

EDSON: (*Disgusted.*) Ehh! OK? OK. When I snap my count, you will come on — turn off — wake up. (*He snaps his fingers. Her body loosens.*) Janis?

JANIS: Yes?

EDSON: Can you please have your friend turn off that video camera?!

JANIS: Oh. (*She laughs.*) I was just making that up in case you thought you'd try anything funny.

EDSON: Making it up?! Oh, yes, funny. Ha ha. Ha, ha, ha! (*Starting to cry.*) Ha-ha-ha-ha-ha.

JANIS: (*Smiling.*) Oh, I have a friend who does that too — cries when she laughs real hard. Ya know, I feel good. Really good. I think this was successful.

EDSON: But you — I — you can't — I, I, I —

JANIS: Don't worry. I'll keep my promise. You earned your five extra large checks. Let me just grab my checkbook and — (*Robotically.*) Softball!!! I must play softball! (*Sounding natural again.*) You know I have an incredible urge to play softball? (*Realizing.*) You did it! You did it! I crave softball. Here keep the whole checkbook! You deserve it — I don't care! Cause I just wanna play softball! (*Starting to leave.*) Come by for dinner, Edson, we'll celebrate. Sautéed eyelashes and we'll pick at ice cream! Bye! (*Calling off.*) Hey, anyone want to play softball?

EDSON: (*Sinking.*) Oh, dear.

## STYLE WITH GRACE

*Anton, forty-three, has been cutting and styling Lois's hair for many years now. She followed him from a smaller pricey shop called Maude's to a rather pretentious, outrageously pricey salon called Hair-em. Through the years the two of them have become privy to each other's personal lives. On this particular day, Lois, forty-nine, made an appointment for hair coloring. She did not, however, make an appointment to have it dried. As a result, Lois and Anton have gotten into a huge mêlée because he has scheduled an appointment right after her. There is no time to dry her wet hair. She feels this is absolutely ludicrous.*

### CHARACTERS

Anton: 43, hairdresser

Lois: 49, his client

### SETTING

the Hair-em salon where Anton works

### TIME

The present

LOIS: You can't leave me all soppo like this!!

ANTON: I have a two-thirty, Lois. I have Ms. Piro at two-thirty.

LOIS: What time is it now?

ANTON: Two-thirty.

LOIS: See? Piro's late. Finish me. You shouldn't have started me if you couldn't finish me.

ANTON: Oh I'd like to finish you all right, but you're already finished, honey.

LOIS: I am hardly finished. If this is finished, so are you, my sweet.

ANTON: No, you are, dear heart. You made an appointment for hair coloring. Is your hair colored?



LOIS: I don't know. You see, it's all wet.

ANTON: Well, it's naturally gray. Is it gray now? (*Not waiting for an answer.*) No. So you're finished. If you wanted it dried, darling, I would have been happy to do that, but you had to make an appointment to do that. That's the rule.

LOIS: What rule? Since when?

ANTON: Since four weeks ago. Raphael insists upon it.

LOIS: He's a fool, an idiot. It's ridiculous, ludicrous. (*Beat.*) Give me an appointment then.

ANTON: Certainly. For when?

LOIS: (*Puts out her hands in amazement.*) Now!

ANTON: I'm afraid that's impossible.

LOIS: Yes! You best be afraid, Anton. Be very afraid.

ANTON: I can't help it. I have Ms. Piro.

LOIS: You *can* help it, Anton. You know why? Ms. Piro is NOT HERE! She's not, not, not here!

ANTON: (*Putting his hand to his lips.*) Shh. She's a very important client.

LOIS: (*More quietly.*) She's also late!

ANTON: She's Julia you-know-who's cousin's dog companion.

LOIS: She's a *dog* walker?

ANTON: No, not just a dog walker. *The* dog walker for Julia's cousin.

LOIS: Any way you look at it, Anton, she scoops poop all day.

ANTON: Well, now, it's not —

LOIS: I know. Not just *any* poop. Julia you-know-who's cousin's pooch's poop. So what! Who cares! We live in Playda del Rey, the place is teeming with stars and their dogs' poop. Who cares?!

ANTON: (*Putting finger over his lips.*) Shhh.

LOIS: Don't shhh me!

ANTON: I don't have time. I have to tidy. I have to make fresh hazelnut coffee with a splash of vanilla for her.

LOIS: I don't care if she insists you grind the beans with your own teeth. I've been your client for more than seven years now.

ANTON: Seven years?! (*She nods.*) Oh God, Lois, I'm old. I'm old. I'm very, very, very, very —

LOIS: (*Clapping her hands.*) Shut up! Snap out of it! You're not that old. I'm older than you are.

ANTON: Yeah, I know.

LOIS: Watch it, chubby. Now, I thought we liked each other. I thought we were friends.

ANTON: We are friends! I'm just under a lot of pressure right now, Lois. I can't make good coffee, for one.

LOIS: That's because you're a hairdresser. Not a coffee maker. Do you see the difference?

