

IN THE SNOW

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CHARACTERS:

Granny

Claire

Simon

Malvina

Peter

1.

(The fire is glowing in the fireplace. It crackles and pops and casts bizarre shadows on the walls. The room is full of warm wood and dark red furniture. This idyllic life contrasts with the snow behind the window, the snow storm is getting heavier and thicker. It is dusk, a fragrant candle is burning in a lantern. Granny is sitting in a rocking chair, dressed in a red robe with emerald embroidery. The most ostentatious piece of her wardrobe is her red velvet slippers decorated with pink feathers - every little girl's dream. Claire comes in. She's finished shoveling snow; leans the shovel against the wall. She takes off her blue coat, shakes it off and hangs it on the hanger. Underneath her scarf she is wearing hair-curlers.)

Claire: I knew you'd be here.

Granny: You wanted to be with me, didn't you?

Claire: I quit shoveling! It's useless. While I was shoveling the steps, the whole patio got covered. Nature had gone amok!

Granny: Well, a year ago this time the trees were starting to bloom. And it was the same thing: Crazy spring, why is it rushing... Everything should take its time...

Claire: What if he doesn't make it here?

Granny: Simon is a young and healthy man! He'll get through.

Claire: I'm sure he doesn't even have good boots. He'll come frozen and wet and he'll be sneezing here the entire weekend.

Granny: Simon knows what kind of shoes to wear in the forest.

Claire: Him? His boots are full of holes. Who would have thought it could still snow. It was a beautiful morning. Morning! Two hours ago there was not a single cloud in the sky.

Granny: How do you know his boots are full of holes?

(Claire is sweeping and tidying. She wants everything to be in order. She is nervous, and keeps moving the little table with a plant from place to place.)

Claire: He would never buy a new pair! He is attached to his old ones. He got them from his father after he graduated from high school.

Granny: *(Silent.)*

Claire : You think he has changed.
Granny : Everything is possible.
Claire : What do you think? Where does it look better?
Granny : You should buy a new table.
Claire : You and Grandpa used to play cards on it.
Granny : Your Grandpa used to cheat .
Claire : Hm... Okay... maybe Simon has new boots. Well , why would n 't he...
Granny : I did n 't say he had changed.
Claire : *(Cheered up.)* Why else would he be coming here, right ?
Granny : You kept writing to him to come every week .
Claire : That 's not fair.You kept talking me into it...
Granny : You wanted to write to him so much...
Claire : As long as he comes, right ?
Granny : As long as he comes.
Claire : You can see the lights from a distance . He should be able to find it.
Granny : You bet he can find it.
Claire : His train came at half past three, and it takes about a half hour to get to the crossroads from the station . He should be here in an hour, maybe an hour and a half. He'll be caught in the darkness...
Granny : So he'll be ploughing through the deep snow in the dark and in the distance he'll see the flickering lights of the cabin...
Claire : You think he still remembers the way? It's been three years , after all...
Granny : Don 't worry, he won 't get lost.
(Claire pulls out a mirror, starts to put on make-up and comb her hair.)
Claire : Oh God, I look like a sheep ...
Granny : Not at all...
Claire : I just hope he doesn't ask for directions downtown ... I can imagine what they would tell him... Aah , visiting the crazy girl , eh? The one who hangs around poor Peter 's neck...
Granny : Come on, Claire ...
(Claire first puts on lipstick and then wipes it off. She combs her hair into a ponytail.)
Claire : I was in the library yesterday and I was just getting the books when I dropped one. A little girl jumped towards me, with curly blonde pigtails, just like I used to have . Do you remember? Before Mom cut my hair and accidentally created two bald coins on my head. The little girl bent towards me and she wanted to hand me the book. But then her hands started to shake . Get it? She was handing me a book that fell and her hands started trembling... She recognized me . The witch that lives high up in the mountains...
Granny : You 're exaggerating ...
Claire : They keep badmouthing me. And I don 't even have a child! But the witches can't even have children, huh? And since they don't have any of their own , they go spying in the library to steal one! That 's why the little girl 's hands shook so bad.

G r a n n y : Let it go, C l a i r e ...

C l a i r e : I d o n 't want to just let it go...

G r a n n y : You were always stubborn . W h a t e v e r you took into your head, t h a t 's how it was! And if not, you kept n a g g i n g and n a g g i n g ...

C l a i r e : I only kept nagging about things that I really cared a b o u t .

G r a n n y : You always care about e v e r y t h i n g, dear Claire.

C l a i r e : Are you here to help me?

G r a n n y : Do I need to keep repeating it?

C l a i r e : Y e s .

G r a n n y : I'm here to help yo u ...

C l a i r e : S h h h ...

G r a n n y : I t 's just the wind.

C l a i r e : I'm glad you are here with me. And I d o n 't regr e t a n y t h i n g . A nything at all.You know that .

G r a n n y : I k n o w .

C l a i r e : When I was walking back up here with the books under my arm , I stopped by the Mountain Service off i c e . Had I happened to find Peter there, he could h a v e g i v e n me a l i f t . He w a s n 't in. It started to snow and I was walking alone. But I w a s n 't completely alone because I knew you were waiting here for me...

E v e r since I've got yo u , I d o n 't feel so desperate and l o n e l y ...

G r a n n y : This is my favo rite spot...

C l a i r e : I k n o w .

30

G r a n n y : Those were gr e at times when this was not just a c a b i n but also the transfer station for the chair lift...

C l a i r e : We took the trip together. I r e m e m b e r .

G r a n n y : People who w e r e n 't tempted by the summits picnicked over there in the meadow. And those who wanted to go even higher transferred to the other chair lift and off they went to the mountains...

C l a i r e : I was about five ye a r s old...

G r a n n y : They used to run e v e r y day from nine in the morn i n g till four in the aftern o o n ...

C l a i r e : It was getting dark and the upper chair lift serv i c e s t o p p e d .

G r a n n y : Y e s , y e s . And you kept screaming your head off, a n d the mountains kept echoing your screams back. I h a d to promise you that I would take you another time...

C l a i r e : But you didn't .

G r a n n y : They discontinued the chair lift serv i c e . Just the old and rusty poles stayed behind.

C l a i r e : H o w could you have left me, when I was so little?

G r a n n y : I d i d n 't leave yo u .

C l a i r e : Tell me how you and Grandpa met here.

G r a n n y : A g a i n ?

C l a i r e : It'll help me pass the time.

G r a n n y : One ye a r , t wo ye a r s after the wa r , I was here on a summer job, checking the tickets. Suddenly a student hugged me around my wa i s t , s a t me down next to him in the chair lift and told me: M i s s , your talents are wasted here, h a l f way through.You belong to higher places... And up there, under the summit, he kept

kissing me for two hours ...

Claire : Simon was never a good kisser. His lips were always too tight. Two straight lines. And he almost never

laughed. He could always explain everything. And calculate. He wanted to calculate me, too ...

Granny : Scientist.

Claire : What if he doesn't show up?

Granny : He'll show up.

Claire : But what if he really doesn't come. What would happen?

Granny : Everything would stay the same.

Claire : Would I stay here living with Peter?

Granny : You would be waiting for Peter every day. And just like you are scared now, you'd be afraid that one day he would send you back.

Claire : I'm afraid.

Granny : It's too late to be afraid now.

(Granny swings the rocking chair and leaves. Claire is left alone in the room. She is waiting. She can hear distant steps. She stands up, takes a deep breath, as if expecting a guest at evening. The steps are coming closer, the door opens. Simon appears first, followed by a tired girl - Malvina. Claire did not expect her, so all her reactions are quite startled. Simon and Malvina put down their backpacks. The girl is very tired and happy to be finally there. She is the only one behaving naturally and honestly.)

Simon : We almost got lost. Good thing you lit up the entire house!

