

TUNCER CÜCENOĐLU

THE AVALANCHE

(ÇIĐ)

(A Play in Two Acts)

Translation:
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IS AN AVALANCHE A NATURAL EVENT ONLY ?

It was the year 1987. I was working for a film company.

One day I was chatting with my close friend, director **Yusuf Kurçenli**. He told me about an interesting event.

“The people who live in a community in the Eastern Anatolia can never speak or laugh loudly, in short they were unable to make noise.

This was because any loud noises or clatter that were made might have caused an avalanche.

The interesting part of the story is that the danger of an avalanche’s existed for months of the year. These people could only shout out, shoot guns and hold their weddings and social events or give birth to their children in the other three months of the year.

In another sense, all the joys of life there were limited to within those three months, during which there was no risk of avalanche. The other nine months? Motionless, noiseless, a life full of anxiety and fear.”

I should have written the play of this event that quite impressed me.

However, how could such a striking situation be told and developed? What could be done to constitute a powerful story from that situation that the audience would watch without being bored?

What has to be done in the context of adaptation for the stage? In addition, what could be added to the text of the play that I would write but keep the situation as a natural event?

How could I benefit from the event on the way to Universality?

So I started out of my adventure of writing with such common questions.

And I came up with my sentence:

An avalanche is not just a natural event.

Perhaps we ourselves created such a fear in our minds.

I thank my director friend **Cüneyt Çalışkur** in particular who did not begrudge his valuable contribution in the dramatic work of my play.

Take it easy!

Tuncer CÜCENOĞLU

SCENE LAYOUT:

A small centre of population surrounded by mountains, inside a one-storey house reminding the audience of a cottage.

Ice is seen hanging from the windows and roof.

Two rifles are hung on the wall. Their barrels are turning towards each other; their butts are pointing in opposite directions. They have been hung on the wall almost with an obvious sense of aesthetics.

There is a room on the left side and a large living room in the middle.

On the right of the second room there is a door leading the other room. A door to the outside is on the opposite side. There is a primitive fireplace in the living room. Just beside it, firewood is arranged in an ordered pile. Kilims are on the floor, and small carpets are hung on the wall.

Also in the living room area there is a drum and its sticks. It is as if they are looking forward to the day they will make a sound.

On the left side of the stage, the YOUNG WOMAN and MAN are sleeping in their own room.

The OLD WOMAN in the living room is near the fireplace, staring the ceiling, waiting, as if between sleep and wakefulness. The OLD MAN, her husband, is sleeping in deathly silence close by. His presence is not evident.

The MAN and the WOMAN are sleeping in the room on the right side.

Everyone is in beds on the floor.

The sections of the house are not separated by walls.

The whole view is not realistic but symbolic.

Silence is sovereign.

This general silence would last during the play until the end. Little or no sound should be made when walking or changing positions. The actions are almost like a film in slow motion.

Dialogue should be carried out in a whisper until the final scene.

The audience should be given the impression of cautious people not able to speak up or make noises and gradually be given the sense of that fear.

For Müjdat Gezen

CHARACTERS:

OLD WOMAN	Around 70. Rather lively. Gives an impression that she cannot walk in order to attract attention.
OLD MAN	Around 80. He can just walk by using his stick.
YOUNG WOMAN	Around 18. Pregnant.
YOUNG MAN	Around 20.
MAN	Around 50.
WOMAN	Around 45.
MIDWIFE	Around 40.
PRESIDENT	Male, Around 75.
FEMALE MEMBER	Around 70.
MALE MEMBER	Around 60.
1st RURAL GUARD	Around 35.
2nd RURAL GUARD	Around 35.

Time : The Present

Location: Any country

ACT ONE

I

(The day is slowly dawning. There is neither the sound of a dog barking or a rooster crowing. Silence reigns. As the sun rises an incredible whiteness begins to reflect inside.

It is also as if the silence is rising gradually in parallel with the dawn. Make sure that everyone appears to be asleep. The OLD WOMAN stands first.

She goes to the toilet quietly. She comes back after a while and picks up some things from the place that serves as the kitchen and eats rapidly. She looks around not wanting to be seen.

The YOUNG WOMAN straightens half in the bed with grimace on her face. It is obvious that she is in pain. She cannot decide for a minute whether to wake up her husband or not to. She makes up her mind. She gets out of the bed quietly. It is clear that she is pregnant.

The OLD WOMAN senses that the YOUNG WOMAN is coming. She gets into bed with the food still in her mouth and pretends that she is sleeping. She also pushes the quilt away from her body to get the YOUNG WOMAN pity her. The YOUNG WOMAN walks silently, to first the living room, and then she goes to the toilet. The OLD WOMAN has followed the YOUNG WOMAN with her eyes.

The YOUNG WOMAN comes back to the living room after a while. She seems to be more relaxed. She walks with the same care as before. She covers the body of the OLD WOMAN, thinking that she is asleep. As the YOUNG WOMAN exits into her room, the OLD WOMAN is seen to be happy at having achieved her purpose and continues to chew the food in her mouth.

The YOUNG WOMAN lays down her bed.

This time the MAN gets up, walks out of the bedroom and comes in silently passes through the living room. The OLD WOMAN pretends to have been asleep again. She again pushes away the quilt from her body, knowing that the MAN will come back.

The MAN comes back after some time.

The MAN covers the OLD WOMAN's body with the quilt. Passes to the bedroom he lays down his bed.

The OLD WOMAN blinks her eyes, gets alone with her thoughts, turning her head sometimes left and right. The YOUNG WOMAN suddenly straightens up in pain where she is laying . It is obvious that the pain has begun again.)

YOUNG WOMAN *(Prodding her husband with her hand)* Get up.

YOUNG MAN *(Drowsily)* What is up?

YOUNG WOMAN My abdomen.

YOUNG MAN What happened?

YOUNG WOMAN It aches.

YOUNG MAN Go to the toilet.

YOUNG WOMAN I went to...

YOUNG MAN So?

YOUNG WOMAN It has begun again. I am scared.

YOUNG MAN *(Not even believing himself)* What is to be scared of?

YOUNG WOMAN What is there?

YOUNG MAN You evidently caught cold. *(But restless)* What else can it be?

(Silence)

YOUNG MAN How are you?

YOUNG WOMAN It is over

YOUNG MAN There is nothing to be afraid of.

YOUNG WOMAN I thought for a second that it was.

YOUNG MAN What?

YOUNG WOMAN I thought that my labour pains had started

YOUNG MAN How come could it be?

YOUNG WOMAN What is this pain from then?

YOUNG MAN You confuse pain with gas.

YOUNG WOMAN It kicked. Is kicking.

YOUNG MAN *(Puts his hand on the abdomen of his wife. Smiles happily.)* How great! As if he is growing impatient.

YOUNG WOMAN He has to be patient for a few days more.

YOUNG MAN *(Holds his wife's hand.)* Throw away these fears from your brain. You have at least another month. There is nothing to be afraid of. No birth has been seen before its time around here. Has not my grandmother told you that?

YOUNG WOMAN But there had been a birth before its time

YOUNG MAN Who did you hear that from?

YOUNG WOMAN From my grandmother.

YOUNG MAN Yes but long time ago.

YOUNG WOMAN Does it matter?

YOUNG MAN *(Seemingly ignoring his wife)* Before we were yet born then.

YOUNG WOMAN They put the pregnant woman into a coffin alive.

YOUNG MAN Has she told that to you?

YOUNG WOMAN She was telling it to my mum, I heard. Not only me, all the young girls know about this story. We dream about that coffin all the time. I used to be scared of falling asleep for nights when I first got pregnant. Because they were carrying me away the same way every night. Just like all others of my age.

YOUNG MAN That is all in the past. Nothing like that ever happened again. You should get some sleep!

(Closing her eyes, the YOUNG WOMAN tries to sleep. This time it is the turn of the YOUNG MAN to be restless. He caresses his wife's hair thoughtfully. The whiteness reflecting from the outside has reached its highest level. However, the unbelievable silence is gradually growing.)

YOUNG WOMAN *(Opens up her eyes)* What if my pain has really begun?

YOUNG MAN I can't be.

YOUNG WOMAN Why?

YOUNG MAN Because the old people calculate it all

YOUNG WOMAN Can't they ever be wrong?

