

GRACE. You young people, all talkin' 'bout "believin' in yourself." I always thought faith was believin' in somethin' bigger. Listen, Glorie, I ain't sitting here gettin' younger. We 'bout done?

GLORIA. Except for your hair. What'll we do with your hair?

GRACE. We could throw one of these quilts over it.

GLORIA. *(Digging through her cosmetic bag)* We need something original. Here we go.

*(She squirts some mousse into her hand.)*

GRACE. What's that stuff? Looks like whipped-up egg whites.

GLORIA. You know, I think it is.

GRACE. Well, that's original, all right. If I lived fifty more years, I never would o' thought of wearing a meringue.

GLORIA. *(Working the foam into GRACE's hair)* It's called mousse. I use it all the time.

*(GRACE relaxes, revels in having her scalp rubbed.)*

GRACE. He was a preacher.

GLORIA. Who was?

GRACE. A temporary preacher.

GLORIA. Who are we talking about?

GRACE. *(Mocking)* "I couldn't possibly understand." You think only you civilized people got them kind o' feelin's?

GLORIA. Oh, you mean ... Oh!

GRACE. He was a young man. Come in one summer when our old preacher got sick. I was married, o' course. Had three, four kids by then.

GLORIA. This young preacher, was he handsome?

GRACE. Oh, boy.

GLORIA. Did he make you feel all – you know.

GRACE. Like a lump o' lard in a hot skillet! Only man in my whole life ever said out loud I was pretty.

GLORIA. Oh, Grace. That's so sweet.

GRACE. Wasn't sweet at all. One mornin' in Sunday School he asked me to stand up'n read something from the Bible. Everybody in the room started to laugh. They all knew I couldn't read. I was so ashamed. Afterwards he come up to me. Told me not to feel bad. Said he'd teach me. Poor man. I'd go over to the church Saturday afternoons, sit there in front o' him with this book. But I couldn't concentrate. I kept lookin' at him. Watchin' his eyes, the funny way he'd wrinkle his brow whenever I made a mistake. Listenin' to him laugh. The people in church, my mother-in-law especially, pretty soon they started cacklin' like a flock of old hens. Didn't take long for my husband to find out. He stormed down to that church and made 'em send that preacher packin'. Things was never great with Mr. Stiles before that summer. I won't tell you how it was after.

GLORIA. But why? Did anything happen?

GRACE. 'Course nothin' happened!

GLORIA. (*Getting a tea rose from the bud vase*) Now don't get upset.

GRACE. I was so angry after that. With all of 'em. The people at church, Gabriella, my husband, even with – I know I told you I never doubted God. That ain't exactly true.

GLORIA. That was a long time ago. Hold still.

GRACE. Hold still! I'm rememberin' things goin' to send me to hell for all eternity and you tell me to hold still!

GLORIA. (*Putting the rose in GRACE's hair*) There. (*She steps back, admiring her work*) Oh, yes.

GRACE. What?

GLORIA. (*Hurrying to the dresser*) I'm going to get a mirror. Now you sit there and don't move. Don't even breathe. (*GRACE slowly lifts her hands to her face*) Don't touch! (*GLORIA returns with the mirror*) Okay, are you ready?

GRACE. I don't think I want to look. (*GLORIA goes behind GRACE. Holds out the mirror. GRACE slowly turns. Her eyes widen*) That young preacher man was right.

GLORIA. (*Starting to take the mirror away*) Are you ready to talk to Luanne now?

GRACE. Don't take the mirror. (*Gazing at herself*) Oh, how I wish –

(*GRACE freezes. Takes a quick breath. Her face goes blank.*)

GLORIA. Grace? Grace, what is it?

GRACE. Pain.

GLORIA. Oh, god.

GRACE. Goin' to be bad.

GLORIA. Grace?

GRACE. Oh, sweet Jesus.

GLORIA. (*Reaching for the morphine*) Listen to me.

GRACE. Sweet Jesus.

GLORIA. Grace, this is morphine. You know how to use –

GRACE. NO! NO DRUGS!