

Double Date

Pamela Loyd





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ArtAge Publications
Bonnie L. Vorenberg, President
PO Box 19955
Portland OR 97280
503-246-3000 or 800-858-4998
bonniev@seniortheatre.com
www.seniortheatre.com

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UNFAITHFUL

by Pamela Loyd

CAST

LAUREL: A woman with a new haircut. (Wears a wig with triangular shapes cut into it. It must be a ridiculous haircut.) She is dressed casually, but nicely. She has been unfaithful and is in a state of astounded disbelief and remorse that she has done something so stupid, but she is not weepy or hysterical.

JUDITH: Laurel's best friend. Dressed casually but nicely. Concerned for Laurel.

GEORGE: Laurel's husband. He is dressed for the office when he arrives home from work. He is a likeable man who loves his wife, and is both shocked and confused by what is going on, never quite 'getting it.'

Place

LAUREL and GEORGE's living room.

Time

Present. A weekday afternoon.

Setting: Living room with a sofa or two chairs. A desk at one side with telephone. A light-weight mirror on back wall with small table under it; a small side table at end of chairs. Scissors in a drawer of one of these tables or the desk--several places for LAUREL to look.

At Rise: LAUREL sits on sofa, fidgets nervously. Doorbell rings, LAUREL opens door, JUDITH enters.

LAUREL: Oh, Judith, thank God you're here.

JUDITH: I got here as quick as I could.

LAUREL: I have something surprising to tell you.

JUDITH: Hey, you got a new haircut. Is that it?

LAUREL: Oh forget that. I need to tell you something awful before George gets home. Something really bad has happened.

JUDITH: You're worrying me, Laurel. What's going on?

LAUREL: (*deep breath*) I did something terrible, Judith. (*beat*) I've been unfaithful.

JUDITH: (*surprised*) Oh.

LAUREL: I've cheated.

JUDITH: I'm surprised. I mean, *you* cheated? Not George?

LAUREL: Oh no, not George. It's me, I'm the guilty one, I'm the cheat.

JUDITH: But if you're the one who cheated, why are *you* upset?

LAUREL: Why shouldn't I be upset? Do you think it's any easier being the cheat-er than being the cheat-ee? Do you think my life is less ruined because I did the cheating? Why don't people ever feel sorry for the cheat-er?

JUDITH: Well, I've never thought about it that way, but of the two choices, I always thought being the cheat-er would be the more desirable position.

LAUREL: Don't make light of this, Judith. Being the cheat-er is not what people think it is, all freedom and happiness and a life of new possibilities.

JUDITH: I suppose not.

LAUREL: But you don't realize that ahead of time. One day you start to feel dissatisfied with yourself, (*looks in mirror on wall*) the same old self you've seen in the mirror every day for years. You start to think maybe you could get a new start, find someone who pleased you more, and you ask yourself--do I dare?

JUDITH: I guess you did dare. But, Laurel, instead of doing something so extreme, shouldn't you have tried to work things out?

LAUREL: Of course you're right. I know that *now*. But now it's too late. I just don't see any way back.

JUDITH: There must be some way.

LAUREL: Do I really have to explain this to you? Surely everyone knows that once you've been unfaithful to your hairdresser, there's no way back.

JUDITH: (*now she's shocked*) Your hairdresser?! Oh my God! You cheated on your hairdresser! That's the sin of all sins! Everyone knows you can never do that.

LAUREL: I know! That's what I'm saying.

JUDITH: I mean, if you've been with them for some time, it's like a commitment. If you ever go to someone else it will be a betrayal.

LAUREL: I'm such a bad person.

JUDITH: What were you thinking?

LAUREL: Well I didn't plan it. It just happened. (*remembering*) There I was in the mall one day looking in a shop window, and I thought who's that tired, frumpy lady in the window? And then I realized it was a reflection of *me*! Then suddenly, salvation came. (*sings*) Da-Da! Two shops down I saw blinking lights. And heard music.

JUDITH: I know where you mean. The Joy of Hair. It's a dangerous place.

LAUREL: (*a dreamy lover's voice*) And I gave in to temptation. I thought, why not try someone new who will make me feel beautiful and lovely and young again. I sat in that chair and said to the hairdresser, take me, take me, do what you want with me. (*beat*) And she did. Before I could think clearly again, this hairdresser with a ring in her nose had cut my hair in what she called the new Hip Blip style.