YOUNG MAN No!

YOUNG WOMAN Why?

YOUNG MAN Because the mistake will reflect on them too.

(Silence)

YOUNG WOMAN But you got scared as well.

YOUNG MAN Isn't that natural?

YOUNG WOMAN Then my fear is natural too.

YOUNG MAN I didn't say it wasn't. But there isn't any clear situation like that. Anyway, there won't be any danger if it happens two days later. Our horses, donkeys, dogs, cows, sheep, cocks and hens will be brought back then. Even if only for three months. Then you can give birth while the rifles are fired. Our baby will scream for the very first time. We will not be afraid of this scream. He will scream again and again! Others will not be scared either. Because there will not be danger anymore.

(He begins to caress the YOUNG WOMAN's hair.)

YOUNG MAN Everyone will sing songs. Even the oldest will dance in the square blind drunk. For the entire three months! It will go on like that for three months. When the first snow falls, we will leave here, taking our baby with us we will go over the mountains. To raise our baby without any fear. Also those who come with their animals, will return the same way. Because horses neigh, donkeys bray, dogs bark, cows low, cocks crow and hens cackle. Will you let me tell you a secret?

YOUNG WOMAN Tell me.

YOUNG MAN We will never come back here again. Just like those young people who left before us. We will go and live until satisfied. Without fear. Only when we feel death close to us will we come back here. Just like our grandparents.

YOUNG WOMAN Won't we return even when the summers come?

YOUNG MAN Not you and our son, but maybe I'll come. Because we have to bring the winter food for those who stay here. What will all those people do without flour, sugar and salt?

YOUNG WOMAN You said you and our son. How do you know it will be a son? Maybe we will have a daughter.

YOUNG MAN Maybe. Just for the sake of the conversation.

There is a line of dialogue missing here.

YOUNG MAN What is making them stay here? They can come along with us.

YOUNG WOMAN Then let yours come too! If we go all together, even temporarily, you will not need to come back again either.

YOUNG MAN Ours won't come because my granddad and grandma came back here to die. Leave our families out of it. Let's look after our own child. Let our child grow up without fear. *(Not aware that the YOUNG WOMAN sleeps)* An old wise MAN

has once said: “The capacity of human thought can’t develop unless fear exists. Fear is the most negative state that makes the human thinking crooked, making it go nuts. Do not make your children live the state of fear that spreads horror to all of us!” No. no I can’t let it happen.

(The YOUNG MAN realises that his wife is asleep. He gets up silently and moves to the living room. The OLD WOMAN again pretends to have fallen asleep.)

YOUNG MAN I know you aren’t sleep grandma.
 OLD WOMAN What is up my son?
 YOUNG MAN I want to ask you something.
 OLD WOMAN Ask.
 YOUNG MAN The day before you told my wife. You mentioned that someone had given birth before their time. In very old days.
 OLD WOMAN *(suspiciously)* Why does it concern you?
 YOUNG MAN My wife is so scared.
 OLD WOMAN Why is she afraid? She does not even have such a problem!
 YOUNG MAN No but she is so scared. She is young and inexperienced. She is affected. As a matter of fact I was also very curious about it.
 OLD WOMAN *(Enjoying herself fully)* I was then young like your wife there were four newly married young girls. We were all married at a magnificent wedding. However, we had to wait at least four months for our wedding nights. The old people of the time had told all of us about it. We three managed to keep away from our husbands. But the other one did wrong. She began to meet her husband every night. Later? Her labour pains began when there was still three months for the danger to pass. And later what happened happened.
 YOUNG MAN What happened?
 OLD WOMAN The rules are known. The midwife was called immediately. All were true. The council of arbitrators was gathered. And the expected judgement was made. Put into a coffin, our friend was buried in one of the graves that had been previously been dug.
 YOUNG MAN What did her husband do?
 OLD WOMAN He shed plenty of tears. He begged for them to stop. He even asked the council of arbitrators to bury him too. But they told him there was nothing that could be done. They rejected his appeal to be buried with his wife.

YOUNG MAN Then?
 OLD WOMAN When the coffin was opened after the passing of the danger, three months later, there was nothing that could be done for our friend.

YOUNG MAN This is an act against human nature.
 OLD WOMAN It was necessary for the survival of the others. Other lives could not be put into danger, knowing that the mountains would come down on us. What else could be done?

YOUNG MAN How do I know? The woman's mouth could have gagged during the birth. The screams of the woman could be muffled.

OLD WOMAN You know we are definitely forbidden to think about such things. It was the same in the past, as it is now. But we woman, even we couldn't try it among ourselves without anybody knowing. But when? While we were giving birth consecutively after the end of the danger. We all kept quiet as if the danger still went on. They were unbelievable screams. They were so echoing from the hills as if they called the mountains upon us. Even the scream of a baby could provide the sound that would cause the death of all of us. Don't forget that even the most merciless rules are designed for the happiness of human.

YOUNG MAN What kind of happiness is this? With what conscience could explain making people happy by burying another.

OLD WOMAN Who put all these thoughts into your head? Don' beat your brain with those things. It happened and now it is over. They say such a nuisance is better than a thousand of pieces of advice. Perhaps that death is the reason why we did not experience such an event again for fifty years.

(The YOUNG MAN keeps quiet for a while, and then he moves to the toilet. The WOMAN gets silently out of her bed. Trying not to wake her husband, she enters the middle room. Her eyes meet with the OLD WOMAN's.)

OLD WOMAN *(Pointing to the toilet)* Your son is there.
 WOMAN Why did you wake up?
 OLD WOMAN I got hungry.
 WOMAN *(Pretends not to have heard)* Get some more sleep!

(The MAN has got up and come silently too)

OLD WOMAN *(Sees the coming of her son but pretends not to)* I got hungry. I am hungry!

WOMAN You expect me to do everything.

OLD WOMAN Would I ever plead if my legs were strong?

WOMAN *(Preparing things, passes to the front of the OLD WOMAN)*
Do not spill in on bed!

OLD WOMAN When did I spill it before?

WOMAN I did not say you had done it, I just said don't!

OLD WOMAN Why do you say so if I never did it? I am careful.

WOMAN You pester me unnecessarily!

OLD WOMAN I wouldn't if you prepared the right atmosphere.

WOMAN Good, go ahead then!

OLD WOMAN It sticks in my throat dry like this.

WOMAN I hope you won't ask for some tea!

OLD WOMAN Some water is enough!

(The MAN has listened to the conversation patiently. He looks daggers at his wife.)

MAN *(To his wife)* We have a lot to do. We should get ready.

WOMAN Were you here?

MAN Wake everyone up.

WOMAN *(More quietly)* If I could get a chance because of your mother!

(The OLD WOMAN tells the MAN that her grandson has gone up the toilet by pointing)

OLD WOMAN Water!

(The WOMAN, grumbling, gives her some water. Then she walks towards the fireplace, she stirs the embers. The fire has burns well. She adds some more water into the big teapot on the fire. Approaching the OLD WOMAN, the MAN caresses her cheek. The OLD WOMAN looks the WOMAN. The MAN looks as if he is accustomed to this, he acts meaning, "tolerate it". The YOUNG MAN comes in. The MAN indicates to his son to wake the daughter in-law as well. The YOUNG MAN nods and goes in. Bending over, caresses the YOUNG WOMAN's hair bending. The YOUNG WOMAN holds her husband's hand. She happily stays like that for some time.)

YOUNG MAN How are you now?

YOUNG WOMAN Fine.

YOUNG MAN I told you. *(Silence)* There's so much to do. You'd better get up.

(The YOUNG WOMAN gets up. She tidies up the bed and the quilt. She passed to the living room where her husband is waiting. While the MAN and WOMAN set up the eating area on the floor, the MAN and the YOUNG MAN take down the rifles from the wall. Showing his son step by step, the MAN begins to clean one of the rifles after taking out the materials from the bag that his son had brought. The YOUNG MAN also cleans the rifle before him just like his father does. The WOMAN and YOUNG WOMAN prepares the dining area and tidy the area in slow motion. During this time the two rifles have both been cleaned. The cups of tea are filled. The MAN frowns when the YOUNG MAN attempts to load the rifle he has cleaned and stops him.)

MAN Not now. It isn't the right time yet.

