

Alarm Clock

Written by
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INT. JOZEF'S BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

Like the rest of the tenement it's a faded memory, worn and sparse.

Below a vanity mirror, a dressing table supports an old framed photograph and a traditional bell alarm clock that's face down and silent.

A window lets in light but can't yet be seen out of.

Jozef lies in a single bed; pallid, asleep, barely breathing.

Fade in the sound of a grand father clock TICKING with...

 IRENKA (V.O.)
No.

 DOCTOR (V.O.)
Please.

 IRENKA (V.O.)
No.

INT. HALLWAY

A TICKING grand father clock by a wall mirror, a coat stand with one coat (Irenka's), a small side table and a waste paper basket.

 DOCTOR
Please Irenka. Listen, you are wearing yourself out. Just look at you.

 IRENKA
I said no.

 DOCTOR
The benefits are obvious. That's why there are those sort of people, places. I can't do anymore, not any more.

 IRENKA
He stays with me.

 DOCTOR
But you can't give the comfort he needs now and they can.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IRENKA

I've given him comfort. And I give him love. You tell me a place where they give love. Tell me.

DOCTOR

They do give love.

IRENKA

They get money, they give comfort but they don't give love. That's why Jozef needs me.

DOCTOR

You can't cope, they can.

IRENKA

I can cope. For eight years I have coped.

DOCTOR

He is sleeping more. When he's awake he tells you he feels better. But he is sleeping more.

IRENKA

It's only because...

DOCTOR

It's because he is deteriorating. He needs specialist care.

Irenka looks away from the Doctor.

DOCTOR (cont'd)

Open your eyes Irenka. For eight years you have cleaned, fed, comforted. It is ruining you.

IRENKA

I won't be able to see him.

DOCTOR

Whenever you want.

IRENKA

I won't be able to love him.

DOCTOR

You always will.

IRENKA

But...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOCTOR

Listen to me. He's dying. He's weaker than he has ever been. His eyes. He can't see and...he tells me he feels close.

IRENKA

No.

DOCTOR

He tells me that and it means he is.

IRENKA

I love him.

DOCTOR

You love him? Then do the right thing. Give him the best. Give yourself a break before he breaks you.

The Doctor reaches inside his jacket pocket and pulls out a leaflet.

IRENKA

I... I must go. I have to look after him. He needs me.

DOCTOR

Take this. Read it.

Irenka doesn't accept the leaflet. The Doctor places it on the side table.

DOCTOR (cont'd)

Look at him Irenka and look at yourself. You've had his life drain you. Do the right thing.

Irenka opens the front door. The Doctor leaves.

DOCTOR (CONT'D) (O.S.)

A care home Irenka. A care home. They have everything he needs now.

Irenka closes the front door, picks up the leaflet and drops it in the waste paper basket where it joins several other identical leaflets.

She looks at herself in the wall mirror, attempts to straighten her back, slumps, sighs and wearily turns to climb the stairs.