LA RECAÍDA

(THE RELAPSE) by ELIZABETH URBINA

DIALOGUES IN ENGLISH

JAIME

Mrs Mercè, how are you?

MERCÈ

You called me about the results, right?

JAIME

Yes. I want to do a more complete check up because some of the numbers don’t fit.

MERCÈ

Look pretty, I’m going to set something straight: if I’m going to die don’t tell me, because at this point it’s not news. What you can do is give me a pill so I don’t feel anything.

JAIME

Let’s see, firstly, you will die...

MERCÈ

What do you mean I’ll die?

JAIME

I mean dying is something that will happen to you, we all die! Like me, but not now, later... No, you won’t die!

MERCÈ

Oh, well that’s not a bad start.

JAIME

Look Mercè, the only strange thing in you analysis is an excess of dopamine which isn’t common at your age.

MERCÈ

¿But isn’t that what they give people in films before they die?

JAIME

No, lady, that’s morphine.

MERCÈ

Oh, great, well explain yourself better! So, do you mean that’s why I forget things, have headaches and sudden tachycardia?

JAIME

Well that’s what needs to be investigated, because dopamine doesn’t cause those symptoms, on the contrary, it’s a neurotransmitter associated with the pleasure system and the brain’s joy; like food, drugs or sex. Now, what have you been doing lately, Mrs Mercè?

MERCÈ

I promise I quit! It’s been a month and I’ve had none, nothing!

I swear I stopped having liquor coffee after meals!

But gosh son, you got me! I keep having the one on Fridays, cause I play cards and one gets excited.

Oh! And about the joy, pleasure and sex, they left me a long time ago.

JAIME

Liquor coffee… No, no, having a coffee on Fridays isn’t a problem. It would have to be hard drugs and more intense activities.

MERCÈ

After retiring the only intense thing in my life, is going shopping and one of the supermarket bags breaking. Some thieves, I tell you, that’s why I take my car and then…

JAIME

Mercè, relax, that’s it. Now, lie down for a moment please, I’d like to ask you some questions.

Very well,

MERCÈ

Like this?

JAIME

Perfect.

JAIME

Tell me what you feel when I put pressure on this area, what type of pain do you feel right now?

MERCÈ

None, nothing hurts.

JAIME

Very good, like this.

JAIME

Tell me what you feel in your stomach and try to remember when was the last time you felt this symptom.

MERCÈ

I get a sensation like… I don’t know, a tingling, it’s a feeling of emptiness in this area. And the last time I felt it was only playing chess.

JAIME

You mean it came suddenly? You didn’t take anything strange?

MERCÈ

No, I didn’t take anything.

JAIME

Tell me what exactly is in your head. What’s the matter?

MERCÈ

Darling, I think I’ve got Alzheimer’s.

My head goes off, I start talking about one thing… and suddenly I go dumb looking at the trees, watching a kid play in the square, I don’t know, I can’t avoid it.

And the other day when I was going home I almost got run over by a bus, because I was saying goodbye and didn’t look at the traffic light.

JAIME

If the dopamine is high it’s not Alzheimer’s.

MERCÈ

Phew, just as well, one thing less.

JAIME

Now, explain better what you do lately, your routine during the week, for example?

MERCÈ

Nothing, I get up, have my coffee and go to aqua-gym with my friends; Marta and Carme.

JAIME

What do you do after gym?

MERCÈ

Nothing, not much, I go home and prepare lunch at midday, then I watch telly for a bit and since a few weeks ago I go to the square to play chess.

JAIME

Oh, that’s good, that you do thing that keep you mentally active.

MERCÈ

Wait, you’ll see… Look at this.

JAIME

Oh, it’s you playing chess!

MERCÈ

The only woman in Spain to win some Chess Olympics! The best moment of my life!

JAIME

Who would’ve said! An Olympic champion! And since then you hadn’t played at all?

MERCÈ

No, because there was no one in the neighbourhood who knew how to play properly.

JAIME

The good thing is now there’s someone, right?

MERCÈ

There someone? What for?

JAIME

You said if you haven’t played again it’s because there was nobody in the neighbourhood who could follow your game. If you play now it’s because there’s someone who’s at your level, right?

MERCÈ

Oh, well yes, now I play with Paquita’s new neighbour, Josep. He’s a man who even though I don’t like him much, I hadn’t found anyone who’d follow my rhythm in the game like him. But he’s so impolite I can’t even say the things he says because…

JAIME

Mercè, what’s wrong? How often does this happen?

MERCÈ

How often what?

JAIME

Mercè, look at me. Do you feel all right?

MERCÈ

You can say what you want, but I’m not okay.

I’m very wrong.

MERCÈ

This must be that Jacinto is waiting for me on the other side, so that I join him. Of course, I do dream about him, the other day he appeared to me in a dream; I was playing chess in the square and suddenly when I was going to put down the king piece, he looked at me with Jacinto’s face and… oh no, no, doctor, I’m sorry but I’m very embarrassed…

JAIME

Don’t you worry because Jacinto isn’t waiting for you anywhere! So relax and talk to me.

MERCÈ

The king looked at me and sang “And I am still the kiiing…”

MERCÈ

It’s just my husband used to like rancheras a lot...

JAIME

That’s it, relax, breathe a little, that’s good, good.

Do you feel better?

MERCÈ

Yes, yes, I’m calm.

JAIME

Very well, let’s see.

You were telling me you played chess with Josep, the new neighbour, right?

MERCÈ

Yes, yes, and he always beats me because…

JAIME

You have tachycardia again, don’t you? This isn’t right, so suddenly, it’s not at all right. It’s can’t be.

The stomach problem you commented happened in the middle of the chess game, right?

MERCÈ

Yes right, that sensation happened during the last game… It’s just Josep got on my nerves with one of his jokes and I was concentrate on the game. He’s just so annoying…

JAIME

And about the bus that almost ran you over the other day, that was also after a game of chess, right?

MERCÈ

Yes, yes, also. Of course, Josep was saying bye to me, yelling and saying “don’t stop coming back the next day”.

JAIME

Of course, of course. It’s a rise of dopamine because of the appearance of a new object of desire, this shoots anxiety because of the need to have a discharge of endorphins by means of pleasure

MERCÈ

What? How?

JAIME

Let’s see how I explain myself; I may not be the best person to tell you about this. It’s complicated, but the biochemical processes don’t lie. You must have forgotten the symptoms of something you lived a long time ago. In simple words, Mercè, you aren’t ill, you’re in love with Josep.