

# *Clairvoyance*



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drama after Daphne du Maurier

by Christian Lanciai (2006)

*Dramatis Personae:*

John  
Laura  
Two ladies, Tilly och Tiny  
A waiter  
Another waiter  
A hotel porter  
A policeman  
A piccolo  
Mrs Hill  
Another policeman

The action is in Venice in modern times

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## *Clairvoyance*

Act I scene 1. A simple intimate restaurant

*John* What luck that we found this nice little place.  
*Laura* It almost smells to well to be true. I'll bet they have real *gnocchi* here.  
*John* Is that your preference?  
*Laura* Of all Italian specialities, that's the most delicious.  
*John* Yes, I know they are a weakness of yours.  
*Laura* We live for the cultivation of our weaknesses.  
*John* Rather that than not live for anything at all.  
*Laura* I try to live, John. I really make an effort.  
*John* Me too. So far we have managed.  
*Laura* This journey became our salvation, which pulled us up by the roots.  
*John* We'll get over it, Laura. All we need is time.  
*Laura* I am afraid all the time in the world is not enough, John. It's like getting stuck in a car in a mud pool. You gas on and on while you just slip deeper down into the mud, which never lets you go but just drags you deeper down all the time in merciless irrevocability...*(can't withhold her tears)*  
*John (embracing her)* Yes, my dearest, cry it out. Let the pain out. One day it must be over. Never forget that we have one son left to live for.  
*Laura* But my daughter was my daughter! My only daughter! She was everything to me! There is no possible compensation for her loss!  
*John* I know, my darling. But, as the doctor said, we can have more children. You can have another daughter.  
*Laura* I must first get over the pain of the loss of Christine. She was only five years! She had just begun to live!

*John* Let the pain ache out. It will only do you good to cry it out. Don't look now, but I think a couple of ladies behind you are staring at you.

*Laura* Have I caught the attention of the entire restaurant?

*John* No, you have managed your pain discreetly, but one of the ladies can't take her eyes from you.

*Laura (drops a napkin on purpose, bows down to take it up to be able to mark the lady)(up again)* I think they must be sisters. They are certainly not Italian.

*John* But why does she stare like that?

*Laura* Something must have caught her interest, maybe more to you than to me.

*John* One of them is now going to the toilet.

*Laura* Good. I will follow her and check her.

*John* There is probably nothing strange about them, but they could be English.

*Laura* We'll see about that at the toilet. *(follows the lady that went out. The other lady stays put and continues staring straight at John.)*

*John (to himself)* Yes, just go on staring, you curious bitch of a lady. Perhaps you have never seen an unhappy couple before who lost their only daughter. Perhaps you are one of those funeral vultures who attends every funeral just to wallow in people's tragedies. Old ladies' pornography is nothing against what you are after, you horrid hyena.

*(The other lady returns, followed by Laura, who almost reels.)*

What is it, Laura? Has anything happened?

*Laura (sitting down, deeply affected)* You were right. They are English.

*John* And?

*Laura* I don't know how to describe it. I am too deeply moved.

*(The ladies rise and leave, one supporting the other, winks with a happy smile to John and Laura before they disappear.)*

*John* What was the matter with them?

*Laura (suddenly fainting, dragging glasses and things with her from the table. John rushes up and helps her come to her senses again.)* It's nothing, John. She didn't stare. She is blind. But she saw all the same and all the more.

*A waiter (has come to the rescue, very helpful)* Are you all right, signora? Perhaps a little more wine could help?

*John* Thanks, my friend. That's exactly what she needs. *(The waiter brings a new glass to Laura, filling it up generously.)* What did she see?

*Laura* She saw Christine.

*John (dumbfounded first)* Come on, Laura. Christine is dead.

*Laura* Her blind sister saw her sitting between us happy and laughing in her red dress. Her message was that we should not grieve any more. She is quite all right on the other side.

*John* Laura, don't take such tricksters seriously. They saw our grief and wanted to help us. That is all.

*Laura* Don't you see what this means, John? Christine is alive! We have never lost her! She is still present! She has just moved into another dimension, where she can see and feel us but without our ability to reach her physically.