ANTON: I'm not living up to their quotas, OK? I'm not bringing in enough of the right clientele. They told me this. My people aren't rich enough, OK?

LOIS: What are you talking about? I'm your people. And I'm filthy rich.

ANTON: I know, but you're not Raphael's idea of rich.

LOIS: What?! (*Anton nods.*) Screw him. I'm stinking, filthy, rotten rich! Do you know how much Noel, my first husband, made?

ANTON: Yes, I know. I know Noel. Look, *I'm* not rich, Lois. Me and Toby just barely scrape by. Raphael told me I'd better make an incredible impression on Ms. Piro or I'm out. Gone. Vamoose.

LOIS: Well, smell him. We never had a problem like this when you worked at Maude's. And where does he get off calling this place Hair-em? Do you know how demeaning that is to women? Tell him I'm disgusted. Revolted! Everyone is. It should be more fun. Curl Up and Dye. Now, that's fun.

ANTON: Don't you get it? Ms. Piro makes recommendations to Julia. Julia tells all her friends. That's a lot of business. This is the chance of a lifetime.

LOIS: From the poop picker-upper? Lovely.

ANTON: Can't you just go out with your hair wet once? It's California. Or sit under the dryer?

LOIS: You sit under the dryer. Let us rewind back to the part



when I mention that I am filthy rich and you say, "But you're not Raphael's idea of rich."

ANTON: I don't mean any offense. I love having you as a customer, Lois. You make me laugh.

LOIS: Thank you. I am funny — hilarious. But you're not getting out of this so easily, Anton.

ANTON: Well, you only come in for a cut every few months. You rarely get your hair dyed. You don't get any extras — ever. No products. And, you're not exactly the best . . . well, tipper.

LOIS: What? I don't tip well?

ANTON: You never tip the shampooers. They complain.

LOIS: They do? They do not!

ANTON: Yes, they do. They don't want to work with you anymore. And let me put it this way. Your tips are pennies better than Ms. Walker's.

LOIS: Oh my God! Mitzy? But she's so, so cheap. You're not serious?

ANTON: I am.

LOIS: Oh my God! I had no idea I was that cheap. I'm cheap. Have I always been that cheap? (*Anton nods.*) Well, why didn't you say anything? You just let me be cheap all over the place.

ANTON: You had just divorced Buddy when we met. I thought you were short on cash.

LOIS: No, I had just gotten engaged to Harry, which might have been when I was divorcing Buddy. I went to you the first time at Maude's on a recommendation.

ANTON: No, you didn't even know Harry yet, so you must have just been thinking about divorcing Buddy, which makes it all the more confusing about why I didn't mention anything about the tip. But once you established that you're a bad tipper, I just expected it.

LOIS: (*Insulted, not sure what to say.*) Well!

ANTON: And you didn't come to me on a recommendation. You were a walk-in.

LOIS: Nooo! No, I don't just walk in. I've never walked in. I had an appointment.

ANTON: You didn't have an appointment. And you certainly didn't have an appointment with me. But I know for a fact that I readied your hair for your niece's graduation party. Remember? You wanted something odd. (*She doesn't quite trust him.*) The cornrows?

LOIS: (*Looking as if she bit into something horrid.*) Oh no! Don't remind me. I looked like a Jewish Raggedy Ann doll in Chanel. But I did meet Harry at that party. He liked the look. Hmm. Was that before or after Celeste had the heroin overdose and met up with Guy Swallow, the most handsome doctor on daytime television.

ANTON: Before Guy. After the heroin. During Phoebe's short-term amnesia.

LOIS: Oh. (*Beat.*) Oh. Then it hasn't been seven years.

ANTON: I knew it! (*Sign of the cross.*) Thank you God. I'm not as old.

LOIS: It's eight.

ANTON: No! It can't be. Noooo!

LOIS: Yes. Thank God we have "The Days and Nights of Passion" to help us keep track of the years. I am really losing my mind.

ANTON: Well, it's the stress, honey.

LOIS: Yes.

ANTON: The demands.

LOIS: Exactly.

ANTON: And Harry.

LOIS: Right . . . bite your tongue!

ANTON: What? You told me things had gone sour. I thought he was on his way out like the rest. I know you haven't been getting as much.

LOIS: It's not what I thought. I love him far beyond the others. Besides, he's not having an affair.

ANTON: How do you know? What did you find out?

LOIS: No dry the hair, no spill the guts.



ANTON: Fine. Get over here. The little dog-pulling name-dropper isn't showing up anyway. Just don't tell anyone I dried you without an appointment. I'd be in big trouble.

LOIS: *(Shaking her hair.)* Mum's the word. And I'll be sure to give you a good tip. *(She smiles.)* Eight percent. *(Nodding her head to him.)* That's good, isn't it?

ANTON: If I were a student loan. *(He pushes her head.)* Put your head down. Here comes my magic blow-dryer. *(Drying with a blow-dryer.)* So spill?

LOIS: Oh my, that feels nice, Anton. I was chilled. That air is nice.