YOUNG MAN How about the water in the drinking basin?

MAN The level was about three fingers deep yesterday.

(They hang the rifles back in the same positions as before. As the women make final preparations for the dinner setting the YOUNG MAN puts bullets with their boxes close by the rifles, then pours water onto his father's hand and helps him to wash his face. The MAN dries himself with a towel.)

YOUNG MAN Shall I check the drinking basin?

MAN It'll be fine.

(The YOUNG MAN walks out silently and disappears. The women complete the last preparations for the meal.)

YOUNG MAN *(Enters. Points with his hand.)* About two fingers and half deep.

MAN Good. Maybe it will get full today and we can fire the rifles.
At the latest it will be full tomorrow.

YOUNG MAN I hope so! It will not be too late then!

MAN What is this rush for? It doesn't matter if it is two or three
days late getting full. It will all be for the best! Nobody is
running after us!

(First the MAN sits at the table. Then the others.)

MAN Why didn't you wake my father up?

OLD WOMAN Let's eat comfortably. I'll feed him later. Don't let him
bother us. If you knew what a man he used to be. Would he
ever be wrapped around someone's finger? The old say that
the old age of the wolf must be seen. There he is. That's
how the wolf is when he ages.

WOMAN May our real friends age in such a way. He does all his
work.

OLD WOMAN *(Smiling painfully)* You go on thinking that!

*(Careful to be quiet, everyone drinks their tea and feed themselves.
YOUNG WOMAN refills the tea glasses when they finish. Prodding her
son with her arm, OLD WOMAN asks him for things every time she
finishes those before her. And sometimes asks for her grandson.
However, she avoids asking anything from WOMAN. Suddenly OLD
MAN straightens up where he lays. He looks without understanding or
expression at those who are having breakfast.)*

OLD WOMAN Come close. *(To others)* Move aside, let him approach. Will
you come closer? *(Tries to get him draw near the table,
pulling him down with her hands.)* Will you come closer.

*(MAN helps too. OLD WOMAN tries to cram things into her
husband's mouth, using force, as if OLD MAN is drinking a bitter
medicine.)*

OLD WOMAN *(Prays with her hands raised)* My God! Don't let me be
crippled by illness or old age! Take me to you silently when
the time comes.

OLD MAN *(Louder than the others)* Everyone has gone. I have gone
too.

MAN Eat your meal dad.

OLD MAN The young have all gone. They never came back. But what
did we do? We came back. We return at the end of every

winter. We came back with our flour, sugar, salt, barley and wheat that we had stocked by working all through the summer. All these people eat them during the winter. We taught you to be more silent year by year and we came back. We are always here now. That's why it is my right to fire the rifle first. It has been the same every year so far. It will be the same again. It will continue to be the same.

MAN You feed yourself dad.

OLD MAN The brave man is the one who comes back after he raises his baby. Furthermore, he is the one who chooses to come back despite knowing the pleasure of yelling. Has anybody here got a word for my bravery? *(pause)* When are we going to fire the rifles?

MAN Maybe tomorrow dad.

OLD MAN They insult me. Supposing that I came back to my land like elephants when they feel like dying.

MAN Don't worry what they say dad. You came back because you loved this land.

OLD MAN *(Cries)* As a matter of fact I myself don't know why I came back to stay. *(Cries again.)* Neither eating nor drinking has any flavour anymore. Not even firing the rifles. Your bird doesn't chirp, your teeth don't cut! What kind of life is this!

OLD WOMAN *(To herself)* Your teeth always cut! Your bird is never silenced either! Consider all those experiences you lived!

(To her husband) Go on eating. Don't talk stupidly!

WOMAN *(Rather quietly)* They sicken me!

OLD MAN Friend! Your bird must chirp, your teeth must cut if you live! I can then say that the man is alive.

OLD WOMAN We also saw the days your bird was chirping! Other people enjoyed it to the utmost. Was it any use for me?

OLD MAN It isn't useless unless you don't appreciate it.

OLD WOMAN There won't be any value and desire if you attempt to cause it to chirp three meals a day! You can get bored of eating even honey every day!

OLD MAN Then others would cause it chirp, which you don't! Seek the fault in yourself a bit!

OLD WOMAN That reflects on your tongue thoroughly! My great God has shown me the days your bird don't chirp, nothing else matters! *(Angrily)* Drink your tea! Because drinking tea doesn't need any teeth! Look, some things go to your stomach without any teeth. *(Quietly)* But it doesn't make a sense to exert if your bird doesn't fly!

OLD MAN *(Angrily.)* Hey woman. Stop it! Don't interfere in everything of mine!

OLD WOMAN Good then. Feel some more grief! Cry! Cry! You will calm down Cry!

(Others continue to have breakfast as OLD MAN cries silently. The room is well lit as if the sun is inside the house.)

OLD MAN drinks his tea, finishes his breakfast, stands, and goes to the toilet. WOMAN and YOUNG MAN begin to tidy up the dining table.

OLD MAN comes, sits. As YOUNG WOMAN silently washes the dishes in the kitchen area, OLD MAN points with his hand to the WOMAN to give him a cigarette.)

MAN Give!

(WOMAN passes one of the cigarettes that she hid before. OLD MAN takes it happily. Indicates to his son to light it. MAN lights his father's cigarette.)

OLD MAN *(Takes the smoke with pleasure to his lungs. Loses consciousness for a while. To his son)* You didn't know your uncle. If he had lived, he would be beside me here. He was two years older than me. He was such an introverted guy. He never talked. We were all afraid that a noise would be made and the avalanche would fall down. But he was more scared. *(Indicating the room)* We used to sleep together. He sometimes woke up with nightmares. He broke out into a sweat. I used to ask him what had happened. He never replied. And one day after I gave my word not to tell anyone, he told me about all his fears. He mentioned that it was the feeling with all his existence that as if everything would end every minute with a bang. "It doesn't matter how much you careful you are, what about if someone else does something wrong? We will all vanish all of a sudden. A booming and we vanish! There is nothing we can do. How bad it is to be helpless my God. He was afraid and all his life feared the avalanche's fall. Fear exhausts a person. It gnaws. Fear is the worm of the person. One night he got up again. He turned to me and said: "I want to go out and scream right now. I think I wouldn't be able to help this."

“Are you mad?” I said. “What if it falls down upon us? We will all die. Where’s your fear? I wonder if you aren’t really scared?” He said, “Fear doesn’t help death. I am fed up with being frightened. I have no other way to stop the fear! To die and rest in fearless is much better than living in fear. One day I will make a big fuss. Then I will get rid of my fears! I want to scream!” I said “good, then you will have rescued us from our fears as well.” I said so but I was so scared afterwards. What if he really screamed by taking all I said seriously?

(OLD MAN falls asleep suddenly. MAN takes his father’s ashtray away. Washing the dishes, YOUNG WOMAN totters for a second and puckers up his face in pain. YOUNG MAN comes towards his wife suspiciously.)

YOUNG MAN *(Without letting anyone hear)* What’s up?

YOUNG WOMAN It started again.

YOUNG MAN It will pass off.

YOUNG WOMAN I can’t take it anymore. (moaning) I can’t stand.

YOUNG MAN But you have to!

YOUNG WOMAN But it isn’t in my hands.

YOUNG MAN Be patient!

(OLD WOMAN gets suspicious and begins to watch them both. But nothing makes sense to her.)

YOUNG WOMAN What can I do?

YOUNG MAN Don’t let them understand.

YOUNG WOMAN How?

YOUNG MAN Let’s go to the room.

(YOUNG MAN and YOUNG WOMAN pass into the room slowly. They have gone in so quietly as if there was nothing wrong. YOUNG WOMAN’s pain continues.)

YOUNG MAN How are you now?

YOUNG WOMAN It goes on!

YOUNG MAN It will be fine.

YOUNG WOMAN I think that’s what we scared of. I have never had such a pain before. This can’t be anything else but labour pains! It’s definitely labour pain! *(Crying silently.)* What will it be now? What are we going to do?

YOUNG MAN *(Helpless but)* No, it isn't. Your time hasn't come yet! Our first relations were just before the New Year. It is not even nine months yet. Ten more days more. *(Calculates with his fingers.)* You have at least one more month for the birth. It will be fine. Stop being pessimistic!