Malvina : It twinkled like a gingerbread house at Christmas!

Simon : This is Malvina...

Claire : Claire ...

(Women briefly shake hands.)

Claire : Peter... he would have picked you up in his jeep had he known you were both coming...

Malvina : Simon called me in the last minute. He wasn't sure if he himself was coming...

Simon : At least we had a nice walk.

Malvina : Nice walk? About halfway here he left me sitting in the snow. He said: If you don't get up immediately and start marching on, I'll leave you here!

Claire : Simon wouldn't do that, would you, Simon? You wouldn't do a thing like that ...

Simon : Why wouldn't I? I would just leave you there and you would get eaten by the wolves.

Malvina : There are no wolves around here!

Simon : How do you know?

Malvina : I know.

Claire : Malvina is right. There are no wolves here.

Malvina : They are very shy. They fear people. For them this is too close to the town.

Simon : Miss Geography and Nature Teacher.

Claire : Are you hungry? I've got... venison stew. I did some cooking yesterday... It should be heated in a minute ...

Malvina : You know what... Let's eat my fried pork first. So that it doesn't go bad.

(Malvina takes out meticulously prepared pieces of fried pork from her backpack and starts handing them out. Claire takes

some too. Then she pulls out a flask with rum .)

Malvina : I would definitely not freeze in the forest. Let's have a drink , shall we ?

(She takes a gulp, offers some to Claire. Claire offers some to Simon but he doesn't want any.)

Claire : So welcome... Both of you ...

Malvina : Finally we're here. I was really looking forward to it! Simon promised to bring me here a long time ago!

But I certainly didn't expect a snowstorm like this.

Claire : Promised a long time ago? Uhm? So how long have you... been going out?

Simon : Half a year ...

Malvina : Five months...

Claire : Sure you won't have some? You used to like rum .

Malvina : Simon doesn't drink . Sometimes he takes migraine medication .

Claire : He still gets... migraines ?

Simon : I work nights. Tons of work to do.

Malvina : Simon is supposed to go to America .

Claire : To America? Congratulations , then .

Simon : Do you remember Graham Smith?

Claire : The small fat guy... Congress in Vyšné Hágy? The one who didn't like our national sheep cheese dumplings ...

Simon : He invited me for a year to his university in Houston. I would lecture on microcellular biology and continue with my research.

Claire : Wow, Simon ...

Malvina : And they published a bunch of his articles in... what is the name of that magazine?

Simon : Contemporary Science.

Claire : You got published in Contemporary Science? That was your dream, right ... ?

Simon : There is a great international team in Houston, two Belgians , a Russian , a Japanese ...

Claire : You always wanted to do that . And you were willing to do anything for it. Anything to get out of here and go somewhere...

Simon : It's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity ...

Claire : Perhaps... perhaps you should go change. And unpack your stuff, right? I'll make the beds upstairs in the loft. There are two guest beds there.

Malvina : Do you get a lot of guests here?

Claire : In the summer they come in flocks. They spread out their tents in the meadows and play the guitar in the evenings. But in winter we get just an occasional crazy mountain climber or Alpine skier...

Malvina : Why crazy?

Claire : Because quite often it happens that he stays in the mountains and then my husband is on call...

Malvina : He's with the Mountain Service ?

Claire : Simon didn't tell you ?

Simon : He did, indeed... Really... where is he?

Claire : They've got a meeting or something... he'll be late ...

Malvina : I'll go take a shower. Do you have hot water ?

(Claire nods and Malvina takes out a towel and some dry clothes from her backpack .)

Malvina : I'm drenched in sweat .

(Claire takes her outside and comes back in a moment . Meanwhile Simon had seated himself in an armchair .)

Simon : Your old wicker armchair . How did you get it here?

Claire : In the jeep . You could have written to me that you wouldn't be coming alone .

Simon : Let's drop that .

Claire : Until when?

Simon : I'm tired .

Claire : But you still came here to tell me something , didn't you? Why else would you go to the trouble of getting all the way up here?

Simon : Yes . You can stop writing to me . I'm not coming back to you .

Claire : I only got three letters from you during all that time . And in each and every one of them you kept describing in detail why you would never come back to me .

But now you're here .

Simon : I came to tell you face to face .

(Claire wants to touch Simon but he pulls back .)

Claire : What did you tell her about us?

Simon : Nothing .

Claire : Nothing? So who exactly did you come to visit?

Simon : An old schoolmate from college . A friend .

Claire : So what kind of a friend am I? A good one , at least , or one that happens to live in nature where one can do some nice hiking around?

Simon : A pretty good friend whom I haven't seen for a while . And who happens to live in nature where one can do some nice hiking around .

Claire : To Hawks Mountain Pass , for example .

Simon : Even to Hawks Mountain Pass . Why not...

Claire : Are you in love ?

Simon : Claire ...

Claire : I don't have a lot of time . Any second now your clean sweatshirt is coming back... And I presume she will be in our faces all weekend long , thanks to you .

Simon : I love her .

Claire : Like cocoa?

Simon : More than cocoa .

Claire : You should have come alone .

Simon : Why did you think I wouldn't have anyone ?

Claire : Alright... alright... But I do have a surprise for you ...

Simon : I don't want any surprises .

Claire : I met someone here , dear Simon . I was right . She was really calling me . And when I came , she was waiting here for me .

Simon : I have no idea what you're talking about .

Claire : You just don't want to know ...

(Showered Malvina comes back .)

Malvina : Am I disrupting anything ?

Claire : I'll put the stew on .

Simon : Aren't we going to wait for your husband?

Claire : He dines with wolves .

(They sit down at the table , Claire is fixing the food . The lights

go out, it is dark .)

2 .

(It is nighttime and Claire and Gran ny are talking. The only light in the room is the fireplace.)

Gran ny : They fell asleep like logs. After a t rip like that ...

Claire : W hy did he bring her here? She can't help him anyway.

Gran ny : Let him be. Let him think that for a while longer.

Claire : W hy did she come?

Gran ny : W h at if she had to come?

Claire : Had to... as if you... you... You knew she was coming ? !

Gran ny : Dear Claire - ...

Claire : W h at ?

Gran ny : She really had to come here.

Claire : N o n s e n s e . If you had know n , you would have told me .

Gran ny : You would have been mad. S i m p l y, the girl had to come here and that 's that !

Claire : But why ?

Gran ny : W hy? Because there are some things that you have to live through before you are able to accept and understand what comes next.

Claire : W hy 's that ?

Gran ny : E ven... when you were little, you always kept asking w hy. You couldn't understand why the trees grow and bunnies hop. And I just kept explaining to you that a tree is a plant and a bunny is an animal and you kept saying why... why... You were able to confuse me so much that then I wa s n 't able to answer any of yo u r q u e s t i o n s.

Claire : And now ?

Gran ny : W h at now ?

Claire : W h at answer would you gi ve me now that you know e ve ry t h i n g ?

Gran ny : A tree grows so it can produce fru i t s. And a bunny hops to escape from the fox who wants to eat it.

Claire : Hmm... So why did she have to come here?

Gran ny : There are some things that I simply must do.

Claire : So she is...

Gran ny : No... not her... she has no idea...

Claire : So why is she here?

Gran ny : She has been looking for someone for twenty ye a rs. And now she'll find him.

Claire : W h o ?

Gran ny : Her fat h e r !

Claire : H ow do you know that ?

Gran ny : He told me.

Claire : You met him?

Gran ny : W h at 's so strange about that? You met me too.

Claire : I d o n 't believe yo u . S h ow yo u rself to him!

Gran ny : E ve rything takes its time. You'll see, dear Claire.

(A car arrive s. It stops, the engine is turned off. Gran ny leave s and Peter appears in the doorway. He takes off his red coat and just like Claire before him, he shakes the snow off his cap.)

Peter: Hey.

