



**What  
Her  
Hair  
Says  
About  
Her**

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cover // Greta Hambke

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Chain e-mails scold her. The ponytail is candy to abductors. The snatch and go. But, sometimes a sloppy ponytail is the best she can do. Her hair says chances are for the taking.

Her hair says she masters hairstyles like some people master alcoholic beverages. She's ready for all occasions.

In a low side ponytail, her hair says she's younger than she really is. Like this, her hair says I'm with the band.

Her hair says it's dark like a villain, like the shadow of the blonde heroine.

Her hair says it's mostly dead even though she's mostly living.

Her hair remembers when she was ten and her mother poured lemon juice from a bottle onto it, told her the sun would make it lighter, the color of the sun reflecting back. She wore a neon bikini and crossed her fingers. Her hair says the sun's too hot.

Her hair says the brunette's always bad news, always up to no good. She's got a mouth like a sailor. Hold your man tighter.

Her hair says a burlesque dancer taught her how to make us crest. She winds us around rollers. We tumble like ribbon.

Her hair says sometimes we miss our hair twin, the ex-boyfriend. He had our original color from when she was little and wore stiff bows on the top of her head, when she looked like a wrapped present.

Her hair says we've been a cliché. The same bully boy tugged us in third and fourth grade. We thought he would snatch the color off, strangle the lazy waves if she let him.

Her hair says she feels left out. Everyone else in the family wears the best black curls.

Magazines tell her to mind her face shape when considering a new hairstyle. Her hair says she never minds.



Her hair says she's even watched documentaries about hair.

Her hair says we've been on a stage before at a hair show. The blonde ironed us in front of everyone. Pools of people pointed at us from the floor. We looked shiny, like a pool reflecting back to the pool. Thirty-two flat irons were sold.

She only uses the air conditioner in the car. Her hair says we want to knot up from the whip of the wind. We want to look like we just left a man's bed.

Her hair says remember that man with albino hair? He said we looked like a bruise. She pushed us behind her ears and slowly. She cleared her throat. She said bruises don't last.

Her hair says she doesn't like the word cascading.

She teases the crown when she wants to look like she sounds like a Verve record. It's a careful arrangement to

camouflage the teased nest. Her hair says she covers the waterfront.

Her hair says it's been long forever. Her hair says don't pitch us out the window though. That's not her story.

Her hair says how many times has he almost grabbed the shoulder of some other girl because the mess on her head looked like us, like candy?

Her hair remembers the barrette her parents had made especially for her in 14 karat gold. Her name in cursive. Her hair says she didn't have words yet.

The mother thinks she's made her hair too dark, from tea to coffee.  
The hair says now we match the rest of you, the three with the best black curls.  
Her mother thinks you always want what you don't have.

She was a blue marlin. Her hair remembers the scream of chlorine. Her hair says we didn't turn green.

Like the other girls her age, she'd fan a section beside her ear out and spray it with extra, extra hold. The girls she went to school with called these elephant ears. They only wore the ear on one side. Her hair says she looked like a lopsided elephant running with a herd of other unfinished elephants.

Her hair says she sprays us with a bottle of saltwater when she wants it to look like she's carefree. Her hair says I just came back from Spring Break. You missed a good time.

Her hair says we lost 22 in the shower today.

Her hair says she used to fall asleep with us down. We'd tangle across the pillows like veins. Her hair says she's all business now with the durable braided bun.

Her hair says silk pillowcases keep us from breaking in her sleep.

Her hair says we've seen a ghost. He stuck his fingers in between her braids when she was sleeping. He pretended she was his sister's doll.

She puts us all on one side of her shoulders when she's trying to show she can be vulnerable like the others, like the blonde heroine.

A younger man told her: *you're not a narcissist. You're just vain.* She remembers it didn't sting because it was their first time ever even talking. Still, her hair thought that if she was a dog, we'd be standing straight up down her back.

She made a chain of weeds once. She tied the chain into a crown and wore it in the backyard. Her hair says she's never believed in the princess, only the queen with the better crown.

When she goes out on dates or to work, she sprays a cloud of perfume in the hall. She walks through it dramatically. Her hair says she shakes her head around like a pony shaking off the sun.



Her hair says she says yes to more when she wears bangs.

She pulls her hair back when running, cooking, riding in convertible cars, and sleeping. Her hair says two of the four are understandable.

Her hair says we're growing right now while she's asleep,  
even though we're mostly dead. She's mostly living even  
though her eyes are closed.

Her hair says she should let us down more often.

Her hair says she's had the same part since she knew how to part her hair.  
Her mother with the best black curls made it.

It takes approximately seventy-four minutes before her hair wilts. Her hair says this is for the birds.

Her hair says if she was running from something, we'd go red. Red like sumac. Not like a fire.

Her hair says these around her face are called "layers." They're meant to frame. Her face is a painting, a portrait.

Her hair says remember when you cut most of us off?

You knew we were his favorite part of you. It took so long for us to come back.



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