(WOMAN notices the absence of the bride. Looks at the dishes. Gets angry thinking that she left all those to her. Begins to wash. MAN tries to shape the pieces of wood before him. OLD WOMAN tries to understand all that is happening around. OLD MAN has fallen asleep and snores gently. WOMAN has washed the dishes.)

WOMAN *(Drying her hands, to her husband)* Have you seen the bride?

MAN They have gone into their room. Why did you ask?

WOMAN She left the dishes without being washed.

MAN Don't load onto the poor girl too much. Her birth is so soon.

WOMAN I wish I had had a father in-law like you. There wasn't anybody caring for me like that.

MAN Don't mention the past!

WOMAN Don't mention when it comes to me! But see how I look after the both of them.

MAN You have to. That's your work! Our kids will look after us as well.

WOMAN I am so surprised that you hope for help from the youth of today. They won't come back as those before. See what happens when they have their baby. Will they ever come back again after they leave? Will those kids of the new generation return? They won't.

MAN My child is different. He will come back.

WOMAN Do you think the bride would allow him to even if he wants to? Look at your son. Takes care every word from her mouth. As if nobody else's wife got pregnant before.

(OLD WOMAN has sensed that her son and his wife are arguing. Tries to listen but cannot.)

MAN Don't start being a mother in law again!

WOMAN You call it being mother in – law when the truth is told.

MAN But you're dragging it out. We also saw you being a bride. I didn't forget what you have done to my mother. You still torment the poor woman.

(Silence. YOUNG WOMAN's pain is over. MAN dries his wife's face that has broken out into a sweat with a towel.)

YOUNG MAN Look, it is over.

YOUNG WOMAN I hope so.

YOUNG MAN Let's go inside. They mustn't get suspicious.

(YOUNG MAN and his wife go into the room. OLD WOMAN still hasn't understood what went on. She obviously tries to work out what has happened. YOUNG WOMAN walks to the area as the kitchen.)

WOMAN *(Sarcastically)* Don't bother yourself daughter. I washed them already.

YOUNG WOMAN My head spanned around a bit mum.

(YOUNG MAN sits beside his father. Picks up the wood pieces. He begins to work on them too. He has just finished one. He places it next to those he completed before and starts a new one. YOUNG WOMAN covers the OLD MAN's body, stirs the embers of the fire.)

OLD WOMAN *(Hesitantly)* My son. Could you take me to the toilet?

(MAN and YOUNG MAN stand immediately. They don't know that OLD WOMAN can walk. They take her by the arms and help her to the toilet.)

WOMAN *(Stands after them and shuts the door.)* Goddamn!

YOUNG WOMAN But at least she says so mum. What would we do if she didn't?

WOMAN *(Angrily)* What would we do? We would put up with that helplessly. If I had someone offering to help a bit, nothing else would matter!

YOUNG WOMAN Forgive me mum. I have become quite heavier. But anyway I try to do my best to help.

(WOMAN doesn't response. They stop talking. MAN and YOUNG MAN brings back OLD WOMAN almost dragging her along. They put her in her bed.)

OLD WOMAN God bless you all! I hope everything you touch will turn into gold! I hope all your wishes come true! I hope God will give you a healthy and beautiful baby!

YOUNG MAN God willing grand mum. *(To himself)* I hope he will give that at the right time and hour. Then we will get rid of our fears!

(MAN and the YOUNG MAN pick up the wood pieces again. They continue working on them. OLD WOMAN has a looks as if she is about to sneeze. Sneezes silently by closing her mouth and nose with her hands.)

OTHERS God bless you!

OLD WOMAN All of you.

OLD MAN *(Wakes up suddenly. Continues to tell the story of his brother where he stopped.)* I said “No! You can’t do it! You can’t yell! All of us will die then! Don’t you ever think that we will all die?” “I think but I can’t help myself. I am willing to go out of the door and scream.” I sensed that he was upset while saying this because he was crying. “At this rate I will be the reason for everyone’s death. Oh my God what kind of passion is that? Wanting to scream with such passion has never been seen before. It was the same as desiring a woman. I want to scream with all my existence. He was complaining by saying “I can’t stop thinking that. I can’t give it up.” My situation was much harder. Because everyone had a common fear. That was: “I am careful but if someone else does something wrong?” But for me the doubt that suddenly one day he could scream was added to this common fear itself. My eyes were on him. I was following him even to the toilet. I was looking into his eyes as if begging. Sometimes he was opening his mouth by making a fist with his hand, and when he caught my helpless looking he was withdrawing his desire to scream. Then one day he said: “I don’t want to scream anymore!” “Is that true?” He said “Yes”. I can’t tell how I got happy. I couldn’t hide my tears. As I was about to think “My brother is getting all right”. He continued to talk: “How loud can I scream even if I do? To yell won’t cut me down. I’ll better fire the rifle! Yes yes I will fire the rifle! Because the mountains will come over the person quite different if I fire the rifle!” Oh my God. My brother was really going insane. Even in front

of my eyes. There was nothing to do. I went to my father and told him the situation. “That’s good!” said my father. “You should hide the bullets of the rifle and nothing then will happen.” I said “But” This isn’t enough of a precaution either. What if he gets annoyed this time? In my opinion he will get angry when he can’t fire the rifle and afterwards he will scream. There is no need to shoot the rifle to be breathless anyway dad. A strong yell is enough to end everything. My brother has put that in his head. He will make it fall on top of us. You still try to hide the fact in the name of protecting him! But I am your son too. I am going to die as well then, as you are. Moreover, if we don’t report it, we will all be considered guilty, not only you, even if we get rid of the danger. You have to admit it dad. My brother has cracked. What shall we do if we don’t report it to them and he goes completely insane and lets out a yell? Which one of us can run away when it flows upon us with a boom? There can’t be any mercy in such a matter. Can we watch everyone die because of pitying one person? Even if he’s my own brother, you should report him dad. My father began to think seriously for the first time.

(OLD MAN falls asleep again.)

MAN *(To his son)* Do you know that story?
 YOUNG MAN Of course I do.
 WOMAN I don’t know how many times we listened to it.
 YOUNG WOMAN Even I heard it three times myself so far.
 OLD WOMAN Nobody listened to his story as many times as I did. Especially in the first months after we left here, I had to hear it every day. This sorrow always pursued him. As I understand it, it will forever.

(MAN and YOUNG MAN go on working on the wood.)

OLD MAN *(Wakes up again, continues to tell.)* My father could not resist anymore. “You’re right!” he said. He went and reported the case to the Council of the Old. They listened silently. They couldn’t response for a long time. Because they were facing such a matter for the first time. Later my father said: “ “What are you going to do with my son? It’s my right to know.” The Arbitrators thought for a while and said: “What else can we do comrade! It is certain what we

are going to do” “Of course we won’t expect the day of our death!

We will wrap up his mouth and place him in a corner with his hands and feet tied up.” “For how long?” “Until the day that the danger of avalanche ends. No no, It’s impossible to untie his mouth. How can we trust to someone who has gone cracked? What about if he yells out?” But my father was right to say: “ How can a person survive without drinking and eating? You leave him to death consciously.” But they didn’t even care. They bound his hands, feet and mouth immediately and took my brother to prison. The guards fed him sometimes. In order to prevent him from yelling, they were cramming his mouth during the feeding in one hand and never took their huge hands off his mouth on the other hand due to the fear that he could yell. This went on like this for a fortnight. Easy to say but for a fortnight. Later they came one day and said “ Your son is dead!” We could never find out if he had died himself or the guard choked him. (*Sleeps.*)

