



## **100 IS GREAT!**

*As told by Gino, Herbert, Laura and Mei on 12/17/08*

There she is, nailing her coffin! (Gino) She's smoking even though she's had a long life. (Mei) She's thinking about something extremely funny, that laugh is about to come out. (Herbert) It's her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday and she's lighting a cigarette off her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday candle. She's melting one of the 0's—that would make her 10, not 100. (Laura)

She's indoors, at home, in her living room. She's sitting in a big chair. It's her birthday celebration. She looks like a pussy cat, like the cat that caught the canary. (Herbert) She's enjoying herself. (Mei) She's somebody's old lady (Herbert) and she's got curly hair. Her name might be Olga, or Matilda or Granny.

But maybe she's not at home. Gino thinks she could be at her therapist's, trying to get help to stop smoking. Laura thinks perhaps she lives in a care home because she looks like somebody fixed her up for the special event and her hair was just done.

Gino observes, "Smoking is just not in keeping—if she's lived to be 100, she's done something right but I doubt smoking is it." Mei agrees—"It's very seldom that you'd find smokers living to one hundred." Laura thinks it's daring to smoke on her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday-- she could start a fire. Herbert thinks she's saying, "Look at me!" Mei doesn't think this lady could stop smoking even if she wanted to because she's done it so long. Gino believes she's defiant, *happily* defiant –and sneaking a smoke at her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday,

she's got something to brag about. Herbert says she reminds him of the Roaring 20s, when women smoked, drank, cut their hair, wore short skirts and did shocking dances. Maybe she was a flapper in her youth and she's still flapping now!

If you live to be 100, you should celebrate right up to the last moment. You should make it a special day because to be one hundred is special. She's 100 and she's still alive and kicking. She hasn't kicked the bucket yet—she's still enjoying life. Gino says it's either that or she's an addict beyond recovering from her addiction and the craving keeps her going.

Mei and Laura think she's healthy in spite of the smoking. Gino is concerned about the age spots on her face and wonders why she hasn't tried vitamins or oils to control and regulate them. Herbert notices that if you hold the picture sideways, you get a whole load of Dunkin' Donuts, the candles look like donuts.

It's not clear if she's here alone or if there are other people present, helping her celebrate. If anybody else is there, Gino is confident it's *not* the mortician. Laura thinks maybe the staff and other residents of the care home are there. Mei guesses her children and grandchildren are there, along with other relatives and some younger friends.

What's going to happen next? Gino says she's going to cough from all that smoking. Herbert guesses everyone will have a drink. Laura thinks the guests will sing Happy Birthday and she will blow out the candle and make a wish for another good year. Gino says she will wish for another 100 years. Mei guesses she will wish for health, life and maybe to correct the smoking and drinking. Herbert thinks she will wish for good health but guesses that whatever she wishes for, she probably won't get it because of her age.

What is her secret for living to 100? Herbert says it's that she does what she wants to do. Gino thinks it's being a cat lover because what's good for the cat is good for her, like eating regularly. Mei thinks it's being focused, concentrating on one thing at a time and loving life. Laura thinks it's the exercise she got from all that dancing she did. She looks like somebody who has had fun. This woman accomplished a big thing: she can still smile at 100.

Gino wouldn't mind living to be 100 but Mei isn't sure. Herbert thinks that under the present circumstances, it wouldn't be bad. Laura says that being 100 would be good if you could have a happy life with a little fun.

And the perfect gift for somebody turning 100? Herbert suggests a broken calendar, one where every week would be a month.