Claire: Hey... You didn't have to come so late.

Peter: I'm sure you had a lot to talk about.

Claire: Well, we could have talked and you could have been entertaining his pretty girlfriend. Your friends would have liked her too...

Peter: I know he didn't come by himself. I saw the tracks.

Claire: You're not happy...

Peter: Did you take your medication?

Claire: I did.

Peter: Really?

Claire: Really ...

(Peter takes the bottle and counts the pills. He hands a couple of them to Claire. She takes them without a word, puts them in her mouth and takes a drink of water.)

Claire: I always fall asleep after these. And I didn't want to sleep.

Peter: You need the sleep. You know how important that is for you.

Claire: I didn't mean to lie to you. I would have taken them. Now, tonight.

Peter: I know you keep throwing them out.

Claire: No I don't ...

Peter: I saw you.

Claire: When?

Peter: How did they like the stew?

Claire: I told them I made it. Why, maybe I could make a stew like you by now, couldn't I? And maybe even a better one.

Peter: You can try it tomorrow, if you want... What is the weather supposed to be like tomorrow?

Claire: Snow storm. We'll be snowed in.

Peter: This time of year spring is usually here. I can't even remember the last time when it snowed like this.

Maybe when I was a little boy.

Claire: So you're also waiting for spring ...

Peter: I am ...

Claire: I'll tell you what you've been waiting for... That he would finally show up and take me away from here.

Peter: Claire ...

Claire: But he brought a girl.

Peter: They've got a place to sleep. There's enough room here.

Claire: And I will stay here like a stone around your neck. Forever.

Peter: I'd like to go to bed. Are you coming?

Claire: And you will have to keep checking every day if I had thrown away the pills or not.

Peter: You know what could happen if...

Claire: Or you will believe me... Hmm? Finally you'll believe me...

Peter: You could end up in a hospital again.

Claire: Do you feel sorry for me?

Peter: I feel sorry for all the wasted paper. You wasted so many words.

Claire: How do you know?

P e t e r: I remember all too well how often and tirelessly yo u can write letters.

C l a i r e: You were the only one that I could write to then. I was left all alone...

P e t e r: You needed me then...

C l a i r e: I still need yo u .

P e t e r: If you only took your pills properly...

(Claire sits down in the wicker chair and starts to rock .)

P e t e r: Should I make tea? Hmm? With honey and lemon?

Tea will do you some good.

C l a i r e: You keep taking care of me like a little kid! And then you leave me here all alone all day s ...

P e t e r: You really don't want some? Lemon balm...

C l a i r e: When you are left alone, all alone, then you'll have to b e l i e v e me.

(Peter sits down next to Claire and rocks her in the chair till Claire dozes off. He cove rs her with a b l a n k e t . D a r k n e s s .)

3 .

(Claire is asleep. It is starting to daw n . G r a n n y comes in. Fo r a while she rocks Claire's chair. Claire wakes up and sees Gra nny.)

C l a i r e: E v e r y o n e still asleep?

G r a n n y: Except for the two of us.

C l a i r e: I need proof!

G r a n n y: Just wa i t .

C l a i r e: For how long?

G r a n n y: Your mom always complained that she couldn't handle yo u .

C l a i r e: Only your heels kept clacking in the same rhythm as m i n e ...

G r a n n y: I n e v e r wore shoes with heels.

C l a i r e: You know... that little girl... in the library. She wa s there with her mom. And when they were leav i n g I heard their heels clack on the stone pavement in the same rhy t h m . Clack - clack - clack - clack...

G r a n n y: My feet always hurt from we a ring high heels.

C l a i r e: I wanted him to find our mountains gr e at and strong. And with all the snow you can't even see a step forward .

G r a n n y: We l l , do something!

C l a i r e: G r a n n y, I would do anything in the world if the sun could shine tomorr ow.

G r a n n y: Really? So spread your arms and fly. F l y . U p, up to the clouds. Shoot through them with your own body. Touch them and they will disappear. Can you see the s t a r s ?

C l a i r e: I s aw the barometer, G r a n n y. Not a trace of high p r e s s u r e .

G r a n n y: So what if your body knows better than the barometer? If you concentrate your will on a single goal, yo u can create enormous pressure that can move clouds.

(Claire is pretending she's flying. New age music is play i n g and Claire is flying high up to the clouds to chase them away and bring the sun around. G r a n n y is leav i n g. It is dawning and Simon enters the room. He is watching Claire fly. He touches her and she is start l e d .)

Claire: Simon ...

Simon: I wanted to get a drink .

Claire: It's raining . And it stopped snowing .

Simon: Do you often... exercise like this?

Claire: No... Only when I want to change the weather .

Simon: I had a dream about you . You were standing sunken in deep snow and you were calling out to me. Help me... save me... You kept begging so urgently...

Claire: Were you really relieved... when... I got married ?

Simon: I was thinking about everything . About everything that happened to us before. You were always so - ...

Claire: Not always .

Simon: Since ...

Claire: Since we were there...

Simon: You were always so strange.

Claire: Maybe I was strange but that was not the reason why you dumped me...

Simon: I'm sorry ...

Claire: Just sorry? Is that supposed to be enough for me?

Simon: What more do you want from me?

Claire: They don't talk to you any more?

Simon: No.

Claire: You're lying.

Simon: Stop writing to me, Claire . I beg you . Please ...

Claire: If you tell the truth to everyone ...

Simon: I keep telling the truth ...

Claire: Help me. Maybe you could write an article about us.

You've got contacts... You would turn the entire world upside down! Help me. Help me, Simon . And then I will leave you alone. Forever . I promise .

Simon: Claire ...

Claire: Okay, let's not drag the whole world into it. It will be quite enough for me if you could talk to Peter . Explain everything to him.

Simon: It was hard on me too, you know. Very hard. I was taking tons of pills during all those years. And now I'm finally okay.

Claire: Are you going to betray me again?

Simon: Your illness is a direct result of the shock. This state is very natural and logical after all that happened to you .

Claire: That happened to us!

Simon: That happened to us...

Claire: You're afraid to tell the truth . Afraid they would send you to a hospital instead of America . You're also scared that nobody would believe you .

Simon: The only thing that makes me sick are your never-ending letters... Claire... Your husband probably wouldn't be too happy to learn about all those letters you write to me.

(Claire starts laughing, very cordially.)

Claire: This is where they placed one electrode on me, and here they put another one. Like in a movie . Have you ever seen a film like that , Simon? Or did the adults also tell you not to stick your fingers in the power socket ?

S i m o n : Regular procedure... medically tested.

C l a i r e : Nothing helped me. Not even the piles of pills that they kept feeding me.

S i m o n : C l a i r e ...

C l a i r e : You know why nothing helped me? Because I h a d n e v e r b e e n s i c k b e f o r e . W h e n I u n d e r s t o o d t h a t t h e y w o u l d n o t s t o p w i t h t h e e l e c t r i c i t y , I s t a r t e d t o l i e .

I p l a y e d h e a l t h y . A s h e a l t h y a s t h e d o c t o r s w a n t e d m e t o b e . B u t t h e y n e v e r s t o p p e d t a l k i n g t o m e . I t w a s t h e m w h o t a l k e d m e i n t o w r i t i n g t o a b o y i n a r e d c o a t . I d i d n ' t e v e n k n o w h i s n a m e . H e h a d d o n e s o m u c h f o r m e a n d I d i d n ' t e v e n k n o w h i s n a m e . S o I w r o t e j u s t l i k e t h a t , t o t h e M o u n t a i n S e r v i c e . T h e l e t t e r h a d f o u n d h i m a n d h e w r o t e b a c k t o m e . A n d I s t a r t e d w r i t i n g t o h i m . A b o u t h o w t h i n g s w e r e b e t w e e n y o u a n d m e , w h e n w e c a m e b a c k f r o m t h e H a w k s M o u n t a i n P a s s . . . A b o u t h o w e v e r y o n e s u d d e n l y w a n t e d t o t a l k t o u s . A n d a l s o h o w a f r a i d y o u w e r e o f t h e m a n d h o w y o u d i d n ' t w a n t t o l i s t e n t o t h e m a n y m o r e . A n d h o w y o u l e f t m e b e c a u s e I w a s t h e o n l y w i t n e s s w h o k n e w e v e r y t h i n g . A n d y o u h a d t o g e t r i d o f t h e w i t n e s s e s !