OLD WOMAN

I gave my first birth when the danger passed off. (*To her son*) You were born. And we all left here when the first snow fell. We were so silent like this for a long time where we went to. Where we stayed was a district of immigrants consisted by those who emigrated from here. The customs of this place were continuing there the same way. I mean we immigrants were silent and timid. The natives used to love us very much. They wanted us to work in every business. Because we never said no and never reacted. We were accepting what was given and never asking for what wasn’t. Come come. Go go. Give give. We were the ones who worked in heaviest businesses! The natives were quite different from us. They were noisy and quarrelsome. They could laugh with a full mouth. They used to love us but never let us talk about this place. They were saying: “We accepted you! What else can you want? Go on working! We can’t permit defeatism!” Then I had my second child. It was again a boy. But he couldn’t survive. Then we had a daughter afterwards. She couldn’t survive either. About him, he began to change. He was so-called sad for his brother. He was coming home drunk every night. He was saying: “This pain will kill me!” I believed him. Later I found out, he was seeing another woman. When I asked him “Why are you

seeing her?” He said: “Do I know what I am doing because of the suffering for my brother? Don’t come over me!” He began to see all the women in the region saying “Don’t come over me!”. His justification was that he couldn’t bear the pain for his brother. “He was saying: “Let me hang about! Otherwise this pain will exhaust me! I learnt from my husband how capable creatures women were in taking men’s pain away. There was an old neighbouring lady. Even she knew my husband’s life out of home. She came to our place once and said to me: “There are various ways to bring men home!”. “Be caring and welcome your husband with a smiling face instead of crying and complaining!” I did what she told me. But he didn’t even see me. She then advised to cook his favourite dishes. But he wasn’t eating when he came back home. He was coming full, drunk and full. I learnt it also from my husband also how hard to feed a full person. Finally our experienced neighbour advised a third way. Sometimes both my child and I would get sick. Therefore I have learnt also that people’s and especially husbands attraction could be attracted by sickness. “Only the child’s sickness isn’t enough. You should get sick too so that later he will give lose his hopes that you could look after the child!” I put the advice into practice and got my husband to return home. But with such difficulty! Don’t look at him lying there like that like an angel! He made me suffer so much, so much!

(Suddenly YOUNG WOMAN begins to writhe with pain again. Moreover, she doubles over in pain. She goes into the other room by making a considerable effort. Noticing the situation, her husband follows her. In any case he has been observing his wife. However, OLD WOMAN has witnessed what was going on too. She tries to understand what was happening in horror.)

YOUNG WOMAN I can’t take it anymore! Oh God! I can’t stand!

YOUNG MAN What can I do? Be patient!

YOUNG WOMAN It’s the labour pain. Admit it! Oh my God! Do what you will! Rescue me!

(OLD WOMAN tries to explain something to MAN by gestures. She rushes up and walks to her son since MAN doesn’t notice. WOMAN gets confused when she sees OLD WOMAN walking who she thought was unable to walk, she almost becomes tongue-tied.)

OLD WOMAN My son!. The bride!
 MAN What is up mum?
 WOMAN She walked! Your mother is walking!
 MAN Mum you are walking!
 OLD WOMAN Am I? Yes yes I am. Forget my walking now. The bride will give birth!
 MAN What are you talking about mum?
 WOMAN Your mother is walking!
 MAN Didn't you hear what she said woman! She says the bride is going to give birth!

(All three of them go into next room. They watch for a while in shock. The others are not aware that they have come in. YOUNG MAN constantly points out to his wife to be quiet. And YOUNG WOMAN writhes with pain.)

MAN What's up my son?
 WOMAN Has something happened?
 YOUNG MAN No, nothing.
 WOMAN Look.
 YOUNG WOMAN My abdomen aches. *(Tries to hide)* It will pass off soon.

(The eyes of all are on YOUNG WOMAN. YOUNG WOMAN tries to hide her pain with a considerable effort. But she can't stand anymore and collapses down.)

WOMAN This! This! Oh my God!
 YOUNG MAN It is not mum. Only her abdomen aches!
 WOMAN I hope so. Would you drink water?
 YOUNG WOMAN I can't take it anymore. *(Begins to moan.)*
 YOUNG MAN *(Closes his wife's mouth with his hand)* It will end soon.
 WOMAN No it won't.
 MAN What's going on?
 YOUNG MAN Her abdomen aches dad.
 WOMAN It isn't like abdomen ache. I myself had several births. That's labour pain. Labour pain!.
 MAN Oh my God!
 OLD WOMAN I told you that!
 WOMAN What's going to happen now?

*(YOUNG WOMAN's pain has passed off, she calms down.
However her face has broken out into sweat.)*

YOUNG MAN I told you that it would pass. Look, it's over.
WOMAN No it isn't. It just had a break. It will start again soon.
MAN How do you know?
WOMAN Who else can know better than me? I gave births to six children although most didn't survive. Let's talk frankly, that's labour pain.

(Silence for a while)

YOUNG MAN How can you be sure mum?
WOMAN You didn't hear I think! I experienced that five times apart from yours.

(Silence again.)

MAN We have to make sure.
YOUNG WOMAN It's over. My abdomen was aching and it is over.
OLD WOMAN That's always the same. First it aches and it passes off. And later....
YOUNG MAN How?
MAN *(Constant)* Go and call the midwife.
YOUNG MAN But.
MAN We have to call her. There won't be any problem if it isn't labour pain. We will feel as relieved, as you will. Being awake is better than sleeping with fear.
YOUNG MAN So what if it is labour pain?
MAN *(Pretends not to hear.)* Call her to come.
YOUNG MAN So what if it is the labour pain?
MAN Then we would be done our duty. There's nothing else we can do. We must call the midwife.

(Silence for a while.)

MAN We can't take this responsible any longer. Every second is against us. We must obey the rules.
YOUNG MAN But...
MAN *(Decisive)* We can't risk everybody's lives! We shouldn't forget the obligation to report if something is wrong. We

know what the rules are. We can't act against the rules. Call the midwife.

YOUNG MAN No!

MAN We are supposed to call her!

YOUNG MAN It is not the labour pain! It happened also before, it passed off after she had gone to the toilet. There is nothing like that. You see she feels pretty well now! Let's wait for a while.

MAN What are we going to wait for? The moment she is giving birth?

YOUNG MAN But she's not going to give birth!

MAN How do you know that? We have to be sure. I said call her!

YOUNG MAN Wait mum! Let's don't turn the place upside down for nothing. Wait!

MAN What is she going wait? You waste our time! Don't hang about! Go and call!

YOUNG MAN Stop mum! You see it passed off! There it is over. I am all right! I swear it is not the labour pain!

OLD WOMAN Why are you afraid if it is not the labour pain then my daughter? The midwife will tell us what it is, we will feel as relieved as you will. Won't we my daughter?

MAN My mother is right. We have to make sure. The midwife is the only one who can tell us that.

YOUNG MAN So what if it is a labour pain?

WOMAN We answered that, didn't we? Won't we be punished if we don't report it on time? Don't you know it is the most serious crime to conceal such a situation?

MAN *(Decisive)* We have to make sure. I wonder if you had sex before the right date?

YOUNG MAN How can you expect such irresponsibility from me Dad?

MAN Why do you try to obstruct the coming of the midwife then? Tell me, why? Go on tell me! Tell me! I said tell me! Tell me! Tell me! Don't you hear me? Will you tell me!

(MAN comes near his son and tries to control his anger by wringing various parts on his body.)

YOUNG MAN It is not what you think dad! I swear it is not!

MAN Why do you worry then bastard! *(Continues to wring)* You will damage my honour. Couldn't you stand it one more month cuckold! Would all these happen to you if you weren't promiscuous? With what strength could we show up from now on? You will make us have a reputation of being a promiscuous family! You are shameless! You put yourself

and us at risk because of your impatience! My glory will now be dishonoured! We will be called as a family have put others' lives into danger because of you! People will keep away from us. They won't trust us! They will exclude us!

YOUNG MAN I say I didn't do dad!

YOUNG WOMAN *(Cries)* We didn't do that dad! We didn't do anything scary!

(MAN stops for a minute. He is now aware that he went too far.)

WOMAN *(Takes his son from her husband's hands.)* He is saying he didn't. Leave him alone.

(MAN leaves his son. Rests for a while, calms down.)

MAN *(Even again decisive)* Then we must make sure. Go and call the midwife. Don't wait! Don't hang about! Quick!

WOMAN What should I say?

MAN *(Stops talking, thinks for some time.)* You should say: "We got suspicious about the daughter's situation. It will help if you see her. We want to make sure." But don't forget to say that the pain arose just a while ago. They mustn't think that we wasted time!

(WOMAN covers her head and goes out to the street quietly.

YOUNG WOMAN cries helplessly, in silence. While others wait anxiously.)

