

Into the Mist

Those who never stumbled across the power of suggestion, they cannot fully grasp how thin the veil of rationality may be, which wraps the desiring force of the human soul like a fragile egg shell. Suggestion is often connected with fear, as I expounded in another tale, yet can sometimes be triggered by even subtler factors that are more difficult to recognise and, therefore, more dangerous. One of those is the state of emotional alteration known as obsession. Those affected by this condition believe that something is true only relying on absolutely inconsistent evidence and logical deductions as arbitrary as false, yet entrenching themselves into their convictions with formidable exaltation and enthusiasm. Too often, among those who fall into the trap of seduction are the most rational and logical people and, most of all, explorers. I want to tell you a dark story that ended in tragedy, which I directly, albeit collaterally, witnessed during one of my long voyages as a lonely hiker. The events unfolded in Greenland, in the far North where the summer sun never goes below the horizon, and owing to a series of unfortunate circumstances, I was forced to settle in a small hotel in the village of J., over five hundred kilometres from Nuuk on the western coast. There, I came across Bradford McNamara and Claire Johnson. Brad recorded their trip on his camera, and that footage has been an invaluable source to get a picture of the hours Brad and Claire spent in J. before my arrival. In fact, the time we

shared was short, and the circumstances were unhappy, and this is the story of that encounter I never forgot.

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Brad and Claire had travelled all day long. They first landed in Nuuk, where they boarded another aircraft, an old propeller flying taxi on which they flew through a scary storm, whose gale-force winds shook and rocked the plane like a toy. The pilot, a man of few words, hardly spoke English and must have been pretty drunk. He was skilled, nonetheless, and eventually landed the aircraft on the short runway at the very end of the village of J.

«Folks», he said, climbing off the plane, «Hotel is there. Big house on sea. Good luck.»

«Are you leaving already?», Brad asked.

«Yep.»

«But the storm is still there.»

«The storm, no problem. I know to do. Passengers in Nuuk, like you.»

«Are you flying them here, too?»

The pilot shrugged and repressed a burp. The two foreigners stood on the edge of the runway, staring at the aeroplane taking off. As the buzz faded out, they remained in the profound silence broken only by the waves breaking against the rocks and the high-pitched calls of the seagulls. They looked around, awed by the breadth of the northern sky. The long-lasting twilight was getting dark. The sun shone low on the

horizon and her rays painted red the low rocky hills. Brad filmed with an eye for details, as if he were shooting a documentary.

The village seemed empty. Not a soul was around, and only a few parked cars revealed the presence of some inhabitants. There was nothing like a square, a boulevard, or gardens. Dozens of tiny colourful homes were scattered here and there, looking more like a cluster of farmhouses than a proper village. The only living creatures Brad and Claire could see were the sleigh dogs dozing in the small gardens or by the low wooden gates. The beasts lay or sat still, looking at the strangers with their cold, blue eyes. The travellers crossed the village without meeting anyone, although some windows were lightened. The large building of the hotel, painted in dark shades of red and green, stood out at the other end of the hamlet, right on the edge of the rocky shore, at whose bottom there was a small pier with two or three moored boats. Some light came out of the hotel's ground-floor windows, relieving Claire. It is comforting indeed when one arrives in a strange place to find out that foreigners already dwell there and perhaps have knowledge to share. Brad looked at his watch and noticed it was almost ten, but the sun did not feel like setting. Stars feebly shone in the east, and a big, bloody Moon rose almost ominously above the inland heights. It is hard to get used to those endless twilights despite their being among the most beautiful spectacles one may contemplate.

Right beyond the door, the foreigners found a rack with a sign hanging from it, on which they read: «Welcome! Feel

free to use the kitchen and choose any vacant room (keys in the doors already). We'll be back soon.»

«This ain't exactly a Welcome Wagon», Claire muttered.

«Not at all.»

«Why is nobody there?»

«They must have had some business out of town. You saw what it takes to travel in this country. Don't worry, they'll be back soon.»

The large hall received the light of twilight through two windows, from which one could also see the bay and the strip of rocky land stretching out into the sea. The furniture was made of seasoned, knotty fir. The walls were crowded with pictures of local landscapes, northern lights and whirlpools, reindeer and mountains, and other odd tools. There were hooks, bowel ropes, seal skins, canteens, baleen, a twisted harpoon, sleigh skates, carved tambourines, and many other old and worn-out things.