S i m o n : I d i d n ' t l e a v e y o u b e c a u s e o f t h e m !

C l a i r e : You left me and I was left alone. Alone! And when I c o u l d n ' t s t a n d i t a n y l o n g e r , m y m o m s h o v e d m e i n t o t h e h o s p i t a l !

S i m o n : There are cases when expert help is needed!

C l a i r e : Did you really think that when you get rid of me y o u w o u l d g e t r i d o f t h e m , t o o ?

S i m o n : E x p e r t h e l p !

C l a i r e : I kept writing and writing to him that at last he came to get me. I found him and he took me to this cabin.

He took the forester's job and we moved here... A n d o n l y h e r e I u n d e r s t o o d w h a t w a s s o t e m p t i n g u p h e r e f o r m e . A s u r p r i s e w a s w a i t i n g f o r m e . T h e s a m e o n e t h a t i s w a i t i n g f o r y o u n o w . . . S h e c a m e h e r e t o m e . . .

My Granny ...

S i m o n : C l a i r e ...

C l a i r e : If only you knew how happy I was! I was so happy that I could be with her again! And now perhaps we all could live here with her in peace. M a y b e I w o u l d n ' t c a r e t h a t t h e y d o n ' t l i k e m e d o w n t o w n . M a y b e I ' d g e t u s e d t o i t . N o w i f o n l y P e t e r w e r e n ' t s t u f f i n g m e w i t h p i l l s a n d I w a s n ' t a f r a i d a l l t h e t i m e t h a t h e w i l l s e n d m e b a c k t o t h e h o s p i t a l w h e r e t h e y w i l l r u n e l e c t r i c i t y i n t o m y h e a d . . .

S i m o n : Your Granny lives here with y o u ?

C l a i r e : She'll meet with y o u . S h e p r o m i s e d .

S i m o n : Your mom's mom? The pretty lady who was w e a r i n g a r e d e m b r o i d e r e d r o b e i n t h e f r a m e d p i c t u r e t h a t u s e d t o h a n g a b o v e y o u r b e d ?

C l a i r e : She still has it. And the slippers that I used to e n v y h e r ! R e d o n e s w i t h p i n k f e e t h e r s !

S i m o n : Y o u ' r e j u s t t r y i n g t o s e e h o w m u c h o f t h i s I c a n t a k e . A s u s u a l .

C l a i r e : You want proof?

Simon: The hell with your proof!

Claire: I will tell you why your girl is here!

Simon: Leave her alone! Don't drag her into your stories.

Please!

Claire: Why? You want to take her to America too?

Simon: Why should I be taking her to America?

Claire: Aren't you going to miss her?

Simon: We're adults.

Claire: So you don't love her that much...

Simon: Maybe I could even fall in love with her... if you finally left me alone.

Claire: Don't worry, you didn't want to take her with you just to have an alibi. You don't have to be remorseful.

They needed her! They called her!

Simon: I'm worried about you...

Claire: Worried about me or afraid of me?

Simon: We shouldn't have come here.

Claire: You had to come here. Or did you really think that you finally found a regular girl?

(Malvina enters the room.)

Malvina: I'm sorry, who was it calling for me? "Needed me?"

Claire: You...

Malvina: I'm a very light sleeper.

Simon: I'm sorry.

Malvina: Apology accepted. After all, what else am I left to do, right... So who was it calling for me?

Simon: Me. I called for you.

Malvina: But you are not calling me to come to America with you...

Simon: Am I supposed to call you to come to America?

Malvina: I didn't know you used to go out together...

Claire: We did. But then we had a minor accident and many things have changed in our lives. And because Simon didn't want the change, he left me.

Simon: We broke up quite normally. Like when two people split up. They get together, they go out together, then they break up. It was a long time ago.

Claire: Two years ago.

Simon: We went out together like any other couple.

Malvina: How could you leave a sick woman?

Simon: I want peace. Understand, the two of you? Peace, so that I can work!

Malvina: Simon...

Simon: Why did you spy on me?

Malvina: I only wanted to drink some water.

Simon: So get a drink and go back to bed. Please...

Malvina: I want to know...

Simon: Please... I'll come with you.

Claire: You shouldn't have taken me hiking in the mountains...

(Simon leaves. Malvina sips a drink of water. She offers some to Claire. Claire doesn't want any, attemp ts a smile. She sits down in the rocking chair.)

Malvina: I only have one significant memory from my childhood. My mom is crying. I am sitting on her lap and wiping her tears. I was always scared that they would

lock her up in a hospital because she cried so much, and I would be left alone and I would have to go live with my Aunt in To p o l c a n y. E v e n t o d a y I g e t g o o s e b u m p s w h e n I p a s s t h r o u g h T o p o l c a n y.

C l a i r e : T h r o u g h T o p o l c a n y ?

M a l v i n a : M y f a t h e r l e f t u s . F o r C a n a d a .

C l a i r e : F o r C a n a d a ?

M a l v i n a : T h e y s a y h e l i v e s s o m e w h e r e i n T o r o n t o . W e h a v e n ' t h e a r d f r o m h i m f o r y e a r s .

C l a i r e : T h a t ' s s t r a n g e . . .

M a l v i n a : W h a t ' s s o s t r a n g e a b o u t t h a t ? A g u y l e f t m e j u s t a m o m e n t a g o . A s i t h a p p e n s , t h e s a m e g u y w h o l e f t y o u a w h i l e b a c k . S o a m I s u p p o s e d t o w r i t e l e t t e r s t o h i m i n A m e r i c a , l i k e y o u d i d ?

C l a i r e : A l l I r e a l l y w a n t e d w a s t o h a v e h i m a l l t o m y s e l f j u s t f o r a m o m e n t .

M a l v i n a : A n d I b u t t e d i n t o y o u r m o m e n t .

C l a i r e : H e w o u l d n ' t h a v e b r o u g h t y o u h e r e i f h e d i d n ' t w a n t t o .

M a l v i n a : Y o u k n o w a l l t o o w e l l w h y h e b r o u g h t m e h e r e . A n d h e r e I t h o u g h t h e w a n t e d t o i n t r o d u c e m e t o h i s f r i e n d s . Y o u k n o w h o w i t i s . W e d o n ' t i n t r o d u c e j u s t a n y b o d y t o o u r f r i e n d s . . .

C l a i r e : Y o u p r o b a b l y r e a l l y w a n t e d t o g o t o A m e r i c a .

M a l v i n a : I r e a l l y w a n t e d h i m . I w a n t e d t o b e w i t h h i m w h e r e v e r h e ' d g o . I f h e d e c i d e d t o l i v e , I d o n ' t k n o w , l e t ' s s a y h e r e , i n t h i s c a b i n , m a y b e I w o u l d n ' t e v e n m i n d t h a t .

C l a i r e : Y o u ' d g e t b o r e d . . . T h e r e ' s n o t m u c h t o d o a r o u n d h e r e . D e f i n i t e l y n o t f o r a w o m a n .

M a l v i n a : M a y b e I c o u l d g e t a t e a c h i n g j o b i n t h e t o w n . O r m a y b e I w o u l d w o r k i n t h e l i b r a r y . T h e y d o h a v e a l i b r a r y h e r e , d o n ' t t h e y ?

