



# LET'S JUST SAY IT WASN'T PRETTY

BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF *THEN AGAIN*

# DIANE KEATON

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LET'S JUST SAY  
IT WASN'T PRETTY

DIANE  
KEATON



RANDOM HOUSE  
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*Let's Just Say It Wasn't Pretty* is a work of nonfiction.

Some names and identifying details have been changed.

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# WRONG IS RIGHT

I've always loved independent women, outspoken women, eccentric women, funny women, flawed women. When someone says about a woman, "I'm sorry, that's just wrong," I tend to think she must be doing something right. Take Diana Vreeland, the legendary editor in chief of *Vogue*. Vreeland was many things, but a classic beauty wasn't one of them. Her mother called her "my ugly little monster." Guess what? That didn't get in her way. Vreeland paraded around with a head of glossy pitch-black hair until the day she died, at age eighty-five. She defied every rule of aging gracefully. She thrived in the big-time world of Beauty, yet was not enslaved by it. Diana conjured a world where "you've gotta have style. It helps you get down the stairs. It helps you get up in the morning. It's a way of life. Without it, you're nobody."

I respect women who aren't afraid to push the envelope, women who are inappropriate, women who do what you aren't supposed to. Women like Katharine Hepburn. Didn't she wear pants under a Chairman Mao tunic to the Academy Awards? No gown? No jewels? No stylist? No posing on the red carpet? Outrageous! And what about twenty-seven-year-old Lena Dunham, who has redefined what a star can look like. I think she's one of the most beautiful women on TV. Her HBO series *Girls* has hit a raw nerve with some reviewers. "One reason that *Girls* is unsettling is that it is an acerbic, deadpan reminder that human nature doesn't change," wrote Alessandra Stanley of *The New York Times*. "As funny and creative as her show may be," wrote Robert Bianco in *USA Today*, "there's little doubt *Girls* will be too explicit, too New York-specific, and too young-and-female-centric to appeal to everyone." That's the point: Why try to appeal to everyone?

I have a soft spot for women like Phyllis Diller. Remember her running after the garbage truck as it pulled away from the curb, yelling, "Am I too late for the trash?" "No," said the driver. "Jump right in!" I admire women like Joan Rivers, even though I can't count how many times she's hauled me before her Fashion Police. Look, it's hard not to love a woman who can laugh about the fact that an animated show once featured her as a vagina that had received too much plastic surgery. Joan, Phyllis, and Totie Fields were among the first to openly discuss their multiple cosmetic surgeries. It takes strength to fess up to your

imperfections. People have asked me why I've never had work done. The truth is I respect women who have had work done just as much as I respect those who haven't. We're all just trying to get through the day.

In my early twenties I used to torture Woody with my insecurities: Would I ever be cast in a great movie? Would my slightly-but-definitely-noticeable crooked nose keep me from getting work? Looking back, I don't know how Woody put up with me. For a year and a half, the only job I'd been cast in was the recurring role of a young woman running around in tracksuit uttering "Hour After Hour won't wear off till the day is over." That's right, no one would hire me, except to sell underarm deodorant. I asked Woody if he thought I was crazy to keep flying to California to audition for films like Anthony Newley's *Summertree* only to lose out to actresses like Brenda Vaccaro. And even if I landed one of those roles, would I ever have a career? Woody told me I didn't have to worry. You're funny, he said, and funny is money. I looked at him and thought, Is this guy nuts? Funny women told jokes. I wouldn't know a joke if it hit me in the face. Funny women knew where the punch line came. I was always fumbling for the right thing to say. Funny women like Joan Davis from *I Married Joan* had a great career playing fall-down clowns with names like Flossy Duff. Funny women were comedic geniuses like Carol Burnett, or Ruth Buzzi of *Laugh-In*, who made herself look pretty awful with her most inspired character, Gladys Ormphby, an ugly spinster whose hair was pulled into a bun secured by a hairnet knotted in the middle of her forehead. Not exactly what you'd call attractive. Joan, Carol, and Ruth took funny to the edge of a cliff and they weren't afraid to fall off. That's when I understood what Woody was talking about. It's why Phyllis Diller worked into her nineties and Joan Rivers is still a force to be reckoned with. It's why I love funny women. They make funny beautiful.

Speaking of fearless and original, what about Lady Gaga, who has worn outfits that look like a chicken nugget and a feather duster? Love that. And Rihanna, the black Madonna, who reinvents her style and image with every album. To me, the most beautiful women are independent women like Angelina Jolie, Anna Magnani, fierce and sassy Jennifer Lawrence, Georgia O'Keeffe alone in the desert, Laurie Simmons (Lena Dunham's mother), Cindy Sherman front and center in her photographs, Barbra Streisand with her untouched nose, strong Kathryn Bigelow, defiant Kate Moss, Grace Coddington and her orange hair, Louise Brooks and her black bob, Françoise Hardy, unstoppable Hillary Clinton, brilliant Tina Fey, fearless Joan Didion, and ... each found her place in the world. Each has her own style, her own voice, her own independence, her own stamp, her own method, her own wrong that she's made right.

Just yesterday Dexter, my eighteen-year-old daughter, found a story online called "Top 10 Female Celebrities Who Are Ugly No Matter What Hollywood Says" by someone named Valdez\_Addiction.

"Mom. Mom. Come over here." I ran to the computer and there was a picture of Number One, Angelina Jolie, with this assessment: "She looks like Skeletor from He-Man. Sorry Bra, you could have done much better than this stick figure." Valdez\_Addiction slammed Number Four, Reese Witherspoon, with this: "What can I say about this genetic mistake that you can already see? Between that chin and that forehead that she finally realized she needed to cover, I'm still amazed she even has a career much less being voted beautiful by people magazine." Dexter kept scrolling, and there was the fifth-ugliest female celebrity no matter

How this chick got a lead role in anything is beyond me. And I know what you're thinking. It's not because she's old as dirt and they still try to give her sexy roles. She's even ugly in the Godfather when she was young.

Old as dirt. Wow. I went to my bathroom and looked in the mirror. "Let it go, Diane. No wallowing in self-pity. You have a family. You have a brother and two sisters. You have a daughter and a son. You have work. You have friends. You can feel. You can think, up to point. Your legs walk, your arms swing. You can see. Seeing is believing. Seeing is the gift that keeps giving. It's much more engaging than being seen. That's the bottom line, Diane... Get over yourself. Listen to your friend Daniel Wolf's advice—want what you have."