«My God, it seems an ethnographic museum», Claire said. «Do you dig that? Those objects once belonged to human beings. Life had to be pretty harsh, round here.»

«It must still be, I reckon. Now the sun won't set, but I would rather be somewhere else when the winter comes. What do people live by here? We flew for over five-hundred kilometres above a landscape of barren rocks and ice.»

Silence in the hotel was complete. The kitchen was tidy, as if no one had used it for a while. A small door gave access to the backyard, where a flight of slippery steps carved into the stone descended to the pier.

«Very well», Brad said, looking at the moored boats. «Now we know how to explore the coast beyond the promontory. The Well must be out somewhere out there.»

The upper floors were, if possible, an even stranger world. An uneven corridor crossed the building from one side to the other, and two small windows at its ends let in a little light. Otherwise, some lamps hanging from the walls gave a feeble yellow light. Four doors were in the corridor, two on each side, and the two flights of stairs going up and down were on opposite ends, so one had to walk the whole aisle to reach the upper or lower floor. The two guests climbed to the last floor, where only two doors opened on a short and narrow corridor. Both the rooms were vacant, but one was small and dark, while the other seemed more welcoming despite the steep ceiling. Two dormers offered an astounding view of the fjord, and as Brad opened the window saw a school of whales blowing at the mouth of the bay. Claire proposed to occupy only the larger room, and Brad agreed.

There, the recording stopped and started again at about eleven in the night, when they got to the kitchen looking after something to eat. In the twilight, the lightened windows looked like many candles in a cemetery. They grabbed a handful of biscuits, a box of canned fish and a jar of pickled gherkins and returned to their room, where the recording stopped again.

They got up in a foul mood and horribly thirsty because of the salty fish, and Claire drew the curtains to let in the morning light. She took up the camera and began to film the change occurred outside. The weather had changed. The sea

was rough, and the sky was sullen. Powerful gusts swept the bay. In the footage, just for an instant, one can see a tiny human silhouette standing out against the sombre sky on the rocky top of the promontory. Claire stayed a little on that figure, zooming in, before she turned to film the ocean. She took a shower downstairs in the shared bathroom, and Brad went to the kitchen to prepare breakfast.

«I heard someone in room n. 6 while I was under the shower», Claire said as she reached Brad. «I'm afraid I woke them up.»

«Good, so they're real. I thought I was beginning to see things.»

«Meaning?»

«I'm not sure I dreamt about that, for I don't even know whether I slept a wink. Anyway, I thought I heard someone sneaking around in the hotel, like light steps and some creaks in the stairs. I thought the landlords had come home, but they're not, as you can see. It'll be like you said, it must have been one of the other guests.»

Claire remained silent and, after a while, she told him about the strange figure she had filmed.

«These folks are strange», he said without paying too much importance. «Today I would like to explore the other side of the fjord. Maybe someone will be willing to ferry us with one of those boats, admitting the sea will let us.»

«As the landlords come home, we'll ask. Now let's have some breakfast.»

«Sure. I'd only like that this damn phone would connect to the Internet, I need to study the map of the fjord», Brad said, chewing on his toast. Too bad the line was down.

«It pisses me off», he said. «I hope to get some signal before we leave. I'm afraid the storm caused some disruption on the grid.»

«Or it might be magnetic interference», Claire suggested. «After all, this is the region of the northern lights.»

Brad began to draw a rudimentary map of the fjord, only relating on his memory, while explaining to Claire that once they reached the end of the cape, they would finally see the other side of the fjord. Their conversation, however, was interrupted by a man in his thirties, who came in unnoticed, so deeply were the two explorers absorbed in their map. They gave a start as they saw him. He wore a light waterproof jacket and carried a heavy backpack. He was pale and visibly tired. He looked around, observing the vast collection of useless objects hanging from the walls. As he saw Brad and Claire staring at him, he nodded:

«Hi. Are you the landlords?»

«No, we're just guests. We arrived yesterday evening», Brad explained. «I'm afraid the landlords will stay away for a while yet. Did you read the sign? You'd better settle down, there's plenty of vacant rooms. Where you're from?»

The man stared back at Brad as if half-asleep:

«Me? I was hiking on the hills, somewhere about ten miles away from here, when my GPS died away. I got lost. Been out there for three days.»

«Oh my God, you must be dead tired», Claire grimaced.

