

PALO ALTO ODYSSEY

Christi: 'Why is everything such a mess?'

“TELL me about my dad,” said Christi to Miranda.

Christi's father Tom was the elephant in the family living room — the person no one talked about. As well as being Christi's father, he was also Miranda's brother.

A drug dealer, Tom had died in his mid-30s, when Christi was only 6. Father and daughter had been close, and Tom's death traumatized Christi.

Miranda had stepped in at the time, coming out from New York where she lived and worked, and putting her lawyering career on hold. She stayed with Christi for several months, trying to help the girl, although at that time Miranda's own life was also out of control.

Miranda decided to tell Christi her ACA story — that is, her story from Adult Children of Alcoholics. Miranda looped back to the bulimia topic.

“I told you, Christi,” said Miranda, “That I was bulimic in college.”

“I find that hard to believe,” said

This is part 68 of a 72-part fictionalized serial appearing in the Daily Post, written by John Angell Grant with illustrations by Steve Curl.

Christi. “You have always been the one person in our crazy family who had it together. ‘Be like Miranda,’ people said to me. ‘If you can be like Miranda, you'll be OK.’”



CHRISTI

“I'm flattered,” said Miranda, “But it's more complicated than that.”

“You were the person in our family who escaped,” said Christi. “You got out of Palo Alto when the getting was still good, and went off and had your fantastic New York life.”

“And now here I am back in Palo Alto,” Miranda said.

“Yes,” said Christi, “And for the life of me I don't know why.”

“You are why I am here,” said Miranda.

“Me?” said Christi.

“Yes,” said Miranda. “You and I are the last remnants of our family. You are the connection to a family that no longer exists — to my parents and to my brother. Christi, I want you to have a good life and to prosper.”

Christi started to cry. “Then why is everything such a mess?” she said.



MIRANDA

“You can change it if you want.”

“How do I do that?” asked Christi

“Tell me about your eating behaviors,” said Miranda.

“I just get so hungry,” said Christi, “But I have no control. I eat the whole half-gallon of butter pecan ice cream. And after I feel so full, I can hardly stand myself. So you know what happens then.”

“Yes, I do,” said Miranda.

“So what do you do when that happens?” asked Christi.

“Well it hasn't happened for many years,” said Miranda. “I went and got help.”

“I'm out of control,” said Christi.

“It runs in our family,” said Miranda.

“Both of my parents — your grandmother and grandfather — were alcoholics. And my brother Tom — your father — was a drug addict. It's our family tradition. With you it manifests in the form of erratic food behaviors. But you can change your life, if you want to.”

“I'm not sure I want to,” said Christi.

Well the apple doesn't fall far from the tree, thought Miranda.

More tomorrow.