The most beautiful woman in the world

Once upon a time, long ago, all the people of a certain village were out working in the fields when they heard someone crying. They looked and looked to find where the crying was coming from. Finally, one of them found a little boy at the edge of the field.

"Hey there, stop crying," the man said. "Where is your mother?"
"I don't know," said the tearful little boy.
"You don't know where your mother is?" the man asked. "You're lost? Well, don't you worry. We'll find your mother for you. What does she look like?"

The little boy stopped crying. "My mother is the most beautiful woman in the world!"
"Well, she shouldn't be too hard to find then!" said the man. He helped the boy to his feet and led him back into town.

That very morning he gathered all the women in the village together, chose the most beautiful one of all, and brought her to the little boy.

"Here you are," said the man who had found him. "This is the most beautiful woman in our village. Is she your mother?"

"Oh, no!" the little boy said. "My mother is much more beautiful than that. My mother is the most beautiful woman in the world!"

"Hmm," said the villager. "This is going to be harder than I thought. If the most beautiful woman in our village isn't the boy's mother, then we will try the nearby villages."

He sent people to all the villages nearby, and in each village they chose the most beautiful woman and brought her back to the lost little boy. But every time, the boy took one look, started to cry again, and said, "Oh, no! That's not my mother."
My mother is much more beautiful. My mother is the most beautiful woman in the world!"

Finally, all the beautiful women in the land had been found and brought to the boy, and none of them was his mother.

"Son? Is it really you?" she asked joyfully. "I've been looking and looking for you. I've been so worried!"

"Do you mean that this woman is your mother?" asked the man. "But you told us that your mother was the most beautiful woman in the world."

"She is!" the little boy answered proudly. "My mother is the most beautiful woman in the world."

"I don't know what to do," said the man, shaking his head sadly. "Where can this boy's beautiful mother be? I don't know where else to look."

Just then an old woman came pushing through the crowd. Her hands were rough and worn. Her shoulders were bent from working many years in the fields. Her clothes were not much more than rags. Her eyes had circles under them and were red from crying. She looked very tired and worried.

The little boy looked at the old woman. "Mother!" he called out, and ran to her and hugged her.

"Hmm," the man muttered to himself. "I wouldn't call her beautiful, but what I think doesn't matter, does it? If he believes that his mother is the most beautiful woman in the world, that's what is most important."

That is a lesson to be learned. What's not so beautiful to some can be very, very beautiful to others. A good thing to remember.

THE END