JUDITH: Yes, I see. Do you...like it?

LAUREL: Of course I don't like it. It's ridiculous. But that's not the point. The point is that now I can't ever go back to Sebastian. He'll know I strayed.

JUDITH: *Sebastian* is your hairdresser? It's almost impossible to get an appointment with him.

LAUREL: Yes, I know. But now I'm so afraid for him to see my hair like this, and have to confess that I went to someone else, that I cancelled my next three appointments.

JUDITH: Oh. That's practically a break-up.

LAUREL: I know. I want to go back to him, but how can I?

JUDITH: So what are you going to do? You can't go back to the little nose-ring chick who did this to you.

LAUREL: I've been thinking about this and I've come up with a plan. It's the only way I'll be able to go back to Sebastian. Get the scissors, Judith. Cut off all my hair.

JUDITH: What?!

(front door opens, GEORGE enters unnoticed, overhears next lines)

LAUREL: I know it's drastic, but it would remove all the evidence of my betrayal.

JUDITH: But what reason would you give for doing this?

LAUREL: I'll say I did it in moment of menopausal madness.

JUDITH: Laurel, I don't know about this. It's one thing for you to be unfaithful, but to do this...What will George say?

LAUREL: I know George won't like it, but he'll just have to learn to accept it. Because I need Sebastian. I can't give him up.

JUDITH: I know how important Sebastian is to you, Laurel, but as a friend I have to say I think you're making a mistake.

LAUREL: Oh Judith, if you can't help me with this, I'll do it on my own. *(exits to another room)*

GEORGE: Hello, Judith.

JUDITH: Oh! George! We didn't hear you come in.

GEORGE: Yes, well, I suppose that's just as well. It allowed me to hear a rather informative conversation.

JUDITH: Oh that was just —

GEORGE: So Laurel has been unfaithful.

JUDITH: George, she didn't mean it the way it sounds.

GEORGE: Oh? And how does it sound?

JUDITH: Well, it sounds like she's having an affair.

GEORGE: Exactly. She's been unfaithful. I heard her say that. Don't deny it.

JUDITH: Well, yes, she did say that, but that isn't what she means. I mean, she does mean it, that she was unfaithful, but not the way you think she means.

GEORGE: Yes, I thought so. Sebastian, is it? I heard her mention a Sebastian. Who is this Sebastian?

JUDITH: Honestly, George, it's nothing to worry about. He's just her hair--

LAUREL: (*enters*) I don't know where I put the scissors. Oh, George, you're home.

GEORGE: Yes I am, apparently just in time to find out about Sebastian.

LAUREL: So you heard what I did. I can hardly believe I'd do such a thing. (*crosses to desk or a side table, begins looking through drawers*) I've got to find those scissors.

GEORGE: So you're admitting it. You've been unfaithful.

LAUREL: Yes, I've been unfaithful to Sebastian.

GEORGE: Unfaithful to *Sebastian*?

LAUREL: Yes, after all the years I've been seeing him.

GEORGE: *Years!?*

LAUREL: And now I've ruined it, I've seen someone new.

GEORGE: Now you're seeing someone else? In addition to Sebastian?

LAUREL: I know. I feel so guilty about what I've done to Sebastian.

GEORGE: You feel guilty about being unfaithful to *Sebastian*?!

LAUREL: I don't know how I can ever face him again. He's so sensitive. I'm worried that he'll have such hurt feelings.

GEORGE: What about me, Laurel? Why aren't you worried about *my* feelings?

LAUREL: (*turns to GEORGE*) Oh, George, why do you have any feelings about this?

GEORGE: Why do I...!?

LAUREL: I mean, really, George, when do you ever pay enough attention to me to even notice if I have a new haircut?

GEORGE: So you're saying this is my fault. That I don't pay enough attention to you.

LAUREL: Well it's true, George. (*crosses to another side table, looks through drawers*)

GEORGE: I don't think it's true. Well maybe I don't always notice if you've gotten a haircut, but I don't accept that that's a reason to...you know...to find someone else.

LAUREL: I know. I never should have done that. I should have stayed true to Sebastian.

GEORGE: (*sputters*) True to...Se...Se...Se...Sebastian...!!

JUDITH: Laurel, I think George is misunderstanding what's going on.

