

Toupée or Not Toupée

CHARACTERS:

Josh Baldwin Forty-two-year-old Creative Director of an advertising company in Central London.

Amber Headstrong Josh's personal assistant—a millennial.

SETTING: Josh's (non-airconditioned) office on the hottest day of the summer.

A meeting is in progress. JOSH is on his personal treadmill working up a mighty sweat while discussing his upcoming business trip. AMBER is seated. She is taking notes.

Josh switches off the treadmill, takes a drink from his water bottle, and reaches for his towel. He wipes the back of his neck before sitting at his desk opposite Amber.

AMBER

Why do you always do this?

JOSH (*Wipes his arms.*)

Do what?

AMBER

Wipe your neck and arms first after a workout.

JOSH (*Reaches under his shirt and wipes his chest.*)

What's the issue?

AMBER

You've *literally* got a deluge of sweat streaming down your face. Look! It's even dripping onto your desk.

(She grabs a handful of tissues, leans over, and wipes the desk.)

JOSH

Really? I hadn't noticed.

(He dabs at his face gingerly with the towel.)

AMBER

May I be frank, Josh?

JOSH

Since when do you ask permission?

AMBER

It's just ... Here's the thing. I know you wear a toupée, and whenever you do a workout, sweat cascades out of the gap between your scalp and the ... *piece*. You *must* feel it. I mean,

how could you not? Yet, you always wipe your neck and arms first as if you're trying not to draw attention to the

JOSH (*Interrupting.*)
Is it that obvious?

AMBER
It's very well-made. Hardly noticeable at all. I'm sure you paid a small fortune for it.

JOSH
Top of the line, ethically-sourced human hair. But that's neither here nor there. How long have you known?

AMBER
How long have I worked for you?

JOSH
Three years and seven months?

AMBER
Three years, six months ... and two weeks.

JOSH
How did you ... how did you figure it out?

AMBER
I couldn't help noticing that your hair is always perfectly styled and never grows. It stays the same length.

JOSH
You're very observant.

AMBER
It's my job to stay on top of things.

JOSH
Have you discussed this with anyone?

AMBER
It's not my business to tell.

JOSH
So, you'll keep this between you and me, then? Our little secret?

AMBER (*Shifts in her chair.*)
I'm afraid it's not exactly a secret.

JOSH
Do others in the office know?

AMBER

Yes.

JOSH

Who?

AMBER

Everyone with eyes. Well, everyone but Veronica in Customer Contact.

JOSH

But she's legally blind! Jesus. Does Madeline in Finance know?

AMBER

The hottie in the floral dresses?

JOSH

That's her. Do you think she knows?

AMBER

Probably. Why? Have you got a crush on her?

JOSH

Crush? We're not fifteen, for Chrissakes. Life isn't a teen rom-com.

AMBER

Okay ... Let me rephrase. Are you *chaffing for* Madeline?

JOSH

Chaffing?

AMBER

Oh, for the love of God. Do you fancy her or what?

JOSH

She seems like a lovely person.

AMBER

Have you asked her out? You know, like on a date?

JOSH

Um ...

AMBER

I'll take that as a no. You're a decent-looking bloke with a good job, so what's stopping you? Wait. Don't tell me. Is it because you're *follically challenged*? You're not actually letting *that* get in the way of romance, are you?

JOSH

Well, um ...

AMBER

So, you're bald. *Big whoop!* I don't understand what the big deal is.

JOSH

You wouldn't, would you? I started losing my hair while I was still at uni. How many twenty-year-olds do you think ever looked at me? Gave me the time of day? Here's the long and short. Zero.

AMBER

But Madeline isn't twenty. She's a grown-up. Besides, she might be into bald guys. Ever thought of that?

JOSH

You think?

AMBER (*Shrugs.*)

You never know. A lot of women find bald men sexy.

JOSH

I find that hard to believe. Name *one* sexy bald man.

AMBER

The Rock. Jason Stratham. Stanley Tucci is hot as hell. Sean Connery ... I know he's dead now, but he was a sexy Baldy. I'd have done him in a heartbeat. That guy Ian in the Arts Department. Geoff in HR. You should take a lesson from them. Put your big boy pants on and embrace your shiny head. Rock it—like Ian and Geoff.

JOSH

Are you suggesting I come to work without my ... toupée? What would everyone think?

AMBER

Who cares? At least you wouldn't have to live a lie anymore.

JOSH (*Long, dramatic pause. Then, with gusto.*)

You're right! I'll do it! I'll march in here tomorrow a new man. I'll ask Madeline to dinner! I'll ...

AMBER (*Interrupting.*)

Um... Josh?

(*She points to his face.*)

You're still seeping.

END