I remember saying something very heartfelt to my dad. We were outside near the vegetable garden, and I looked up at him and said, "Dad, when I grow up, I want to marry someone like you!" Quality time, affirmation, making me feel important and valued—all these things were coming into play in those youthful moments with my dad. Times like these are so very instrumental in a young girl's life. They help lay a foundation for the way she will view herself, view men, and expect to be treated by a man. They also tremendously affect how she views her Father God.

The book you are about to read is incredibly important. I know that many men feel intimidated at times in parenting a daughter, especially as she grows up and begins looking and acting more like a young woman than a young girl.

> This is a book of encouragement for dads.

- > It is a book that I know my husband will want to read now that we have a daughter!
- > It is a book for every father who desires to connect in meaningful and unique ways with his daughter.

One of the authors of this book, Dale Reeves, is a man I know very well. I've had the privilege of writing several books with him since I was seventeen years old. He is a man of God, with a wonderful family, and so much wisdom to share. I'm thrilled that he and Jess MacCallum have written such a treasure as this book is! May God speak into your life and encourage and enhance your relationship with your little girl, who, in your heart, will always be so—no matter how old she gets.

Be blessed!

Rebecca St. James

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory.

EPHESIANS 3:20-21 NIV

> START HERE <

We are qualified to write a book on daughters because we both have been voted Father of the Year—in our respective homes—every year we’ve been eligible. The contest is local and is open to as many qualified voters as there are in the house. My (Jess’s) son, for example, is ineligible to vote, because being a boy, he would cast his ballot for anyone—perhaps even a total stranger—in exchange for merely a free rental from Redbox. My girls, on the other hand, think I’m great, and that is what gets me to work on Monday mornings and makes me bite my tongue when they want to watch the Disney Channel instead of ESPN.

My (Dale’s) girls are a bit older now—in their twenties—but they still love for me to take them to Disney movies. Yes, it’s true. Not too long ago, the three of us sat and watched *Beauty and the Beast*—in 3D, complete with the glasses—alongside and in front of many snickering children. But as a bonus, due to many strategic partnerships with my girls throughout the years, it is now a realistic possibility for ESPN to be included in the channel mix—especially when the Cincinnati Bengals are in contention for winning their division. . . which is about once every ten years.

Girls are tricky creatures, fun and vexing. They experience life in ways that boys and dads just don’t. Even when we see something of ourselves in our girls, it’s always skewed by that chromosomal difference. Things you *think* you understood about them yesterday have already expired today.

Fortunately, we both have very patient daughters and wonderfully instructive wives (just one wife apiece), who have all helped us along the way to our becoming decent

fathers. They have given us such incredible support that we felt compelled to write some of it down. But not in any *authoritative* way. These are more a collection of meditations, like Blaise Pascal's *Pensées*, only ours are about daughters—their joys, idiosyncrasies, and hormonal mood swings—rather than the easier topics that Pascal tackled, such as philosophy, theology, and mathematics.

Each daughter is unique—even if most dads are yawningly predictable—so we leave it to you to tailor these ideas to your own girl (or girls) as suits your situation. You may laugh at our misguided attempts at heroic feats, but we invite you to steal from the brilliant ideas that actually worked. Most of all, we encourage you to keep your own notebook; this list is just the beginning.

We have arranged the chapters chronologically, so you can decide how you'd like to digest this book. These sections include Little Princess (preschool); Can You Say *Gawky*? (elementary age); Creature From Another Planet (teenage years); and Darn, She's Basically a Woman (late high school, college, and beyond). Or you can just plow through the chapters one at a time, dog-ear what you need, and ignore (or learn from) the mistakes we've made along the way.

You will notice more entries in the Little Princess section than in any other. That just means you should get started on some of these things sooner rather than later. Many of the things that apply to your little princess will apply to her later in life, as well. So, we recommend that you start reading in the first section and go the distance.

We're so glad you're part of our tribe! We wish you and your girls many blessings along the way.

Jess MacCallum & Dale Reeves

> **LITTLE PRINCESS** <

1. BE UNAPOLOGETICALLY MASCULINE

The way God designed women is amazing, annoying, and attractive all at the same time. You begin to see these traits at a very early age. Women are most definitely not the same as men. That's good news—it means we have something to offer. The gift we enjoy called *masculinity* is essential for establishing your daughter's female identity. I mean, how else will your little pumpkin understand the meaning of the word *gross* if you don't define it for her regularly? Or how will she know which cologne smells manly for her future husband if she hasn't smelled her dad after a day of yard work?

Seriously, your masculinity is a gift for the women in your life. It's like a magic mirror that shows them their femininity. They find security in it, even if it sometimes comes in a stinky package. Your ways will be funny and mysterious and appalling to them, but they will delight in laughing at you among themselves. That's what they do. When you wonder why they are giggling behind your back, that's probably it—your *hairy* back.

