Home on the range: Where seldom is heard a discouraging word...

A Discouraging Word

You've got to be kidding... You're going outside, looking like that? I hate to break this to you, sweetie, but you don't look anything like a real girl. Not the least little bit.

Your hair is a wig. Like, it's sooo obvious. And all that finger-combing isn't going to help... you really need the attentions of a full-service beauty salon.

And that fake cleavage? Give me a break! Anyone can tell those things are just water balloons. They might fool a blind man, but one touch and he'd figure it out in a hurry.

As for your face, maybe you should've watched a few of those online tutorials before trying it youself. Take a hint: less is best when it comes to makeup. Yours looks like a six-year-old went to town with a fingerpaint set. I mean, c'mon!

Your figure doesn't exactly scream 'female' either. Far from it. A giant cucumber would look better in that slinky dress than you do. Seriously!

If you want my advice, go right back inside and forget about ever passing as a woman. It's game over. You aren't gonna fool anyone looking like that...

Amanda Hawkins
Bonus! A short interview with the author...

Host: Welcome to the show, Amanda. Thank you for taking the time. I know you’re busy.

Amanda Hawkins: Always happy to help.

Host: Let’s get right to it. With regards to the caption we just saw, some people might be confused by the way the off-screen character describes the on-screen cross-dresser. She goes on and on about how this man looks nothing like a woman—but clearly he does.

Hawkins: That’s the reaction I was aiming for. The dialogue is meant to contrast the image in a dramatic way. This contrast, or dichotomy, is the essence of satire. It sets up a tension in the reader’s mind. It raises the question of what the heck is going on.

Host: I see. And exactly what IS going on? For those of us, like myself, who still don’t know.

Hawkins: Well, this is meant to dramatize what many cross-dressers hear on a daily basis—in their own minds if nowhere else. That they aren’t good enough, that they’ll never be able to pass as women, that they should shut out the world and deny who they are. It’s an awful thing to hear.

Host: But isn’t it true that some, or even most, cross-dressers really can’t pass as women?

Hawkins: I wouldn’t necessarily say ‘most’ but it’s true that some can and others can’t. But many who can are denied the chance to do so because of this sort of negativity.

Host: I see. So your message is that some males could indeed pass themselves off as female—but they aren’t doing so because other people are telling them they can’t. Or for that matter, they tell themselves that.

Hawkins: In a nutshell…. Cross-dressers are often quite conflicted about what they do. This isn’t a choice we’ve made, by the way; it’s a compulsion that stems partly from our upbringing and partly from our genetic makeup. But we feel guilty because we’re doing something that society regards as abnormal. This often leads to a poor self-image for our male selves, and this in turn causes a lack of confidence in the female image we attempt to show the world.

Host: Hmm. Deep. It sounds like a good many cross-dressers should be in psychotherapy.

Hawkins: Well, many of us are. And the risk of mental health issues is very real. This caption is my playful way of saying that we should give ourselves a break. Maybe we don’t look as bad to others as we might to ourselves. It’s very hard to be objective, of course. But if we can recognize our built-in negative bias, then we have a chance.

Host: I see. This is a lot of freight for what on the face of it seems like a fairly simple, not to mention confusing, TG caption.

Hawkins: Good fiction works on multiple levels. It can entertain as well as educate. Preferably, the education part should work on a subliminal level. No author wants to come across as preachy. But if the reader enjoys the story, or caption, and manages to learn something in the process, so much the better. That’s why a good story can make us feel better about ourselves, even though we might not know exactly why.

Host: We’re out of time. Thank you, Amanda.

Hawkins: No prob. It’s been a slice.