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National Museum of African American History and Culture

Playbill for Hair

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"It can't be. She's in Europe."

"Barbara Feldon's at the Warwick," reports Mike, something of a celebrity in his own right, having once done a three-minute dance sequence in a Stella Stevens movie.

"Warren Beatty and Julie Christie are staying at Delmonico's" counters Steven, a newcomer who lives in a hotel three blocks away and has latched on to the Sardi's people as a cure for his loneliness.

"No they aren't," on-ups veteran Celia. "They checked out this morning."

Outside, as well as inside, an eavesdropper is treated to occasional displays of theatrical bitchiness – some of them as arch as any celebrated exchanges between stars. ("We crashed Truman's party at the Electric Circus last night." ... "You mean Bess Truman, dear?")

Of course, there is some information that can be gleaned on the sidewalk in front of Sardi's and perhaps nowhere else. Such fascinating tidbits as the fact that at 10:55 each night the ushers at the St. James Theatre open the doors to the balcony so that it is possible to walk in free and watch Pearl Bailey do her nightly encore. ("Half the audience doesn't know enough to stay for it," complains Mike. "Honestly, the people who go to Broadway shows these days don't even know what an encore is.") Or that Ingrid Bergman's favorite dessert is cheesecake. Or that Bette Davis' present chauffeur last worked for Phyllis Diller. Or even that Duke Ellington's signature looks like a D and a bunch of scribbles.

During the periods of waiting for someone of note to go in or come out, Sardi's group compare autograph books. ("Look, he's got Morey Amsterdam," says Celia. "Isn't that beautiful."); give each other tips ("Usually when they write so bad, I make a notation who it is."); and exchange lively, if unorthodox, opinions on show business ("Vincent Price deserved an Oscar



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