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Setting: An empty beauty salon. Can be represented by simple chair and a spotlight.

Special items: One old, grizzled wig and one shiny, new, cheap one.

Cast: AL: Male, 50s, any ethnicity

MRS. PETERS: Female, 60+ (the older the better), any ethnicity.

Notes:

1. A beautiful movie star of color of the director's choosing may be referenced instead of Nicole Kidman and/or Channing Tatum and the Hemsworth brother to reflect the ethnicity of the actor playing Mrs. Peters, if so desired.

A chair in a pool of light that's brighter than the rest of the stage. MRS. PETERS, a woman of a certain age enters. She clutches a handbag and wears a scarf, large sunglasses, and a COVID mask.

MRS. PETERS is followed by AL, a robust man of a certain age wearing a hairdresser's smock. He is also wearing a COVID mask.

AL

Mrs. Peters, we're closing.

MRS. PETERS

Now Al, it's been over a year. You can't imagine what's under this scarf.

AL

You should have called for an appointment.

MRS. PETERS

Well, I would have, but this is a dire situation. Do you think anyone saw me coming in?

AL

Mrs. Peters, have you been vaccinated?

MRS. PETERS

Yes. You?

AL

Yes.

MRS. PETERS

Then... we don't need all this.

AL

Except, we're closing.

MRS. PETERS

Al, please.

AL

All right.

As AL removes his COVID mask, MRS. PETERS rips off her scarf displaying a snarled mess. AL lets out a little scream of fright.

AL

Sorry. I had a burrito for lunch. Please. Sit down.

MRS. PETERS is seated.

MRS. PETERS

I have a picture of what I want.

MRS. PETERS produces a photo from her handbag.

AL

This is Nicole Kidman¹.

MRS. PETERS

That's right.

AL

From 1998.

MRS. PETERS

Isn't that a beautiful mane?

AL

You want -

MRS. PETERS

Nicole Kidman's hair. Yes. Please.

AL

Um...

MRS. PETERS

Now Al, you're a bone fide wizard. I just know you can do it.

AL

Um...

MRS. PETERS

Honey, do you mind if I take this off?

AL

Please.

Instead of removing her COVID mask, MRS. PETERS removes her wig. Again AL lets out a little gasp.

MRS. PETERS

You should see someone about that.

AL

Yes ma'am.

MRS. PETERS

You see, I met this gentleman online. God bless Covid. It's been literally decades since I've dated, but the quarantine has made some people a little frisky and more adventurous, if you know what I mean.

AL

I do.

MRS. PETERS

That's Miss Nicole Kidman.

AL

Why, yes, it is.

MRS. PETERS

I told him I worked in the movies and when he asked if he'd seen me in anything, I told him he'd seen parts of me. Because I am Nicole Kidman's body double.

AL

You sent him a picture of Nicole Kidman.

MRS. PETERS

He's been in prison, so he doesn't get out much.

AL

Since 1998?

MRS. PETERS

It was a gross miscarriage of justice, of course.

AL

Of course.

MRS. PETERS

He's being released tonight, and I don't want to disappoint.
Do you want to see a picture of him?

AL

Desperately.

Again, from her handbag MRS. PETERS produces a picture.

MRS. PETERS

He has a lot of time to work out in prison.

AL

You know that's a picture of the actual Channing Tatum¹. And he's not in prison.

MRS. PETERS

But isn't he yummy?

AL

Dreamy.

MRS. PETERS

Everybody says Channing could be his twin.

AL

Everybody. In prison.

MRS. PETERS

So, what can you do for me? Al. Did I mention he's getting out tonight?

AL

Do you think it's wise to --

MRS. PETERS

Al, the heart wants what the heart wants. And I want Channing Tatum.

AL

Well, all right then. Let's see what we're working with.

AL begins to unpin MRS. PETERS'S hair.

MRS. PETERS

No! Al! A wig. *(whispering)* I need another wig!

AL

Mrs. Peters, The Mantrap is closing, so maybe we shouldn't rush into this. What if we think about this a little bit before we meet a man who hasn't seen any woman - any - woman - in nearly thirty years. I mean, a woman like you can never be too careful.

MRS. PETERS

As the pandemic comes to an end, what risks would you take to make Channing Tatum happy, Al? Did you see my picture?

AL

Point taken. Let me just take a look in back and see what we have.

AL exits and a moment later returns with a full, luscious wig.

Now, it's only nylon, but...

MRS. PETERS

Oh Al! It's perfect.

AL

And it's the only one we have left.

MRS. PETERS

Gimme! Gimme!

AL

Allow me.

AL puts the wig on MRS. PETERS'S head. MRS. PETERS admires herself in a mirror.

MRS. PETERS

Oh, yes. Yes! Al?

AL

Yes?

MRS. PETERS

Are all of the windows secure?

AL

Mrs. Peters?

MRS. PETERS

Under no circumstances do I want anyone to know I wear a wig.

AL

May Channing Tatum grow fat and bald, your secret is safe with me.

AL crosses himself.

MRS. PETERS

What do you think? I mean, with makeup and the right lighting.

