

The Most Beautiful Girl by Adelene Ellenberg

Rona had been voted “most beautiful girl” in her New York high school.

Her husband, Ed, was an ambitious accountant who was amazed he’d snared the beauty queen. Perry and Vita, also Manhattan-dwellers, had attended high school with our dinner-party hosts, as had Dale, my husband for all of two weeks.

Conversation swirled around life in Manhattan, off-Broadway shows, and art-gallery openings. Hailing from “fly-over country”, I sipped my wine and listened. Eventually, the talk turned to fashion and hair.

“My hair is styled by Andre at Vidal Sassoon’s shop over on Fifth Avenue,” said Rona. “He’s so talented.” We gazed at Rona’s perfectly-trimmed black hair that framed her large violet eyes. “He’s a bargain at only \$150.00.”

“Pierre, at Vixen’s, charges the same!” said Vita.

The New York ladies turned to me. “Where do you go to get your hair cut?”

“Me?” I muttered. I looked down at my plate. “I don’t make a fuss.”

Just then, Ed emerged from the kitchen, a striped apron over his crisp, white shirt. He stood aside, holding a flaming platter aloft.

The ladies’ eyes remained on me, curious. “Ok,” I confessed. “Dale cuts my hair.”

Their eyes rolled in unison, as Ed announced, “More flambe?” He brandished the dessert deftly onto the table’s center. My dreams of friendship flickered, then died, like the flames on the caramelized peaches.

I peeked at Dale, hoping I had not embarrassed him. Dale and I had eloped, despite significant disapproval. Was this bold life-choice going to pan out? We came from very different backgrounds...the tectonic plates were already shifting beneath us ...would we withstand the “slings and arrows” coming at us from many sides?

Dale met my gaze. All was well. Indeed, all would be well. We had taken our vows “for better, or for worse”. Our hearts were one from the very start of this, our Grand Life Adventure. Like a roller-coaster, our Adventure has had its ups and downs.

Yet, thirty-six years later, we are still married, and blessed with the sweetness of “unconditional” love.