The stranger nodded and sighed.

«You sure you don't want something? There some warm coffee.»

The man smiled and shook his head, then turned away and went upstairs. Heavy steps resounded from above, then a door slammed and utter silence returned.

«He must have fallen on the bed with his boots on», Brad chuckled. «He really was wasted.»

«Don't you find that a bit odd?», Claire asked thoughtfully.

«Why? He got lost, that's all. You heard him, his GPS died out.»

«That's not what I meant. Something's wrong with this place. Where is everyone? Look at that village, it's already seven and there's no one around. The lights are on, but none of those homes seem occupied. Why?»

«Look, these folks are used to living at night for six months a year, I reckon it'd be only natural for them to keep the lights on. They wouldn't even think about that anymore, possibly.»

«If we only could speak to the other guests, they might have met the landlords.»

«What do you worry about? As far as we know, that woman you saw earlier may be our landlady.»

«I didn't say anything about a woman. I saw someone, that's all.»

«Oh, I was sure you'd said she was a woman. Anyway, who cares? We oughta move now, the earlier we start the faster we finish. We can't stay here all day long, waiting for someone to come home.»

They left the hotel at about half past eight and crossed the empty village under the silent gazes of the dogs. They walked along the rocky cliff, accurately filming the landscape, the sky, and the sea. The wind was cold and violent showers poured down at short intervals. They had to walk to the very end of the cliff to see beyond the promontory without climbing over its peak, when a sudden sound rose from below, an unsteady buzz coming in waves as if its source was bouncing on the rough sea.

«It's the boat!», Brad cried, pointing his finger to a tiny white spot struggling with the waves about a mile offshore. «Damn! They're westbound, look!»

The boat slowly crawled against the wind, passing beyond the promontory. It then veered to the north and proceeded into the open sea until the wind overcame the feeble buzz of the engine. Brad and Claire reached the edge of the cliff and finally saw the northern side of the coast, which took their breath away. A thick, white bank of mist floated on the ocean about one hundred metres from the shore.

«So this is it», Brad muttered in awe. «That's what the Vikings saw one thousand years ago. The Pit must be somewhere in there.»

Brad was so exhilarated that he hugged Claire and leapt here and there like a happy child, unconcerned about the slippery rocks.

«I knew it was here, I was sure we'd find it», he blabbered excitedly.

«Brad, watch out, you're gonna slip. Don't jump around like a frog!»

«What are you talking about? Don't kill my vibe! Don't you get it? We've found it! We only have to wait for the boat to come back...»

Suddenly, Brad quieted down and frowned.

«Good Lord, and what if that boat was carrying *someone else* to the Pit?»

«What do you mean?»

«Other researchers, you know? Someone who's looking for the Pit, just like us. Perhaps the other guests of the hotel!»

«I don't think that's be possible, Brad. If anyone had been searching for the Pit, we would have known over the years. The search for the Pit is in our hands, it always has. Com'on calm down now. Let's go back. We'll wait for the boat at the hotel.»

They walked back to the hotel, and the rain caught up with them as they were a few steps from the house but still in time to soak them to the skin. Brad and Claire climbed to their room to wear something dry, and while crossing the corridor, they noticed room n. 6 was vacant.

«This room was occupied this morning!», Claire said. «We should ask that young hiker, maybe he met them.»

«Never mind. We'd better keep our eyes open and wait for that boat to return. I don't care who knows what. I only want to get on that boat and find the Pit.»

Claire was right, for I had occupied room n. 6 before I made up my mind to change it to the vacant room on the third floor, right opposite the n. 9, occupied by them. I switched room because n. 6 was directly next to the shared bathroom, and Claire had woken me up when she had show-

ered. I found it already unnerving enough that the sun never set, so I was not also willing to let my neighbours' visit to the loo keep me awake. It was thus that from my new room, I could hear their conversation and Brad's complaints. His voice trembled with restrained anger. I soon realised the man was obsessed with some idea that, over the years, had wound up penetrating into his brain like a nail and that now, a step away from the goal, tortured him like an old, rusty harpoon torments the flesh of a whale. Perhaps owing to sleep deprivation, the long journey and the unnerving rain the wind washed against the walls as if to tear them down, they fell asleep very late. When Brad woke up, the storm was gone and the sun shone down between shreds of thin herring-boned clouds. I was returning to my room from the kitchen when I heard some noises and Brad crying:

«Damn it! They're back, and we are sleeping like two jackasses.»

