

***Please locate and read the entire play – the monologue below is merely a suggested one.***

**Curl Up and Dye** is a 1989 play by Susan Pam-Grant which is set in a hair salon in Johannesburg.

**Characters:**

Rolene (a hairdresser);

Mrs Dubois (caretaker of block of flats);

Charmaine (a Wellconal addict); Miriam (domestic helper);

Dudu (a nursing sister).

Monologues:

Character: Rolene speaking to herself and then on the phone.

(Act One)

Hell, this place looks like a bomb's gone off. Jissus Miriam – just you show that face of yours in that door and you dead, my girl! (She feels something furry on her foot.) Aaagh!! (She runs to the light switch.) Ooh, gonna, if that's a rat I'm going to, I'm going to ... faint. (She switches on the light.) Ag sis man, it's yesterday's hair. (She then goes to switch on the radio and then the kettle. While doing so, she's mumbling and grumbling to herself.) This place is a mess, looks like a bladdy pigsty. I'm not picking up people's dead hair, sis – I'm a hairdresser, not a bladdy sweeping girl. This is disgusting. So now who's going to do the shampooing, and what about the mix for my highlights and my lowlights – Miriam you've had it, my girl. (She stands in front of mirror and starts doing something with her hair – phone rings.) Curl Up and Dye International, can I help you? Yes ... Ja of course it's me ... At the salon. Ag Denzil, don't be such a doos, what number did you just dial? .. When ... what about five minutes ago? ... I was trying to get in ... Yes I am ... About what? ... Then talk ... Listen Denzil, don't you bokkie me ... Sorry se voet! Every time afterwards you come and say you sorry you sorry... So, are you going to get the TV back then? ... Today Denzil! But didn't I just say I'm here by myself. Well if you don't believe me, come down here and check ... Ag nobody's whistling at me, Denzil man – shit it's the bladdy kettle. (ROLENE slams down the phone and continues with her hair and starts to touch up her make-up.) A few minutes later the phone rings again.) Curl Up and Dye International can I help you? ... Jissus Denzil, now what. You can't keep phoning me man – this is a business line, now hurry up, what you want? ... Jissus Denzil sometimes you act like a real doos – the toilet paper is in the

toilet and if it's not in the toilet it's at the Spar! There's five rand in my panty drawer. And don't send the child!

Character: Mrs Dubois to Rolene

(Act One)

So what was her story? This business of Quintus and the knife and all that. What was her version? She say it wasn't his fault? Se voet it wasn't bis fault! One minute he's fine – the next minute he's there like a raving maniac. Of course, you know me Rolene, I don't miss a thing. And they were making such a bladdy racket everyone else was out there watching too – the whole world and his wife – and the way they were performing and carrying on, Quintus screaming and shouting, 'Leave my F ... ing chick' and 'F ... you' – you know – it was embarrassing, man. Such filthy language. And they started. it hey, I'm telling you Rolene. Naag, rubbish, it wasn't Jakkals. She was so hoog on the takke she wouldn't know what the hell was going on – so Quintus pulls out a knife. As sure as my name is Hettie Coralinda Dubois. It was Quintus and he pulled the knife – I saw it. Look Rolene, I wasn't born with concrete above my ears hey. Would he be standing there waving his arm around like a mad thing if it was a cigarette? I mean really, it was a bladdy knife. So then this other bloke. what's it – urn – Jakkals – ja, he then tries to stop him – no luck – so he also draws a knife. Ja, so Quintus was in a spot of tight water, but he was so high he didn't even notice and I think he ran right into the knife! Ja, that's what happened – he ran into the knife – end of story. No buts ... that's the truth Rolene – hot from the horse's mouth – there you have it in a nutshell- take what you want. (Miriam enters) And where were you Miriam? What's this coming in at the time you arrive! For Pete's sake man, you must come on time! (Sniffs as Rolene says something) Well then Rolene, next time you sitting on the pavement don't come and complain to me! I never have this kind of a problem with my staff. Make no bones about it I don't beat around the bush – they bugger me around upstairs, they must go. I don't want to hear their troubles man. They must just do their job-that's all I ask.

Character: Rolene speaking to Charmaine (Act One)

(She looks at CHARMAINE. Turns back to mirror. She pulls her cardigan down and examines a large bruise on her arm. She speaks into the mirror, occasionally glancing at CHARMAINE's reflection. While she speaks CHARMAINE responds to a whistle from the street and leaves without her

noticing). Denzil ... 'Bokkie!' Jus' after we got married hey, 'Bokkie, in a year or two we'll have our own house, even if it's a small one, with a yard for the kids' ... Ja those were his very words. And you know I believed him. And it's ever since 'they' started moving in that things have gone this way. I wish they would jus' go away. Ag, maybe I should of told him straight – I can't take it Denzil, I'm leaving ... But a family's got to have a father. And every time – the same pattern; the same story – belt undone – the skeef look – laughing at me. And it's worse for the kid -shame -she really loves her father, and he's very nice to that child – takes her to the park, to the Rand Show and that, buys her sweets ... Now how can she understand it when she sees her mother crying? ... And then I got to lie to her, tell her I'm now upset cos I'm feeling sick. He's the one that's sick man. Ag, but as long as I live – I won't forget nothing ... I'm telling you Char ... (She turns around to look but Charmaine is not there).

Character: Miriam speaking to Rolene and Mrs Dubois (Act Two)

It's always Miriam, Miriam, Miriam – you don't think of me. Now you listen to me once! I'm in troubles – my husband is dying. I got three children in school, I've got no food, I've got nothing and you don't want to give me increase! I am twenty years here, and I'm working like a slave! I'm helping you here with everything – I'm cleaning – but you don't even want to say thanks – cause you don't like me, you just like my hands! Do you think I'm a stupid! I'm not a stupid! You found me here and I teach you everything you know – you didn't know nothing! I can leave this job at any time, at any moment – then you will call- 'Miriam where's this, Miriam where's that' because you can't do nothing without Miriam! This job – it's not good, Not even for a dog! So you and your Mrs Dubois and your pure white flats can all go to hell- the lot of you! And as for you, Mrs Dubois – you pretend you are my friend, then when it suits you – you just shout at me. You can't even wash your own pantie – and you call me filth – ga! I don't care if I've just got a Standard Five or what. But at least I can wash' my own panties! Or hide them before I can let anyone else wash them. You think I've got no blood! I don't want a bladdy glass of sugar water. I want pay! Money – so that I can buy my own sugar! (MIRIAM walks away to the kitchen to cool off.)