ANTON: *(Not hearing above the blow-dryer.)* What?

LOIS: *(Louder.)* Nice. *(Anton nods, smiles. Talking over dryer.)* He has a physical ailment.

ANTON: What?

LOIS: *(Even louder.)* Harry's got a physical ailment!

ANTON: *(Loudly.)* I know! What ailment?

*(They continue trying to talk over the hair dryer.)*

LOIS: Irritable bowel.

ANTON: He's irritable?

LOIS: No, his bowel is.

ANTON: A bowel can be irritable?

LOIS: Well, apparently, his can. I never heard of it. I heard of spastic.

ANTON: Spastic what? *(He turns off the blow-dryer.)*

LOIS: *(She yells.)* Spastic bowel, you idiot! *(Looks around.)* Sorry. *(Smiles at customers.)* Spastic Cow — you know that PBS documentary on mad cow disease? *(Waves to someone else in the room.)* I had an appointment for this.

ANTON: Oh God, Lois, don't be so loud.

LOIS: Don't be so deaf. Anyway.

ANTON: Anyway, that problem keeps him less interested?

LOIS: Well, it's irritating apparently.

ANTON: Umm.

LOIS: What's umm? You don't think he's telling the truth?

ANTON: What? I never said that.

LOIS: Well, at least I have a husband, don't I?

ANTON: I have a husband!

LOIS: No, I've met him, honey. He's a wife.

ANTON: Whatever, Ms. Homophobia. The point is, at least, I keep him, or did.

LOIS: Did?

ANTON: Nothing. I didn't mean that.

LOIS: I love Toby. He's adorable. Where is he? What have you done to him?

ANTON: I didn't do anything to him! It's what he's done to me. He's gotten so wrapped up in this whole Buddhist deal. You know he wants to go to the San Bernardino Mountains to this place called Whispering Pines, so that he can dance at night in the wilderness.

LOIS: So?

ANTON: He wants to do it naked.

LOIS: Oh no!

ANTON: Exactly.

LOIS: The mosquitoes are terrible up there. Tell him to bring lots of *Off*.

ANTON: But he wants to go without me. We haven't been apart for fifteen years.

LOIS: Well, it's about time. He's sick of you, darling.

ANTON: Uh. That's what I'm afraid of. I've become so old, and chubby, and boring to him. He wants one of those slim, yogurt-drinking yoga boys.

LOIS: Probably. *(He gives her a look.)* That doesn't mean he's going to leave you. I had a similar stint with Harry.

ANTON: You did?

LOIS: Yes. We planned a cruise to the Bahamas. One of those ships that stop all over. Oh gosh, I remember there was this really annoying cha-cha instructor who I just wanted to smack across the ocean if she said, "Isn't it fun and easy?" just one more time.

ANTON: How, in any way, does this relate to my Toby naked on a San Bernardino mountain?

LOIS: Shhh. I'm getting there. I'm taking the scenic route. I didn't want Harry on the trip. In fact, I told him it was *my* trip. Alone. He put up a big stink, but eventually he let me go.

ANTON: And you had an awful time.

LOIS: No, I had the best time of my life. I flirted with everybody.

ANTON: But you missed Harry terribly.

LOIS: Not really.

ANTON: Lois, this is strangely not making me feel any better.

LOIS: I didn't leave him. We have a commitment. He's the best man for the job. And I love him. You see? Toby will feel the same way. I know. And he won't be a Buddhist for long. He doesn't strike me as the eternally peaceful type. He's addicted to his neuroses.

ANTON: Thank you for saying so, Lois.

LOIS: You're welcome. But it's true.

ANTON: *(Beat.)* Lois, do you ever ponder what your life is about? What it all means? What you've done in the scheme of the world?

LOIS: *(Pause.)* Oh Anton! You added a color in. You did, didn't you? I love the hint of auburn streaking through effortlessly.

ANTON: I knew you would.

LOIS: You're a genius. An absolute artist. *(Touching her hair with glee.)* I love it! *(Loudly.)* I'm giving you a two hundred dollar tip!

ANTON: *(Quietly.)* You are?

LOIS: *(Quietly.)* Not on your life, darling, but they don't have to know it. *(Loudly.)* And there's more where that came from! Several hundred more! *(Quietly.)* Just flaunt it to the snooty Raphael and tell him to shove his rotten, poorly named salon up his you-know-what. *(Beat.)* Once a job has you pondering garbage like you're pondering, you know it's time to leave. Life is about being happy, not productive. And you are *not* happy here.

ANTON: Are you serious?

LOIS: As a naked Buddhist dancing on a mountain. Did you ever fret over making coffee for a dog walker at Maude's? *(Anton's not sure what to say.)* Um-hum, I rest my case. *(She starts to leave.)*

ANTON: *(Yells out.)* Lois! Get the fu-fu drinks flowing.

LOIS: Café Milan.

LOIS and ANTON: Lance's section.

ANTON: *(Finger pulling him in.)* Oh, Raphael?