

*This excerpt takes you inside the Pub that Johnny frequently drops by on his way home. He quietly sits with Joe as they listen to the conversations being bantered about. It's part of the set up for the story that evolves through the holiday season.*

“Great, “ says Joe as he turns his attention to a conversation at the servers station. Sue and Kim have been talking while Sue loads up Kims tray with waters and drinks. She seems a bit down today ... not her usual engaging personality.

“The car repairs cost almost \$200 dollars and I have to have my car, but now I’m told if I don’t pay \$142 dollars tomorrow, my lights go out .... it only takes one thing to throw everything else off .... so I’m going to pretty much work through the holidays .... I need to get out of this financial pit a whole lot more than taking time off for family, that’s for sure.”

“That sucks,” says Kim as she prepares to head to table 12, “And people don’t tip as well during the holidays .... they’re spending all their money on more gifts.”

As Kim heads towards table 12 and Sue gets another round for Eric, MaryJo takes over the conversation.

“ So Eric, do you think you have enough for a tree?”

“I think I have enough for a forest.” he says as he looks at the mound of money in front of him. “ I don’t think this guy has that big a house.”

“ Just buy a nice tree and put the rest of the money in an envelope that says ‘Have a great Christmas’ ..... keep it anonymous and don’t put the envelope down where the pit bull can get to it .... put it up high, but be careful that it’s not seen by people walking by...”

Eric interrupts MaryJo, “Okay, okay, okay .... I got it .... I know a kid who would do it for me.... we’ll get it done.”

As Eric and MaryJo start counting out the money, Joe turns to Johnny, “Let me buy Santas drinks tonight, Johnny” as he hands Sue his credit card, indicating it wasn’t a point of discussion.

“Thanks, Joe ... what are you doing for Thanksgiving?”

Joe smiles, “Research .... I’m always doing research.”

“ Must be a pretty good story you’re writing.... or a pretty difficult one .... you do a lot of research.”

“Research is what life is all about, Johnny.... the more you research, the more your story

grows.”

As they get up to head for the door, Johnny notices the bill on the bar. As they reach the door, Johnny speaks up.

“\$142 tip is pretty good for a couple of drinks, don’t you think?”

Joe smiles at Johnny, “It was enough.”

Johnny turns back and sees Sue looking at the receipt with her hand over her mouth and tears welling up in her eyes.

“ Enough Indeed.” he smiles.