

SOMETHING DIFFERENT

A MONOLOGUE

By JANE CAFARELLA

Time: The present. LINDA, 40s-60s interrupts her nightly book reading to tell her husband about her trip to the hairdresser.

I went to the hairdresser today.

She waits. No answer.

I was going to finish my book. But they will talk to you – even when it's obvious you don't want to.

(She mimics a cheery hairdresser). “And what are we doing for you today, ma'am?”

Just the usual - take 10 years off my life! *(A wry laugh).*

(She buries her head in her book). I can't look. All that sticky brown dye...bits of hair plastered down here and sticking out there... like Frankenstein's bride. And the smell... *(She screws up her nose).*

Oh, I know you say I don't have to...but I'm not ready for that...to give up...not yet.

And as luck would have it, I was sitting right next to the man from the post office! You know...what's his name? Oh, never mind. I didn't say hello...I don't think he recognised me. Why are all these salons unisex?

It was a relief to finally get to the washbasin.

I'm not a fan of all that finger drumming and scalp scratching. But I do like lying flat in the dark, listening to the whoosh of the water, thinking my own thoughts.

Today there was a new apprentice. A nice young man. He turned the tap on and guided the spray nozzle over my head with his other hand. “Okay?” he asked.

“Yes,” I said. The water was warm. The shampoo smelled of...what was it? Peaches! He drizzled the warm water over, coaxing the shampoo out, and replaced it with a clot of cold conditioner, a tiny shock, and began to work it into my head in a slow circle.

I was just about to tell him not to bother with the head massage when he rolled down my shirt collar, and quickly moved his fingers down and began to gently massage my neck.

I nearly said something, like, “Is this extra?” Like those special conditioners they're always pushing.

I thought, maybe he's trying to make a good impression? Maybe he's got a three-month trial or something? So cruel how they do that these days. So, I kept my eyes and my mouth closed.

He began to drive a soapy path from my neck to my back...Down and up, down and up...till I started to wonder ...how's he going to rinse off all that soap without soaking my shirt?

It felt...(beat)...kind. So, I... gave in to it. *(She sighs and closes her eyes)*

And as I lay there, it occurred to me...not that I'm complaining... but it occurred to me... that it's been such a long time...since I've been...*touched.*

Oh, I know, we have sex. Not as often as you'd like, but often enough. But we don't *touch*. It's more of a release, or at least for you. We don't make *love*. Not anymore.

So, that's what I was thinking, lying there...at the hairdresser.

Beat.

It only lasted a few minutes.

He took a fresh towel and reached down into my shirt and removed the soapy water from my back with firm upward strokes, the kind that makes a cat arch its back.

He fashioned a small turban with a fresh towel, and with a small push in the centre of my back, he sat me up. My head felt heavy. The room swayed.

"Are you alright?" he asked.

"Vertigo," I said. "I'll be all right in a minute. Thank you."

I walked slowly back to the chair where the hairdresser was waiting.

"The usual?" she said, her scissors poised.

"No," I said. "Can we do something different?"

She turns her head, shyly, to show her new hairstyle.

I hope you like it.

SFX gentle snoring.

ENDS

Approx. 600 words