

## **In-Laws in Heaven**

If Heaven can accommodate Protestants and Catholics and perhaps other types of believers, on the “Dry” side you might see George and Hazel Davis (Dibbie Dib and Nannie) start their day with bacon-egg-and-cheese biscuits imported from Hardee’s. Dibbie Dib’s “coffee” must have several packs of Sweet-n-Low and enough Cremora to turn it a shade of beige you’d paint a family room. For lunch, they’d be eating chicken and pastry (others might call it dumplings) or the senior lunch special at KFC or the buffet at The Sandpiper. Cape Fear Barbeque or fried fish and hushpuppies from Hudson Bay Seafood on Ramsey Street back home in Fayetteville, NC would light up their eyes. They’d relish hot doughnuts from Britt’s that dissolve in your mouth, but you’d have to ship ‘em to heaven at miraculous speed from that tiny storefront along the Boardwalk at Carolina Beach because once those Britt’s donuts have cooled, they lose their magic. A dozen Krispy Kreme donuts at any temperature never failed to bring joy to their grandkids.

Dibbie always tried but was never able to grow tomatoes of the size and sweetness of his best buddy Fred Comer, whose soft-spoken wife Estelle never had much to say, and when she did, it was almost a whisper. J.W. and Sophie Dawson, together with Fred and Estelle and George and Hazel sustained Sherwood Presbyterian Church, even though it was apparent that Hazel was a life-long Baptist in Presbyterian clothing.

Dibbie and Nannie prefer southern gospel music by The Gaithers and J.D. Sumner whose bass voice was the envy of all. But they’d be perfectly content with silence and very satisfied with cicadas buzzing at sunset while they sway in porch swing softly squeaking in solicitation for a squirt of grease. The fragrance of fresh-cut grass seasoned with a few of those pesky wild onions would be a pleasant reminder of a productive warm summer day coming to a sweet conclusion. Right before bed, Dibbie would have a big gulp of Livingstone Cellars Red Rose wine from a mason jar he kept inconspicuously in the door of the refrigerator. This was purely for medicinal purposes, recommended by his doctor and strongly endorsed by his daughter-in-law Tia. Nannie would never!

Meanwhile, over on the “Wet” side, Joseph Palmisano and Tia, his eldest daughter (The Boss and Ms PD) will be sipping wine without a tinge of guilt. Red or white

or rose, makes no difference if there's plenty of it! They'd have a "trash can" omelet (toss in whatever you got) from JK's Diner or K&W Cafeteria for breakfast right after the short and efficient 7 am Mass at Saint Pats, which was unembellished by inspiring music. At breakfast with Joe and Lucille Rebello and Courtney and Mary Lou Fox, they'd lament rampant ineptitude in the Armed Forces since their retirements, while admitting their own humorous contributions to the demise.

The Boss and Ms PD would feast on Italian or Greek dishes from Sammio's menu and happily explore entrees they can't pronounce from a Thai restaurant. After dinner, they'd sip a Grand Marnier or have a nip of Tia Maria. No longer living carefully due to diabetes and emphysema, The Boss would gorge on Tootsie Rolls pilfered from the stash he curated for Knights of Columbus fundraisers. They'd enjoy music from the Big Band Era (mid-1930s to mid-1940s) mellowed with Michael Buble, Andrea Bocelli, The Eagles, and Barry Manilow.

The Boss would appreciate the whine of a fine carbide-tipped blade ripping through heirloom lumber on an industrial grade table saw. He'd be most happy in a haze of sawdust spewing from an orbital sander. He'd savor the smell of freshly-sprayed polyurethane on white oak he had transformed from rough-cut sawmill wood to a silky-surfaced cedar-lined chest for a grandchild. Ms PD would prefer the aroma of cakes in the oven to be shared with all who would partake in this form of Communion.

Dibbie, Nannie, The Boss and Ms PD might meet at the border in the early evening to enjoy a session of Wheel of Fortune together. They might be entertained by a nightly report narrated by Walter Cronkite of the adventures, toils, foibles, and triumphs of their still-mortal relatives. We hope not to disappoint them!

On second thought, Tia might not be in Heaven just yet. As a Catholic, she believed in Purgatory. She once confided to me that she hoped to spend some time in Purgatory before entering Heaven Proper because she thought an abrupt transition from Earth to the splendors of Heaven might be a bit too much for her. I disagree. I never saw anything that woman couldn't handle, except perhaps my erratic driving!

GR Davis Jr  
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