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO**II**

(YOUNG WOMAN is sitting sad and worried in their own area as a room. MAN sits close to her wife, thinking, as if he is looking for a way out. OLD WOMAN is sitting in her place, stares at the door and waits. MAN wanders within the house by looking through the window from time to time. OLD MAN sleeps. The outside door opens and WOMAN enters)

MAN	What happened?
WOMAN	I told her.
MAN	What did she say?
WOMAN	She's coming.
MAN	Why didn't she come along with you?
WOMAN	She said she had to report it to the guards.

(WOMAN sits next to the bride. Despite hesitating a little, caress her hair to console her.)

YOUNG WOMAN Has she arrived?

WOMAN She will. Has anything happened when I was absent?

YOUNG WOMAN No!

WOMAN I hope what we fear won't happen to us.

YOUNG WOMAN I hope so.

WOMAN Maybe it is not the labour pain.

YOUNG WOMAN I hope so.

WOMAN You aren't angry with me are you?

YOUNG WOMAN Do I have the right to get angry?

WOMAN What could we do? We had to report it at once. I doesn't matter if it
is

me or someone else. Someone had to go and tell.

YOUNG WOMAN I know.

(Silence)

YOUNG WOMAN I am afraid.

WOMAN There's nothing else we can do!

YOUNG WOMAN I am so frightened.

(MAN must have seen MIDWIFE coming that he gets alarmed and goes to the WOMAN.)

MAN They are coming!

(MAN and WOMAN open the door.)

WOMAN Welcome!

MAN Come in.

(First MIDWIFE and after the 1stGUARD enter.)

MIDWIFE Good morning.

1st GUARD Have a nice day.

MAN Good morning.

YOUNG MAN To you all.

WOMAN To you too.

OLD WOMAN You are welcome my daughter.

(MIDWIFE kisses OLD WOMAN's hand.)

OLD WOMAN I hope many others will kiss yours too.

(YOUNG MAN kisses MIDWIFE's hand.)

MIDWIFE Thanks my son.

YOUNG MAN It is not the labour pain.

MIDWIFE I hope so.

WOMAN Would you like to drink something?

MIDWIFE Time is important in such situations. Let's not delay. I will drink your coffee before I leave if there's nothing to fear.

WOMAN I hope so.

MIDWIFE I hope so too. Where's the bride?

(WOMAN walks in the front, MIDWIFE follow her.)

MAN *(To the 1st GUARD)* Take a seat!

(1st GUARD sits. MIDWIFE comes beside the YOUNG WOMAN. Caresses her hair.)

MIDWIFE *(To WOMAN)* You go out!

(WOMAN takes place near others.)

MIDWIFE Get well soon my daughter.

YOUNG WOMAN *(Her voice vibrates)* Thanks auntie.

MIDWIFE Let's talk first.

YOUNG WOMAN All right.

MIDWIFE But you will answer my questions honestly. OK?

YOUNG WOMAN Alright.

MIDWIFE When did you enter nuptial chamber?

YOUNG WOMAN In the middle of December.

MIDWIFE Did anything happen between you before that? Such like kissing. I wonder if you acted foolishly and went too far? You mustn't hide it from me.

YOUNG WOMAN But I have nothing to hide!

MIDWIFE I am asking these for your benefit.

YOUNG WOMAN I swear I am not hiding anything.

(MIDWIFE calculates by using her fingers. Later calculates again.)

YOUNG WOMAN I am so afraid auntie.

MIDWIFE There isn't anything to be afraid of my child. We are not wrong about the time. There is at least a month more to your birth according to this calculation.

YOUNG WOMAN God willing!

MIDWIFE Your first relations must have been before that if you are giving birth at the moment. (*Calculates again.*) Yes that's right. But you know, miscalculation returns from Baghdad. It is not the labour pain you suffer if you don't hide some events from me. (*Looks at her face doubtfully.*)

YOUNG WOMAN (*Senses her suspicious.*) I am not hiding. I swear I am telling the truth. And also when could we have a relation? Our families didn't let us see each other even from a distance. So they would never let us get alone.

MIDWIFE Could fire and gunpowder ever stay side by side my daughter? Considering the painful event experienced before that.

YOUNG WOMAN Was it you who examined her?

MIDWIFE Of course not. Am I that old? It had happened very long time ago. In the youth of my grandmother. But nothing like that ever happened again since that day. I hope it won't again too.

YOUNG WOMAN God forbid!

MIDWIFE So your fear has passed?

YOUNG WOMAN (*Continues to sound scared*) It is over.

MIDWIFE Let it pass. Fear can never prevent death anyway. We can now look at it. To make sure completely. Lay down. Where you are. Lay, lay.

(YOUNG WOMAN lies on her side.)

MIDWIFE On your back.

(YOUNG WOMAN lies on her back with her head towards the audience.)

YOUNG WOMAN Like that?

MIDWIFE Yes. Pull your legs up towards your abdomen. Both of them. Pull up your dress. Very nice.

(MIDWIFE, pushes YOUNG WOMAN's dress further.)

MIDWIFE Raise your ass. Rise. (*Takes off YOUNG WOMAN's underpants.*) Well done. There is nothing to worry. (*Bends and checks with her hand. Examines her abdomen. Checks over and over again. Stands.*) Get dressed.

(*YOUNG WOMAN gets dressed, stands and waits with her hands tied before her.*)

MIDWIFE When was the first pain?

YOUNG WOMAN (*Obviously lies*) Just before you were reported.

MIDWIFE (*Angrily*) Don't ever lie! When did it happen? I have to know. I myself have to know. It doesn't matter if others know but I must know that! I hope you didn't lie too just before!

YOUNG WOMAN No I didn't.

MIDWIFE I asked you about the first pain.

YOUNG WOMAN (*Hesitantly*) Before the dawn.

MIDWIFE Then?

YOUNG WOMAN It happened again just after that.

MIDWIFE Later?

YOUNG WOMAN Then it didn't happen again.

MIDWIFE (*Silent for a while*) You know my daughter, I know your mother well. We had been neighbours for years. I am truly very sorry. However I have to report the case to the administrators. This is necessary for both the rules and the benefit of the society. (*Lowering her voice*) Tell them about your final pain. All right!

YOUNG WOMAN I got it.

MIDWIFE Otherwise you'll put those all at home into trouble! By the way don't ever forget that! Hope in God never gives up! Maybe it is not the labour pain you suffer.

YOUNG MAN (*Helpless*) I hope that! Are my parents going to come too?

MIDWIFE No! Because it is against the rules.

YOUNG WOMAN At least call my mother.

MIDWIFE There is nothing like that in the custom of the matter. The judgements are done in the house where the event takes place. They never permit emotion entering into such matters.

(*MIDWIFE quietly joins the others.*)

MAN What happened?
 MIDWIFE *(To WOMAN)* Let me wash my hands.

(WOMAN gets a mug of water, warms up the cold water, pours onto MIDWIFE's hands in the area as the kitchen.)

WOMAN I wonder if?
 MIDWIFE *(Drying her hands.)* I was hoping indeed but it was not in the destiny. I won't drink your coffee. Don't be offended by me. That's the rule. I have to let them know. What should I say? Get well soon! *(To 1st GUARD.)* You wait here!

(MIDWIFE goes out silently. WOMAN shuts the door behind her. Everyone is upset. OLD MAN sleeps. YOUNG MAN goes next to her wife. YOUNG MAN and YOUNG WOMAN hug each other.)

OLD MAN *(Wakes up. Looks around. He continues to talk where he stopped.)* But in my opinion it was another business, My brother's death wasn't of his own accord. They killed him! They exterminated him ruthlessly! *(Suddenly sees the 1st GUARD.)* You guards! You! *(Lengthening his hand to 1st GUARD as threatening)* You killed him! You! By choking him with your hands. Killers. Killer guards!

*(While OLD WOMAN tries to shut her husband up silently. **Blackout.**)*

III

(The tension of waiting goes on. Moreover 1st GUARD tries to understand the reproaches the OLD MAN directed at him. OLD MAN has been shut up but again looks at 1st GUARD from time to time angrily. MAN walks inside by looking through the window occasionally.)