Daniel's not wrong, but he's not entirely right. It isn't quite that simple. I wish it were, but beauty is more complicated than that. Let's get real: Does anyone know a woman over fifty who hasn't taken a long hard look in the mirror and recited some version of this not so pretty monologue? "Diane, I've got some bad news. No matter what you do, no matter how much Restylane and Botox, no matter how many face-lifts and arm lifts and body lifts (good idea why not get the whole package taken care of in one fell swoop and call it a day); no matter how many brow lifts, thigh lifts, breast lifts, breast reductions, breast augmentations, tummy tucks, nose jobs, eye jobs, cheek implants, or chin implants; no matter how many chemical peels, laser skin resurfacings, spider vein treatments, permanent makeup applications (permanent sounds good), liposuctions, hair replacements, dermal filler polylactic acid treatments, dermal filler PMMA treatments, dermal filler polyalkylimide treatments (that's a lot of dermals), calcium hydroxylapatite (whatever that is), etc., etc.... Are you listening? No matter what you do you will still be a sixty-seven-year-old woman on the downhill slide."

So, what is beauty if it isn't Angelina Jolie and Reese Witherspoon? Why do we try to pin down by categorizing it as absolute? Why limit it at all? Why is classic beauty the gold standard? Why is gold the gold standard? And what is "classic"? What's precious about precious stones? Why are diamonds a girl's best friend? Don't tell me what beauty is before you know it for myself.

These old-as-dirt days have one advantage: I've learned to see beauty where I never saw before. But only because my expectations are more realistic. My favorite part of my body is not what my eyes see but what they feel. Not because of their color and God knows not because of their shape, but because of what they see. When I was in my twenties and thirties I wanted my appearance to be more interesting than the beauty that surrounded me. It was a fool's folly.

On my fifteenth birthday my dad told me I was becoming a pretty young lady. Mom said I had a pretty smile. One of my teachers complimented me on my pretty new dress. I was old enough to understand that pretty was a poor cousin to beautiful. Pretty was the stuff of being friendly but not being friends. Pretty was the right dress from Bullocks department store, not a beatnik tunic with black tights and a beret. Pretty was Sandra Dee, easy and light. Pretty fades. Beautiful was Natalie Wood, deep like the ocean. I knew this because on the cliffs of Laguna Beach I cried from the sheer wonder of what I saw. Beautiful makes you come back for more. It makes you ask questions. It's vast, unknowable, and magnificent. That's part of its power. It makes you think about the experience it's giving you. That's when I knew what I wanted. I've been chasing it ever since.

If we're lucky we have a long time to consider what beauty means. One thing I know, there is no beauty without pain. Beauty flourishes on sorrow. It's enriched by the knowledge that life is fleeting, sometimes cruel, and often ends without resolution. That's what makes beauty deep. Marilyn Monroe's insecurity explains her continuing appeal. It wasn't just her pretty face. It was the depth of her sad experience. Without living through the journey from orphan to goddess with a breathless voice, would she have become a legend? In the complexity of her suffering lies the universality of her appeal. How did Picasso come to see the scope of Marie-Thérèse's riveting head and shape it? I'll tell you how: through loving her, living with her, and seeing her as both ugly and magnificent. Because of his sculptures, Marie-Thérèse emerged as a symbol of unsightly, frightening, even hideous but also, I have to say, complete beauty.

When I was growing up I had a hard time doing much of anything right. Dad was always harping, "Diane, how many times do I have to tell you, don't stand in front of the open refrigerator, you're wasting electricity." Or "Diane, use your noggin. That's what happens when you forget your lunchbox in the car. You don't get lunch." And every single night at the dinner table: "For God's sake, Diane, keep your mouth closed when you chew." There was always something interfering with getting things right: a question (the wrong kind), hesitancy, and always, always the mangling of my sentences, the stammers, the ums, the you knows, the oh-wells, the I-don't-knows. I was inept, inexact, and imprecise. I would never have believed you if you had told me that this ineptness would help me later on, but somehow it did and I made my way.

Mom, on the other hand, taught me there was beauty in the imperfect. She would jot down words of wisdom and leave them on my desk. Things like "You don't have to be perfect to be beautiful." "Walk in power." "Find a reason to love yourself every day." "Only you can decide if things are right or wrong." "Buy yourself a gift for just being you." "Honor yourself Diane. You deserve it." "Laugh at your friend Leona for making fun of your face." When I was a senior at Santa Ana High School, these words of wisdom, while well intended, seemed stupid. Walk in power? Laugh because someone tells you you're ugly? Please. "Only you can decide if things are wrong or right"? Okay, but how?

Look, I get how Valdez and others might see me: the woman hiding under her hat to be unseen. I know it might sound disingenuous at best and whiny at worst to complain about what I find in the mirror. But I'd be lying if I told you my mornings don't start with self-doubt, and you wouldn't believe me anyway. Besides, when I think about beauty I mean something much bigger than a face in the mirror or a photograph of an undeniably gorgeous woman or even some Internet story about Hollywood's ten ugliest female celebrities. I'm talking about that overwhelming feeling you get when you stand on a cliff and look out at the ocean. I'm talking about Phyllis Diller chasing the garbage truck or Joan Rivers getting in the first laugh about herself.

Or Katharine Hepburn in her tunic on the red carpet. Or Lady Gaga in her egg. Or Diana Vreeland's wise words about style helping you get down the stairs. I'm talking about finding whatever works for you to get out the door every day. I'm talking about the flaws that eventually take on a life of their own. The ineptness that makes you who you are. I'm talking about women who make us see beauty where we never saw it; women who turn wrong into right.

# PRISONERS ON MY WALL

As I throw my coat on the chair, I see Alexander Gardner's 1865 portrait of Abraham Lincoln hanging on my living room wall. My first impression of President Lincoln came from a book checked out of the Bushnell Way Elementary School library, *Abe Lincoln: Log Cabin to White House*, by Sterling North. In it President Lincoln fought to free the slaves. He was a great man who paid the ultimate price. Mr. North described President Lincoln as unsightly, even homely. To a ten-year-old girl, that meant President Lincoln was ugly. I didn't understand how an ugly man could become the president of the United States. Gardner's photograph, taken just days before Lincoln was shot in Ford's Theatre, contradicts North's description of a man who got shortchanged in the looks department.