Stuff like wearing your T-shirt as a nightgown, watching you shave, and rubbing your bald spot are milestones your daughters will never forget.

Be masculine; your daughter will feel comforted. Be strong; she will feel protected. Be aggressive; she will feel valuable. Always be sensitive to her differences, but never feel awkward about yours.

A WORD FROM THE WORD




*"I am going the way of all the earth.
Be strong, therefore, and show yourself a man."*

1 KINGS 2:2

*These were the heads of their fathers' households. . .mighty men
of valor, famous men, heads of their fathers' households.*

1 CHRONICLES 5:24

THINK ABOUT IT . . .

-  Not every man will be a warrior or a hero to the world, but every dad is a hero to his little princess.
-  God made men and women different to be complementary; the Fall created friction between those differences.
-  We are not to erase our differences, no matter what the social engineers might say. On the contrary, we are to celebrate them and reclaim them.




2. PLAY DRESS-UP

There may very well be exceptions to the following discussion, but because I have boringly stereotypical gender roles in my family, I can't advise you on the issue of playing dress-up if your son loves Broadway musicals and your daughter prefers Resident Evil 4.

Generally speaking, girls have more nuanced imaginations than boys. They actually create things without planning to destroy them immediately after completion. They develop entire worlds of play by the age of two and a half. And they understandably expect to be center stage with a supporting cast—and with you included. They have roles in mind that require a strong male lead, and you are the first choice of the casting department. I understand that many dads want to play dress-up about as much as a cat wants a bath, but if / can sit through a tea party, any man can. The satisfying payoff is making the event come alive for your little sweetie and an audience of stuffed animals.

Being a good costar when your daughter is young will prepare you for the supporting role you will play in the future, as well: a little in the background, stage left (with a big friggin' sword), ready to rescue the damsel if she gets into distress. That's a part that will last in her mind a lot longer than you might imagine.

THINK ABOUT IT . . .

-  Playing dress-up is, more often than not, a female pastime. That means you are stepping into her world when you do it.
-  Dressing up with what she chooses lets her be in charge.
-  Take pictures of the event for her to remember the fun you had.

TAKING INVENTORY

- > Many times, dress-up is a spontaneous request. When can you make time during the week to just spend time playing with your daughter?
- > Does your daughter play any dress-up games on a regular basis? Is she a Cinderella girl? A Pocahontas type? A tea-time hostess?

3. BE CONFIDENT IN YOURSELF FOR HER SAKE

Confident people make history. Good and bad history, I'll grant you, but they make it for a reason. Most people are looking for a leader, a star to steer by, if you will. Even leaders are looking for leaders. And what sets most leaders apart is self-confidence.

Now, if you're not brimming with this quality, there's still some good news. You are Daddy to your little princess, and you're bigger than she is. That's an immediate blessing to get us rolling. Your daughter looks up to you both physically and figuratively. Of course, as she grows up, she needs more than a hulking presence in the background. But starting with her natural awe of you at least gives you time to work on becoming more confident, decisive, and consistent. You don't have to swagger or wear a uniform, but it wouldn't hurt to stand up straight, believe in something bigger than yourself, and communicate your convictions with some authority. Some men confuse this with raising their voice. Confident people know to lower their voices.

Confidence is a universally appealing trait, unless you mix it with arrogance. Fortunately, God invented humiliation to balance the scales, and He will apply it liberally to your life and mine when needed.




One more thing. Confident dads don't work through their personal fears and issues in front of an audience. It may have worked for troubled characters like Hamlet, but daughters want a safe harbor. You can project confidence even when you're afraid or unsure—CEOs and politicians do it all the time. Save your indecision for the Chinese buffet and your deepest fears for your accountant. Your daughter will find rest in your self-confidence.

A WORD FROM THE WORD

Moses called to Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel, "Be strong and courageous, for you shall go with this people into the land which the LORD has sworn to their fathers to give them, and you shall give it to them as an inheritance."

DEUTERONOMY 31:7

THINK ABOUT IT . . .

-  Is there any trait more appealing in a leader than confidence? (Yeah, yeah, I know. . .justice, mercy, insight, etc. But those are hard to see until the situation arises.)
-  Confidence isn't loud or bombastic or arrogant. Those are signs of insecurity. A non-anxious presence is far more compelling.
-  A girl has a lot coming at her these days. A solid, steady father will be a treasure for her entire life.

TAKING INVENTORY

- > Do you have an outlet for yourself? Someone who will let you drop your guard so you can get a balanced view of things? This is essential for you to be healthy and give your girl what she needs.
- > Have you developed any habits that show you are not confident in yourself? Drink too much? Curse at inanimate objects? Road rage? We all have habits that come from a lack of self-confidence—so let's start together to look at those "billboards" of ourselves and take them down.

4 . DON'T UNDERESTIMATE YOUR SYMBOLISM

Not that any man deserves it, but your little princess is going to put you on a pedestal. Crazy, scary—even laughable, I know; but you and I are *automatically* awesome to our girls. And considering the reactions we usually evoke, that's pretty cool.