*John* And how much did the ladies charge for that?

*Laura* Nothing! The blind sister just happens to be clairvoyant seeing things that we cannot see with our mortal eyes! To her it was nothing strange at all!

*John* I hope we don't have to see them any more.

*Laura* If we could get in touch with Christine by them, wouldn't that be worth giving a chance?

*John* Keep me out of it. I am scared to death of such things.

*Laura* The ladies couldn't be more gentle and kind. It's impossible to imagine anything wicked about them.

*John* That may be so, but don't let their spirits come near to me.  
*Laura* I will keep you out of it, John, if you let me try to cultivate this contact.  
*John* Do as you wish. You are free. I love you anyway and will never let you go, least of all to some spirits.  
*Laura* Thanks, John. I promise to always stay in touch with you, no matter how far I may be pulled across to the other side.  
*John* I hope you are joking.  
*Laura* Of course.  
*John* Thanks goodness for that! I think we are finished here for today. Waiter! *(The waiter brings graciously the bill, John pulls out a note, they rise and walk out, tenderly and faithfully together.)*

## Scene 2. A hotel room.

*John* Laura, for God's sake, forget those two old ladies and their tricks. Regard it as an episodic parenthesis. They were probably just adventurous cheats going around to ensnare people by their arts in order to extract money from them. All spiritists are cheats.  
*Laura* They were no spiritists. The blind one only saw what she saw.  
*John* She saw that we were in mourning and took her chance.  
*Laura* No, John, it was real. What she saw she saw with her mind's eye. And I must confess something. I have seen them again.  
*John* By chance, or did you look them up, or did they follow you?  
*Laura* They just turned up again, and I just had to take up the contact with them. Don't you see, John, that this is our great possibility to get into touch with Christine!  
*John* It will only lead to your grief growing worse than ever.  
*Laura* No, John, their message is happy! She lives! They can cure my grief!  
*John* Until you realize they have fooled you. Sooner or later you will see through them, and then your heart wounds will start bleeding again.  
*Laura* Let's give them a chance, John. We have nothing to lose, since we already lost everything.  
*John* Laura, I don't want to lose you.  
*Laura* You can never do that.  
*John* The other side has already started pulling at you.  
*Laura* You misunderstand it. They only want to help me.  
*John* Do what you want, Laura, but at least let me love you.  
*Laura* Give me anew daughter.  
*John* I would love to very much.  
*Laura* Perhaps it's too early yet, but if it works it will work. Do your best, John.  
*John* I certainly will and with joy, dearest.  
*(They get started in bed.)*

## Scene 3. Another restaurant.

*(Enter John and Laura, looking around, like the place, take their seats, the waiter brings the menu, they order, the waiter leaves.)*

*John* Forget that scream yesterday, Laura. It could have been anything. Maybe it was a cat.

*Laura* No, it was a human scream, as if someone was murdered. If the block starts swarming with policemen and they fish corpses in the canal, it was the murdered victim who screamed.

*John* Your imagination runs amuck with you.

*Laura* No, John, I just follow what happens, while you seem to try to resist it at any cost.

*John* I had a similar experience yesterday. It was very strange. You were lucky not to see it. It was just after the scream. It was a quite small person. It could have been a child, a girl, dressed in exactly in such a red raincoat with a hood as Christine was dressed in when she drowned... The child ran across a few boats lying across the canal to the other side, as if she was on the run. She almost fell into the water. If you had seen her you would surely have thought it was Christine's double.

*Laura* Lucky then that I didn't see her.

*John* That's what I mean. But it was living being. That I am sure of.

*Laura* I am sure it was.

*(Enter the two sisters.)*

*John* Who asked *them* to come here? Will they spoil the atmosphere for us wherever we dare to show up?

*Laura* John, it was I who asked them to come here when I knew we would be here. I am sorry. If you don't want to see them I can walk over to them myself, for a few minutes just for the sake of politeness.

*John* The blind one is staring at me again. I am sure she is not blind at all.

*Laura* Yes, she is stone blind but still sees what she sees.