GEORGE: Oh no, I understand perfectly well what's going on. First there was this Sebastian, who I gather you've been seeing for quite some time, now you've thrown him aside for someone new.

LAUREL: Yes, that's right, so you do understand.

GEORGE: Well I don't feel particularly understanding.

LAUREL: Anyway, I've got to find the scissors. (*goes to a third small table, searches in a drawer*)

JUDITH: Laurel, this is not a good idea. (*takes mirror off wall*)

LAUREL: Ah! Here they are. *(holds up scissors)*

JUDITH: *(goes behind LAUREL, leaves about five feet between them, LAUREL turns to face JUDITH)* You don't need the scissors, Laurel. Think about how you'll look. *(holds up mirror)* You won't like what you see when you look in the mirror.

GEORGE: That's right, Laurel. Listen to Judith. You want to be able to look at yourself in the mirror and know you've done the right thing. *(steps between JUDITH and LAUREL)* So call it quits with this Sebastian fella right now.

(In the following sequence, the three are in a line. LAUREL will continuously move towards GEORGE shaking scissors at him in what will appear to be a threatening way. GEORGE will continue to back away from LAUREL with the belief that she plans to kill him. JUDITH is behind GEORGE still holding up the mirror. She continues to step back as GEORGE steps back towards her.)

LAUREL: Call it quits with Sebastian? No, no, no. I don't have to do that because I have a plan, George. I will use these scissors to get rid of my problem in order to keep Sebastian.

GEORGE: Get rid of your problem? Do you mean *I'm* your problem?!

LAUREL: I won't let anything stand in my way.

GEORGE: *(screams)* Ahhh! You do mean me! You mean *I'm* standing in your way!

LAUREL: *(tries to peer around him at mirror)* Yes, you are, George. You are in my way.

GEORGE: Please, Laurel, you don't have to do this! *(he stops backing up, covers his eyes in fear)*

LAUREL: *(crosses behind GEORGE to mirror JUDITH holds, puts scissors to her hair)* You're wrong, George. I do have to do this. Judith, how many cuts do you think it will take?

JUDITH: At least a dozen.

GEORGE: *(his back to LAUREL)* A dozen?! That many?! This is going to be so painful.

LAUREL: *(turns around to face GEORGE's back)* I know you won't like it, George, but you've just got to accept that this is something I have to do.

GEORGE: Please, Laurel, don't do this to me!

JUDITH: What is wrong with you, George? She's not doing this to you. She's doing it to herself.

GEORGE: (*turns around, looks at LAUREL*) To herself?

LAUREL: (*shakes scissors at her heart in a way that looks like she might stab herself*) George, I have to do this. I thought you understood. I can't give up Sebastian! I can't go on without him! I'll just die if I lose Sebastian!

GEORGE: (*to JUDITH*) What does she mean she can't go on? She'll just die? What is she going to do with those scissors?

JUDITH: Isn't it obvious, George? She's going to cut her own—

GEORGE: Oh my God! She's going to cut herself! (*grabs scissors from LAUREL, drops them, wrestles her to the sofa*) Stop, Laurel! Don't kill yourself! Don't cut your wrists! Don't cut your heart out! Sebastian's not worth it!

LAUREL: What are you doing, George?! What are you doing? Let me go!

GEORGE: I'm stopping you from killing yourself, Laurel!

LAUREL: I'm not going to kill myself.

JUDITH: (*with dry irony*) What I started to say, George, is that Laurel was going to cut her hair.

GEORGE: You were going to cut your hair? Oh. I thought...(*looks at her carefully*) But it looks like you already had a haircut. Well I must say, this is quite something.

LAUREL: I know, it's horrible.

GEORGE: (*sincere admiration*) No, not at all. I like it. It's kind of sexy. Kind of exotic.

LAUREL: Really? You like my hair this way?

GEORGE: Yes, I do. It brings out your spunky side. I think you should keep it this way.

LAUREL: (*excited*) Well that's...that's...I mean, this is fantastic! If I keep my hair this way and just go back to the nose-ring girl, then I don't have to confess my infidelity to my hairdresser.

GEORGE: Why would you confess your infidelities to your hairdresser?

LAUREL: Well I won't have to if I cut my hair. That's what I've been saying.

GEORGE: (*confused*) But you already have a haircut, so now you don't have to... whatever it is you don't have to do. Now everything's...whatever you've been saying. So let's just put Sebastian behind us. We'll move on and we'll rebuild our marriage.