C l a i r e : Y e s , t h e y d o . . .

M a l v i n a : Y o u k n o w , I w a s a l w a y s v e r y t e m p t e d b y t h e m o u n t a i n s . E v e n y e s t e r d a y w h e n w e w e r e h i k i n g u p h e r e i n t h a t s n o w s t o r m , I h a d a f e e l i n g t h a t h e r e , i n t h i s p l a c e , s o m e t h i n g w a s a b o u t t o h a p p e n t h a t w o u l d f o r e v e r c h a n g e m y l i f e a s I k n o w i t . . . Y o u k n o w , I d o n ' t h a v e v e r y h i g h e x p e c t a t i o n s f r o m l i f e . I j u s t w a n t e d a m a n . O n e w o u l d b e e n o u g h .

C l a i r e : I d i d n ' t m e a n t o t a k e h i m a w a y f r o m y o u . . .

M a l v i n a : S i m o n w a s n o t m y m a n . I w i l l l e a v e t o d a y . . . Y o u c a n h a v e h i m f o r a f e w d a y s a t l e a s t , i f y o u r e a l l y n e e d h i m . . .

C l a i r e : Y o u j u s t g o t h e r e y e s t e r d a y .

M a l v i n a : W h y s h o u l d w e b o t h s u f f e r ?

C l a i r e : Y o u s h o u l d n ' t l e a v e .

M a l v i n a : I m a d e u p m y m i n d .

C l a i r e : Y o u w a n t t o w a l k d o w n t o w n a l l b y y o u r s e l f ?

M a l v i n a : Y o u c o u l d w a l k m e t h e r e .

C l a i r e : H o w a b o u t w e h a v e a g o o d b r e a k f a s t f i r s t , h u h ? A n d t h e n w e ' l l w a k e u p P e t e r . H e ' s g o i n g d o w n t o w n a n y w a y , h e ' l l t a k e y o u i n h i s j e e p .

M a l v i n a : W h a t a r e w e g o i n g t o t e l l h i m ?

C l a i r e : H e d o e s n ' t a s k q u e s t i o n s a n y m o r e .

Malvina : Alright then... What have you got?

Claire : Home-raised eggs? From Peter's mom? Orange color! With home-made bacon!

Malvina : He will leave you . Next Monday he's lecturing at an important seminar...

Claire : Would you prefer scrambled eggs?

Malvina : I'll go pack...

(Malvina leaves, Granny enters.)

Granny : She's staying! Will you handle it or should I go talk to her?

Claire : She can't talk to you ...

Granny : Leave that up to me.

Claire : I've been waiting for too long!

Granny : I promised to help you ...

Claire : Well, you didn't help!

Granny : Just wait!

Claire : I don't want to wait any more!

Granny : So you don't need my help then?

Claire : I'll take care of it myself!

Granny : How?

Claire : How do I know? When I can change the weather ...

Granny : You really think you can change the weather?

Claire : My body knows better than all the barometers in the world, right?

Granny : Sometimes it simply happens that the barometers are wrong . And instead of sleet and snow we have a beautiful day.

Claire : And what if you don't have any powers either? You only keep talking about everything!

Granny : Her father wants her here, and that's that! He called her here and he wants her to stay. And you will make her stay.

Claire : Her father lives somewhere in Canada. Isn't that a coincidence, huh? What would he be doing here?

Granny : In Canada?

Claire : That's right .

Granny : That's what her mom tells her. Because she herself didn't want to believe that her man left her to be with us.

Claire : With you? Yeah, right!

Granny : It took Malvina's father years to meet me. I met you , you met Simon and Simon found Malvina for us. And now he brought her here. Would you allow all this work to get wasted? You know how much effort it took me to get her up here?

Claire : So... you are not here because of me at all? I am only a means to an end for you? Just a link in the chain?

Granny : We are all mere links...

Claire : And some links have to be declared insane so that other links can realize their dreams? Thanks a million!

Granny : Only people like you and Simon can actually see us...

Claire : Don't count on me any more. I'm sick.

Granny : You're not sick.

Claire : I don't have a single piece of evidence!

Granny : Just bear with me for one more day.

Claire : No!

G r a n n y : W e l l , we didn't agree on this, dear Claire.

C l a i r e : I d i d n ' t make any agreements with anyone . You came to me and started to order me around. And for what ?

For her? All this, all my suffering was good only so that a girl I don't even know would find her father ?

I won't listen to you any more.

G r a n n y : You don't have much of a choice . Not you , not any one of you .

C l a i r e : Go away.

G r a n n y : I'm not leaving until everything is squared away.

C l a i r e : I d o n ' t want you here! I d o n ' t want you here! You ruined everything! Get out of my life and leave me

alone , finally !

(G r a n n y is leaving and Malvina, who had packed in the meantime , witnesses this hysterical scene. C l a i r e ' s screams awaken Peter as well , together with Malvina they are watching and wondering what is going on with Claire. Malvina is terrified , Peter acts quickly. He pulls out the pills from a shelf and is forcing them down angry Claire's throat . Malvina understands what 's going on very fast and quickly assists Peter with water. Claire knocks the glass with water from her hand. Peter and Malvina become instant allies against Claire. Claire realizes it in horror .)

C l a i r e : I'm sorry, I d i d n ' t want to do that .

(Malvina quickly sweeps the glass shards and assists Peter with another glass, C l a i r e , resigned , quietly swallows the pills.)

P e t e r : C o m e , come to bed. That 's what you get from staying up all night. You'll take a short nap and you'll feel much better.

(Claire is not resisting, she is leaving with Peter. Malvina is wiping the spilled water. She is silently wiping the floor with a large rag, trying to get it all dry. In a moment Peter comes back .)

P e t e r : Sometimes it gets her. She yells , screams , but that 's about all... She wouldn't hurt you . This type of schizophrenia does not have any violent streaks.

M a l v i n a : Is it bad?

P e t e r : She is very upset... You probably shouldn't have come ...

M a l v i n a : I had no idea...

P e t e r : That 's alright . It 's not your fault . You 're just another victim ...

M a l v i n a : Have you been living here long with her?

P e t e r : Two years. But originally I am from downtown .

M a l v i n a : It 's a beautiful town .

P e t e r : Claire is much happier up here.

M a l v i n a : How often do you go downtown ?

P e t e r : Sometimes even twice a day. And of course , every time I'm on duty. But sometimes I go just because I want to... I love to play pool...

M a l v i n a : Man , you 've got pool here?!

(Peter spread some butter and jelly on bread and he offers it to Malvina.)

P e t e r : Would you like some?

M a l v i n a : Uhm... Excellent jelly!

P e t e r : You will never guess who made it!