Dominated by a pair of eyes set in darkness, Lincoln's face is magnificent. His left eye is engaged by what it sees, looks out with endless empathy, while his right eye tells a story that is harder to comprehend. The bottom half of his face, framed by two deep lines, singles out his prominent nose, but it's those eyes, particularly the left eye, the caring eye, the engaged eye, that is so compelling. Or is it? As my own eyes drift across Lincoln's wide forehead, look back into the right eye, the one drawn toward reflection, and you know what I see? I see the darkness of a great calling.

Did President Lincoln's face become magnificent because he accepted a grave responsibility that would lead to a tragic end? Or was it the angle of Mr. Gardner's pose, the light, the patina? Was it good luck or a fortunate mistake? After living with Mr. Lincoln's portrait for

several years, I've come to this conclusion: his beauty, like the hidden cast of his right eye, became identifiable only after I included "unsightly" as a possible way of describing beautiful face.

Sharing wall space with Abraham Lincoln are forty-seven other portraits of men I've collected over twenty-five years. I call them my prisoners. There's Robert Mapplethorpe's portrait of the artist Francesco Clemente, who presents his hands from under a black coat. There's Marion Robert Morrison's face before he became John Wayne. On the bottom left, Tony Ward is painted with mud. His hands frame his eyes. Maybe he's sick of looking out from under the dirt. Maybe he doesn't want to be painted into a shadow; maybe he's tired of being Herb Ritts's favorite model. The face of the Russian revolutionary and poet Vladimir Mayakovsky stares out in shaved-head resistance. He brings up longings. I'd carry him on my coattails. I'd be his lackey. Next to the kitchen door, Elvis Presley is sticking his tongue into a young woman's mouth. I never understood why he made millions of girls cry until I saw Albert Wertheimer's *Kiss* in an ad for Sam Shepard's play *Fool for Love*.

Which brings up Sam Shepard, who is framed dead center among the other prisoners on my wall. I was thirty-one when I went to a matinee of Terrence Malick's *Days of Heaven* at Cinema 1 on Third Avenue between Fifty-ninth and Sixtieth Streets in Manhattan. The movie seemed to glide through a brilliantly lit travelogue until Sam Shepard walked onto the screen and took my breath away. His face bore the imprint of the West in all its barren splendor. For years, I followed Sam's life from the safety of distance, a fan's distance. He was the playwright of *Buried Child* and *True West*. He worked with Bob Dylan. He was married. He fell out of marriage, and into love with Jessica Lange. He wrote, "When you're looking for someone, you're looking for some aspect of yourself, even if you don't know it. What we're searching for is what we lack." And that's the way it was. Some aspect of him was an aspect in me, an aspect I hadn't developed, something I lacked. Or so I thought.

As life would have it, Sam slipped into the background until ten years later, when I inadvertently came across his face on a fifty-cent eight-by-ten glossy I bought at the Rose Bowl swap meet. The photograph was not exceptional except for one thing: Sam's face. That damn face. A day doesn't go by without a glance his way.

Gary Cooper also came to me in motion, but he wasn't beautiful. What he was, was old. I saw him walking a dusty town's deserted street toward four killers in Fred Zinnemann's 1950 motion picture *High Noon*. The movie was told in "real time," a time where events happened at the same rate that my ten-year-old eyes experienced them. Everything about the movie seemed super real. On Gary Cooper's wedding day to Grace Kelly, he had a choice: he could either ride into the horizon with his pretty new bride or stay and face the killers. As a girl, I didn't think about Gary Cooper's looks, or the difference between Grace Kelly's age and his. I didn't care. Would he ever see her again? Would he die? Did he have to be so brave? I remember their goodbye. I remember Tex Ritter singing "Do Not Forsake Me, Oh My Darlin'." I remember crying. Looks weren't the issue. Courage was. I didn't know then that courage was a form of beauty, but I must have felt it.

Imagine my surprise when I discovered Cecil Beaton's photograph of a thirty-year-old drop-dead-gorgeous Gary Cooper. Beaton did more than document the awe-inspiring good looks; he somehow captured Gary Cooper's awkward lack of calculation, his sweetness. Sometimes I compare the portraits of Gary Cooper and Sam Shepard. One photograph is of a man my age,

still alive, still Sam. The other is an image of a legend I never met. Gary Cooper's photograph is the work of an artist. Sam Shepard's photograph is just another glossy eight-by-ten. Both however, set off memories of milestone moments in movie theaters.

John Wayne's is the youngest, most irresistible face framed behind glass. It's ironic that he would become the ultimate symbol of the American male. There's no hint of aspiration in his expression. He seems almost perplexed by the idea that someone is taking his picture. How could a football player from Glendale have imagined donning a big old ten-gallon hat for some guy with a Rolleiflex dangling around his neck? Before Gary Cooper and Sam Shepard, it was John Wayne, the Duke, who would walk through the western landscape and into the heart of Joan Didion, who describes him best: "We went three and four afternoons a week, sat on folding chairs in the darkened Quonset hut which served as a theater, and it was there that summer of 1943 while the hot wind blew outside, that I first saw John Wayne. Saw them walk, heard the voice. Heard him tell the girl in a picture called *War of the Wildcats* that he would build her a house, 'at the bend in the river where the cottonwoods grow.' As happened I did not grow up to be the kind of woman who is the heroine in a Western, and although the men I have known have had many virtues and have taken me to live in many places I have come to love, they have never been John Wayne, and they have never taken me to that bend in the river where the cottonwoods grow. Deep in that part of my heart where the artificial rain forever falls that is still the line I wait to hear."

All three men came and went as they walked through time on the screen. All three acted out stories written for the entertainment of the masses, particularly women like me. All three are icons. Now they're incarcerated on my wall, where their beauty continues to evolve. Gary Cooper, John Wayne, and Sam Shepard still take me to Joan Didion's "bend in the river where the cottonwoods grow." They still give me hope for a house that can never be a home that exists only in my dreams.

