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Perchance to dream

de
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traducción de
Jim McCarthy

(fragmento en inglés)

Characters

Emma

Peter

Doctor

Frank

John

Sam

(The roles of Doctor, Frank, John and Sam are played by the same actor.)

(The symbol / indicates that a speech is interrupted by the next speaker.)

1. A Meeting in Heaven?

(PETER mops the floor whilst singing Henry Mancini's 'Moon River'. Enter EMMA, completely confused. She wears a hospital gown, open at the back. PETER doesn't notice her.)

EMMA
Hello?

PETER
(sees her): Emma? Is that you? Here so soon?

EMMA
What?

PETER
Well, goodness me.

EMMA
Excuse me, can you tell me what this place is?

PETER
But what's happened?

EMMA
Where are we?

PETER
Now now. Relax.

EMMA
Just a minute. Tell me what's happening here.

PETER
Don't be alarmed.

EMMA
And how do you know my name? I don't know you at all?

PETER
It makes no difference. Everybody here knows everyone else's name.

EMMA
What are you talking about? What is all this?

PETER

Keep calm. Right now it's all a bit odd, but you'll understand straightaway.

EMMA

Understand what?

PETER

What's happened.

EMMA

You're frightening me. What is it that's happened?

PETER

Nothing that hasn't happened before. Calm down.

EMMA

I don't like this. I want to go back.

PETER

Where? (*Silence.*) Back to where?

EMMA

(*confused*): I don't know.

PETER

You don't remember?

EMMA

(*with difficulty*): All I remember was being very cold. And I was dazzled by a very bright lamp. And there was... Now I remember... I was on a stretcher. In an operating theatre. That's it, they were going to operate.

PETER

Now I get it.

EMMA

What?

PETER

Why you're wearing that gown with half your bottom showing.

EMMA

Now, watch it, that's cheeky.

PETER

You're the one showing your bottom. (*Emma tries, with difficulty, to fasten the back of the gown*).

Let me give you a hand.

EMMA
No funny business.

PETER
Who on earth do you think I am?

EMMA
Precisely. Whom am I addressing?

PETER
A bit formal. Makes me feel old.

EMMA
Well, you could be my father.

PETER
Even more reason. Relax. We don't stand on ceremony here.

EMMA
Here? What is this place?

PETER
The one where we all end up sooner or later.

EMMA
Please – no riddles.

PETER
Why were they operating on you?

EMMA
My heart, I think.

PETER
Complicated operation.

EMMA
I suppose so. Quite. Very.

PETER
And suddenly, without knowing how, you're here.

EMMA
That's it, yes. *(Silence. A gesture from Peter.)* What does it mean? I'm...dead?

PETER
Seems like it. How do you feel?

EMMA
How do I feel?

PETER
Hmm.

EMMA
Well, actually...I don't feel anything.

PETER
No doubt about it. You're dead.

EMMA
Sure?

PETER
Certain.

EMMA
I always imagined it would be different.

PETER
That happens with all the new arrivals. But it soon passes. For us dead everything is the same.

EMMA
You're dead too?

PETER
There's no room for doubt about that.

EMMA
You wouldn't be Saint Peter?

PETER
Very amusing.

EMMA
But you are called Peter, yes?

PETER
You see how everybody here knows everyone else's name?

EMMA
So, is this heaven or not?

PETER
What do you reckon?

EMMA

It reminds me of a dentist's waiting room.

PETER

You're not far wrong there. But no. Nothing to do with teeth.

(Silence. Emma moves around the stage, examining everything curiously.)

EMMA

It's an odd place. But it feels ok here.

PETER

Agreed.

EMMA

If we really are dead, what do you suppose we're doing here?

PETER

Waiting.

EMMA

For what?

PETER

For them to perhaps dream about us.

EMMA

WILL-YOU-TELL-ME-WHO-YOU-ARE?

PETER

You already know, I'm called Peter.

EMMA

I'm asking you what it is that you're doing here.

PETER

The same as you. I'm also waiting for them to dream about me.

EMMA

This has to be a joke.

PETER

Dying always has its funny side.

EMMA

I don't see it anywhere.

PETER

That's because you've just arrived. But straightaway here you start to see everything differently. You'll realise it the first time someone dreams about you.

EMMA

What's all this dreaming about me nonsense?

PETER

Think about it a moment. Didn't you ever dream about a loved one who'd died? Your parents, perhaps, or grandparents, or a friend?

EMMA

I dreamed about my mother sometimes; never my father. I didn't know my grandparents, so them neither. I had an older cousin who also died. He was gorgeous. A shame – any dream with him would do for me. But you have to take all that with /

PETER

Wait. When you dreamed about your mother, didn't you have a feeling that she was...real? I mean much more real than a dream?

EMMA

Yes. *(Pause.)* My mother's here?

PETER

Not that I know of.

EMMA

Pity. I liked dreaming about her. It was like she was with me.

PETER

Exactly. It's the same. Any moment someone will dream about you and you'll have to be there.

EMMA

Like a ghost?

PETER

Like a dream.

EMMA

This can't be happening to me.

PETER

All the new arrivals say that too.

EMMA

I don't understand anything. What do I have to do?

PETER

Don't worry. When it happens you'll know without a second thought.

EMMA

That's not a great help, actually. (*Peter shrugs his shoulders.*) What happens in these dreams? What are they like?

PETER

Nothing out of this world.

EMMA

But they're from out of this world.

PETER

I mean that when they dream about the dead, the majority of people have sad ones; some are full of regrets and beg forgiveness for things that don't really matter; lots of them complain; others throw things in your face about the past; there are arguments and fights...

EMMA

Phew. What a prospect...

PETER

Not always. Some are amusing, weird, romantic. All types. And when I say 'all types' I mean 'all types'.

EMMA

Erotic ones too?

PETER

I believe so.

EMMA

And if I'm picked for an erotic dream, what do I do?

PETER

What do you do? Enjoy it. In that gown it'll be easy enough.

EMMA

Do they dream about you a lot? In general, I mean, not the erotic ones.

PETER

Not too much. Neither here nor there.

EMMA

So, why are you here?

PETER

Because someone is about to dream about me.

EMMA

How do you know?

PETER

I don't. Suddenly, I'm here. That's all.

EMMA

And that means what? That I'm here too because someone is about to dream about me?

PETER

Exactly. You're picking it up as we go along.

EMMA

Who?

PETER

You'll know straightaway.

EMMA

Just like that?

PETER

Just like that.

EMMA

And I have to appear like this, with my bottom on view?

PETER

Aha...

EMMA

I'm not ready for this.

PETER

Remember you're dead. To you it's all the same.

EMMA

That's easy enough to say. But what do I do?

PETER

Nothing. Just close your eyes. Things will happen straightaway.

EMMA

What things?

PETER
How do I know?

EMMA
My God! This is the first time someone's going to dream about me and I'll be in the front row seeing it all live.

PETER
'Live' isn't quite the term.

EMMA
But when I appear, what do I say?

PETER
You'll know exactly, word for word. It'll be very comforting. You'll see...

EMMA
I'm a bit nervous.

PETER
Relax. It can't be a fate worse than death.

(They close their eyes. The scene dissolves. Peter disappears.)