MAN They are coming!
 WOMAN *(To OLD WOMAN)* You can walk anyway. You stand too. So we will not do anything wrong in terms of respect.
 MAN Don't fight with my mother!
 OLD MAN They choked him! Killers! Killer guards!
 OLD WOMAN They are not the same guards. You confuse everything.
 OLD MAN No I don't. One of them was this! I know it was you, It was you traitor! Traitor guard! Traitor guard!
 1st GUARD *(To OLD WOMAN)* Who did we choke dad? I didn't choke anybody! *(To others)* What s he talking about!
 MAN *(to 1st GUARD quietly)* My father really got too old. He is too old that he can think an event happened years ago happening right now. Don' pay attention!
 OLD MAN *(Almost keeping tempo)* Killer Guard! Killer Guard! Killer Guard!
 1st GUARD Unfortunate coincidence!
 OLD MAN Killer guard! Killer guard!
 1st GUARD But he can't go on like that!
 MAN *(Looks at 1st GUARD as meaning "Leave it to me". Turns to his father.)* Shut up dad! Shut up! *(To others)* Here they are.

(OLD MAN stops, offended. Everyone looks to the door including OLD WOMAN. MAN opens the door.)

MAN Welcome.

WOMAN You are welcome.
 OLD WOMAN What a pleasure you brought with you.

(Members of Arbitrators Council, in order first PRESIDENT, FEMALE MEMBER, MALE MEMBER, MIDWIFE, and behind them 2nd GUARD walk in.)

PRESIDENT Hello!
 OTHERS *(Quite respectfully.)* Hello! Hello! Come in! Welcome!
 OLD MAN *(Indicating 2nd GUARD to his Wife, in a way others can't hear)* Look that's the other one!

(OLD WOMAN explains to OLD MAN by gesture that MAN will get angry.)

WOMAN Where would you like to sit?
 PRESIDENT *(Checks inside the house with his eyes.)* Let's sit somewhere high up, as is our due.
 MAN *(Indicates with his hand.)* Is over there convenient?

(PRESIDENT looks also at other members. The members nod.)

PRESIDENT It is convenient.

(PRESIDENT and the members sit. 1st GUARD and 2nd GUARD stand by the door. OLD MAN looks attentively at the members of Arbitrator Council.)

PRESIDENT Bring the tripod!

(MAN and WOMAN pick up the tripod and put it before PRESIDENT.)

MAN Would you like anything else?
 PRESIDENT Our mouths can get dry while talking. Bring us some water! With a sufficient number of glasses!

(WOMAN put a decanter and some wooden glasses on the tripod.)

PRESIDENT Thanks my daughter. Where is the bride?
 WOMAN Do you want her to come?
 PRESIDENT Immediately! Let's not waste time.
 WOMAN *(To her Son)* I will call her.

(WOMAN goes in. Points to YOUNG WOMAN to come.)

PRESIDENT We can't talk about this without the bride! *(To OLD WOMAN)* Can we?
 OLD WOMAN Right!
 PRESIDENT Everybody sit down. Those we question will come over there and answer standing. Did you get it?
 OTHERS Yes we did. Thank you.
 PRESIDENT *(To other members)* Shall we start? *(Others nod.)*
 OLD MAN *(To his wife silently)* They will judge the guards finally!

(OLD WOMAN tries to explain him to shut up by pointing. Furthermore, as a master of pantomime she silently explains that the bride will be judged since she will give birth before day.)

OLD MAN Our bride? Murderers!
 OLD WOMAN Shut up! *(Convinces her husband quietly to shut up.)*
 PRESIDENT We stopped at the drinking basin before we came here. You know the dangers is supposed to be over when it is completely full of melted snow. However, we saw unfortunately that there is still two fingers depth before it gets totally full. *(Indicates with his hand.)* This means today or latest tomorrow that the emptiness will be filled and the danger will end. Then, those who left in early winter will come back with their kids, flour, sugar, salt, vegetable, meat and every type of food and they will be with us for three months until the first snow falls. We will live, have weddings, births, entertainment and celebrations. The couples who give birth and others will leave here and go when the first snow falls. Until next summer, they will work and save up again for those who stay here to spend next winter comfortably. They will come again later. They will go again. While we wait within this vicious circle, the midwife came just before end and told us about the matter.

(MALE MEMBER has symptom to cough. WOMAN passes a pillow as a habit. MALE MEMBER coughs silently by pressing the pillow on his face. He also cleans up the tickling sensation in his throat. Passes the pillow back to WOMAN.)

PRESIDENT I have to make public our regret that we have not faced such an situation for fifty years. The fact of birth before its day. I am very upset as well as the other members. But there's nothing we can do. We will apply the rules! Because this is a matter related to the safety of others. Let's now do what it needs to be done without wasting more time. *(Points to MIDWIFE to stand. MIDWIFE stands.)* When did they report to you?

MIDWIFE Just a while ago

PRESIDENT Yes. Then?

MIDWIFE I came up immediately and examined. Then I reported to you. Let me state unfortunately that the bride will give birth.

PRESIDENT Are you sure?

MIDWIFE Absolutely.

PRESIDENT You can look again.

MIDWIFE There's no need. Because all the symptoms prove that.

PRESIDENT You can sit. You! *(YOUNG MAN and YOUNG WOMAN stand.)* We have determined that there is still one more month before the birth is due under normal circumstances. However, you have reached to point of giving birth before the danger ends. Do you know that this is the most considerable crime that throws others of lives into danger don't you?

YOUNG MAN We know.

YOUNG WOMAN We know.

YOUNG MAN But it is not our fault!

PRESIDENT What does it mean?

YOUNG MAN Our grandparents have done the calculation. They said it would happen that day. Then the same day we had our intercourse. We entered our nuptial chamber on time. Until that night they showed my wife to me from a distance. We didn't even come side by side.

MAN My estimable President, if you let me I want to begin to speak.

PRESIDENT Speak without making it too long.

MAN My son tells the truth. We always prevented them from coming together before its day.

WOMAN We didn't even let them hold hands.
 PRESIDENT Don't speak without permission. Right?
 WOMAN Alright my President.
 PRESIDENT Assuming that everything happened on time. I find it difficult to understand where to go from here.
 YOUNG MAN This is an early birth.
 MIDWIFE (Stands again) Yes my President. This is an early birth.
 YOUNG MAN In other sense we are not guilty. (Silence.)
 PRESIDENT Does it make any difference? We don't discuss here whether the birth is early or late. We only look at the result. Right now, I mean your wife had come to a position to give birth before the danger passed. That is what concerns us. However, if any intercourse before its time is in question, this definitely concerns us too. But it doesn't effect the consequences. Now the process is clear. *(Silently gets the approval of other members.)* This young woman will be put into a coffin without delay, then she will be buried underground! For you to know that this decision also upset us will be our consolation.
 YOUNG MAN My President.
 PRESIDENT There's nothing left to argue about anymore because this young lady may give birth every minute. I don't know if I need to remind you what such consequence will bring. Look, if the midwife has any objection regarding the birth, the execution may be discussed by deferring it. *(To MIDWIFE)* Because you are the only one having the right to object in this situation. Have you got any contrary opinion?
 MIDWIFE No my President.
 PRESIDENT Let the rules be applied without any waste of time!
 OLD MAN They are not judging the guards!

(MAN and OLD WOMAN point to OLD MAN to shut up.)

YOUNG MAN My wife is being punished for a situation that is not our fault. So what, These are the rules. Even so we didn't do anything violating the rules. Our wedding, entering nuptial chamber, all were carried out on time.
 PRESIDENT *(Angrily.)* But we finished talking on these matters my child. I witness such an opposition for the first time anyway. Do I need to remind you why all those motherland children who go out, get jobs right away? Because they don't oppose anything! They continue their good manners even in the places they stay temporarily. If the word in peacefulness is

removed from dictionaries, let's not forget that the actual reason for that is its arising from the application of the rules decisively! (*Angrily.*) What do you mean? Shall we debate the rules and leave this many people to die!

YOUNG MAN (*Quite sentimental*) Let not all those people die! But let not my wife either!

PRESIDENT I can understand your grief boy. We were young too. We loved too. But you should know to make sacrifices for the lives of other people.

YOUNG MAN (*Almost cries.*) Please wait a bit longer. This birth thing doesn't happen all of a sudden! I beg you to keep it waiting a bit longer.