Warren Beatty is not one of the prisoners on my wall. He is a person I loved in real time, not reel, and not in a photograph. Real-life Warren was a collector's item, a rare bird. He lived in a three-room, eight-hundred-square-foot penthouse on top of the Beverly Wilshire hotel. Littered with books and scripts, the place was not fancy. Yet he owned an unfinished Art Deco estate on a hilltop, and he claimed he was going to make it his home. He was always late and always meeting people, and always, always, always working on a script. He had aspirations I couldn't begin to contemplate. You have to remember, I was Annie Hall. At that point I was happy to act in movies, not produce, star, and direct them while contemplating a political career. One moment Warren was stunning, especially from the right side; the next, I couldn't figure out what all the fuss was about. These variables kept me curious. Was he a beauty or wasn't he?

Yes. Warren was a beauty. That stood out with particular intensity during our bittersweet breakup. And wouldn't you know it, it revolved around a photograph I saved but couldn't find to put on my wall.

I was in Germany working on George Roy Hill's *The Little Drummer Girl* in the early eighties. It was a difficult shoot. Picking me to play a British actress who finds herself embroiled in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was bad casting. Picture the poster: a silhouette of Diane Keaton with unusually well-endowed curves leaning against a semiautomatic rifle. Today you can buy it on eBay for a dollar ninety-nine, which is just about what *The Little*

*Drummer Girl* made at the box office.

No matter how hard I tried to look butch holding an Uzi assault weapon or to master an English accent, I failed. To make matters worse, Warren and I weren't speaking. On my day off, I would wander around Munich feeling sorry for myself. One Sunday at a flea market I came across a big picture book on the films of Warren Beatty. I bought it. Back in the hotel room, I cut out a picture of Warren from *Bonnie and Clyde*, folded it into small squares, put Warren in my jacket pocket, and brought him to work the next day. Before a particularly emotional scene, I took it out, unfolded Warren, and touched his face with my fingers. When I put my lips to his, all those months of straining for a crumb of feeling came flooding back. That's what Warren's face on the page of a broken-down book printed on cheap paper did to me before I shot a scene from *The Little Drummer Girl*.

At some point I lost the photo. In a way, I'm glad I did. It doesn't belong with my other convicts. Warren was not a fantasy to ponder. I knew him well. He was not a mystery to contemplate. Sometimes I wonder if he enjoyed his beauty. Did he like what the mirror reflected? He knew that his pretty face, set on that masculine body, blessed with a great mind, would continue to seduce legions of women with incredible success decade after decade after decade. But did he know that, like all gifts, it came with a price tag?

A question for Warren, and all of my inmates: When did they begin to worry about time's effect on their faces, if they did at all? What was it like for fifty-one-year-old Gary Cooper to see his close-ups in *High Noon*? What was it like for "the Duke"? Tom Cruise, who turned fifty-one recently, is on the eve of losing his looks. Brad Pitt is forty-nine. Johnny Depp is fifty. How are they dealing with the first signs of loss? Warren Beatty, now seventy-six, and his pal Jack Nicholson, at seventy-six, have let it go. They're over the hump. Al Pacino, too. Maybe letting go is the only graceful thing to do. My face was never in the same league as my prisoners'. There's nothing extra ... ordinary about it. It's okay. Not bad. Normal. I'm a pretty, good-looking woman. In a way, my loss has been a gain. Someone has to play the hopes and wishes of women in my generation. I was never a shocking standout like Warren. I was no Julie Christie. I was, as one person described me ... "a washed-out Ali McGraw."

My daughter, Dexter, has never heard of Gary Cooper. She knows Jack Nicholson because she made a movie with him. I was a little surprised when my friends Sandra Shadic and Lindsay Dwolley, both in their early thirties, told me they'd never heard of Gary Cooper, either. When I showed Sandra Cecil Beaton's photograph, yes, she found Cooper beautiful, but not in a significant way. Lindsay agreed that Cooper had a kind of masculine appeal. Dexter shrugged when I showed her. I guess it's a question of how you see people, how you picture them in time and place. Maybe it's also a question of age. For example, on Dexter's list of the twenty-five hottest men, Taylor Lautner is one, Justin Bieber two, Zac Efron three, and Robert Pattinson rounds off four. She did throw in one oldie: thirty-six-year-old Orlando Bloom. To prove that these five men were the sexiest men on earth, she showed me a cluster of tweens from other girls who had their own ideas about the hot twenty-five:

"Number seven should be switched with Justin Bieber."

"awesome list, when i first told my friends how hot Tom Felton was they didn't believe me, and now im like, hahahahah."

"good list i think zac efron is the hottest."

“robert Pattison is the BEST.”

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“Taylor and Robert are both Gorgeous.”

“Alright no offense to zac efron but this is a disgrace to taylor lautners name! he should have been number 1!!!!”

“You should add Oliver Jackson Cohen too. He is so handsome!”

“I admired most Robert Pattinson.”

“Taylor Lautner is Soooo Hot. He is Number 1 too me. i love him so much.”

Poor Orlando Bloom didn’t even make the cut.

Once it was me looking at my number one really neat coolest ever man, Fess Parker, also known as Davy Crockett, wearing his coonskin cap on the back of a Kellogg’s Corn Flakes box. Later it was a signed photograph from James Garner, then starring in *Maverick*, and another from Edd (Kookie) “Lend Me Your Comb” Byrnes from *77 Sunset Strip*. After that was James Dean and Marlon Brando. Then Jack Nicholson in *One Flew over the Cuckoo’s Nest*. Later it was the crumpled photograph of a man I’d once loved cut from an old paperback movie-star book. Now it’s forty-eight men hammered to my wall.

Other women collect men, too; they must. Maybe their detainees are stuck inside journals or posted on their Facebook page, or Scotch-taped to the corner of a bathroom mirror. It’s all the same, right? Well, not exactly. I’ve probably taken it a little too far, what with a floor-to-ceiling wall filled with men’s faces. At least I don’t play favorites: not Marlon Brando, nor Gary Cooper, not Matt Dillon, or Paul Newman, Morgan Freeman, Ryan Gosling, Adrienne Brody, not even Halle Berry’s catch of all time, Olivier Martinez, or my new addition, Jeremy Renner … no, no, no, all get equal time. Collectively they come and go in soft and sharp focus, in black and white, and color, too. They are the promise of eternity and the fuel of fantasy. Sometimes they look into the wonder of my eyes. Sometimes they glide their fingers across the outline of my lips and say the same line over and over: “Diane, Diane, look at you. You’re beautiful. Do you know that? Can you see your beauty through the light in my eyes, Diane? Look. Listen to me: I will make a home for you in a place where the cottonwoods grow.”