M a l v i n a : Yo u ?
 P e t e r : My mom.
 M a l v i n a : Moms don't count. All moms can make jelly.
 P e t e r : Can you make jelly?
 M a l v i n a : I'm not a mom... Will you gi ve me a ride to the train
 s t a t i o n ? I want to go home.
 P e t e r : You just got here ye s t e r d a y .
 M a l v i n a : P l e a s e ...
 P e t e r : You really don't have to be afraid of Claire... when
 s h e ' s o n m e d i c a t i o n , s h e ' s a l m o s t a l w a y s g r e a t .
 M a l v i n a : It must be hard on yo u ...
 P e t e r : I l o v e h e r .
 M a l v i n a : I often used to go to Simon's lab. He used to sit behind
 his microscope and be quiet. Once we st a y e d
 quiet like that all night. T i l l m o r n i n g . He kept w r i t i n g
 stuff into his charts and I was just sitting there.
 I thought there was simply no need to talk about anyt
 h i n g . T h a t i f I l o v e h i m , I k n o w e v e r y t h i n g a b o u t
 him... I'd like to be gone by the time he wakes up...
 P e t e r : I'm not asking why ...
 M a l v i n a : I k n o w ... They say you never ask any questions.
 P e t e r : Did Claire say that about me?
 M a l v i n a : U h m ...
 P e t e r : I h a v e a c o u p l e o f h o u r s o f w o r k h e r e i n t h e f o r e s t .
 Would you like to come along, since you are here
 a n y w a y ? I ' l l s h o w y o u s o m e d e e r .
 M a l v i n a : D e e r ?
 P e t e r : W h a t k i n d o f s h o e s a r e y o u w e a r i n g ? W e l l , i f y o u
 really wanted to go hiking, you should buy some good
 b o o t s ...
 M a l v i n a : You know much more about the two of them than
 I do... r i g h t ... ?
 P e t e r : W h a t i f y o u d o n ' t a s k a n y q u e s t i o n s e i t h e r ...
 M a l v i n a : I just thought, wo u l d n ' t s h e b e b e t t e r o f f s o m e w h e r e ...
 i n s o m e i n s t i t u t i o n ? W h a t a r e t h e d o c t o r s
 s a y i n g ?
 P e t e r : H a v e y o u e v e r s e e n a n i n s t i t u t i o n l i k e t h a t u p c l o s e ?
 M a l v i n a : T h e r e a r e a l s o s o m e s p e c i a l b o a r d i n g h o u s e s ...
 P e t e r : A r e y o u c o m i n g ?

4 .

*(The snow s t o r m i s r a g i n g b e h i n d t h e w i n d o w . T i m e e l a p s e s .
 M u s i c . T h e s u n h i d e s b e h i n d t h e c l o u d s a g a i n . T h e f i r e i n t h e
 f i r e p l a c e h a s g o n e o u t , t h e r o o m i s e m p t y . B e h i n d t h e w i n d o w
 s o m e o n e i s t r y i n g t o s t a r t a c a r , i t ' s n o t w o r k i n g . P e t e r a n d
 M a l v i n a a r e c o m i n g b a c k t o t h e r o o m . T h e y p u t t h e l i g h t s o n .)*

M a l v i n a : Does it happen frequently?

P e t e r : Couple of times each winter. I'm supposed to get
 a new one in the s p r i n g .

(P e t e r i s c h a n g i n g i n t o h i s w o r k c o a t .)

M a l v i n a : In the spring I wo n ' t b e r u s h i n g o u t o f h e r e t o c a t c h
 the train.

P e t e r : D o n ' t w o r r y , y o u ' l l c a t c h i t . I f I d o n ' t f i x i t w i t h i n h a l f
 an hour, I'll call a f r i e n d o f m i n e a n d h e ' l l c o m e a n d
 get us.

M a l v i n a : My feet are wet... and somehow... I d o n 't feel we l l .
I 'm bu rning all ove r.

P e t e r : You are we a ring the wrong shoes...

M a l v i n a : I 'll make some tea. H u rry up.

(Malvina is making tea. Then she pulls out dry socks and s n e a k e r s from her back p a c k , then another pair of shoes. T h e b a c k p a c k is bu rning with stuff. Malvina is looking for a p l a stic bag for her wet shoes, finally she pulls it out. She is changing her shoes. She gets slightly dizzy. She is breathing heav i l y, as if she was ove rtaken by sudden fe ve r. She wraps herself in a blanket and she seems to rest her eyes for a m o m e n t . S h e m aybe even takes a nap... Suddenly Gra n ny comes in.)

G r a n n y : H e y ...

(Malvina comes to and she is ve ry start l e d . She is looking at Gra n ny with surp ri s e .)

M a l v i n a : H e l l o ...

G r a n n y : I am Claire's gr a n d m o t h e r ...

M a l v i n a : Did you come to see her? She wa s n 't feeling well this m o rning . Peter had to make her take some pills.

G r a n n y : You shouldn't be running away like this.

M a l v i n a : I 'm not running away ...

G r a n n y : You are.

M a l v i n a : You know... I broke up with a b o y, or rat h e r , he broke up with me. He let me know that I s h o u l d n 't count on him in the future. So I 'd rather rush home to cry on my mom's shoulder.

G r a n n y : You can cry here...

M a l v i n a : In front of him? I n e ver cry in front of him. Will yo u h ave some tea?

G r a n n y : No... I c a n 't drink tea...

M a l v i n a : When did you come here?

G r a n n y : A long time ago.

M a l v i n a : I d i d n 't see any tracks.

G r a n n y : S n ow blew over my track a long time ago...

M a l v i n a : H ow long did it take you on foot?

G r a n n y : I d i d n 't count the hours.

M a l v i n a : You know, P e t e r 's jeep broke dow n . If his friend can't gi ve us a lift, I am wo n d e ring how long would it take me to get down there.

G r a n n y : H ow do you like these mountains?

M a l v i n a : B e a u t i f u l . Too bad I h ave to leave .

G r a n n y : Wait just a little while longer.

M a l v i n a : This is for the best. I also promised Claire.

G r a n n y : I wanted to talk to yo u .

M a l v i n a : Will I finally learn something about Simon and C l a i r e ?

G r a n n y : M ay b e . But I 've got something that will be more interesting for yo u . I will tell you about your fat h e r .

M a l v i n a : Excuse me? *(She starts laughing.)* You knew my fat h e r ? !

G r a n n y : He used to like to come here... to the mountains.

M a l v i n a : And he was definitely my fat h e r ?

G r a n n y : I k n ow much more about yo u .

M a l v i n a : E ven the fact that he ditched me when I was five ye a r s old?

G r a n n y : N o, he didn't ditch you... Just... You shouldn't be

Leaving yet.

(Suddenly Peter comes in. Granny vanishes inconspicuously.)

Peter: Let's go... Are you ready?

Malvina: Wait... Didn't she want to get a ride with us? Where is she?

Peter: Who?

Malvina: I am very dizzy.

(Peter is standing next to Malvina, not knowing what to do.)

Peter: Should I give you some Tylenol?

(Claire appears in the door.)

Peter: She's burning.

(Claire is taking out a thermometer and without a word starts taking Malvina's temperature.)

Peter: I took her out for a walk and then I was fixing the car...

Malvina: I am very sleepy...

Claire: You should have given her a ride first thing in the morning.

Peter: Should I put her to bed?

Claire: I don't care...

(Peter lifts Malvina into his arms. Malvina holds him around his neck. They leave the room. Peter comes back in a moment.)

Claire: Why did you take her into the forest?

Peter: I was showing her some deer... She has never seen live deer before.

Claire: Deer... oh my God... so you don't mind any more that they came here?

Peter: You both treat her like... I won't even say it.

Claire: Peter, I'm not responsible for all those things that happened to Simon and me... And I'm not responsible for the fact that it was you who saved me. There were so many rescuers... Why did you have to play a hero?

Peter: That night I was breathing life into your mouth... you were frozen and all blue. Had we found you just one minute later, you both may have been dead for good.

Claire: You don't have to keep bringing it up in front of me...

Peter: Why don't you appreciate that you live?

Claire: Over there, on the other side, for a moment I became Simon and Simon became me. And when you brought us back here, I stopped being myself and he stopped being just himself...

Peter: I am not the man I used to be any more either, ever since I met you.

Claire: Did it ever occur to you that maybe it would be much easier on you if you believed me? What if there really are souls that we had met there and that there is another world that will come after this world is over...

Peter: Claire!

Claire: What? Are you going to threaten to put me in an institution again? All right then, just put me there. Maybe I will be much better off. At least I would be able to speak out loud and without fear about all the things

that you and the likes of you have no idea about. You believe that deer exists, because you can see it. But what about you and the girl that you feel so sorry about. But what if I see something besides the deer? What if everyone who ever gets to visit the other world just for a second can see much more than the deer...?

