

I got your email, and I guess I should also reply via email, but I can't right now. And this way you can hear my voice, right? I remember you saying to me 'it's good to hear your voice, Felisa' whenever I called your office or dropped by when something could have been an email. And I guess... Well, I guess maybe that expression isn't just about the subject or the conversation point. Maybe it is about the other person. And how you're feeling that day. And you constantly feel like hearing my voice. Because of what it means.

I understand, you know? Maybe not well and maybe there are things that I constantly overlook, but I understand more than I let on. Right now, I understand that you care about me. I understand that you are genuinely and earnestly concerned about me. But I also understand that you are only human. You aren't going to know what to say to me all the time or what to think of this. Because there's a couple options here, and neither of them are really great. There's the realistic version or the compassionate version. Obviously, I didn't actually see anyone. Or best case scenario I did not. Or maybe it's not even the best case scenario. Regardless, I'm clearly going back and forth on it. And there's... There's a reason I want to believe, right? Which goes back to my family, and there's a whole lot of issues to unpack there.

(Pause)

I did think about contacting that cousin-ish, adjacent. *(Sigh)* I did think about contacting the person who put this idea in my head who is also technically family. I did think of trying to look up his social media profiles and see if he was like 'check it out. I pulled an epic prank.' Presumably, that prank would have been on me. I know he has profiles. Social media is big here. Which makes sense, I guess, considering how many

families are spread out all over the world. It couldn't be that hard to find him. But that's probably super ill-advised because I know I can be a bit naive and gullible. I get it. I have an ounce of self-awareness. It was this way before the accident, so I can't even blame brain damage for that one. And I'm sure all that research that I did just embedded the mental image of a woman on the mountain into my mind. And I was tired because I decided to research instead of sleep. But I've gotten by on less sleep. I'm a college student. All-nighters are part of the deal. Okay, I was the typical college student. Having one class a semester was supposed to make that not necessary or possible, and... Well sometimes, hip pain keeps me up at night.

But I wasn't... I don't think I was asleep. I don't remember being that tired or not being able to stand or move around. Everything was normal and fine, I mean. Unless I passed out, which I guess could have happened abruptly. But--But here's the timeline. If I passed out, it would have had to be either before I heard the voice or soon after it happened, right? Like, if this was a dream of some kind, the intensity of it gets too much for it to be a waking-sort-of dream. And if that's true, I would have been around my family when I went down or a place where they could have found me more easily. It wouldn't have taken so long to find me if I went down right away, which presumably I would have had to do.

And I do remember walking, though. With the woman. She didn't tell me her name. I didn't ask. Maybe if she had, I would know for sure that I was having hallucinated because, well, wouldn't my brain need to draw from some repertoire of stuff in order to make the image or the other parts because there was sound too. There was

a voice, and it didn't seem familiar. I mean, when I think back, it's not the sort of thing I can place or recall hearing before.

Also, no, I did not see my grandpa. I know you were politely dancing around the issue a bit. Talking about grief and mourning and the context. Yeah, I... I know. I was just talking about the issues I have with his memory or not having a decent one of him. So there are gaps that could have been filled. Maybe there's a goodbye that could be had that would actually give me closure with him.

Instead, I--I have the exact opposite right now. I'm so far from closure you don't even know. I--I need to know what happened. But okay, let's be reasonable again. I don't know enough about hallucinations to know if any of what I was saying about them actually makes sense. Or to know for certain if I was having one. I probably don't know. Probably everything before this was inaccurate. The brain is a difficult thing to describe. So there probably could be random and fantastical hallucinations out there. Not unlike the one I could have been having, but okay, if we're gonna start on this road, couldn't it have been more dramatic? Or not, it didn't have to be more dramatic. It could just be what it was. But maybe it's a sign that... Well, if I was hallucinating, then something is wrong with me.

Paramedics did say I had a bump on my head after the accident, but when we got to the hospital, it was... It wasn't a concern. For all my injuries that one didn't seem too bad. Also it seemed like my brain hadn't been without blood for a worrisome amount of time so check that box off on the 'is everything fine' checklist. I was probably fine cognitively, but they tested me anyway before I left the hospital. And then sometime after at the lawyer's insistence because insurance reasons. And both times, I was fine.

There was no indication I wasn't fine or that something could develop in time. Then again, there's a class of disorders and diseases out there or multiple types that can strike people independent of whether or not they were in a bad accident.

In either situation, the implications of that are horrifying, if I'm to be completely honest. And maybe that's why I'm not mentally committing to this. For me, personally, it's hard enough being physically impaired. At least I can chew out someone if I finally lose my patience. And losing this last bastion of comfort is not something I can handle. And I know I say that a lot. But I mean it. I would never say that sort of existence is not worth having or living. Nothing like that. What I mean is.... that I'm just so tired. All my batteries are empty, and it is so hard for me to recharge them as it is. And no one around me is willing to help. I just want someone to help me. Or not someone. Like I said, I know you're trying to help me. It's going to take multiple people because this is not something you can do all the time. You don't know the vocabulary or context I'm working with. To this day, there's a lot about my family's life or beliefs that is mystical. And not just in the Catholic sense. Lolo might have been the big believer in the traditional ways, but his legacy still lives on. In us. In this family because it is a way that we can hold onto him.

It might not be about grief to me, but if I tell my family about this, it will be about grief to them. The people who actually remember him. They won't... Well, they aren't the best about consistently thinking about my welfare. I have to do that for me. So while I sort this out and maybe afterwards, I'm going to keep this to myself. Or between you and me.

I'm happy to hear that my mom hasn't tried to contact you since then. I've been worried that she will. Because she can tell that something is up with me and has taken it personally that I won't tell her what it is. But I can't. I really can't. I'm sure deep down, she doesn't want this situation to get worse and trying to tell her is going to do just that.

I'll be okay, though, Professor. I promise.

(Pause. Music fades in)

The Mountain's Heart is a production of Hugot Podcasting. And this end song comes from the Sounds like an Earful music supply. See you in two weeks.