Once, in the early 1970s, I passed John Wayne on my way to an audition for the TV series *McMillan & Wife* at the Paramount lot. He seemed to be in a hurry. That was it. Several years ago I ran into Francesco Clemente. He charmingly mentioned his new project: painting portraits of interesting women like Toni Morrison, Fran Lebowitz, and Renée Fleming. Hoping that he found me fascinating too, I waited for his call. Needless to say, there is no portrait of Diane Keaton. I’ve met Tony Ward the model. He was polite. I made four movies with Sam Shepard, a mesmerizing man, but I never really got to know him. Just as well.

In the end, there are two ways of seeing male beauty. Real or imagined. There’s the looking-in way and the being-seen way. There’s the man himself and the man I’ve made up. I’m guilty of one, and proud of the other.

Last year I went to the White House Correspondents’ Dinner in Washington, D.C., where I met Wolf Blitzer and hugged Colin Powell. I was in the same room with President Obama as he gave his speech. Michelle sat next to him. It was hard to get my mind around the reality of being in the presence of so many of the most powerful people in the world—that is, the

people who run it and the journalists who tell the stories that help us assimilate the information. The next day I took a tour of the White House, including the Situation Room which I found surprisingly unassuming. All those big decisions in such a small room. I saw pictures of Hillary Clinton and Leon Panetta sitting around the television sets as they watched the Navy SEALs land in Osama bin Laden's compound in Abbottabad. I walked over to the Corcoran to look at the paintings, and the National Gallery, too. As the sun began to set, dropped by the Lincoln Memorial. It was cold when I got out of the car. From a distance I saw the monument lit from inside. As I got closer, there he was again, this time nineteen feet high, resting his arms on a marble chair. The great man with the unsightly face, all alone. Thank God for that face and those eyes, one looking out for man's best interests, the other searching within for solutions to impossible conflicts. I gasped in awe. Here was the depth of beauty. And here were those same eyes looking out from inside a national monument to the memory of a great man.

# COR- RECTIONS

The face is our most important sensory organ. It is a compound so diverse and varied that there are no two faces alike. Yet we all share its five senses. For example, our noses take in smells. We hear with our ears. We taste with our mouths and touch with our lips. We see (one of my favorites) from our eyes. The face includes things like hair, foreheads (one, not two), eyebrows (two, not one, with as many as seven hundred hair follicles on each brow). We have one pair of lips, thirty-two teeth (for the most part), skin (a vital organ), and one chin. These make up the façade of the average human head. But the most amazing aspect of the face is its ability to show expression. More than anything, our face identifies who we are.

I was eleven when I first looked into the bathroom mirror and felt disappointment. I couldn't exactly pinpoint my dissatisfaction. I wasn't ugly. But I wasn't Doris Day. Doris Day was my idol. She sang hits like "Que Sera, Sera" and "Secret Love," which won the Academy Award for Best Original Song in my favorite movie, *Calamity Jane*. Played by Doris Day, Calamity Jane was shiny and blond. Pressing my face against the mirror, I tried to imagine what I would look like with yellow hair. That's when my younger sister Robin (always annoying) started banging on the door. "Open the door, Diaps," she demanded. (Short for Diane Dee Diapers.) "What are you doing in there?"

"None of your business," I said.

"Get out. I need to use the bathroom now."

I put my fingers in my ears, cocked my head in an attempt to mimic Doris Day's adorable mannerisms and said, "This town ain't big enough. Not for me and that frilled-up, flirting man-rustlin' petticoat."

"Mom!! Diane won't get out of the bathroom."

Unlocking the door, I had a dim awareness that the best thing to do about wishing I was a gun-toting, sarsaparilla-drinking Doris Day was just don't. Don't wish for something you can't

have. But I did anyway.

Every month I ran to the mailbox to see if Mom's subscription to *McCall's* magazine had arrived. In its pages I learned that Maybelline Cake Mascara was "the first modern eye cosmetic for everyday use." I discovered the theory of "Before and After," which meant there was a before me and the hope of an after me. This was good news. I was excited for Tangier cosmetics when it presented "Bright 'n Clear," a lipstick "for lips men long to kiss again and again and again." Testimonials from real women, in real life, confirmed that Bright 'n Clear went on easily and magically transformed into the perfect shade for you.

I'll never forget the day our next-door neighbor Laurel Bastendorf said, "Diane, you know who you look like?"

"Doris Day?" I asked.

"Oh no, this is far better. You look like Amelia Earhart, the famous woman pilot whose plane went down over the Pacific—you know, the national heroine? You could be mistaken for her daughter." Amelia Earhart? A flier? What happened to Doris Day, or even Debbie Reynolds? I ran home and got out the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, where I found a picture of what appeared to be a man in a leather Dwight Eisenhower-type windbreaker. I didn't want to look like a man. Still, I couldn't deny the obvious similarities. She, too, had a high forehead; her eyes also slanted down, not up; and, of course, her face was the essence of plain.

The slights continued to mount. Even unintended insults were humiliating, like the day I asked Mom if my eyes were green. "They're hazel. You know that, Diane." But the next time I looked in Mom's magnified mirror, I discovered my eyes weren't hazel. They were gray, and they would always be gray. What was I going to do? I couldn't change the color of my eyes. Even more troubling were the folds of skin that hung down over my drooping eyelids. Pressing on, I focused on what Mom referred to as my lovely auburn hair. Webster's defined Auburn as a city in Alabama, and also as the color copper, russet, or red. There was no reddish or any of its variables, in my hair. Was Mom kidding? The more I looked at my face, the more determined I was to buy a Doris Day mask. But what if there was no such a thing as a Doris Day mask? Besides, I couldn't wear a mask to school every day. What was I going to do?

I'll never forget the day I overheard Mom's best friend Willie Blandin discuss aging issues with Mom. With a Camel cigarette hanging from her red-hot lips, Willie inhaled deeply before saying these unforgettable words: "Dot, listen to me: the way to avoid bags under your eyes is to do eye exercises on a daily basis." Maybe that was it; maybe that was the way to pick up my sagging eyes.