Peter: It would have been well-known by now, dear Claire... the whole world wouldn't be talking about anything else.

Claire: Everyone like me is stuck behind some hospital doors because no one believes them. Nobody wants to believe us. Can you imagine the revolution? Religion and science conspiring against us; they would have to retract all of their theories and dogmas immediately ...

Peter: Please, don't start again...

Claire: Why did you bring me back into this world when now I have to fear you? You are a member of the Mountain Service so it is your duty to save frozen tourists?

Peter: It took me forever to make you start breathing on your own, without my help. I was carrying you in my arms towards the helicopter and I knew that it was the best thing I ever did in my life!

Claire: So now what? Don't I remind you of your heroic deed anyway more? Or am I proof of how imperfect it was in reality? You need to get rid of me?

Peter: No... no... no way... Only I didn't know that maybe it would be even more heroic - ...

Claire: What? Just finish saying it.

Peter: I never wanted to get rid of you.

Claire: You just didn't know that it would require even more heroism to live with me. To tolerate me... Why did you bring me back into this world?

Peter: Why did you keep writing to me from the hospital?

Claire: He left me! I needed your help!

Peter: And now he'll leave you again!

Claire: And you keep watching this whole thing and you claim you're trying to help me...

Peter: I only know one thing, Claire. I know that high up there in the Hawks Mountain Pass, three years ago, it was just the two of you, the rescuers and no one else. No souls from another world. Nothing! Just you, us, the mountains and the snow ...

(Claire is quiet for a while, then she leaves. Peter exits through a different door. He starts the car and leaves.)

5.

(It is the next morning. Claire looks messy, her hair still bears the bed pattern, she is wearing pajamas and slippers. Peter is trying to start a fire in the fireplace next to her. It is snowing outside. Simon enters from the outside.)

Simon: *(Pretending to be calm.)* Thanks for the skis. They are great. It felt good to exercise a bit.

Peter: Claire's skis are even better, right, Claire?

Claire: I got them last Christmas.

Peter: A friend of mine has a sporting goods store downtown

own . If you are ever interested.

Simon : I'm just an occasional skier. And now I won't be needing skis for quite a while .You know I'm going to Texas.

Peter: Malvina told me how successful you are in the scientific world .

Simon : I wanted to thank you .That you spent time with her.

Whenever I get a headache , I'm completely out of it... I can only get rid of the pain by sleeping it off.

Claire : (*Very irritated.*) You know, the changing air pressure makes a difference ...

Simon : I heard she wanted to leave ...

Claire : See... and she didn't .

Simon : That would have been too bad. To run away from such beautiful mountains.Who knows when she'll get here again, right ?

Peter: How is she doing?

Simon : She's still feverish .

Peter: She had to have brought the virus with her. It's impossible to get sick in a couple of minutes.

Simon : I'm coming down with something too. I didn't do too well skiing, either .

Claire : Yeah .You are sick.You have been sick for a long time. Just like me. And here you're trying to cover it up with your awkward headaches.

Simon : I'll go take a shower .

(Malvina comes in.All three of them seem to be startled by her arrival . She also has messy hair and is dressed in her night gown , like Claire.)

Peter: Did we wake you ?

Malvina : I had a very strange dream. I dreamed that an elderly lady was sitting at my bedside... and she was telling me... about my father .

Claire : What did she look like?

Malvina : I don't know... what dream characters look like. I already forgot everything she was telling me. I only know that it was very, very interesting... I wanted to tell you all about it...

Claire : Please , try to remember what she was wearing . Embroidered red robe and slippers with pink feet .

Tell them the truth !

Malvina : I really don't remember anything .

Claire : You're scared, aren't you? When I'm here, you don't need to be scared. I know everything . I know why you're here. And I'm not mad at you . Just tell them the truth ...

(Malvina is afraid of Claire, who is agitated again .)

Peter: Claire... leave her alone. Malvina is not feeling well and she's going back to bed, isn't that right ?

Claire : You have to tell them the truth! Don't leave me alone like this! Please! I won't let them stick you in a hospital like me.Tell them that you saw her too... Don't

leave me alone like this... Well , come on, did you see her ?

Peter: Every once in a while Claire is convinced that a person in red slippers is visiting her. But it is quite common with people with her diagnosis...

Claire : Simon... Simon...

Simon : Yes , yes , many people who experienced clinical death suffer from various hallucinations. I used to have them too. Right after the accident. You know, some people get over it sooner, and for some organisms a traumatic biological event like this will have long term effect. If you consider that during the period of clinical death the brain is not oxygenated ...

Claire : Simon ...

Peter : You knew what your visit could do to her! So why did you bother to come here?

Malvina : Claire... that lady was wearing red slippers... really... I just remembered now... and she said hello to you ... just calm down ...

(Malvina turns to Peter.)

Malvina : Does she need more medication ?

Claire : I don't need any medication . Don't need any medication! I was just kidding you , Granny doesn't exist! I made the whole thing up. Just for revenge! Did you really believe that my Granny was coming to visit me? You're so funny! Every year we burn candles at her grave! A woman in red slippers! You are just as stupid as the doctors in the hospital! They tried so much to get Granny and the likes of her out of my head! And they didn't get it, that I was making everything up! It's all a lie! A lie !

Simon : I didn't realize how bad she was. Shouldn't we call an ambulance ?

(At that moment Granny enters the room. She is wearing a robe and red slippers with pink feet. Peter and Malvina do not respond to the entering character. Only Claire - and Simon - can see Granny.)

Claire : I told you I made the whole thing up!

Granny : No need to call an ambulance , Simon , you know better than that .

(Simon stands motionless, completely startled.)

Granny : I'm glad you finally came to see us. We have been calling you for so long. And you resisted so heroically. But now you have to help Claire.

Simon : What kind of a lonely place is this?

Peter : Did something happen to you ?

Simon : What kind of a game are you playing ?

Granny : I will give you a piece of advice. Watch every word you say. They will never believe you can actually see me. Just like they don't believe Claire.

Simon : I won't swallow that !

Claire : *(Ecstatic.)* Simon! Just be quiet.

Simon : No! I won't be quiet! What kind of show are you dragging me into?

Malvina : Simon , don't yell at her! She'll feel even worse !

Granny : They can't see me. They can't hear me. They didn't go through what you and Claire went through. People from this world will never believe you . They don't believe dreams, why should they believe you .

Simon : What do you want from me?

Malvina : Are you crazy, Simon ?

G r a n n y : They will start thinking yo u 're hallucinating too.
They will have you examined and you wo n 't go to
A m e r i c a . They will say the same things about yo u
they say about Claire. And you don't want them to
k n o w that you are exactly like her... or do yo u ?

S i m o n : L e a v e me alone! For God's sake, e v e r y o n e , l e a v e me
a l o n e !

M a l v i n a : L e a v e yo u alone? Yo u 're behaving like a fool!

G r a n n y : If you help her, I will disappear foreve r. I will and
they will.You wo n 't have to run in front of them any
m o r e .

(Simon sits down and rests his face in his hands.)

G r a n n y : T h a t 's a good trade, i s n 't it? You'll go to Texas and
you'll take Claire with yo u . S h e 's the only pers o n
a l i v e in this world who knows your secret and know s
yo u 're not crazy. S h e 's the only one you can tell the
t r u t h to... The only one you can live with and don't
need to be afraid of.

(Simon is silent, on the ve r g e of a b r e a k d o w n .)

G r a n n y : And in front of eve ryone else, you'll be living a fa s c i n
ating life of a scientist who can calculate eve ry t h i n g
and doesn't believe in ghosts. And no one will eve r
l e a r n your secret. So what do you say, do we have
a d e a l ?

*(Claire is quiet. She sees Gra n ny but is not communicating with
h e r. She comes to Simon and tries to gi ve him a h u g. S i m o n
d r a w s back abru p t l y. He runs out of the room into the cold.)*

C l a i r e : S i m o n !

