

HEIDI CHRONICLES

1987 Children's ward in a New York hospital. On the tv, is a late night Christmas movie, Miracle on 34th Stret. A young doctor, Ray, is sitting on a child's chair, smoking. There are toys and stuffed animals on the floor, faded Christmas decortaion. Heidi awkwardly enters carrying boxes and records and toys as Ray turns off the tv.

Ray exits.

He seems very nice.

You seem completely insane.

I have been trying to reach you.

Well, I'm here every night. It's a hectic social schedule. Cha-cha lesons at five, cocktails and limbo party at 6, dinner under the stars at 7, and free love with safe sex at 8.

I thought you went home to Chicago. I found out you were working through the holidays in some metropolotian column.

It was the New York Times. "Sciene Tuesday." Page c1. What did you think of the picture?

I thought you looked good.

I thought I looked jowly. Turned out the photographer was an ex very close personal friend of Stanley's. He certainly made sure no one would call me. Not even you.

I called you. I couldn't find you.

Enough. End of narcissism. What can I do for you?

(kisses him) Merry Christmas.

Thank you.

You're brimming with holiday cheer.

Heidi last night three immune deficient children in Queens were burned out of their home because an entire neighborhood preferred they not return to school next year. I don't know who the hell wants to get in here at midnight. But I can assure you that I'm not very happy that they can.

I should have called again.

I'm sorry Heidi. I'm not feeling very communicative. Unfortunately, things here are for real. Not farina.

I've never heard that: for real not farina.

Stanley used it.

How is Stanley?

Oh, he's fine. What's all this?

Nothing.

This gets better and better. You came here at midnight Christmas Eve with boxes of nothing..

It's boxes of books, records, clothing. One girl's complete collection.

Thank you. We accept. Winter cleaning before the new year?

(mumbling) No. Well, actually, I'm leaving tomorrow.

Heidi, you're mumbling.

I'm going away tomorrow.

Chicago to see your parents.

I'm going to Northfield, Minnesota. Where the Jesse James band stopped.

Are you planning on robbing banks and getting caught?

I thought I'd finish my new book in the midwest. I had an offer to teach at Carleton College there. So I accepted.

This is sudden.

Well, yes, but...

But why not?

Peter, I came to say goodbye.

Good bye.

That's it?

What do you want me to say?

I don't know. You'll call me?

I'll call you. Heidi, what do you want me to say? You are a brave and remarkable young woman. A proud pioneer. My Antonia driving ever forward through the unknown.

(softly) Peter, what is it?

Nothing. So you're going to Northfield Minnesota to start again. Goodbye, New York.

Goodbye mistakes. Make new friends. Give donations to the old.

I hate it when you're like this.

Heidi you arrived at midnight and promptly announced you're leaving tomorrow. I'm just feeling my way through here.

I thought you would be the one person who would completely understand.

Understand what? Looking back at your life and regretting your choices? Deciding your work, your friends, your history are totally expendable?

You have a life here that works for you. I don't.

Right, so I'm expendable too.

Peter, stop it.

I'm not doing anything. I was going to have Christmas here with the Hardy boys.

The Hardy boys?

For our last donation we received my sister-in-law's Paula Patrone's complete childhood collection of Nancy Drew the Bobbsey Twins, the Hardy boys, Honey bunch and Heidi, which I actually perused last night in your honor. Did you know that the first section is Heidi's year of travel and in the second she uses what she knows? How will you use what you know Heidi?

I've been sad for a long time and I don't want to be sad anymore.

This is hard Heidi, this is very hard. What have we got here? The Mama's and the Papas, Gerry and the Pacemaker's, Sam the Sham and the Pharaohs. "Theodore Bikel sings favorite worksongs from the fourth international."

Scoop's. From his red-diaper period.

HW Jansen...Thank you. we don't have any of these.

(smiles) I thought so.

The next time some reporter arrives with a surly photographer, I'll tell them, "never mind the kid's immune system, as him about the Secret Life of Salvador Dali."

I think you starting this unit is remarkable.

Your friend Susan's production company sent us a very nice check. We would have thought three women artists in Houston loft would capture national imagination? It's odd what people find comforting.

What, sweetie?

Nothing. I was thinking about what people find comforting. I'm sorry. Generally, I try to stay very chipper.

Honey, you don't have to be chipper around me.

You know what's unappealing in its own insidious way as my sarcasm?

What?

Your trying too hard. This high voice, the gratuitous honey and sweetie, I can't tell what the hell you are thinking.

Peter, where is all this coming from?

Truth.

It'd be preferable.

Okay Heidi, about once a month now I gather in some church, meeting house or concert hall with handsome men all my own age, and in the front row is usually a couple my parent's age, the father's in a suit and the mother's tasteful, pleasant face. And we listen for a half hour to testimonials, memories, amusing anecdotes about a son, friend lover, also handsome, also usually my age, whom none of us will see again. After the first, fifth or fifteenth, SADDENESS LIKE YOURS SEEM A LUXURY.

I understand.

NO YOU DON'T. NOT REALLY. I LEFT one other thing out. my friend Stanley isn't very well. that was my call when you so adventerously arrived. that's where all of this is coming from.

Peter I...

You see my world gets narrower and narrower, a person has only so many close friends. and in our lives, our friends our families. I'm actually quite hurt you don't understand that. i'm very sorry you didn't find that comforting.

There is no one more precious to me in the way you are.

but obviously i can't help you. and you can't help me so...

so...

my best to jesses james.

pause

peter we could try.

not if you're going to become someone else.

i could become someone else next year. postpone it.if that's not a little too understanding...

a little, but i'm listening.

i promise you won't lose this member of your family.

who? the sad one or the the one i spotted 25 years ago at a miss crain's school dance?

pause

however, if you do stay. i have one specific request.

what?

that you still plan to donate this fine collection.

all yours.

mitch ryder nad hte detroit wheels, gary oucket and union gap. nelson and the rockerfellers. how did we ever become friends?

i'm a sucker for a man of taste and talent.

you have such distinguished taste in music. i can tell you're very bright. tell me since i value your opinion, what did you think of dr. ray? **(heidi sits on a tiny chair beside him)**

i told you, i liked him.

yes and i like greg louganis. but i don't know if a diver is the best chouce for me.

is dr. ray a diver?

no, but he's a man of taste and talent.

(heidi picks up two dixie cups) it's a lovely evening don't you think?

what?

the stars above the sea below us. tell me how long have you been on this cruise?

oh around 25 years. i tried to pick out your name. amanda, lady clara, estelle.

(heidi notices he crying)...it's....

i know, it's heidi. your grandfather told me. are you fromt he alps.

yes, like chocoalte. i want to know you all my life. if we can't marry, we'll be great friends.

i will keep this goblet as a momento beside my piloow. he looks at her.

(she takes his hand and gets him up.)

ah, the "shoop shoop song" baroque but fragile.

i'm not familair with the word.

(heidi begins to sing to him softly)...is it in her eyes?

oh no you'll be decieved.

...if you want to know if he loves you so...

peter embrace heidi....

merry christmas heidi.

merry christmas peter.