

Diana Hamilton
Excerpt from *Universe*

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“Please don’t scream, sir,”
he said, “when I cut your hair.
You have to be quiet!”

*

Refuse to speak of the world as round
because—
in spite of the good evidence of roundness—
a feeling
of confidence
has not been produced.

*

“Shut the door.”

*

“I want you to shut the door.”

*

If I say “Shut the door”
and you say
(to the same person)
“do not shut the door”
we are not contradicting one another;
and this is odd.

*

“You are not going to shut the door.”

*

“I believe that you are going to shut the door.”

*

“You are going to shut the door.”

*

“The Health Service has done a lot of good.”

*

“I want you to the shut the door.”

*

Everyone knows
that the Health Service has averted a lot of pain, anxiety,
&c.

*

“Shut the door.”

*

The minister of Local Government expresses approval
of my town plan
by getting his underlings to write
to me saying

“The Minister approves of your plan.”

*

“You are going to shut the door.”

*

“The minister thinks your plan is the best one.”

*

“I believe that you are going to shut the door.”

*

“The minister thinks your plan is the best one.”

*

“I believe that you are going to shut the door.”

*

I hire

a private detective
(wronging him).

*

“Shut the door.”

*

The private detective observes
the Minister
for signs of emotion.

*

“I want you to shut the door.”

*

Either you are going to shut the door,
or something bad will happen to you.

*

“Shut the door,”
or you burn.

* * *