*John* Very well. You can move over to them. I will stay here drinking in the meanwhile

*Laura* Don't drink too much. Then you might see what you don't want to see.

*John (pours himself demonstratively a full glass while Laura walks over to the sisters.)*

*Laura* I am glad that you came, but John is in a bad mood.

*Tilly* We understand him. Perhaps we shouldn't have come here. But we were so worried about you. My sister has had a warning from your Christine.

*Laura* A warning?

*Tiny* You must leave Venice at once. You are in danger here. Christine is very worried about you.

*Laura* But what could happen?

*Tiny* The eyes of the mind and spirit see nothing material but for that very reason can see everything clearer than the organic eye. Christine knows even if she doesn't know practically what it means what she knows. But you must leave Venice.

*Laura* We are in the middle of a journey. I don't think John wants to interrupt it.

*Tilly* My sister knows what she sees and is certain about it. The warning is justified. That's all we know for sure. We have given it to you, and the safest thing to do would be to take it seriously.

*Laura* I had better tell John about it immediately.

*Tilly* He has soon finished half your bottle. We shouldn't have come and disturbed him, but now it's done. Come, Tiny. Let's leave the young couple in peace.*(The ladies break up.)*

*Laura* Don't leave for our sake.

*Tiny* It's just for your sake that we leave. Pardon us. Come, Tilly. We have done what we could. *(They leave. Laura looks after them and then returns to John.)*

*John* Well, what kind of wild visions did the weird sisters have this time?

*Laura* The blind one is in close contact with Christine who has warned us against some danger if we remain here.

*John* Would we interrupt our journey because some old ladies want to importune and take charge over our lives?

*Laura* I knew you would react that way.

*John* I forgot. This telegram arrived this morning. Perhaps it has some bearing on the matter.

*Laura (reading it)* It's from the headmaster of Johnnie's school. Johnnie has been hospitalized. It could be the appendix.

*John* He says there is no need to worry.

*Laura* Maybe the sisters drew the wrong conclusions, saw the danger but failed to see that it threatened Johnnie and not us.

*John* That's something to speculate in.

*Laura (takes his hand)* John, they are more worried about you than about me. I have no problem with spiritual phenomena, but they say you are more clairvoyant than you want to admit to yourself, that you have the gift more than I, and that you suppress it isn't good for you.

*John* They just importune. Haven't we our own minds to mind with our own trauma that we only can handle ourselves?

*Laura* That's just what the sisters mean that we need some help with, since we are all lost in contact with the other side.

*John* This is going too far. They can go to hell.

*Laura* John, you have had too much to drink.

*John* I know. *(drinks some more)*

*Laura* We must check the situation of Johnnie.

*John* Yes. We'll call home from the hotel.

*Laura* If you don't wish to interrupt the journey I could fly back home alone and then come back when the crisis is over.

*John* If it's that serious.

*Laura* That's what we must find out.

*John* You are right as usual, Laura. Forgive me. I have behaved badly, but this contact with clairvoyant ladies that barge in on our lives has been a little too much after what we have gone through already. Forgive me. *(leans his head against her)*

*Laura (takes care of him)* It will all probably come out well, John. We just mustn't lose another child.

*John* You are so right, Laura.

Act II scene 1. The hotel room.

Laura is talking on the telephone. John is sitting beside her on the bed, tired with his head in his hand.

*Laura* Fever? Nothing else? I understand. *(covers the telephone, speaks to John)* There might have to be an operation, but it is nothing dangerous. *(back to the telephone)* Yes, I will come. I got a seat in a charter flight within an hour, so I will be with you in four hours. We were lucky to get this reservation. Thank you. Yes, I will give him your regards. *(hangs up)*

*(on her knees before John)* What luck, John! See it as a fortune in the misfortune. I can go there at once and come back as fast as soon as the crisis is over. The doctor says it's not dangerous at all. The appendix is just a little tight. Fortunately they have X-rays.

*John* Pity though that they only had one vacant seat on the plane.

*Laura* You can take it easy here in the meantime, and I will call you from home. There is no cause for anxiety, John.