PRESIDENT Nothing like that is possible. I can't throw the entire village into danger, your wife or other people. I mean all of us. There is no mid-way in that! Why shouldn't we apply it if there was a solution to save everybody's lives? (*Decisively*) The execution has to be done at once actually. I mean the rules will be applied! What can we do if your wife starts giving birth right now? Just one scream that she makes during the birth is enough itself. How about the screams of the newborn baby? Won't the mountains come upon us? (*Suddenly becomes tough.*) We may have to give the same decision and apply it for you as well if you continue to talk. Stop it now!

YOUNG MAN My President.

PRESIDENT I warn you! Don't forget! The silence is golden if the word is silver! That has been our principle for centuries. (*Points to the guards to start.*)

OLD MAN They don't judge the guards! The innocent will be buried not the guilty!

PRESIDENT What is he talking about?

OLD MAN Judge those who choked my brother man!

PRESIDENT Hey what do you mean?

OLD MAN Judge the killers man! Judge them if you're brave enough! But you can't. Because they will then choke you at once.

PRESIDENT (*To guards*) Tie up his mouth!

(While 1st GUARD tries to tie his mouth up with a cloth he brought with him.)

PRESIDENT Hurry up!

OLD MAN (Tries to prevent them tying him up) I can understand my brother better now. I do understand him very well!

PRESIDENT *(To 2nd GUARD)* Make the other one ready too!
 2nd GUARD Immediately my President!

(2nd GUARD attempts to gag the bride's mouth.)

PRESIDENT You confused me boy. But I forgive you considering the
 pain you suffer.
 2nd GUARD *(Has tied up YOUNG WOMAN's mouth and hands behind.)*
 Ready my President.
 PRESIDENT *(As pointing with his hand to tie her eyes as well.)* Don't
 leave your work incomplete!

(2nd GUARD ties her eyes too. BRIDE shivers of fear.)

PRESIDENT Alright. *(To others.)* Nobody else will go! You will stay
 home until the work is completed. *(To 1st GUARD)* Only
 you will stay here. *(To other members.)* Stand up. Let's us
 witness.

*(PRESIDENT and the members stand up. 2nd GUARD has difficulty
 as he tries to take the bride, because the bride resists and struggles.
 Also she tries to make heard that she doesn't want to go by groaning.
 On the warning of PRESIDENT, 2nd GUARD pulls the bride close to
 the door. Almost dragging her. PRESIDENT and the members walk
 behind them gradually. Meanwhile, YOUNG MAN has opened the
 box without showing anyone and put the bullet to the breach of one
 the rifles while the others were waiting silently.)*

YOUNG MAN *(Straightens up the rifle.)* Now you stop!

(Everyone is frozen for a minute. All in a complete confusion.)

PRESIDENT What do you intend to do my child?
 YOUNG MAN I said stop!
 FEMALE MEMBER What does this mean?
 MALE MEMBER What is he doing?
 YOUNG MAN Don't make me pull the trigger!
 PRESIDENT I can't believe that!
 FEMALE MEMBER Won't the rifle be fired when you pull the trigger?
 MALE MEMBER And when the rifle explodes. Oh my God!
 PRESIDENT However, all of us will die.
 YOUNG MAN Yes. We will! My wife will survive or we will all peg out!

(Silence)

MAN Put that weapon down.
 WOMAN Do you want to kill us too?
 MAN Won't we all die together?
 YOUNG MAN Don't interfere dad.
 MAN How shouldn't we? Behave yourself my son.
 YOUNG MAN Is it nice if my wife dies? I must do my best for the survival
 of my wife and my unborn baby!
 MAN What do you think you can do?
 OLD WOMAN We will all die together!
 WOMAN You are still young. There will be many other women for
 you. You are the source. The child can be from other
 women too.
 OLD WOMAN You will be the killer of your grandparents!
 OLD MAN I am proud of my grandson!
 YOUNG MAN You don't understand me! *(To PRESIDENT)* Everyone
 don't move! Go back to your places. I said go, go!

*(PRESIDENT and the members takes back their places.
 2nd GUARD brings back the bride to her previous place.
 She unties her eyes, hands and mouth by the pointing of her
 husband. Silence.)*

PRESIDENT My mouth got dry. Can I drink water?
 YOUNG MAN Drink!

(PRESIDENT drinks water. Others drink too.)

PRESIDENT What will it be now?
 FEMALE MEMBER What are we waiting for?
 YOUNG MAN *(To 1st GUARD)* You! Dad you too. Go and look the
 drinking basin! Let's see what the latest situation is! Don't
 hang about!

(MAN and 2nd GUARD goes out.)

OLD WOMAN Let's judge the guards too!

*(Everyone waits just in that way. Especially PRESIDENT and the
 members are in a state of fear and confusion. The waiting continues.
 MAN and 1st GUARD come back.)*

MAN One finger!
 1st GUARD Yes one finger.
 YOUNG MAN She didn't have any more pain anyway. Maybe the Midwife was wrong! It is not the labour pain. But my wife nearly dying because of your impatience. Look you see. Is there any ache at all?
 PRESIDENT What are you talking about my child? Is the Midwife lying? Leave us out! You mother, father. All will die! Don't you pity them?

(Suddenly YOUNG WOMAN begins to writhe with pain.)

PRESIDENT Oh my God!
 MIDWIFE This woman will give birth!
 YOUNG MAN *(To 1st GUARD)* Gag her mouth!

(1st GUARD ties up the bride's mouth.)

YOUNG MAN Take her inside.

(OLD MAN claps his hands silently shows his happiness while 1st GUARD takes YOUNG WOMAN inside.)

YOUNG MAN *(To MIDWIFE)* Enter .Mum you help too.
 MIDWIFE *(To WOMAN)* Bring a basin and hot water! Quick!
 YOUNG MAN Quick mum!
 PRESIDENT *(In horror.)* What about the baby's scream!
 FEMALE MEMBER *(Terrified)* Screams!
 PRESIDENT All of us will die!
 FEMALE MEMBER We will die!
 MALE MEMBER We will die!
 OLD MAN I came to die anyway. Doesn't matter. I now understand my brother better. I want to scream out before I die. I want to yell! Right now!
 OLD WOMAN Don't ever do! Don't ever do that!
 MAN I am your son dad!
 WOMAN This is our end I think.
 MAN You will cause my death too! *(Closes his father's mouth with his hand.)*
 WOMAN *(To her son)* I am the one who brought you up. Did I bring you up for you to be the reason for my death? I will give up my right of my milk and efforts to you!

YOUNG MAN Shut up!

(MIDWIFE points the 1st GUARD to go out. 1st GUARD come next to others. 2nd GUARD is approaching YOUNG MAN stealthily. As he was about to hold his arm YOUNG MAN notices and hits the 2nd GUARD with the rifle's butt, causing him to collapse.)

YOUNG MAN Don't ever try that again!

OLD MAN My lion-hearted grandson!

PRESIDENT *(To 1st GUARD) idiot!*

YOUNG MAN You got it?

2nd GUARD Yes I did. *(The bride inside has been made lying with her head towards the audience. The birth is going on silently. MIDWIFE points WOMAN what she is supposed to do at the same time.)*

FEMALE MEMBER *(Worried)* But The child's mouth has always to be closed. Because he will scream consecutively.

PRESIDENT They have to keep the baby's mouth until the drinking basin is full.

(The moaning of the bride has increased. The groan is heard hoarse and deep from. The bride stops groaning suddenly. MIDWIFE picks up the baby with her hand by closing its mouth. The baby slides to the basin from MIDWIFE's hand. An unbelievable loud laughter is heard from the baby. While the laughter continues consecutively MIDWIFE catches the baby again. A complete silence. The echo of the laughter is heard. Silence again. Everyone is in fear, waits for the boom of the avalanche. Some also pray meanwhile. There's no sign that the avalanche will fall.)

PRESIDENT It didn't fall!

FEMALE MEMBER It won't fall I think.

MALE MEMBER I hope so!

YOUNG MAN Shut up! *(Silence for a while.)*

OLD MAN *(Despite his wife obstructs, He opens the door by taking the rifle from YOUNG MAN's hand. He lets out an incredible yell.)* Heeeeeeeeeeeeeeeey!

(The echo of the yell is heard after a while. This time he fires the

rifle too. Anxiety waiting replaces the shows of joys. While the sound of drums and shrill pipes accompany the gun shots heard from outside.)

The End

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