LAUREL: Rebuild our marriage? What are you talking about, George?

JUDITH: Your marriage is fine, George.

GEORGE: Huh? What?

(*telephone rings, LAUREL answers phone*)

LAUREL: Hello?...Oh, hello Sebastian. (*excited aside to JUDITH and GEORGE*) It's Sebastian...Yes?...What?...How can you do that?...After all these years!...Oh! (*slams down receiver.*) Can you believe that?!

GEORGE: What's he want now?

JUDITH: What did Sebastian say?

LAUREL: Sebastian said since I cancelled my next three appointments, he has cancelled all the rest of my appointments. He's given my regular first Tuesday appointment time to someone else.

JUDITH: You have a first Tuesday appointment?

LAUREL: Yes, every month. The first Tuesday at ten o'clock. And now he's taken on someone new and dumped me.

JUDITH: Oh dear. First Tuesday at ten o'clock?

LAUREL: How dare he do this to me. Judith, he's being unfaithful to *me*. My God, there's nothing worse than an unfaithful hairdresser!

GEORGE: So Sebastian's cheating on *you* now?

JUDITH: (*looks at her watch*) Oh! Look at the time. I've got to go.

LAUREL: Judith, you can't leave now. Who do you think he's cheating on me with? probably some evil conniving woman who tempted him away from me. Boy, I'd like to rip her hair out. (*picks up phone*) I'm going to ask the receptionist to look in the appointment book and give me her name.

JUDITH: No, Laurel. That's not a good idea. (*pushes phone down*) I mean, how can this be the new woman's fault? She didn't know she was taking *your* spot, did she?

LAUREL: Why are you defending her?

JUDITH: I'm not...I mean, she probably just had her name on a waiting list for Sebastian, then when 'someone' cancelled so many of their appointments, which it turns out happens to be you, but this other woman didn't know it was you, and then Sebastian called this innocent other woman and gave her that time slot. The first Tuesday at ten o'clock. Before you ever told me about this.

LAUREL: Judith! It's you! You're cheating on me with Sebastian! Oh my God, there's nothing worse than an unfaithful friend.

GEORGE: Now *Judith* is having an affair with Sebastian?

LAUREL: No one's having an affair, George. Where do you get these silly ideas?

GEORGE: No one? But you just said...

JUDITH: Wait a minute, this is all Sebastian's fault. He just up and dumped you.

LAUREL: That's right. This is Sebastian's fault. (*picks up phone, dials*) Hello, Sebastian, this is Laurel. How dare you just dump me. You're supposed to be heartbroken that I cancelled three appointments because I let someone new cut my hair into horrible chunky thing-a-ma-bobs and now I'm so distraught that...what?...Are you crying, Sebastian? (*aside to JUDITH and GEORGE*) Sebastian's crying, I guess he *is* heartbroken that I've found a new hairdresser...What?...(*disappointed*) Oh...I see...Well I don't know about that. (*slams down phone*)

JUDITH: What's going on?

GEORGE: (*explaining to JUDITH*) Now Sebastian's crying because he lost Laurel.

LAUREL: No, Sebastian wasn't crying about me. He's crying about horrible hair—that any hairdresser would hack someone's hair into ragged whatevers. He says I must come see him immediately so he can fix it.

JUDITH: That's great!

LAUREL: (*stubborn*) I don't know about that. I'm the injured party here. I don't want to forgive him too easily.

GEORGE: That's right. Don't forgive him, Laurel.

JUDITH: And I'll cancel my Tuesday appointments so you can have them back. That really is your time slot.

LAUREL: Shouldn't he apologize first? This is all his fault.

JUDITH: Of course this is all his fault, and now he's realized his mistake. Laurel, he's asking you to come back to him. (*exaggerates for LAUREL's benefit*) Poor man, I imagine he's *desperate* to have you back.

LAUREL: Well, since he's begging me, I suppose I *could* do him the *favor* of returning.

JUDITH: Hey! I think you got him back.

LAUREL: (*gleeful*) That's right. I got him back!

GEORGE: What? Wait a minute. You're going back to your affair with Sebastian?!

LAUREL: What affair? Haven't you been listening, George? I swear you never pay attention. It's what I've been telling you. A woman can never be unfaithful to her hairdresser.

THE END