*John* No, just a set-back and another sabotage against our lives.

*Laura* No, it's not that bad. I might be back again just within two days.

*John* I trust you, Laura. We'll meet on the telephone next time.

Laura Yes, darling. (*embraces him*) If we only take one day at a time we can take anything.

John You said it.

Porter (*enters*) The boat taxi is here.

Laura Farewell, my love. Everything will be all right.

John I sincerely hope so.

Laura (*to the porter*) I am ready. (*He takes her bags. Laura kisses John tenderly goodbye – and leaves.*)

John (*after a moment's silence, in total emptiness*) What the devil did I do wrong? How could it go so wrong? If we only had kept an eye on Christine in the one critical moment... I can never forgive myself, and it will never pass. And now Laura is there alone with our ailing son... Everything is as wrong as anything could be, and everything is my fault... No, it was not my fault that there was only one seat on the plane. Well, Laura will manage all right, and our son is in good hands, so I only need to think of myself – but how boring it will be without her! The bottle will not last long for comfort, and with it for a guide I might start seeing those ghosts again, those appalling ladies and the girl in the red raincoat – no, life can't get any more dreadful. (*drinks*)

I can't just sit here and grow sour. I might as well go out. Nothing could be worse than being alone with yourself. (*leaves*)

## Scene 2. Before the curtain.

John (*enters in deep melancholy, and then suddenly sees something*)

No, it can't be true. It's impossible. Laura back already? And with those weird sisters? It must not be true. What has happened? Has she missed her flight? Yes, she must have missed her flight, and then those ladies have got hold of her again. But then she must be back at the hotel at any time. This is crazy. Everything is only getting worse all the time. (*hurries back*)

## Scene 3. In the hotel.

Porter No, madame has not come back.

John But I saw her! She was on her way here in the vaporetto together with those ghastly sisters!

Porter What ghastly sisters?

John Two ladies we met at a restaurant, English, one of them blind.

Porter We will check with the airport if anything could have happened to cause a delay. (*makes a telephone call*)

John (*while the porter is on the telephone*) She should have been here. I saw her as clearly as I see myself in the mirror! And those two sisters. Could they have brought her with them to their hotel? Yes, that's how it must be. But why? And why hasn't she called? Was it something they planned in advance? This drives me crazy.

Porter (*has concluded the call*) I just spoke with the airport, which confirmed that the flight has left with all passengers on board, and the plane was full. You must have seen wrong.

John Impossible! My own senses cannot deceive me thus!

Porter We will of course look further into it. You saw her in the company of two ladies. Can these ladies be traced? Do you know where they stay?

John I know neither their names or where they stay. One of them was blind. It must be possible to find them. There are only two such English sisters in Venice.

*Porter* That leaves us only one thing to do. We must get in touch with the police, so that they could trace the two ladies. But the police will arrive at the same conclusion as I: you must have seen wrong.

*John (beside himself)* Impossible, I tell you!

*Porter (resigns)* Yes, yes, go to your room and have some rest in the meantime. I will take care of this.

*John* Please excuse me, and thanks for your good will to help me.

*Porter* That's the least thing we can do. (*picks up the phone again. John leaves.*)

Act III scene 1. At the police.

*Police* So your wife is missing?

*John* No, she has come back, but that's the problem.

*Police* Don't you want your wife back?

*John* No, although she has come back, she hasn't come back.

*Police* So she has both come back and not come back?

*John* Yes.

*Police* Does that mean that she has come back or not?

*John* That is what I have to find out.

*Police* You had better tell the whole story over again from the beginning.

*John* So, we arrived in Italy in a desperate effort to get away from all our past life and try to find a new start after having lost our only daughter in a totally unnecessary drowning accident. My wife was inconsolable and needed to get away from everything.

*Police* Was she in a state of shock?

*John* To the highest degree. Nothing could comfort her. She just cried and cried and cried. It became slightly better when we came here to Italy and could let ourselves go a little with good food and good wine and eat outdoors all the time, but then we met those two sisters here in Venice.

*Police* What sort of two sisters?