I admired Willie not just because she had a million beauty tips—like "Always style your hair with a curl that flicks either up or under" and "Believe in pink." Like Bette Davis, Willie had a high forehead. Her solution? Bangs. She tried to convince Mom to cut *hers* as well, claiming they would give Dot (she always called Mom Dot) a more youthful appearance. Mom would have none of it. For me, the opportunity to reduce the square footage of my forehead seemed brilliant. The problem? Mom was holding the scissors that cut my bangs. The results? Tragic. Think Depression-era bowl cut. Think Moe of the Three Stooges. What little hair I had—and I didn't have a lot—had been destroyed. Mom's response: "Diane, stop complaining and be proud. You have a lovely forehead, like Bette Davis." Bette Davis

Sorry, but enough with Bette Davis. Oh, and just to reiterate, Willie wasn't wrong about bangs. To give credit where credit is due, it was Willie who introduced me to the idea of "Corrections."

I was fourteen when I first jotted down a few in my "Dear Diary." It was August 8, 1964. This is what I wrote:

1. Sleep with a bobby pin stuck on top of my nose. Tilt it to the left where the bulb is fat, by fat I mean swollen to the extreme. If pressed on a regular basis the bulb will eventually be squeezed out of existence.
2. Spend time practicing a series of smiles. Part of "smile time" must be attended to by exercising the sincerity of my feelings. The best location is in the back seat of Mom's station wagon where I can see myself in the rearview mirror, free from Robin's dim-witted remarks.
3. Exercise my eyes for 30 minutes a day. Open them as wide as possible, then shut them tight, at least 24 times every 60 seconds. In addition, swing them back and forth faster than the speed of light. This kind of to and fro motion, which *McCall's* magazine describes as "swaying," will make them appear wider set apart. By combining these two exercises my eyes will actually become larger. Don't forget to try exercising in Civics class, where Mrs. Clark is frequently distracted, but watch out for Mr. Barnett in Spanish Two, he's no fool.
4. Today I tried "smile time" on Dawn Utley and Dale Finney by looking off into the distance with a happy-faced grin. No response. After I finished my eye exercises in the girls' bathroom I spotted Dave Garland, so I leaned against his locker and pretended to be lost in thought. As I slowly turned my face to his and smiled with a glow that came from the heart, he said, "Hey, Diaps, what's the matter? Did somebody die? You look weird."
5. This morning the bobby pin on my nose left a mark that took a half hour to wear off. I've decided to buy some wooden clothespins. They're much more gentle. I asked Mom if I could eat my Cheerios in the bedroom 'cause I needed more alone time. If she knew what I was up to, it would be curtains, but the risk is worth it. Besides, I'm sick of listening to boring Bob Crane on the radio.

Mom let me wear lipstick in ninth grade. It was so much fun. But one day Willie Bland took a long, hard look at my face and said, "Diane, listen to me. Now that you've started wearing lipstick, you can never go back. I'm not steering you wrong. Those lips of yours are going to dry up and disappear into nothing more than slits unless you have an ever ready supply of lipstick in your pocket. Welcome to womanhood, young lady." She scared the hell out of me, until Maria Gusman, Willard Junior High School's only female janitor, commented on how pretty I looked and inquired about the color of my lipstick. Thrilled, I thought of Willie in gratitude, and vowed to never leave the house without a tube of lipstick in my pocket. In her honor I shared my knowledge of Tangee's "Many Mini Colors" with Maria.

also suggested that Maria might consider the new set of Revlon's "frosty" colors for women with darker complexions.

Eye makeup at school was a different story. Willie supported it. Mom was firm: no eye makeup. How ridiculous. I mean, come on, it was 1960. Models like Twiggy, Jean Shrimpton, and Penelope Tree never appeared on the cover of fashion magazines without plenty of eye makeup. Plus, "the Shrimp," *Vogue*'s "face of the moment," was only a few years older than me. Mom finally caved during my junior year and allowed me to spend my salary from Newberry's five-and-ten-cent store on a Maybelline eye kit.

Sitting in my bedroom, I read the entire Maybelline eyeliner-application pamphlet. First, with Maybelline's soft eyebrow pencil, I was told to draw a narrow line across the upper eyelids, at the base of lashes, adding a short upstroke at the outer corner. Then, and on and on, would I be ready to soften the line with my fingertips. Next: use short, light upward strokes of Maybelline's eyebrow pencil to form beautiful expressive brows, then taper lightly at the outer end to soften the effect. This was fun. I liked the whole soften-the-effect concept. Maybelline suggested I buy their smooth mascara, too. It would further enhance my eyes. For an extra touch of mysterious eye beauty, the pamphlet added, it would be wise to blend a bit of Maybelline eye shadow on the upper lids. The instructions said it would "bring out the unsuspected loveliness" of my eyes.

My makeup bonding with Willie continued throughout high school. As a bona fide member of "Club Willie," I was privy to some of the more extreme remedies for facial woes. According to her sources (whatever that meant), Marilyn Monroe was nineteen when her agent, Mr. Johnny Hyde, advised her to have a slight bump of cartilage removed from her bulbous nose. Bulbous? Oh my God. Marilyn Monroe had a bulbous nose, too?! Willie must have made that up. A nose job? No way. Willie also described Ann Miller's botched nose job. "Who's Ann Miller?" I asked. Shocked, Willie informed me that Ann Miller had starred in *Easter Parade* with Fred Astaire, and that when she was tap-dancing, she could click five hundred times per minute. Anyway, the surgeon cut off so much cartilage on one side that the flaw showed up on camera. It was such a disaster the studio makeup department was forced to create a fake nose for filming. During one of her numbers in Cole Porter's *Kiss Me Kate*, she twirled around so fast her nose flew off and hit the camera. I couldn't believe my ears. And as if that wasn't enough, Willie showed Mom and me a photograph of Dean Martin, her hero, before his nose job. "Let's just say it wasn't pretty." That's the way she put it. It wasn't pretty. "And how about this," she said. "Lou Costello, from *The Abbott and Costello Show*, paid for Dean's new nose. That's friendship for you."

I told Willie I didn't believe Dean Martin would do such a thing. Men weren't like women. They didn't care about their looks, did they? She just shook her head and said if I was so smart, why hadn't I heard about Gary Cooper? Didn't I know what had appeared on the front page of the *Mirror-News* a couple of years before? That's right, Gary Cooper's face-lift!

