

MABEL:

Don't nobody borrow my hats. I have about two hundred of them. I've been wearing them for forty-five years. I have five sisters. I don't borrow their hats; they don't borrow my hats. That's our way of doing it. I have seven sisters-in-law. They don't borrow my hats, either. One time, a sister-in-law said, "I need your royal blue hat." I said, "Well, you better buy you one." Listen, never touch my hat! If you don't know, I'm gonna tell you. Don't do it. Not the hat. The only person who'd touch a woman's hat is someone who doesn't wear hats. Admire it from a distance, honey. Sometimes people touch it by accident, but that's still no excuse. Like when I'm sitting in the pews on Sunday and somebody gets up to pray or something and knocks my hat. All that time you spent fixing it just right on your head is gone, just like that. Whenever I hear any movement behind me, I duck. But they still get me from time to time. You gotta be careful if you're sitting behind a hat queen. Same thing with a hug. Church folk like to hug, but there's a certain way to hug a woman in a hat. You can't get all up on her, grabbing her around her neck. If you do that, you must be a person who doesn't wear hats. Because if you wear hats, you already know you're not supposed to get that close when you hug. Both people have to tilt their heads way to the side, in opposite directions, and leave a little space between you. It might sound funny, but it's true.

Over the years you learn ways to keep your hat on your head:

- Don't let people touch the hat.
- Don't let people knock the hat.
- Don't let people hug too close.

Those are the hat queen rules. Don't break 'em.