

[ from *I Remember Nothing and Other Reflections*,  
By Nora Ephron, Vintage Random, New York, 2011. jt ]

## *My Aruba*

I am sorry to report that I have an Aruba.

You don't know what an Aruba is, but you're about to find out.

My Aruba is named after the Caribbean island of Aruba, where the winds are so strong that all the little trees on it are blown sideways in one direction. But my Aruba is not an island. It's the thing that's happening with my hair, on the crown of my head, in the back. My cowlicks have won, and they are all blown sideways, leaving a little bare space. It's not a bald spot exactly. It's there when I wake up; then I fix my hair and make

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it go away; and then, a couple of hours later, it's back again. A gust of wind, a short walk, a ride on the subway, or life itself—anything at all can make my hair blow sideways, leaving a spot on the back of my head where my scalp is showing through.

And the thing is, I can't see it.

Even if I catch a glimpse of myself in a window, it's not visible because it's in the back.

I look fine from the front.

I look as young as a person can look given how old I am.

But from the back, it looks as if I have either forgotten to comb my hair or as if I am just a little bit bald.

Neither of these things is true, I swear.

But what is true is that I am older than I look, and my Aruba is a sign. I did not have one when I was younger, but now I do.

This is not the worst thing about getting older, but it's very disheartening. And almost no one tells you you've got one at the time.

There are a whole bunch of things no one tells you about and then you come home and discover you've been walking around all day with them. I am of course referring to spinach in your teeth, or a tag that's sticking up the back of your collar, or a fluffy piece of toilet paper on your shoe. I am talking about those little dark flecks that sometimes end up in the corners of your eyes, and mascara that has run. I'm talking about lint.

It's very sad to look in the bathroom mirror at the end of an evening and realize you've spent the last

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ninety minutes with spinach on your tooth. Or parsley, which is an even more dangerous thing to eat. And that none of your friends loved you enough to tell you.

This is especially painful because it's so easy to tell people they have spinach in their teeth. All you have to do is say, "You have spinach in your teeth."

But what can you say to a person who has an Aruba, especially since, until I wrote this piece, there was no word to describe it?

But now that I have come up with the term, I would appreciate your telling me whenever I have an Aruba. Because then I can fix it. Temporarily, anyway.