Before the sheer magnitude of this misplaced worship crushes your brain, let me assure you that it's good for her—as long as you and I don't try to stay there. We dads represent the first impressions of God to our kids, and then we have the privilege of helping them transfer those attachments to God Himself. But as you come down to earth, don't underestimate the power of what you symbolize—something larger, stronger, and more secure than any mere man. The way you smell, the way you dress, the way you cough or sneeze—as repellent as some of those traits might be to your friends and coworkers—can be funny and warm symbols for your daughter. Girls are little touchy-feely creatures. My youngest loves to borrow my T-shirts to sleep in. I never refuse her, no matter what. She is wrapping herself in her daddy. I want to create *afterimages* for when she is grown and on her own. *Remembering* is part of our identity, and identity is reinforced by symbols of attachment.

The great thing about symbols is that some of the most meaningful ones for my daughters are almost effortless for me—things like my bald head, my nightstand items, my favorite movie. Sometimes we can help our daughters without ever leaving our overstuffed easy chairs.

A WORD FROM THE WORD

Now listen, Joshua the high priest, you and your friends who are sitting in front of you—indeed they are men who are a symbol, for behold, I am going to bring in My servant the Branch.

ZECARIAH 3:8



You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake.

1 THESSALONIANS 1:5

OUR TRANSLATION

- > You are bigger than yourself when God decides you are. And He decided it when you had kids.

THINK ABOUT IT . . .

-  Being a symbol of something larger than ourselves is about as easy as it's going to get. Just don't get in the way!
-  Keep an eye out for small, important things your daughter likes about you. Things you can set aside, or gift to her when she's older. Nothing will be more meaningful to her than something with warm, happy memories of you.



5. CREATE THEME NIGHTS

A girl's imagination is staggeringly detailed. Costumes, lighting, and sound all make the experience more real. Give my son a stick and he has everything he needs to storm the beaches of Normandy or bring down the Tokugawa Shogunate. My little girls want scenery. They love full costuming, complete with coiffure, and preferably enough time to get ready (because *anticipation* is part of the whole experience). That's what I love about "theme night" with my daughters. It gives them time to enjoy the event well before it happens. For example, a medieval theme (also known as Knight Night) is good for two days' worth of planning and fun. The last time we did this, I wore my kilt (yes, Scottish DNA always looks for an opportunity) and we roasted "wild game." Actually, it was New York strip, but to me New York is pretty wild. If you are a deer hunter, this should be a real win-win.

Of course, my daughters already own a number of princess gowns, hats, slippers, etc. My wife managed a promising wench costume (and promised to wear it again later) and we watched Disney's *Four Musketeers*. I realize that Athos, Porthos, Aramis, and D'Artagnan aren't technically medieval, but we'll correct that misconception before the girls take their all-important SATs.

The point is to come up with something better for Friday nights than, "I dunno, what do *you* want to do?" That is an evening killer no matter what age a girl is! Other themes you can try include Samurai Night, Cowboy Night, Hawaiian Night, or Fashion Night. Some of these will depend on what's in your daughter's dress-up bin. Or your own tolerance for humiliation. Get into it with your little princess, and become part of her imagination forever.

THINK ABOUT IT . . .

-  Nothing says “you’re important” quite like planning ahead.
-  Young kids, especially girls, live in their imagination. A theme night gives you and your princess a chance to have an adventure in her world.

TAKING INVENTORY

- > Is there a costume or party store near your house? (Just walking around in there will give you ideas.)
- > Does she have a favorite movie that you could turn into a fun night together by dressing the parts?
- > Ask your daughter: If you could have lived in any other time, what would it be?

6. GET A MAKEOVER

One night, I found myself watching my daughters and a friend (all between the ages of eight and eleven) while my son was spending the night out and my wife was just out spending. The little ladies' Friday night had been thoroughly planned for days. Our house was now a spa and they were rich celebrities. That meant bathrobes, hair in towels, slippers, and a full manicure and facial. In case you've never paid much attention to skin care, a facial for spa-celebrity-spend-the-nights includes a mud mask and cucumber slices on your eyelids. As it happens, the mud mask is about the same color green as the cucumbers—and don't tell me it wasn't *planned* that way.

While the celebrities lounged in the den, away from the paparazzi (me), ate confectionary delights from the in-house baker (also me), and waited for the butler (me again) to check on their next whim, I snuck away to the bathroom to transform myself into a celebrity. I applied the mud mask, leaving large areas around the eyes, and carefully sliced my own cuke sunglasses. I sauntered into the lounge area to great squeals of delight as they had begun snacking on their vegetable eye care products. (Where the heck is that butler anyway? I need a drink with my cucumbers.)

Nothing gets a dad into his daughter's inner circle quite like sharing in her whimsical, feminine world. And sometimes you get great skin at the same time.