

Why Miranda's mom liked Rainier Ale

MIRANDA decided to share her ACA (Adult Children of Alcoholics) story with Christi, thinking it might help the young woman.

She did not want to lecture Christi on what she should do — about her marriage, or her food issues, or her thorny relationships with people. Miranda knew that would not work.

Christi was a fellow sufferer. Miranda, however, had done a lot of work to make different choices in her life, and had undergone a spiritual transformation.

“Tell me about my father,” said Christi.

Christi's father was Tom, who had also been Miranda's brother. He had died in his 30s, up in Humboldt County, under circumstances that to this day weren't clear. It had something to do with drug dealing. Or maybe just with drug taking. No one was really sure. The issue at the time had been very painful.

After Tom died, Miranda's mother drank herself to death. Then, after

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her mother died, her father shot himself.

“So you could say, I grew up in a dysfunctional family,” Miranda joked.

“I'll say,” said Christi. “I've heard a few of the stories.”

“We'd come home from Paly in the afternoon,” Miranda continued, “and mom would be walking around the yard in her elephant slippers with her can of Rainier Ale.”

Christi made a wry face.

“Mom used to say that Charles McCabe was her hero,” continued Miranda.

“Who is Charles McCabe?” asked Christi.

“You aren't old enough to remember,” said Miranda, “But he was a columnist for the San Francisco Chroni-

cle, and a notorious drunk. He wrote about his daily schedule. He said he got up early in the morning, about 4 or 5 a.m., and wrote his column in an hour or so.

And then a courier from the Chronicle would come by and pick up the column and take it to the paper. Those were in the days before email or fax.”

“Is that back when you still had to get water out of a well?” joked Christi.

“Yes,” said Miranda. “Before there was electric lighting.”

“Anyway,” Miranda continued, “McCabe said after finishing his column he went over to Gino and Carlo's bar in North Beach, and sat at the bar in the morning drinking Rainier Ale. Mom said one of her goals in life was to go to Gino and Carlo's in

the morning, and see if McCabe was actually there; and if he was actually drinking ‘my drink,’ as mom called it.”

“So one morning,” Christi continued, “When I was in the city early, I went by Gino and Carlo's at 9 in the morning; and lo and behold, there was McCabe sitting at the bar drinking Rainier Ale.

“I came home and told mom, and she said, ‘Why didn't you take me with you?’”

“I didn't take her with me because she had drunk a fifth of vodka the night before, and was passed out on the living room sofa when I left early in the morning for my San Francisco

meeting.”

“So that's the kind of household I grew up in, Christi.”

More tomorrow.