He flung the door open and jumped out but did not run far because he bumped into me, scaring me to death.

«Who are you? What were you doing behind my door?», he asked angrily, but I disliked his tone and replied sharply:

«If I am not wrong, it's you that charged me like a bull, sir.»

«I am sorry, I wouldn't imagine you might be there», he said, regaining his temper.

«When did you arrive?», Claire asked, emerging over his shoulder.

«It must have been four in the morning, I cannot say precisely. I was tired, or rather dead. That endless daylight made me lose track of the passing time.»

They exchanged a bewildered glance.

«Did you arrive on a small plane from Nuuk, perhaps?», he asked.

«No, I travelled by car. A local gave me a lift.»

«And who would that be?», Claire insisted.

«I told you, I don't know, I had never seen him before.»

«And that person, does he live in the village? Could you see in which house?»

«He dropped me and drove on, I don't think he was from around here.»

«So you didn't book your room in advance, either?»

«Course not, I had never heard this village before», I explained, pretty annoyed.

«And did you see anybody in the village?»

«Not a soul. Now, if you allow me, I am fed up with your questioning and would like to get some sleep.»

I accepted Brad's apology with a grunt and shut my door on his face. They recoiled into their room too. You may need to know that all the hotel's walls were made of a thin layer of wood, and therefore I could hear every rustle and whisper coming from room n. 8. My neighbours' behaviour struck me so much that I sat in the armchair where I stayed awhile, sunken in my ruminations. In the meantime, I listened to their conversation, learning their names and a good deal of their story, for they spoke a lot about their research, mentioning more than once a place called the Pit. He kept claiming this must be the right place. The only thing they still did not know was what they should look for, a mountain, an island or a cave. Brad claimed it would be a small island because all the

manuscripts he had studied agreed with the oral tradition that the Pit was detached from the mainland. Claire, conversely, argued this should be taken metaphorically, for the Pit was the threshold between our world and the mythical Land of the Mist. She sounded more reasonable, but her arguments lacked the strength to stand against Brad's obsession. I made notes of those parts of their conversation that seemed more interesting, notes that I later used to carry out some research that led me directly to Brad and Claire's scientific contributions (although I should express several doubts concerning the methodological rigour and the credibility of their hypotheses). I understood that Brad and Claire had spent twenty years at least collecting clues scattered in all possible manuscripts, scrolls and oral traditions after having explored half of Scandinavia, Iceland, the wild shores of Newfoundland and Western Nunavut, seeking the legendary Hell's Pit. They had securely established a connection between this legend and the ancient legend of the Cimmerians, whose land beyond Scythia in the deep heart of Asia would be the mythical place of birth of dreams. That would be the land the Vikings tried to reach, sailing westwards and through the Northwest Passage. Brad was absolutely sure that at least one Viking crew had landed in the very fjord he and Claire were about to explore.

Their conversation was abruptly interrupted, and I heard Brad run down the corridor, chased by Claire. I opened my door a crack and saw Brad standing at the end of the corridor, looking through the window and pointing his finger at the promontory. Over there, on the top of the hill, a woman dressed in black with long, wild red hair stood against the sky.

The evening came down, or I should better say an endless, unnerving twilight. At about midnight, I heard a sound, which I knew not whether it was the last impression of a dream or the first blurry apprehension of reality. It sounded like a low rumbling. Claire came out and went downstairs, and I silently followed her and hid in the hall. The sound I heard came from a running engine. Claire ran to the door and stormed out, but the road was already empty. Brad was up, too, and reached Claire in the hall. From my hiding place, I could hear their conversation:

«You're afraid of everything and don't see but threatens and oddities. There was a car outside, so what?», he snapped. Then he calmed down and continued:

«Let's try and pull ourselves together. We're almost there to harvest the fruits of many years of work. I don't like this place either, this damn endless daylight gets me on my nerves. Only a few days still, and we'll get the answers we seek. Then we'll leave this place at once. I promise, I will find the way to get on that boat today. We're going to find out what we've come here for.»

His tone betrayed his irritation. As they climbed upstairs, I remained hidden behind a large chest, waiting for them to retire into their room. Instead, I heard light footsteps and thought that Claire was returning downstairs again. It was not her, though. Someone was in the hall, whom I could not see from my hiding place. Brad meanwhile came down again, but as soon as he landed on the floor, a dark shape bolted across the hall and disappeared through the kitchen door. Brad cried, grabbed the poker from the fireplace and darted out in pursuit.