*John* They are two old sisters who appear to have always lived together of which one is blind and has second sight, and when we met at a restaurant she let Laura, my wife, know, that our daughter sat between us and was happy and glad. That our daughter would still be with us as a living soul caused my wife a great joy and relief, and she was actually starting to return to her former self again. But she became dependent on those two sisters and started hanging on to them, and I feared some kind of a deceit.

*Police* Two elderly English sisters of which one is blind should not be difficult to locate in Venice if they are still here.

*John* They must still be here, because I have seen them with my wife. Well, then came their perplexing warning that we were in danger here in Venice and should leave the town at once. At the same time there is a telegram from home about our son in possible need of an operation. Naturally we immediately decide to go home, but there is only one vacant seat on a plane leaving at once. My wife accepts the seat and goes home, and a few hours later, when she should be landing on Heathrow, I see her here together with the two weird sisters on a vaporetto.

*Police* And you couldn't be mistaken? Are you sure it was your wife that you saw with the two sisters?

*John* Absolutely. She was dressed in her own clothes and in the same red coat.

*Police* That you saw both your wife and the two women indicates that what you saw was true. Well, go on.

*John* Aha! I thought, she has suddenly changed her mind and come back, but why? And what has the two sisters got to do with her? In any case, I hurried back to our hotel and took for granted that she should be there when I arrived, but she wasn't. No messages, nothing. Then my imagination started to run amuck with me. Had those two ladies kidnapped her? Had she beguiled me? Had she happened to something? But when we checked the airport from the hotel it was proved the airplane had been full and no one had climbed off the plane.

*Police* Have you checked if she has arrived at home to your son?

*John* I will do that as soon as I get back to the hotel.

*Police* The case is very simple. You can trust us completely. We will contact the two ladies, and if you find your wife home in England, you must in some way have been mistaken.

*John* I have heard there is a murderer loose in Venice.

*Police* We will soon get him.

*John* There has been stories about several mysterious murders in which innocent victims had their throats cut without the police having found any motive.

*Police* Yes, we have three such murders to investigate. It must be a maniac. Don't worry. There is no reason to put them in connection with your wife's disappearance, which probably is no disappearance at all.

*John* Thank you, inspector.

*Police* We will let you hear from us quite soon. Go back to your hotel and recuperate. Order a good dinner with a good wine. That's the best thing you can do.

*John* Yes, I imagine so. Sorry for having taken your time.

*Police (politely)* That's what we are here for. (*bows politely as a sign that nothing more needs to be said, and John leaves.*)

## Scene 2. The hotel room.

(*John lies on his bed completely exhausted by all his upsets, when there is a knock.*)

*John* Come in!

*A piccolo* Your whisky, signor.

*John* Thanks, I have waited long for that.

*Piccolo* The director sends his regards with the recommendation that you shouldn't drink on an empty stomach but rather first have a regular dinner.

*John* I will think about it. Thanks for his good advice. Go now.

*Piccolo* Yes, signor.

*John (alone with the bottle, which he opens and applies directly)*

If only that damned telephone could ring and tell me that all is well and in order, so that I didn't have to wallow in my worries any more! O bottle, save me from my ghosts! (*drinks*)

(*A gentle knock on the door. John rushes to open.*)

Laura!

*Porter* Sorry for disturbing you. Your wife is on the telephone. You can take the call here in your room.

*John* At last! Is it true?

*Porter* Lift your receiver and listen for yourself.

*John (lifts the receiver, quaking)* Laura! Is that you?

*Mrs Hill (the scene is slightly shifted to show the telephone talkers in England from a headmaster's office)* This is Mrs. Hill. Everything has turned out well. Your son has already been operated. Everything has gone well, and it was very fortuitous that your wife arrived here just in time for the operation.

*John* My wife? Is she there?

*Hill* Yes, she is here. (*turns the phone over to Laura, who now gets visible*)

*Laura* John, my darling! Everything has gone well! I am so happy and relieved! It wasn't any difficult operation at all, and it was almost completely without pains. Johnnie has managed it bravely. But what luck that I came here!

