



Sky Pirate

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Lars Nøhr Andresen for beta reading and tightening
Oliver Nøglebæk for illustrations
My wife for bearing with me

Dedicated to Sagad Al-Serjawi

Introduction

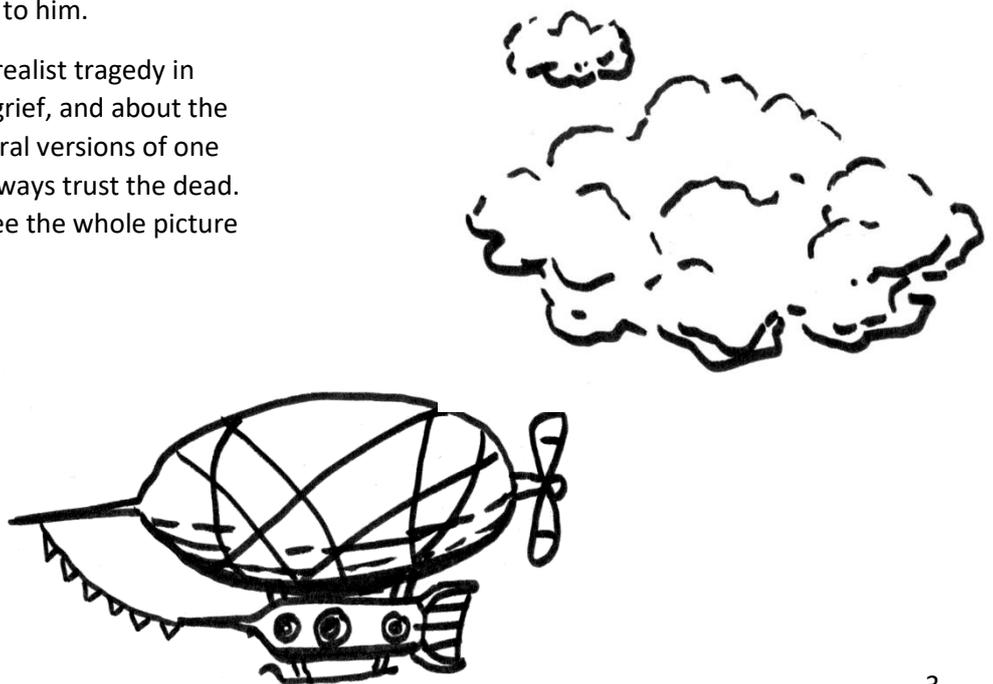
Sky Pirate is the story of the three sisters Solveig, Katinka and Cirkeline and their relationship to their mother, their grandmother and their deceased father.

A couple of years ago they lost their father, who took his own life. The girls visit their paternal grandmother every Friday. Grandma says that Dad isn't dead, but actually a sky pirate in Cloudland, and she has a new story every week about Dad's new life as a sky pirate.

They are retrieved by Mom, who isn't really on speaking terms with Grandma, but who reserves a cool politeness for her. They drive home to their apartment, eat dinner and watch Disney Afternoon. It is a routine the girls are used to. But on Katinka's 10th birthday all of that changes, as she gets a posthumous gift from Dad: a Ouija board.

They make contact with Dad, and things go quickly from there. Dad misses them and wants to be with them again. But as he cannot come to them, they will have to come to him.

Sky Pirate is a magical social-realist tragedy in three acts. A scenario about grief, and about the fact that there are often several versions of one truth. And that you cannot always trust the dead. It's about not being able to see the whole picture and coming through grief.



The Story

In this chapter we will elaborate on the tragic story that is Sky Pirate by going through the plot, structure and effects.

Background

Dad was bipolar and swung between mania and depression. He had done this for many years, but managed to mostly keep it at a tolerable level.

The three daughters usually experienced only his good side. When he was in a good mood. Or when he was in a wild mood. Fun Dad, as Katinka used to call him. He was an author and always home when they got home from school. Always ready to play. Build a cardboard fort in the garden. Make a catapult with the water cannon against the neighbors. A pillow fort through the entire house. Eating ice cream for breakfast. Cake for Dinner. With cocoa and cartoons.

Then he fought with Mom. She tried to save the sinking ship. She had him committed various times. In those periods, it was said that Dad was "on holiday".

After an especially difficult episode, Mom left Dad at last and took the girls with her. After half a year in which his condition only became worse, Mom decided to seek a divorce with full custody. Dad had become too irresponsible. It was dangerous for the young ones to be with him, without supervision.

The next day, he took his own life.

Now

It is now almost a year later. Mom and the girls live in a little dilapidated apartment in a gray complex. It was the only one they had money for.

She still owes the bank money from the sale of the old house. Mom is stressed, tired and run down. But in all the misery she's found a boyfriend, Torben. Torben is entirely ordinary. Exactly what she needs. But he is not Dad, which hasn't escaped the girls' notice, either.

The girls know virtually nothing about Dad's illness. Solveig knew something but struggles to see the full picture. The others have their own version of Dad and Mom, and why Mom left. They remember things differently, and each remembers the order of things differently. And they hold on to the conviction that their version is the right one.