I was too scared to show myself and face a mysterious intruder and an overreacting armed man in that absurd night without darkness and yet devoid of enlightenment. How could I justify my presence in the hall, hiding behind a chest, without admitting I was eavesdropping? Everything sounded ridiculous and dangerous at once. After a while, Brad came in and pushed the armchair against the corner, from where he could watch the doors and windows. He sat in the chair holding his pointed iron in his hand, and there waited. Thus, I found myself completely trapped in my uncomfortable hideout. When Claire came down to check on the noises, she saw him sitting there with the poker in his hand, a perfect warden for that bizarre mansion.

«What are you doing?», she asked bewildered.

«Do you remember the woman we saw, standing on the hill? She was here.»

«Excellent! Is she the landlady?», she asked, looking at the poker in Brad's hand.

«*Absolutely not!*»

«Who is she then?»

«I have no clue. She ran away through the kitchen door and fled into the backyard. She looked like... a phantom.»

«I told you there's something wrong with this place», she said in anguish. «I don't like it. The village seems abandoned, then we find out it's inhabited by mysterious motorists and boat pilots who sail away in the mid of a storm. Strange people come as if fallen from the sky, wasted and lost, and never come out of their rooms but to disappear as they came, all at once. And now this woman, who seems to summon mist and

squalls, sneaks into the hotel and vanishes as a ghost. Don't you find it a bit too odd? I don't want to remain here one minute more. Please, call and ask to send a plane. otherwise, I will walk away, I swear. I implore you, let's leave this place.»

Brad listened to her with an expression of regret and compassion. I suppose he had never seen his friend and companion so afraid. He looked weary and worried, too, but his monomaniacal idea must have been rooted too deep in his mind:

«Look, I understand how you feel and believe me, I would walk away right now too. But think about the Pit. Think about all our work, hope, and frustrations. It has been our life for over twenty years, and now we're almost there. Should we give up now because some odd coincidences scary us off?»

«Coincidences?», Claire vented out her exasperation. «Can't you see the mark of the supernatural all around? This village is not dwelled by the living, and those dogs watch over their homes, or better said their tombs. You know well the ancient traditions. And who about those guests who pop by? Did you notice how pale and lifeless they seem? They're ghosts, I tell you! Lost souls who don't know they died. They roam, lost and lonely, and end up here because this is the place, the passage on the border. They seek for it too, they sense its presence and are attracted to it, so they arrive, sooner or later, to this abandoned hotel. From here they sail for their last voyage. Who do you think that boat carried away, into the mist?»

Brad stared at her with horror:

«So we'd be...»

«Dead, yeah. Do you remember the storm? We probably crashed. That's why we lost all contacts with the outer world and are bound to this hotel. No landlord and a wide-open door. Do you dig it?»

I leave it to you to try and imagine the state of terror Claire's words cast me into. Did I die? How? When? Was it an accident? Did someone murder me? Did I slip in the shower? However, a part of my mind laughed at such codswallops and repeated that I was there for a simple reason. I had climbed into that car only to skip a six-hour walk across a storm. I calmed down a little, even though I must admit that the crazy idea of being dead and trapped in that Greenlandic version of Hotel California never left me until the end of this story. After all, I could see that Claire's theory had not taken hold of Brad's mind either. He grew pale but soon burst into laughter and stood up, pacing the room.

«Damn it, Claire», he said with forced cheer, «you got so close! You almost scared the hell out of me. But I don't believe you. We may go upstairs and knock at the doors, then you'd see the other guests are alive like the inhabitants of the village, if only we wanted to drag them out of their beds. Com'on, buck up! We're a step away from seeing it through. You're a rational, intelligent woman, You can't believe these old wives' tales.»

«I agree with you, it's a clever idea!», she stirred. «Let's go knock at the doors, let's wake up everyone.»

In the same breath, the woman was already on the stairs. I heard her stomping along the corridor, banging at the doors. However, I knew she'd be bound to be disappointed, for all

rooms were empty. I had seen the young hiker in room n. 3 leave – supposedly without paying – and as to me, you already know where I was. I confess that I still feel guilty for my cowardice. Had I jumped out and found a way to convince Brad and Claire that the power of suggestion was numbing their minds, things would perhaps have ended better than they did.