G r a n n y : Let him be for now, C l a i r e . Let him be alone for
a m o m e n t . But then take your coat and go after him.
He will need you ve ry much..

(Claire hesitat e s.)

M a l v i n a : Did he get offended?

C l a i r e : Perhaps I overdid it a b i t , d i d n 't I...

G r a n n y : D o n 't wo rry about them.You couldn't care less what
they think, right...? They will never understand yo u
a n y way ...

P e t e r : I'll go after him.

C l a i r e : Let me, I'll go...

M a l v i n a : But yo u ...

P e t e r : ... need some rest.

C l a i r e : I 've never been more calm.Trust me.

*(Claire is getting dressed quick l y. She takes Simon's
c l o t h e s, t o o.)*

C l a i r e : Take care of Malvina. (*To Malvina*) Take some
Tylenol and Peter will make you some tea.With honey
and lemon. And you should lie dow n ...

*(Claire runs out the door with Simon's coat . G r a n n y
s t a y s behind and sits down in the rocking chair. S h e
s t a r t s to rock , the chair is screeching.)*

M a l v i n a : Look! Someone bumped into the chair.

P e t e r : Sometimes it rocks like this. In the draft.

M a l v i n a : But there's no draft now.

P e t e r : I'll go after them.

M a l v i n a : N o, d o n 't leave me here alone...

P e t e r : Claire is not dressed enough and he's not either. I f

they start walking somewhere we'll have another
emerge ncy. They are two crazies. Two sick fools.
I can't let them be outside by themselves.

(Malvina is looking out the window.)

Malvina :They are not going anywhere... They are standing
right here, in front of the cabin. She is stroking his
hair and he's crying and... he's trying to escape. But
she is holding him tight and...

(Malvina bursts into tears.)

Malvina :They are kissing... kissing... You're right! Go after
them! They can't do this to me!

Peter: They can't be kissing after all that . Right in front of
our noses! As if we didn't exist! As if they were both
from a different world !

*(Peter hugs crying Malvina. He is looking at the two
lovers from the window.)*

Malvina :How could he do that to me... Dirtbag... Did he go
completely insane?

Peter: Shhhhh , come on... calm down... I'll make you some
tea ...

6 .

*(It is a dark night. Malvina and Peter are asleep. Malvina is
clearly sick , there are many bottles with tablets around her
makeshift bed. Peter fell asleep in the rocking chair. Granny sits
down at Malvina's bedside. A dim light comes on. Malvina
opens her eyes and she is not surprised to see Granny again , in
her robe and red slippers.)*

Malvina : You ?

Granny : You're dreaming about me again.

Malvina : Really ?

Granny : Sometimes it's better just to dream about some
things. When you wake up tomorrow, you won't remember
me. I don't belong in your memories , so you
can get rid of me easily.

Malvina : Why am I here ?

Granny : You have a high fever so Peter made your bed next to
the fireplace so that you can break into a sweat .

Malvina : Have they left?

Granny : Yesterday. While you were sleeping... Claire packed
pretty quickly. As if she hadn't lived here for years ...

Malvina : He could have at least said goodbye ...

Granny : He kissed you on your forehead. But they didn't want
to wake you ...

Malvina : And you? Why did you stay ?

Granny : I also came to say goodbye . I am going back where
I belong . I only came here to tell you that when you
wake up, Simon is not going to hurt you any more.

Malvina : How did you find me?

Granny : Your father sent me to you . He's here, very close. But
he can't talk to you yet . I would n't have been able to
talk to you either if Claire hadn't brought me with
her ...

Malvina : I don't understand .

Granny : You were five years and twelve days of age and Christmas
was coming...

M a l v i n a : W h a t a r e y o u t a l k i n g a b o u t ?

G r a n n y : Y o u w e r e c a l l i n g : W h e r e ' s d a d d y , I w a n t m y d a d d y , a n d y o u k e p t l o o k i n g o u t t h e w i n d o w t o s e e w h e n h e w a s c o m i n g . I t w a s j u s t s t a r t i n g t o s n o w . T r y t o r e m e m b e r .

M a l v i n a : T h e l a m p w a s m a k i n g a y e l l o w l i g h t c i r c l e i n t h e s n o w ...

G r a n n y : A n d y o u r m o m w a s w a i t i n g t o o . S i n c e m o r n i n g y o u b o t h w a i t e d f o r y o u r f a t h e r w h o w a s s u p p o s e d t o c o m e b a c k f r o m t h e m o u n t a i n s .

M a l v i n a : R i g h t .

G r a n n y : J u s t a s y o u w e r e w a t c h i n g t h e l a m p l i g h t , y o u r f a t h e r c r o s s e d f r o m y o u r w o r l d i n t o o u r s . . . H e w a s c l i m b i n g t h e m o u n t a i n s a n d h e s t a y e d t h e r e . H e s t a y e d i n t h e s n o w . H e r e , n o t f a r a w a y , i n t h e H a w k s M o u n t a i n P a s s ...

M a l v i n a : I w a n t t o g o a f t e r h i m . I w a n t t o s e e h i m !

G r a n n y : W h y w o u l d y o u g o t h a t f a r ? I t ' s e n o u g h t h a t y o u a r e s o c l o s e t o e v e r y t h i n g y o u d e s i r e n o w . A n d b e s i d e s , t h e y d o n ' t w a n t y o u y e t ...

M a l v i n a : T h e y ?

G r a n n y : A l l t h o s e p e o p l e w h o b r o u g h t y o u i n t o t h i s w o r l d .

M a l v i n a : W h o a r e y o u ?

G r a n n y : I a m w h a t y o u s e e w h e n y o u w a t c h t h e s k y .

M a l v i n a : I o n l y s e e t h e c l o u d s .

G r a n n y : A n d b e y o n d t h e c l o u d s ?

M a l v i n a : I s e e o n l y c l o u d s .

G r a n n y : T h a t ' s t h e w a y i t s h o u l d b e . Y o u a r e t h e o n e w h o s h o u l d o n l y s e e t h e c l o u d s f o r n o w .

M a l v i n a : Y o u a r e d i s a p p e a r i n g ...

G r a n n y : G o o d b y e , d e a r M a l v i n a ...

(G r a n n y l e a v e s . L i g h t c h a n g e s .)

M a l v i n a : D o n ' t g o a w a y ... d o n ' t g o a w a y , s t a y h e r e w i t h m e ...

(P e t e r w a k e s u p . H e q u i c k l y g l a n c e s a t h i s w a t c h .)

P e t e r : Y o u a r e d r e n c h e d i n s w e a t ...

(S l o w l y , m e t h o d i c a l l y , h e s t a r t s t o c h a n g e M a l v i n a ' s c l o t h e s l i k e a f a t h e r c h a n g e s a s i c k s w e a t i n g c h i l d . H e c h a n g e s h e r w e t s h e e t s , a n d w h e n h e c h a n g e s h e r p a j a m a s , f o r a m o m e n t h e i s s t a r t l e d b y t h e l o o k o f M a l v i n a ' s n a k e d b r e a s t s . H e d r e s s e s h e r i n a c l e a n p a i r o f m e n ' s p a j a m a s . H e h i m s e l f u n d r e s s e s d o w n t o h i s s h o r t s a n d c r a w l s i n t o t h e p r e p a r e d s l e e p i n g b a g . H e l i f t s h i s h e a d u p o n e m o r e t i m e a n d v e r y g e n t l y k i s s e s M a l v i n a o n b o t h h e r e y e s a n d t h e n h e r m o u t h ...)

P e t e r : S w e e t d r e a m s ...

(H e l i e s d o w n i n t h e s l e e p i n g b a g a n d t u r n s o f f t h e l i t t l e l a m p .)

T h e E n d