A Haircut

It was time for a haircut. Lenny didn't even have to look in the mirror. Even though he was going bald, he knew that he needed to cut his hair every two weeks.

He had a "tongue" of hair on the top of his head. His hair was thinning at the crown. He still had plenty of hair on the sides and back. It was what they call "salt and pepper," a mixture of gray hair and dark brown hair. It was only a few years, he figured, until the salt and pepper became just salt.

He never let his hair grow for more than two weeks. The longer it got, the worse it looked, he thought.

He spread a newspaper over the bathroom sink so that no hair went down the drain. He plugged in the clippers and started cutting his hair. He started at the back of his head, went to the sides, and finished on the top. Every minute or so, he had to clean the hair out of the blades with an old toothbrush.

Finished, he picked up a hand mirror to check out the back of his head. Everything looked okay. He carried the newspaper back out to the kitchen and shook the hair clippings into the trash can.

Grab Your Umbrella

It looked like rain. The sky was gray. It was almost noon, but the sun was hidden by a gray blanket. It was cool. There were no birds flying anywhere. A couple of birds sat on the telephone wire. Bob was standing outside talking to Bill. They both had their hands in their pockets. They knew that it was probably going to rain shortly. A sudden breeze blew some leaves off a tree onto the sidewalk.

A young woman wearing a dark blue coat and jeans walked by. She was walking a small dog. It was pure white, and pretty. It sniffed at a tree trunk. The woman waited patiently. Finally, the dog lifted its leg.

Bob said that he liked the rain. It was a nice change from the usual hot Los Angeles weather. And the plants could always use the extra water. Bill said the only thing he didn't like about rain was that all the motor oil on the streets would get washed into the ocean, and so would all the trash.

"But that never stops the surfers," Bob said. "They don't seem to care what's in the water, as long as there are waves to surf on."

A Good Sandwich

Gordon was hungry. He opened the refrigerator. There must be something in here to eat, he thought. There was—a single hot dog.

He took it out of its package and put a small frying pan onto the stove's gas burner. He turned on the heat. Then he poured a little bit of vegetable oil into the pan. He sliced the hot dog in half lengthwise. When the oil got hot, he put the two halves in the pan. About a minute later, he flipped each half over. After another minute, he took the hot dog out of the pan.

Gordon put two slices of bread into the toaster. This was tasty and healthy bread. The first ingredient listed was organic sprouted wheat. The first ingredient in ordinary bread is usually unbleached flour.

When the toast popped up, he put mustard, mayonnaise, and ketchup on one slice. Then he added two slices of onion. On top of the onions, he placed the hot dog. On top of the hot dog, he put a couple of slices of apple. Then he added some bits of hot green chili, and then put the top piece of toast onto the chili bits.

Ahh, what a sandwich, he thought, as he sat down to eat.

She Loves Her Son

Maria had to buy food for herself and her son. Divorced for ten years, she was used to doing the shopping for her son. He was a junior in high school, which meant that he would be entering college in two years. Then she would be shopping only for herself. She felt sad when she thought of this. She hoped that he would attend the local junior college and then transfer to a university. That way he could continue to live at home for another two years. She loved him, and dreaded the day that he would no longer be her daily company.

Maria drove to Costco, a chain store that sold food in bulk packages. By selling in bulk only, the store helps its customers save money. She parked far from the entrance. That meant a longer walk, but also a faster exit from the parking lot. She grabbed one of the big shopping carts outside and pushed it into the store. Her purse stayed tightly hung over her shoulder. Surprisingly, the store wasn't too crowded.

In the produce section, she examined nine packages of seedless green grapes before she found one that she liked. She carefully selected some bananas, apples, and other fruit. But she couldn't find her son's favorite brand of tangerines. On the way home, she planned to stop at another market or two until she found them.

Putting Bunny to Sleep

Jim and Alicia had two dogs, Bugs and Bunny. They were both 15 years old. Bunny was dying. Bugs was still healthy. They were brother and sister, and had been together since birth. They had never been separated for longer than a couple of hours.

Jim and Alicia weren't sure what to do. The vet had told them that Bunny was in pain, and might continue to suffer for as long as another year. This was unacceptable to both Jim and Alicia. So, putting Bunny to sleep now, instead of letting her suffer, was not an issue. However, what to do about Bugs? The vet said Bugs was still healthy. He could last another two to three years. But how long, they wondered, would he last without his sister?

Bunny had always been Bugs' "big sister"; she was confident and assertive. Bugs was rather timid. He didn't mind when his sister bossed him around; she was also there for him when he was feeling anxious. Bugs followed Bunny everywhere. And whenever Bunny decided to sleep, Bugs always curled up next to her, whether he was sleepy or not.

Jim and Alicia both arrived at the same conclusion without very much discussion. When they took Bunny to the vet so that she could be put to sleep, Bugs went, too.

An Upset Stomach

Sara needed to see the doctor. She had an upset stomach. She felt bloated, and needed to pass gas every minute or so. This was terrible. She couldn't go anywhere in public.

Her friends told her it was because she had moved to America. The air, water, and food in America weren't agreeing with her. They said she would have to return to her home country.

"No way," Sara said. She didn't want to go home. She liked America. This was a minor problem, she was sure. Any good doctor would solve it in no time. Two days later, she saw her doctor. He asked her if she drank milk. She said yes, three glasses a day.

"Don't drink any more regular milk. Start drinking lactose-free milk, because lactose can upset your stomach."

Then he asked her if there were any big problems in her life. She said that her boyfriend was a big problem. He wanted to get married, but she didn't. The doctor said that she should find another boyfriend.

"Why?" Sara asked.

"Because your boyfriend is giving you too much stress. He is probably the main cause of your upset stomach."

"I don't think my boyfriend is going to like that."

"Just tell him if he really loves you, he should leave you."