AL

Well... how dark are we talking? I mean, it's hard to tell with the mask and sunglasses.

MRS. PETERS

Oh. Maybe I'm just a silly old woman.

AL

Mrs. Peters.

MRS. PETERS

You don't like it?

AL

It's not that. It's just...

MRS. PETERS

How much is it? Because I'm happy to pay full retail.

AL

Nineteen, ninety-nine. but...

MRS. PETERS

It that with tax?

AL

Yes ma'am

MRS. PETERS

Will you take a check?

AL

Mrs. Peters, Channing Tatum doesn't deserve you.

MRS. PETERS

Decades, Al.

AL

I understand. A check is fine. But...

MRS. PETERS

What are you suggesting?

AL

Why don't we just set this aside for a minute and see what's happening with the hair that's actually growing out of your head, and you know, talk about the wisdom of meeting a man who's being released from prison. What was he in for? Thirty years is a very long -

AL sets the wig aside and begins unpinning MRS. PETERS'S hair.

Why, when was the last time I cut your hair?

MRS. PETERS

Now Al, don't be mad.

AL

Mad?

MRS. PETERS

I had to try out that new place. Curl Up and Dye over on Clark? They have them everywhere, now. Are you familiar?

AL

Oh, yeah, uh-huh.

MRS. PETERS

But I promise, it was just one time. It didn't mean anything.

AL

No, it wasn't.

MRS. PETERS

Al, I'm sorry. It just happened. It was an accident. I was drunk!

AL

Mrs. Peters, I've been trying to tell you: The Mantrap is closing.

MRS. PETERS

What? Why? You're going to throw me out over a silly little indiscretion? I just needed to feel young again. It meant nothing to me!

AL

I sat here, in the shop, all alone for weeks. But if I'd just had five clients a week... three, even, I could have kept things going. Even one client might have made things easier.

MRS. PETERS

Oh, Al. I understand. The highlight of my quarantine was a fight I had with my ficus in November, and I'm still not sorry for depriving him of water for two months. He learned who's boss, let me tell you.

AL

Mrs. Peters, the building's been sold. It's going to be an Ink Spot in a couple of weeks.

MRS. PETERS

A what?

AL

The Ink Spot's a discount tattoo franchise. That's what the world's come to. Discount tattoos. There was a time when people cared about craftsmanship. Artistry. I'm an artist, aren't I?

MRS. PETERS

Yes.

AL

I mean, I never cared for tattoos, per se, but they used to mean something. They were good conversation starters. "Oh, what prompted you to get a tattoo of a dagger through a bleeding heart?" "Well, you see Al, I was in the South Pacific when pirates took over our ship and I had to kill three of them or become their love slave." Now every Chad, Dick and Tyler can have a tattoo. "Tell me, Chad, what's the significance of that Captain America shield you have there on your calf?" "Uh, I don't know. Dick and Tyler dared me, and, I was like, 'I will if you will,'" and they were like, 'Challenge accepted!' so I kinda had to go through with it, you know? And it's like Captain America, so... Bitchin' isn't it?" "Why yes, Chad.

AL
cont'd

Every forty-five year old gay man should have one." If just half of them had come in here for a haircut, I'd... The quarantine wouldn't have been so hard.

MRS. PETERS

Al. What can I do? Maybe Channing will need a good haircut! If, you know, he has hair.

AL

That's sweet. But they've offered to train me to be one of the tattoo artists.

MRS. PETERS

Doesn't something like that take a lot of experience?

AL

The Ink Spot does them all with stencils. I'm going to be tracing Tweety Birds and Batman logos on the doughy asses of bargain-hunting middle-aged men with hair plugs and neon white dentures. Until I die.

AL has begun to openly weep.

MRS. PETERS

Are you all right?

AL

Honestly, I want to curl up and die.

MRS. PETERS

I felt like that. And then my Channing came along. I would give you a hug. But... You know. Covid. A girl can't be too careful.

AL

I understand.

MRS. PETERS

Say. I've always wanted to get a tattoo.

AL

Oh, Mrs. Peters...

MRS. PETERS

A little butterfly. On my... You know. Do you think you could -

AL

I'll make a deal with you.

MRS. PETERS

What?

AL

I'll tattoo whatever you like if you'll promise not to meet Channing Tatum.

MRS. PETERS

I wouldn't even consider this for anybody else but you. And I can keep the (whispering) wig?

AL

What wig?

MRS. PETERS

Come on, Al. Let's go to Starbuck's. There's a pumpkin-spiced latte with your name on it. My treat. Have you ever had one?

AL

What about Channing?

MRS. PETERS takes the picture of Channing Tatum and puts it back in her purse. Then she puts on her wig. AL straightens it for her, and as they exit arm in arm...

MRS. PETERS

He's waited thirty years. You know, Channing tells me he knows one of the Hemsworth¹ brothers.

AL

Is that right?

MRS. PETERS

Would you let me meet Channing if there's a date in it for you too? Maybe we could double. But I call the back seat! Don't forget the light.

The lights go out.

END OF PLAY