**Uncle Pete**

1.

And this is uncle Pete. He wasn’t exactly my uncle rather granny’s brother. He lived by the lake in a small shrub. Had his own small dock and a wooden boat, which we used to go fishing with. Then there was this old willow. Uncle loved the willow, he talked to it, but only in his mood. Laurice, he called her. She was his only company when I wasn’t around.

He wasn’t very good with people, not even granny. Pete lived all alone since I remember. Something like Mr Nelson. But people weren’t so afraid of him, as of Mr Nelson. It was just forbidden, it was unfair if you ask me. Everybody avoided him. Even though he was a good person. He was silly only in his mood. All red and smelly, flailing hands, suddenly angry with everyone.

But not with me, he was always good to me and other children. I loved playing with him, crafting small wooden boats, taking care of his herbs or fishing. Once in a while, I delivered the package to Oleg. Uncle would always give me some money for it. Oleg as well! But most of all cooking. His cooking was superb. He was a really good cook. Small garden behind his house was filled with numerous herbs and shrooms of all sizes and colours. Sauces he’d made out of them were top-notch. If only sauces. When I was really small I thought he was a crazy alchemist. He could do anything out of them. Stews, liquors, syrups, cakes. Even smelly candles. Anything you could imagine. Not everything he allowed me to taste. ‘The Powder’ he called it. ‘’The purest essence.’’, he used to say. It always made him sneeze. That’s when his mood was the biggest. But he used it only for special occasions, even then he smelled only a little.

For example for Laurice’s birthday. She was a bit younger than him, 64. He would give some Powder to her as well.

2.

The last time we spoke, we had an argument.  I was really curious about that Powder of his. I wanted to try some. I wasn’t small anymore. He said, that when I grow I could try some. But when? When?

So I sneaked to his brewery. It was when I was 13, he always hid his key under a rusty mug in a hallway. He kept it on the floor. I it was a mystery for me for a long time. Why he keeps a mug on the floor? For doors maybe? Then once I saw him putting the key under it, he said that I’m old enough. ‘Never tell anyone’. I didn’t, well except for Andrew.

There were many different ‘instruments’ that I didn’t understand. Weird pipes from the roof, some of them were leaking, there was this big orange container with a thermometer on it and clock looking mechanism but instead of time, there were letters and drawings. The tiny hand moved really fast and made a big blur. There were boxes with things packed in plastic bags and basket with cupcakes. I really wanted one, but I got hold of myself, they were for Oleg. Before he ate one himself. Then he went working on his rock garden without his shoes. I think he just went there to have some time with Laurice. Next to basked was the jar that I was looking for, red lid with white dots. It was just when I was having a taste when he suddenly rushed in and started screaming. I had gone so scared that I dropped the jar and everything was on the floor. Then he was shouting even more. The Powder somehow evaporated after a while, pink smoke rose and filled the room with sweet odour. My hands went numb and I couldn’t stand his mood anymore, so I rushed out of the room with tears. It was the first time that Uncle was angry with me and justly.  I slammed the door of his house, that’s when I realised that my legs are getting numb as well. I got a little dizzy. I nearly fell to the lake, but Laurice warned me to mind my step.

3.

I remember the last time that I went to his place. It was after Christmas. It started on the way to his place, this weird feeling of foreboding. Nice cool afternoon, snow just started dropping. I wasn’t talking to him lately. I started perceiving his behaviour as strange. That made me feel bad because that’s how everybody perceived him and I liked him and I knew, that he is a good person. I felt guilty about it. I stopped by the lake, sat on a bench. I opened my bag and grabbed a frame in a plastic foil.  I had a gift for him. A framed picture that I took some time ago, of him and Laurice. I slightly opened it, just to take a peak. It was fine, I feared that glass had broken when my bag fell from a wall when grandma was cleaning. But the biscuits that Oleg gave me were all mushed up. That made me even more sad. I wanted to share them with Uncle. I ate those that looked good and dumped the rest. Than I sad for a bit more. I love this lake, it’s so quiet, now that snow was falling, it looked even more beautiful. My mood suddenly got much better. I stood up and went to his place. As I was getting closer I was walking faster and faster, I was so happy, finally, after a long time, I’ll see him. In the end, I was running, not only from joy but I was a little scared, all those trees were giving me funny looks. When I got close to his house it was already dark. Then I froze. I couldn’t move or say a word. I saw it. I saw him, standing in his rock garden, with his hands up. There was a turquoise light coming out of the willow. He looked rather happy, crying. I was happy as well, it all made sense now. I wanted to say something or at least wave, but I couldn’t. Then he slowly went to Laurice and hugged it. The light started going threw him. More and more, until he wasn’t.