*John (finds it hard to believe her)* Is it really you? Are you really there?

*Laura* Of course, who else would it be? You haven't been drinking, have you? And why are you still in Venice? I thought you would have arrived in Milan already with the car.

*John* So much has happened. You can't imagine... I saw you here on a boat with those weird sisters. I was positive it was you. I thought you had come back, and when you never showed up we contacted the police...

*Laura* What disturbance have you now been causing? You seem to have got those clairvoyant sisters on your brain.

*John* There is also a murderer loose in the streets here, and I thought those sisters had kidnapped you or that you had got your throat cut and been thrown in the canal by that murderer...

*Laura* Stop it! How much have you been drinking?

*John* Only about two glasses but directly from the bottle.

*Laura* Fortunately Mrs Hill didn't hear how drunk you were. I hope you haven't told them anything about your drunken fantasies?

*John* Not a word, I assure you!

*Laura* That's good for us. They have been so kind and helpful to me, and I may lend their guest apartment. They really did everything for Johnnie.

*John* Thank them on my behalf.

*Laura* Now have some coffee and eat something substantial, so that you sober up. I don't want to see you under the influence when we meet again.

*John* Will you get back here, shall we resume our journey, or should I come home?

*Laura* I think we have got over the worst of our sorrow by now. If you want to, we could continue our journey, but I don't have to. You will decide. If you want to, I'll come back to you at once.

*John* Yes, come, Laura, so that we may love and party here in Venice and celebrate that you weren't here at all when I saw you.

*Laura* What do you mean?

*John* I did see you with those sisters.

*Laura* Try to finally forget those sisters. I will come as quickly as possible. So long.

*John* Goodbye, my love, and come soon back to reality.

*(a click in the telephone. Blackout in the English part of the scene.)*

How could this be possible? Could I really have been hallucinating? No, it was too real. *(drinks)* Those sisters must have some devastating clairvoyant influence on me. I saw precisely how they saw me through. Could they have manipulated me to see my wife with them? No, this is too incomprehensible. I could swear that I saw her as clearly and alive in her own red coat as when she left, and there is nothing wrong with my eyes! *(drinks)* But she is right. I must go out and have something to eat. This will not do. *(puts the bottle away, takes on a coat and goes out.)*

#### Act IV scene 1. The hotel reception.

*Police* So you haven't seen that disabled Englishman since he went out?

*Porter* We assure you that we have done all we could for him. He has been like possessed ever since he saw his wife as a phantom in the canal.

*Police* I know. He has turned all Venice upside down for that matter, but his wife is not likely to be dead, at worst only lost. Don't you know where we could find him?

*Porter* I have no idea. I really hope he will come back soon. As long as he drinks you never know what he will be up to or what might happen to him.

*Police* Is he drinking much?

*Porter* He ordered a full bottle of whisky up to his room and drank half of it at once.

*Police* Then it is serious. We must get hold of him before he drags more people down into his misery. For his sake we had to trouble two harmless old ladies to come to the station and answer questions.

*(enter John)*

*Porter* Here he is.

*Police* At last! Where have you been?

*John* I have been out having dinner at the advice of my friend here. I only had mineral water with it.

*Police* That's good to hear. I also have some good news for you. We successfully traced the old sisters, and we have brought them to the station for questioning.

*John* Everything was a misunderstanding.

*Police* What do you mean?

*John* I am terribly sorry, but I actually must have been mistaken. I have talked with my wife on the telephone.

*Porter (to the police)* That's what I tried to tell you.

*Police* And she was there alive? She was not lost?

*John* No. Everything was in perfect order. She arrived home in time to be present at our son's operation, which was successful. Now she will come back here as soon as she can.

*Police* So everything was a misunderstanding?

*John* Yes.

*Police* And we have troubled two innocent old ladies for nothing?

*John* I am really terribly sorry. Are they still at the station?

*Police* They were very upset about being brought there and only agreed to it for their concern about the fate of your wife.

*John* This is only getting worse all the time. I can't tell you how sorry I am. I must insist on coming with you to the station, explain it all to them and apologize.

