

GEORG

“The Magic Mountain.” I bought it for myself — for my birthday. If you like — I’d lend it to you...

AMALIA

Is he — completely bald?

GEORG

Does that matter? I thought you were in love with him...?

AMALIA

I *am* in love with him, Mr. Nowack. I *am*. It’s just — you know — I thought — I hoped...

(Pulls herself together)

I’m so ashamed of myself! As if appearances made a difference!! The important thing is the letters. Just look at all the immortal works of art — the rapturous love stories — that were written by elderly men, bald men, fat men — with indigestion and terrible tempers — but somewhere deep inside — they had the magic... and that’s a glory beyond estimation!

GEORG

You put it very well, Miss Balash.

AMALIA

I feel very well! I feel marvelous!! Oh — thank you, Mr. Nowack! Thank you for coming here today! Thank you for my life!!

(AMALIA kisses GEORG quite impulsively. For her it is a little kiss — but it rocks GEORG. SHE runs around the room, pulling up the window shades. Sun pours in)

I’m going to write to him — this very minute. So he’ll have a letter waiting. But I won’t mention you — since that might be embarrassing.

GEORG

Yes, I would appreciate that.

(Stands)

Well — I guess I’ll get back to the shop...

AMALIA

And I’ll follow — as soon as I’ve written the letter!

GEORG

Oh, no. There’s no need for that. Take the rest of the day off. Relax. Read a book. Have you finished “Anna Karenina” yet?

AMALIA

Oh, yes. A long time ago.

GEORG

So did I. But it's remarkable how it stays with me. You know — every platform — every station platform with a train puffing in — is Anna's platform — wherever it may be. And I can see her — actually see her come out of the crowd and walk slowly toward her death. I've even tried to stop her a few times. But she always vanishes into the smoke and steam...

AMALIA

How odd, Mr. Nowack. How very odd. You know — in one of his letters... I wish I could show it to you...

GEORG

You mean — Dear Friend's had the same experience?

AMALIA

More than once!

GEORG

Well — goodbye, Miss Balash.

AMALIA

Goodbye. Oh, Mr. Nowack! May I tell you something — quite sincerely?

(GEORG nods. AMALIA continues with astonished delight)

I like you, Mr. Nowack. Really! I like you!

GEORG

Thank you, Miss Balash. See you in the morning...

#44 *Vanilla Ice Cream* (Amalia)

AMALIA

In the morning.

(GEORG EXITS. AMALIA closes the door. SHE goes to the table and takes out pen and paper. She thinks for a moment, then starts to write)

Dear Friend...

I AM SO SORRY ABOUT LAST NIGHT.
IT WAS A NIGHTMARE IN EVERY WAY