

THE MYSTERIOUS DISCOVERY

I was sitting at the small square kitchen table when I heard a sudden bang. I was frightened. What was that? I turned around looking for someone who might have been near, but then I remembered that I had been living all alone in this old house for about a year now. As I was reminded of this once again, I was saddened. Why does it have to be this difficult and painful to move on?

When I forced myself to banish the thought that is keeping me awake most nights from my brain, the roaring sound popped back into my head. What could that have been? I got up and made my way to the window on my right. I opened the curtains but apart from the gloomy street, which was not yet lit by the streetlight at this time of day, I didn't see anything unusual. The house across the street looked just as uninhabited as it had for the last few months. When I calmed down again, I went to the sliding door in the living room. I opened the patterned curtains and looked into the snowy distance. But again, nothing caught my eye. I reached for the door handle and carefully pushed the door to the side. I took a step outside and the icy cold filled my body. I lifted my gaze and turned my head a little to the left and that's when I saw it.

A cold shiver ran down my spine and I felt my heart beat faster as I took another step to the left. From the mountain just a few hundred meters to the left of the road a huge avalanche had gone down, taking with it everything on the slope and only having come to a stop at the beginning of the valley. Still, in shock, I took another look to make sure that I wasn't making things up in my head. Not being able to think clearly, I went back inside closing the door with my cold hands. I quickly ran to the front door, put on my boots, grabbed my coat, and stepped outside onto the street.

I walked down the narrow road and turned left into the main street, that led to the end of the valley where the avalanche had stopped. As I turned, I could already see the blue lights of multiple police cars in the distance and I started to walk faster. As I got closer I saw a crowd of people standing around in a circle with the policemen standing in the middle. I was wondering what everyone was looking at... What could it be?

As I approached the circle I saw that the policemen were trying to keep everyone away... What didn't they want us to see? I stepped closer but as I was trying to look at what they were trying to hide, a young policeman asked me to keep my distance and step sway. I did as I was told and when I looked around me I began to recognise some people I knew. I had been so focused on figuring out what was going on that I had completely blanked out everything. Suddenly a woman came towards me. Only when she was only a few meters away from me, I realised that it was my neighbour Jasmine.

I was still in a state of confusion and didn't know what was going on when all of a sudden she said: "Carol, I'm so sorry! It must be really hard for you!". Now it didn't make any sense to me at all! What was going on here?! Still perplexed, I answered sharply: "Jasmine, what are you talking about?!". After she realised that I could not follow her, she took me by the arm and

walked with me to the policemen. She exchanged some words with one of them but the only thing I could understand was Carol saying "... that's her!". Why are they all looking at me so strangely?

A little later, the policeman took me aside and said with a serious face: "I know it won't be easy for you, but I need to show you something." I was perplexed and unable to answer, so I nodded. Then he led me to the centre of the circle and I saw what they had been hiding from the public. Now it started to make sense! It was a gurney covered with a white cloth. When I saw that, I could already guess what would be underneath.

With a worried face, the policeman took another look at me and then slowly lifted the cloth. No! That couldn't be true! I was overwhelmed with emotions and tears began to stream down my face. What I was seeing was the dead body of my beloved spouse, who had been missing for more than a year...