*Police* Very well. Let's go at once. *(to the porter)* All's well that ends well. *(leaves with John)*

*Porter (sigh)* That's how it is with these enamoured Englishmen. They just fall victims to their own exaggerations all the time.

Scene 2. The police station.  
(The two ladies are sitting there.)

*Tilly* You must understand that we are utterly devastated by your treatment. My sister cannot bear being upset. She can have epileptic fits.

*Police 2* We are really sorry, but we just follow orders. Your countryman reported you for possibly having kidnapped his wife. We are paid to follow through every report.

*Tilly* But how could you think that we wanted any harm to his wife! We were only fond of her and shared her grief.

*Police 2* A report is a report. If you are innocent you have nothing to fear and will be escorted home as soon as your countryman withdraws his report.

*Tilly* But we have done absolutely nothing! We haven't seen her since yesterday!

*Police 2* We know, but a report is a report.

(Enter first policeman with John.)

Well, at last we may see an end to this.

*Police 1* We really regret this inconvenience you have been exposed to, my ladies, since everything appears to have been a misunderstanding.

*Tilly* I am so pleased yo hear it. Has your wife been found?

*John* I have spoken with her myself on the telephone from England. She has happily reached home, and everything is well and in order. I am truly sorry for what you have been through for our sake.

*Tilly* But how then could you see your wife here in Venice with us on board a vaporetto? We haven't had our foot in a boat all day.

*John* I am sorry. I can't explain it. A hallucination maybe.

*Tilly* But according to the report you were quite sure about it!

*John* My eyes have never deceived me before, but there must be a first time. No matter how sure I was of what I saw, it is contradicted by the fact that my wife is in England. So I must have seen something wrong.

*Tiny* You didn't see wrong. What you saw was the future.

*John (to himself)* Now the hag starts gagging again. (*openly*) What do you mean?

*Tilly (worried)* My sister has been exposed to severe strains tonight. I would rather that she didn't have a fit here. Now when the misunderstanding is cleared, inspector, couldn't we return home at once?

*Police 1* I will gladly escort you home myself, my ladies, if you don't wish to make a report against your countryman for having filed a false report.

*Tilly* Certainly not. We just want to get home and at once. (*to John*) I hope you would accompany us, so that we could talk the thing over in peace and quiet at home.

*John* I would very much like to.

*Police 1* All discord and unpleasantness can be disposed of by talks. I am glad that you will settle the matter friendlily. I would gladly escort you all three home to the ladies' pension.

*Tilly* Thank you. – Everything will be well, Tilly. At home we can dispose of all tensions.

(*They all break up. Second policeman stays to tear up John's report.*)

Scene 3. In the simple hotel room of the ladies.

*John* You must understand. I had no intention at all to cause you any trouble. I told my story to the police, and then the police turned it into a report without my asking.

*Tilly* But what did you really think about us?

*John* I was just confused and tried to find a logical explanation of the situation. The most probable solution I could find was that Laura had lost her memory and therefore missed her plane and that you had taken care of her. You were concerned and engaged, you know.

*Tilly* It's true that we gave her our names and our address here in Venice. She knows that we will stay here for another ten days.

*John* But I didn't know where you stayed, so my only chance to get in touch with you and perhaps learn something was to get in touch with the police. As always, the police drew their own conclusions and acted accordingly.

*Tilly* It was neither the fault of you or the police. Everything is natural and everything has its natural explanation. The problem is that vision you had. My sister observed at once that you have clairvoyant abilities that you might not even be aware of yourself. There is so much happening around us that we never notice or feel

since we are so stuck in the distortions by our sensual senses of what we think we see, while my sister only sees the other side for good and for evil, and it has mostly only lead to great inconvenience for her.

*Tiny* The gift is a responsibility which you just have to accept as it is and live with, whatever inconvenience and trouble it might bring you.

*John* You appear rather realistic for being spiritual viewers.

*Tilly* Only my sister. I must keep my feet steadily on the ground, or else my sister would not manage.

*John* I see.

*Tiny* You must understand that our involvement in your lives was only caused by your daughter contacting us when we saw you?

