

Me

Sighing loudly, she banged her coffee cup on the table. Unfortunately, there had still been a few drops in the cup, so several droplets joyfully jumped onto the polished wood and sat glinting up at her, daring her to leave them there. With another sigh she sloped off to the kitchen and fetched a cloth. After all, no one else was going to clear it up. The very brief temptation to just leave it died quickly; she knew the stains would bother her, and her only.

Since she had stumbled out of bed with the alarm early that morning, she hadn't stopped. Hadn't stopped what? Goodness knows. There didn't seem much to show for her frantic activity. Preparing breakfast, getting the kids ready for school then driving them there – it was like she'd done three jobs before she even started work. No wait, she had also sorted out husband Tony's diary; she sometimes felt like his unpaid PA. Her work that morning was at the lounge corner table where she was crafting small items she would sell on the internet. Then in her lunch hour she had messaged other parents about an upcoming play date – just when *does* a parent turn into a social secretary?

Returning again to her craft table – the detritus from cutting, gluing, sewing and embroidery had all thankfully been spared by the cavorting coffee droplets – she reflected how her little enterprise had begun as a dream. But she was a victim of her own success and now it seemed there was less creation, and more administration. When you have your own business, however small, you have to wear all the hats. Design, production, marketing, accounts...

She paused in her work. Yes, so many hats she wore even in one day. She visualised a chef's toque blanche, a maid's mob cap, a chauffeur's peaked cap, and what would a PA or social secretary wear? Perhaps a cloche hat...on the table she could almost see the hat pile, and it grew as each role she fulfilled in any given day took shape as some form of head gear. And that was before she even began to express her entrepreneurial role - perhaps a fedora? A military hat for keeping the family peace, a deerstalker for when she turns investigator for those mysterious breakages, baseball cap for the jogging she does to keep Tony interested and the hat hill was now mountainous, and the stack began to teeter and threatened to engulf her – quickly, she waved her arms in front of her and swept away the picture with a shout, 'but where is *me*?'

Looking again at the table of craft materials, she picked up this and then that, trying to work out if she could make some kind of hat that really spoke of her. Just her, plain old her. A 'Me' hat. But she soon put everything down. She stood up, went to the front door and stepped outside. She was only her without any hat at all.