And Grandma stands on the sideline. Grandma thinks that it's Mom's fault Dad took his own life. If Mom hadn't moved out and sought a divorce, Dad would still be alive.

Grandma fights her own battle to keep the memory alive and tells the girls that Dad is still alive. He has just moved to Cloudland, where he is a sky pirate and has all sorts of fantastic adventures. She tells these adventures every Friday, when the girls come around after school. The stories are sent to Grandma via airmail from Cloudland, she says.

And this is where the scenario starts. An entirely ordinary Friday at Grandma's house. With danishes and a new letter from Dad. At home, Mom and Disney Afternoon awaits, just like always.

Bipolar Disorder

Bipolar disorder is characterized by recurrent periods of both manic and depressive episodes.

There will be a manic exhilaration where one can handle everything but lacks the overview to finish anything. You are easily distracted and the mood does not match the situation you are in.

And when depression manifests itself, one becomes sad and discouraged, and loses the ability to feel. One cannot cheer up and may experience decreased self-confidence, as well as thoughts of death and suicide.

Structure

Sky Pirate is divided into three acts, which all have the same structure.

1. Visit with Grandma and a letter from Dad
2. Mom gets them and they drive the trip from Grandma, past the cemetery, and home.
3. Dinner and Disney Afternoon.
4. The ending changes from act to act: a children's birthday party, a quarrel, a fire.

In the first act the characters are introduced, and we establish routines and the small signs that foreshadow something larger (see the next chapter). Act 1 ends with the aftermath of Katinka's birthday, and contact with Dad via their newly acquired Ouija board. The first act is the longest.

In the second act we dial up the conflicts and the magic, while simultaneously retaining Friday's rigid structure. An unavoidable clash between Torben and Cirkeline is also the end of Mom and Torben's relationship. Torben leaves, Mom cries and in a session with the Ouija board Dad reveals to the girls that Grandma is in danger.

The third act starts at the hospital where Grandma has been admitted after she fell at home a week ago. She is dying, and the girls say farewell. Before they go they get one last letter, which they should open at home. When they get home Mom needs to get the candy for Disney Afternoon. While she's away they read the letter, which says that everything about Dad and Cloudland was a lie.

As foreshadowed through the whole scenario, the catastrophe occurs at last. As Disney Afternoon is starting, the television sparks and starts a fire. The girls can't get out of the apartment and burn, as they try to take refuge in their room.

They awaken with Dad in Cloudland.

Roles

Solveig, 12 years: serious and marked by the fact that it was her who found Dad. She sticks with Mom.

Katinka, 9 years: Thoughtful and diplomatic. Is more spiritual. She and her cat believe that they can feel Dad.

Cirkeline, 8 years: Fantasist, who believes everything Grandma says. And she hates Mom's new boyfriend.

Mom (NPC): Single mom to three demanding daughters. She tries to keep the sinking ship together. She hates that Grandma puts pictures in the girl's heads that Dad is a sky pirate.

Grandma (NPC): Bitter old lady, who loves her grandchildren. She thinks it's Mom's fault that Dad died. She keeps his spirit alive by telling stories about his life as a sky pirate.

Torben (NPC): Mom's boyfriend. He wants what's best, but he meets a lot of resistance from the girls.

Dad (NPC): Bipolar author, who struggled to hold his inner child in. Took his own life.

Mr. Herman (NPC). Katinka's cat. Black, scruffy and fat. Just like Dad. He showed up on the day Dad was buried.

Game Master

In this chapter you'll find clarification of the play elements you should be aware of as game master.

Play Technique

Sky Pirate is a classic round-the-table roleplay, also called **Nordic freeform**. The players play the three sisters, and the game master controls the battlefield and plays the few NPCs that visit the story.

Sky Pirate will at times take the form of a more **collaborative story**. During the scenario different scenes will be framed with questions for the players. They can be concrete questions about interior design, people, thoughts, or questions about things that happened earlier, which operate to create a common reference between the players.



Online roleplaying

To roleplay online is not entirely the same as sitting close around a table. Online roleplay does, however, have other options, which I have tried to put into play.

Background. There is a virtual background, a blue sky with clouds, which every player should use, on which the characters' names are also written. In this way all the participants are in the same virtual room, the same childish universe and they are never in doubt about who is who.

Ouija-board. Three times, the players will take the Ouija board out, and when that happens you will need to find the Ouija board file and share it on your screen. Your mouse will be the planchette the three sisters have a finger on. When they ask a question, you will guide the planchette from letter to letter. Do it at a tempo the players can follow.

Interaction between NPCs

Sky Pirate is a scenario that is seen from the children's point of view. And adults don't want to fight in front of the kids.

Therefore, there are some rules for interaction for NPCs in the scenario:

The adults NEVER fight where the children can see it.

So if you decide that an adult says one thing, the other adults will either give agree with the first adult or just smile, embarrassed, and hold their tongue.