*John* Has she given you any more visions?

*Tilly* Don't provoke Tiny's medial faculties. It could end up badly. Visions can appear suddenly and then as suddenly disappear again, like lightnings, but the difficult thing is to understand and interpret them correctly. Tiny is very sure though that your daughter asked us to warn you against staying in Venice. The telegram about your son's crisis seems to have confirmed the vision, doesn't it?

*John* Absolutely.

*Tilly* We just don't understand why you stayed on and sent away your wife.

*John* There was only one seat left on the plane. Or else I would have followed.

*Tiny* Perhaps that was misfortunate.

*John* Why so?

*Tiny* Give me your hand.

*John* I think I should go now.

*Tiny* Just a moment.

*Tilly* Do as she says. You have nothing to lose by it.

*John* Well then, for old friendships' sake, as a farewell. (*offers his hand to her*)

*Tiny* I see the girl. I see your girl. She still wants you to leave Venice as soon as possible.

*John* My wife will come here any moment. I must wait for her.

*Tiny* Perhaps that was misfortunate. Did your daughter wear a red raincoat with a hood?

*John* Yes. She drowned in her raincoat.

*Tiny* I see the red raincoat but not your daughter in it. Here is a mystery.

*John* Can't you see why I saw you with my wife on the boat?

*Tiny* That's the mystery. (*is suddenly subject to a terrible epileptic fit.*)

*Tilly* Now you have got her into a trance. You had better leave.

*John* It looks more like an epileptic fit.

*Tilly* It's the same. She is lost for the moment, and it will take her some time to recover.

*John* I had better leave then. I will ask my wife to contact you as soon as she arrives.

*Tilly* We will be in touch. This must be looked into further. Go now.

(*John leaves, and Tilly takes care of her sister, who is shaking and having terrible fits with froth and unpleasantness.*)

#### Act V scene 1. John before the curtain.

*John* Now I am lost again. Why the devil did the ladies have to stay at such a weird place for? I don't know these canals at all. But that church seems familiar. Isn't that the church we used to visit with those old paintings? Damn it! I hope I'll never have anything more to do with those weird sisters! Clairvoyance! If there is anything

I could do without, that's that. But what's that? It's that child again in the red raincoat! Wait! I don't want to harm you! Christine! Is that you? (*starts chasing what he saw and leaves and disappears.*)

Scene 2. At the police. Difficult atmosphere.  
Laura in black is sitting by them.

*Police 1* It's a very strange situation. We don't really know how to explain it. We have been looking for that murderer for a week, and then it proves it was a dwarf woman who was the psychopath. And then your husband gets to her and gets caught with her before we get through. What we can't understand is why he followed her. What did he want with her?

*Laura (in despair)* She was dressed in the same kind of red hooded raincoat as our daughter when she died! He thought it was her!

*Police 1* Dear me. What a misunderstanding. Of course we will do anything to ease this tragedy for you, signora. He appears to have seen things more than once?

*Laura* Yes, he saw his own funeral. He didn't want to see any more of that sort. He didn't want to have anything to do with such things. And then one day he falls to the temptation to take a suspect vision seriously and pursues it in the belief that it is our daughter from the other side, which proves to be something different. It was the only time he deceived himself.

*Police* He died instantaneously. She quickly cut his carotid artery like on all the others. She was only afraid and wanted to be left in peace. No one knew where she lived, but your husband happened to follow her to her place and came in to her. He must have had a shock when he saw that it wasn't his daughter but just a disfigured freak, a psychotic dwarf with bolting paranoia. She is locked up now of course for permanent isolated psychiatric care.

*Laura* Of course.

*Police* Is there anything we can do for you? We'll do anything you wish.

*Laura* Have you contacted those sisters? Only they can help me now.

*Police* Of course, signora. They will certainly support you all through the funeral.

*Laura* Yes. They may follow me on the funeral boat.

(*cries. The police comforts her.*)

*The End.*

(*Leh-Likir-Thingmosgang, 3-5.8.2006,*)  
*English translation October 2019*)