Claire came back pale in her face and crestfallen.

«No one is upstairs», she said feebly.

«So what? This means nothing. They might have gone out to walk or be gone, who cares?»

Claire's chin trembled, in her eyes I saw fear blending with discouragement.

«What's happening?»

«Oh please», Brad snapped. «How can you still believe in that crazy idea of yours? You see ghosts and witchcraft everywhere. The sun must have dispersed the mist, why don't we go and see? There's light enough to walk.»

«All right. But you must promise me that if that bank of mist sill lies out there, we pack and leave at once.»

«I promise.»

So they left the hotel and headed for the cape. After a while, I followed them, hiding among the rocks along the way. I must have looked pretty ridiculous, chasing them in my pyjamas. I had no watch and could not tell the time, it might be perhaps two or three in the morning. As they reached the edge and looked to the north, their hearts sank, for the thick mist lay still and red in the early sunlight. At that moment, a terrifying burst of crazy laughter filled the air. On

the top of the hill, a red-headed woman dressed in a black robe madly laughed, waving and stretching her white-as-leper arms against the sky. And then, with a buzz from below, I saw the white speck of a boat slowly crawling on the calm sea towards the north at the mouth of the fjord. Claire and Brad looked at the advancing boat as if hypnotised until it disappeared into the foggy bank, which engulfed the buzz.

«I must know what lies in that mist!», Brad cried, darting there in a mad chase along the cliff. Claire called him back desperately as he leapt from rock to rock like a goat, and the woman on the hill seemed to fall prey to an inexplicable frenzy. She shouted and wriggled and eventually ran down the hill and darted toward the village. Claire was paralysed by terror. She looked at Brad, running on the cliff made slippery by the recent rain. I saw him become smaller and smaller until I could only spot the bright red speck of his jacket leaping here and there. The mist engulfed him. A flock of seagulls remained floating a few metres above where he disappeared, casting high cries. Claire leaned against a rock as if struck by a hard blow. I was paralysed and looked in awe. I now saw the power of the obsession that had worn out Brad's mind, urging him to chase his phantoms up to that high cliff and into the mist.

They both had pursued a legend, perhaps scarifying everything to the endeavour, money, youth, time, and family. I had heard them talk about it with that determination that only innerves the words and thoughts of passionate people. I saw Claire walk down the cliff, followed by a flight of crying seagulls. Only then would I come out of my shameful stupor and

call her name, but in vain. My voice was blown in the wind, and Claire vanished in the mist.

That day, in the evening, the landlords came home. In the village of H., some ninety kilometres north, a relative of theirs had been injured in a car accident. They expected to meet Claire and Brad and were ready to apologise for having abandoned them so rudely. However, the two explorers never returned. Their bodies could not be found either. The rocks at the feet of the cliff are sharp, and the stream at the mouth of the fjord drags out into the ocean. No one but me had seen them walk on the perilous edge of the cliff before they vanished into the mist. Who would do such a foolish thing? Everyone in the village seemed to know that the northern side of the promontory could be accessed only by boat. However, the poor daughter of my landlord, the red-headed girl I had seen standing on the top of the hill, seemed to have something to say about the two researchers. Nobody paid her any attention, though, for she was mad. She had lost her mind long before, seeing her elder brother fall down the cliff and into the mist. Neither then, my landlord explained, could the body be found.

No one else had seen anything. As I said, the other guest had already left the hotel, and the boat's pilot knew nothing. I found Brad and Clair's things in their room, among which was the camera that Brad had forgotten as he had left the house in a rush for the last time. I eventually handed it over to the police. The inhabitants, in whose shy and silent customs did the foreigners think to see God knows what mysteries,

carried on with their lives unstirred. The silent gaze of their sleigh dogs, the mist, the cars at night and the lights at the windows may seem mysterious to the stranger, who in such a raw and majestic landscape feels lost and uneasy. For sure, those arctic nights when darkness never comes wear out the nerves of those who are not used to it. Brad and Claire, who were already obsessed with their endless search for an imaginary place, wound up seeing mysteries and prodigies even in the simple lifestyle of a fishing folk. Lured there by the phantom of a too-long pursued desire, they got lost forever, tumbling into the mist and on the slippery rocks, and falling down the most impervious cliff of the fjord, which the locals had always known by the iconic name of Pit of Hell.