Clearly, I hadn't seen the newspaper article commenting on his face and how it looked "quite different" and how the procedure had "not been successful." The facts were this: fifty-six-year-old Gary Cooper had entered the Manhattan Eye, Ear and Throat Hospital for a full face-lift by Dr. John Converse, one of the leading plastic surgeons in America. Mom and I were baffled. Gary Cooper had a face-lift? Really? But then I thought, Hey, someone had to be the first male movie star to get a face-lift. Why not Gary Cooper? Besides, I identified

with the facial dilemmas of Marilyn Monroe, Ann Miller, Dean Martin, and my hero Gar Cooper. Corrections had to be taken seriously.

The bobby pins on my nose, the endless adjustments to my face in search of the right smile at the right angle, the swinging-eye exercises, the celebrity pink lipstick, and the acquired skill of displaying my deepest feelings as if it would improve my countenance were only the beginnings of a determined will to right my wrongs. I'm sorry to say the Corrections didn't do much; nor has their failure stopped me from trying out "solutions" to innumerable more serious "issues," mainly medical. There's my skin cancer regimen, which requires monthly visits to Christie Kidd, who freezes off keratoses, i.e., fledgling skin cancers. There are the endless varieties of creams and lotions, like Renewal Plus, and Solaraze gel, and even the imaginable sunscreen. This has made my skin so sunblocked I don't even need to tint the windows of my car. There's the mouth guard worn every night to keep my teeth in place, and the happy brightening gel to make them almost white. I won't go on. The truth is, this is only the beginning of a long list that isn't about beauty; it's about survival.

As far as my face goes, the question is, how far am I willing to go? Particularly at this age. And what would the results give me? With every choice there's a possible gain, but also loss. I can't say exactly why I haven't turned to surgery or fillers, at least not yet. But why does it matter, particularly now? Why the hell not? Who cares? Maybe I don't want to change my everyday me because I can't picture what I will look like, nor can I imagine what effect it will have on myself or others. I tell myself to hold on to authenticity. But am I authentic? I'll tell you one thing ... I'm authentically confused by what authentic is. For instance, is it authentic for me to seek out attention by wearing "eccentric" clothes with a lifetime supply of hats? Or is that a look I insist on repeating because it's a habit, a habit that has come to define me? Is it because I admire the unusual? Is it because we're only here once and why not take things as far as you can? Even if it's self-centered, what does it matter—aren't we biologically self-serving animals? Was Georgia O'Keeffe inauthentic and self-consumed when she left Alfred Stieglitz to go live by herself in the desert to paint and put her hair back and wear Indian jewelry and live her life her way, not the high way? I don't think so. Even if it's narcissistic, is that always such a bad thing? Somebody has to be Joan Rivers, just as somebody has to be Hillary Clinton. Authentic? Inauthentic? I have to laugh. All I know is I'm sick of worrying about my authenticity.

If I want to be prettier, yes, fillers and Botox and a neck-lift would help. I look at my contemporaries who've had "good work." Are they any less authentic? No! And neither are the women who've had procedures that went awry. And yet ... why haven't I had work done? I still might, though it's borderline too late.

Like most women, I've had some serious disappointments. We each deal with them the best we can. We slather, we dab, we rouge, we nip, we tuck, we ignore, we dream. I don't regret that the face I present to the world is the same I was born with. I've been banged up a bit since I'm older. Actually, I'm a senior citizen. My nose is still my central sense organ. And the bulb? I still hate it, just not as much. I hear with my ears. I eat, speak, and breathe with my mouth. My face includes hair. My forehead is high. I have eyebrows, eyelashes, and two eyes that see. That's my favorite thing about my face. I can see trees and sunsets. I can see my son Dexter's oval face, and the color of my thirteen-year-old son Duke's eyes: they're chocolate brown, not gray. I can see shadow and light. I can see paintings and portraits on a wall. I can

see the ocean from a bluff. I have two ears and two cheeks. With one mouth, one set of lips, one chin, and lots of skin that's still a working vital organ, I'm not complaining. I know from experience how lucky I am. But the most thrilling aspect of my face is its ability to express feelings. All of my feelings and all my emotion come out on my face—my sixty-seven-year-old face. You see, my face identifies who I am inside. It shows feelings I can't put into words. And that is a miracle, an extraordinarily ordinary miracle, one I'll think twice about before change.

# BAD HAIR DAYS

I woke up knowing this: I had a dream. In my dream I was bald. The rest was unclear. According to *The Dictionary of Dreams*, when a person dreams of hair loss she is concerned with getting older. (No shit.) She is also concerned with losing her sexual appeal. (I'm sixteen—what sex appeal?) Approximately thirty minutes later—four forty-five A.M., to be exact—I was sitting shotgun in the Range Rover as my daughter, Dexter, then sixteen years old, began the drive to Oceanside, California, where she would join approximately three hundred people in a 2.4-mile open-water swim in the Pacific Ocean. I pulled down the sun visor and looked in the mirror. No apparent hair loss, at least not for now. Dexter wanted a Carson Daly morning; I wanted to listen to *Morning Edition* with Steve Inskeep and Renée Montagne. We flipped a coin. Dex won. And with it, Carson Daly played Adam Levine's "Payphone." "Yeah, I know it's hard to remember the people we used to be." For sure I couldn't remember the person I used to be, much less the people.

I glanced at Dexter driving south on the 405. She'll never have to worry about a receding hairline. She'll never have hair issues. But I do, and always did. As an underdeveloped, overlooked junior in Santa Ana High School, I was constantly concocting "unique" hairdos, in particular my version of Betty Rubble's "buzzy" beehive. It was just one in a variety of elaborately teased "Big Hairdos" requiring a can of Style hair spray every three days. My inspiration? Dusty Springfield, Cher, and all three of Phil Spector's Ronettes.

Dexter couldn't care less about hair spray. She's a swimmer. I don't understand the kind of mind-set that makes a girl walk around with wet hair at six A.M. in the dead of winter, or drench herself in chlorine 250 days a year in swim cap and goggles. When I was young, all girls were forced to wear bathing caps at the public plunge, which made it all the more humiliating when Sawyer Swartz and his gang of geeks would tease me, saying I looked like

jarhead or, worse, a bald-headed Olive Oyl, Popeye's scrawny girlfriend.

