

NEIL. Fair enough. Then let me ask you this: if marijuana didn't produce a mild state of euphoria, would you object to it as much?

BILL. Then it wouldn't be illegal, would it.

NEIL. Morphine is legal. It gets you high as a kite, it's highly addictive — not only that, it turns your brain to mush and disrupts the functioning of all your major organs.

BILL. That's a load, Neil. You can't sit there and tell me that smoking marijuana doesn't harm your lungs.

DINAH. Actually, Honey, he uses a special machine that doesn't make any smoke.

BILL. Fine, but you have no idea where this marijuana came from. Come on, this is a criminal industry. There're no regulations. It could be laced with all kinds of dangerous chemicals and such.

JEANNETTE. What do you think, Babe? You think Malcolm laces your weed with PCP?

NEIL. I think I tasted something funky in that last hit.

BILL. If you think this is something to joke about —

JEANNETTE. Bill. Malcolm is a sixty-eight-year-old ethnobotanist. He collects rare seed and he's as straight as they come. He's been growing a few plants for Neil as a favor.

NEIL. It's heirloom pot. Malcolm's very proud of it. He can trace it all the way back to the hemp they brought over on the Mayflower.

DINAH. Really?

NEIL. No.

BILL. Look, I don't care if it can sing the Star Spangled Banner, it's still illegal. Whatever chances you want to take, that's your choice. But we came here as your guests.

JEANNETTE. Oh Bill, get off it. Do you see any helicopters swooping in to take pictures of the plates on your rental car? My husband is in pain and if taking a few hits of dope can make the last days of his life bearable then so fucking be it.

(a beat)

BILL. Neil, I know where you're going with this. Let's just say we don't see eye-to-eye on this particular topic and leave it at that.

NEIL. But we should talk about it because obviously you're still uncomfortable with the fact that I had a toke of grass.

BILL. Yes, I am uncomfortable. I also wish you wouldn't take the Lord's name in vain.

NEIL. Did I?

JEANNETTE. You said Christ, Honey.

NEIL. Oh.

JEANNETTE. I think I let fly with a few myself. I'm sorry, Bill, we're pretty foul-mouthed around here. It's just our way of keeping the demons away.

DINAH. We don't mind the other swear words, it's just this particular thing.

NEIL. No, no, we weren't being respectful. I apologize to the both of you.

DINAH. Thank you for understanding.

NEIL. But getting back to this marijuana issue —

BILL. We don't need to talk about it.

NEIL. Why not? It's an interesting discussion. Dinah, are you all right with this?

DINAH. I don't mind.

NEIL. Bill, let me ask you this. What exactly disturbs you about marijuana?

BILL. I object to it because it's illegal.

NEIL. But legality is a frangible thing wouldn't you agree? Cannabis has been around for thousands of years.

People have plucked it, smoked it, crumbled it into their tea or walked right past it thinking it was just some smelly, overgrown weed. Making it illegal doesn't change the essence of the plant. It grows, it blossoms, it goes to seed. It's as indifferent to the laws of man as a tomato plant.

BILL. I think it's kind of disingenuous to compare the two.

JEANNETTE. (*cont.*) Listen, I know you're not a bad guy, in fact I remember you used to be a lot of fun. You've had an unspeakable loss and no one expects you to break open a kegger here, but you've got to loosen up. We're all in the same canoe here, Baby, so take the stick out of your ass and have a glass of wine. Don't say no, I'm making a toast.

(**JEANNETTE pours BILL a glass of wine.**)

To family. To the ones who are gone and to the ones that we still have left. And to the journey ahead, wherever it takes us. No fear.

NEIL. No fear.

JEANNETTE. Toast with us, Bill. Please.

BILL. Cheers.

(*They all drink. Deeply.*)

NEIL. So what do you think of the wine?

BILL. Well, I can't say I know a lot about it, but yeah, it's very good.

JEANNETTE. There you go.

DINAH. I think it's delicious.

BILL. I agree. Very flavorful.

JEANNETTE. We'll send a couple of bottles home with you. Dave brought by a whole case the other day. Which was a little strange because he knows that Neil can't drink anymore.

NEIL. It was a denial gift.

JEANNETTE. I think you're right.

(*to DINAH and BILL.*)

A lot of our friends can't deal with the fact that Neil is terminal. Our friend Roger is furious with him for stopping chemo.

NEIL. "Don't cop-out on us now, Neil, you're almost at the peak."

JEANNETTE. Roger is a rock-climber. He's a maniac. He once climbed Mount Rainier with a pair of broken
WTISTS.

BILL. Good grief.

NEIL. "No pain no gain, you gotta hang in there, Man."

DINAH. Oh dear.

JEANNETTE. I finally told him to back off or get the F off our land.

NEIL. She was fierce. She made poor Roger cry.

JEANNETTE. Too bad. I'm not letting anybody guilt you into suffering any more than you have to. So you better watch out there, Bill.

BILL. Oh, don't worry. I'm watching myself.

DINAH. Chemotherapy is just a terrible treatment, isn't it?
JEANNETTE. Well, and then we find out it wasn't even making a dent. In fact the cancer was thriving on it. It was like they hooked Neil up to a bottle of fertilizer.

NEIL. (*patting his belly*) I'm growing prize-winning tumors in here. I'm going to enter them in the state fair.

BILL. Oh gosh.

JEANNETTE. Then of course, we have all these friends who want to go alternative. We got this e-mail the other day: "Neil! Jeannette! Don't give up! Attached is a study on treating late-stage cancer with fish oil."

BILL. Oh boy, that's a new one.

NEIL. Googling: the endless worm-hole of misinformation.

BILL. I'm with you there.

DINAH. We've gotten those kind of e-mails too – all very well-meaning, but some of them...you just have to wonder what people were thinking. We got this one from our friends the Bickfords.

BILL. The Bickfords are idiots.

DINAH. They sent us a link to a web site on bipolar disorder with a message that said, "We thought this might be useful in your time of sorrow." I just couldn't understand what their point was.

BILL. Well, first of all, the man who took Cindy wasn't bipolar, he was schizophrenic for sweet sake. And even if he was, why on earth would this be useful to us after the fact?