

DINAH. (cont.) Let's see, what should I give you first...

(DINAH pulls out a jar of preserves that she's labelled and decorated with a gingham cap.)

Here're some strawberry preserves I made in June. I put up about fifty jars of the stuff.

JEANNETTE. You've been busy, Hon.

DINAH. As I said on the phone, nothing to do but to keep on moving.

NEIL. I like the packaging, Dinah.

DINAH. Oh, thank you. I enjoy making things look pretty. And here's another one of my projects. I'm not sure what you'll think of it, but I thought it was something you could use. I remember how much you love candles...

(DINAH hands JEANNETTE something wrapped in tissue and ribbon.)

JEANNETTE. Oh, let me see.

(JEANNETTE unwraps a large candle in the shape of praying hands.)

Oh, look at that.

NEIL. Buddha hands.

DINAH. Actually, I think it's supposed to be Christ's but that's all right, however you want to see it.

NEIL. No, Christ is good too.

DINAH. I made it out of beeswax because I remember you like more natural things.

JEANNETTE. Love beeswax. Love the smell.

NEIL. Straight from the hive. Beautiful.

DINAH. And Neil, I made something for you...

NEIL. Oh really?

(DINAH pulls out an afghan that she's crocheted out of a mix of brightly colored yarns.)

DINAH. I hope you like all the crazy colors.

NEIL. Wow. You made this for me?

DINAH. Yes. I wanted it to be cheerful, you know, with everything that you've been going through.

NEIL. Let's try it out.

DINAH. I thought you might like this for the times when you need to lie down. You know, it'll keep you nice and cozy.

(DINAH tucks the blanket around NEIL.)

NEIL. This is nice. Very nice. I feel much better already. This is a beautiful gift. Thank you.

DINAH. Oh I'm so glad you like it. I made one of these for Cindy to take to college with her and she told me that she loved to curl up in it at night when she was studying. She'd say to me, "I don't know, Mom, there's something about that blanket, it makes me feel smarter." Which was silly, she didn't need any help in that department. She was a straight-A student all through high school. Not that she was ever a show-off about it. She was too nice a person for that.

JEANNETTE. I remember she was such a sweet kid.

DINAH. (a wave of grief) Oh boy...

JEANNETTE. It's all right, Hon, let it go.

DINAH. I'm all right - it comes and goes. Like getting the hiccups.

(back to her bag of goodies)

Let's see, what else...

(DINAH pulls out a jar of pickles.)

Oh, I made pickles. These are Grandma Henley's recipe.

JEANNETTE. You're kidding me, I loved her pickles.

DINAH. (opening the jar) Try one, tell me what you think.

JEANNETTE. Oh yeah, these are outstanding.

DINAH. Oh good, I'm glad they work. Neil, would you like to try one?

NEIL. No thank you, Dinah, they'd be wasted on me.

JEANNETTE. His taste buds got fucked up by the chemo.



DINAH. Oh, I'm so sorry.

NEIL. That's all right, I'm into other pleasures.

DINAH. Good for you.

(JEANNETTE has switched on the blower button of the vaporizer. The bag is expanding.)

Oh look at that, it's just like a Jiffy Pop!

(JEANNETTE detaches the bag and attaches the mouth piece for NEIL.)

(DINAH gets out an envelope of photographs.)

Jeannette, I also brought some family pictures, because I know you lost all of yours in the fire.

JEANNETTE. Oh hon, that's so sweet of you.

(NEIL takes a hit.)

DINAH. There's one in here of Cindy that I thought you'd like to have.

JEANNETTE. Oh, let me see.

DINAH. That was two summers ago when she was going on a bicycle trip with some of her friends.

JEANNETTE. What a sweetheart.

DINAH. Yes she was.

JEANNETTE. Look at that bod - those are serious biker's legs.

DINAH. Oh yes. She just loved to ride. She did one of those hundred-mile things for charity - it was for Children with AIDS or Heart Disease, one of those. She made over eight hundred dollars.

JEANNETTE. Good for her.

NEIL. She's got your eyes, Dinah.

DINAH. Yes, we have the same coloring.

NEIL. No, no, I meant that they were kind.

DINAH. Oh. Yes, she was. She wanted to go into nursing. She was very caring but she had a very practical side as well. When she was a freshman in high school, her uncle had to have a liver transplant and the donor was a young man who had died in a snow boarding

accident and Cindy was so moved by the fact that this young person had given her uncle a new life that she said to us one night at dinner, "You know, Mom, Dad, I am in great physical shape and I would be an awesome donor, so if anything happens to me, make sure you give all my parts away." She wasn't being morbid or anything, that was just who she was.

JEANNETTE. Sure.

DINAH. I wish we could have carried out her wishes. It would have been nice to know that somebody was walking around with her heart.

JEANNETTE. Did Bill not allow it?

DINAH. No, oh no, it wasn't that, no. Nothing could really be salvaged.

JEANNETTE. Oh shit. I'm sorry.

DINAH. Well. I like to think that Jesus was with her during her ordeal and that He was able to distract her with His love. I imagine that Cindy's soul was like a little bird that just flew out of a cage straight up to heaven into the arms of her Lord. There's some comfort in that. Anyway.

NEIL. Time to change the subject, Dinah?

DINAH. Yes, please.

NEIL. What other pictures do you have there?

DINAH. Well, let's see. Here's one of our Grandma Henley on the farm...

JEANNETTE. What a great old gal. She always wore that same raty old apron.

DINAH. Do you remember how she used to keep corn feed in the pockets for the chickens?

JEANNETTE. Oh yeah.

DINAH. (to NEIL) She'd hand it out to us when we went into the coop to get the eggs. Some of the chickens pecked at our hands so we'd throw the grain to get them off of their nests. But Jeannette was fearless. She would just shove her hand underneath those chickens. She didn't care what they did to her.