The point is, hair, the meaning of hair, the look of hair (my hair, to be exact), has dogged me all my life. Which makes it all the more bizarre that I was cast in the original Broadway production of the musical *Hair*. I remember lying under the scrim one night, waiting to see how many tribe members were going to strip naked, when James Rado, one of the show's creators, stood up with nothing on except a shoulder-length honey-blond wig. I have to say, he was even more riveting than his large penis. His nudity gave the wig a kind of otherworldly glow, a life of its own. Everyone knew Jim was disguising the fact that he was balding. Fine with me. Why not? He was in good company. Sean Connery, Howard Cosell, Burt Reynolds, and Jack Benny wore hairpieces, or toupees, as they called them back then. In any event, no matter how hard James Rado tossed his head back and forth to "give me down to there hair shoulder length or longer," his wig never swayed, not even an inch.

Once we hit Costa Mesa, Dexter took the Bristol exit in search of gas. As she sped up to make the light, I reminded her that it's best to slow down before approaching an intersection. My words fell on deaf ears, and Dexter ran her first red light. "It was still yellow before I hit the middle, Mom."

"Listen to me, Dexter. I'll say it again: it's unwise to speed up at an intersection. Okay? Are you listening to me?"

Silence. I looked over in exasperation and noticed a head of hair so thick it hid her ears. I've never seen her hair part around her ears like mine does. There was a period in the 1980s when I wore a variety of berets to hide my Spock ears because, let's face it, my ears were and remain, just one more of my many disappointments.

Back to wigs. First there was the one I wore in *The Godfather*. Robert Evans, the head of production at Paramount Pictures, thought I was too "kooky"-looking for the role of Kay Corleone, so Dick Smith, a.k.a. the Godfather of Makeup, turned me into a WASP with a canary-yellow wig ten times larger than my head. Twenty years later I played Bessie, the caregiver sister in *Marvin's Room*, opposite Meryl Streep. Bessie is diagnosed with leukemia, undergoes chemo, and loses all her hair. Throughout most of the two-month shoot, I wore a wig donated from a local candy striper volunteer organization. Jerry Zaks, our director, was enchanted by its authenticity. To me, it was sort of a throwback to Jim Rado's shoulder-length tresses. Only this one was a brunette nightmare from hell. I tried to convince Jerry to give me a chance to wear a hair-hat wig on occasion. Sound strange, a wig sewn into a hat? Not to me. I figured Bessie would look good in a hat. Jerry would have none of it, pointing out that Bessie was not vain. He also added that Bessie was not Diane. Shrugging him off, I continued to press my point, until the day we shot a makeup and hair test for the bald cap. I had to wear toward the end of the shoot. As soon as I saw my hairless head, I begged Jerry to please let me keep wearing my candy striper James Rado shoulder-length brown synthetic almost attractive wig. That is, until the day Meryl told me we both looked like shit. Frankly, I was relieved that she included herself.

The last wig I ever wore, both on- and offscreen, was a curly shag in the practical straight-to-video movie I made with Dax Shepard called *Smother*. Enough said.

As Dexter and I sat in the car at the Chevron gas station, I breathed a sigh of relief. We were two females, one mother, the other daughter. Yes, Dexter had run a red light, but we all make mistakes in the process of learning something new. In the peace of the moment,

mentioned my dream. Dex nodded and, after her quiet way of gathering thoughts, responded with a hair dream of her own: "Okay, Mom, I'm looking through my hair, and it starts falling out in clumps. My head has bloody sores, and blisters, and even holes in the flesh. Every time I look, it's worse than before. It was so creepy. I kept trying to find you and Duke to help. But you were nowhere to be found."

"Wow, Dex, I bet you're glad it's not a reoccurring dream."

"But it is. That's the horrible part, Mom. It is."

I told her that the meaning of dreams is hard to unravel. I told her that she of all people will never have to worry about blisters and sores on her gorgeous hair. Ever. Her hair perfect. And I was telling the truth.

Woody used to dream of hair loss. Not now. He's done very well retaining what hair he has. Warren used to pontificate on the subject for hours, insisting that hairdressers were worth their weight in gold. According to him, hair was, in fact, 60 percent of good looks. That philosophy must have at least partially inspired him to produce and star in the box office blockbuster *Shampoo*. With hair on his mind, you can imagine how taxing it must have been for him to select the hairstylist for his Oscar-winning movie *Reds*. His pick? Barry Richardson, who did Julie Christie's hair in *McCabe and Mrs. Miller*. Barry was a hairdresser genius, but the truth *Reds* was more hat movie than hair movie. I wore a variety of broad-brimmed hats, several variations on the beret, a number of cloches, and, in one pivotal scene, a peasant scarf tied at the back of my neck. It was all so perfect. I couldn't have been happier. During the weekends I roamed through London's Portobello Road, my favorite flea market. One Sunday, I found a high-crowned black hat with a wide fur trim wrapped around its circumference. I put it on, and, oh yeah, let's just say I bought it on the spot. Later that afternoon, a man with long curlicues dangling on both sides of his face walked past me wearing the identical hat. Shaking his head, he glared at me in an unfriendly manner. When I got back to the hotel, I looked at the label written in Yiddish. Duh. It was what's called a shtreimel. Shtreimel hats are worn exclusively by married male Hasidic Jews, not thirtysomething female actresses. What the hell was I thinking?

And what was I thinking when I tried to seduce Nancy Meyers and Charles Shyer into letting me wear a couple of hats after I was cast opposite Steve Martin in *Father of the Bride*? Nancy reminded me that it was 1991, not 1976. I was playing the mother of the bride, she said, not Annie Hall. During those fifteen years, I let my hair grow halfway to my waist. Nancy let it be known I needed to get a haircut. So I did.

I got back, though. Every day at lunch I would don my bowler hat and join Steve, Marlo Scott, Kimberly Williams, and Steve's wife at the time, Victoria Tennant, for a plate of spaghetti and some good times. After a couple of weeks Victoria said, "Is every day a bad hair day, Diane?"

I wanted to respond with my own personal philosophy: *Victoria, my hair is my hat. And my hat is my hair.* But of course I said nothing.

Sometimes I wish I was joined at the hip to a great hairstylist like Frida Aradottir or Jill Crosby, who did my hair for the cover of *Ladies' Home Journal*. It's a shame insecurity doesn't bring out my best behavior, but it was a cover, so I felt justified in having a little chat with Jill before the shoot. I began with the bad news. *Ladies' Home Journal* would not, repeat not, let me wear a hat on the cover. I told Jill I was worried about my hair. It needed more

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