The adults can fight when the doors are closed.

The most important thing for the adults is that their disagreements don't get put on display before the children. Externally, everything must be idyllic.

The adults can backbite about the others when they aren't there.

The adults can disagree, and make their disagreement clear when the opposing party isn't there. So Grandma can definitely speak condescendingly about Mom to the girls, as long as Mom isn't there.

Magical Social Realism

Sky Pirate is a scenario in the magical realism genre. This means that the story is about social realist characters but combined with the fantastic.

In Sky Pirate it is Dad's fantastic universe, Cloudland, that pokes a hole in the tapestry between the two worlds from time to time. And as we see things from the children's perspective, it is important that they see the signs that the adults ignore.

A rainbow is not just a rainbow, but in fact a several hundred kilometers-long rainbow earthworm, like Dad wrote about in his letter. There is always the hint of an airship behind the white clouds, and the traffic lights are always red when the car approaches the crossing by Dad's cemetery. Or the more dangerous the Ouija seance becomes, the more the storm increases.

The players also have the chance for input (see the next chapter). It could be them who say that Dad's airship *Cotton Ball* was up in the clouds. It is, of course, gone when Mom looks, but it was there. It is up to you as the GM to strike a balance. If the players don't provide their own input, you can hint at the outline of an airship in the clouds. Or if they have too much input, you can have Mom scold them, and say that she doesn't need to hear any more of Grandma's nonsense and tall tales.

Another important element is the cat, Mr. Herman. Katinka's cat which, just like her, can feel Dad's presence. You can always use the cat as a catalyst. It hisses at an empty chair. Purrs when someone mentions Dad. Puffs up at the Ouija board and miaows if the players haven't had the thought. Claws at the girls (but never Katinka) if the situation calls for it. It is Dad's extended arm, and Katinka knows this.

And then, of course, there is the Ouija board.

Ouija Board

This is the girls' opportunity to have a direct contact with Dad. The Ouija board comes with a guide, which the girls follow or not as they please. The guide recommends that you do not speak of the dead and their world, which is probably all they want to know about. The more play they can get out of a conflict about 'breaking the rules,' the better.

The contact happens quickly as Dad is at the ready. In every séance scene, there will be suggestions for reactions, questions and answers. It is naturally difficult to predict all questions, but try to answer them honestly, as Dad would have done. There are, conversely, things that shouldn't be revealed until later. If they ask questions you don't want to answer, you can finish the séance early, with the cat jumping on the table, or the arrival of a huge thunderclap which blows the windows open, or something similar. When one of the girls lets go of the planchette, the séance stops.

ZIP file

As the GM you will get a zip file. In the zip are the following files:

- Scenario PDF
- Ouija-board jpg
- Rules for the Ouija board pdf
- Letter 1 pdf
- Letter 2 pdf
- Letter 3 pdf
- Solveig pdf (for players)
- Background Solveig png (for players)
- Katinka pdf (for players)
- Background Katinka png (for players)
- Cirkeline pdf (for players)
- Background Cirkeline png (for players)



Foreshadowing

The scenario ends with the girls burning up in their room. And it happens with the help of a fateful string of coincidences, which are foreshadowed the first time the players come to their apartment.

The hints are as follows:

- The elevator is always broken down or it breaks down.
- The lock to the outer door sticks. The janitor has promised to take a look at it.
- The old TV flickers and is living on borrowed time.
- The window behind the TV is leaky and drafty.
- The new curtains on the window flutter when the draft winds are the worst.

It's important that these small things are mentioned on a running basis.

"Argh, the door is sticking again. Mom knows a trick, something like you have to pull up and..."

"The TV is acting up again. It flickers and is out of focus. It looks like it's time to smack it again."

"You have gotten the duvet for the draft. The curtains dance in the cold breeze."

At last, the TV gives up and a tongue of flame emerges from the top, and takes hold of the curtain that dances in the wind over the TV. The fire spreads lightning-quick through the old flammable apartment. The girls can't get out when the lock sticks fast. Mom is away and when she comes back she takes the elevator and it breaks down.

Play start

Before you can start the players' journey in Sky Pirate, there are three things you need to do: briefing, role division and warm up.

Briefing

Before you begin the scenario, brief your players on the following:

1. Background and roles.
2. About magical realism and the childlike viewpoint.
3. About the scenario's structure and the established story.

It is completely ok to play with open cards when it comes to Sky Pirate. As long as the players understand to differentiate between what they know as players, and what their characters know.

In your briefing, you can always take the summary in the intro as a starting point, but omit the part with the Ouija board. The most important things are what the players know of Dad, the suicide, and what that has done to the family, and where the story starts. The rest of the information stands in the characters, so the players will read it in time.

Tell the players, that this is magical realism, and that it revolves around seeing the magical in the dull everyday. It's about seeing coincidences as signs of something larger. The more they can make that part of the story, the better. Whether it's a rainbow earthworm or an airship or cozy ghosts who sling the furniture around is up to them. They are kids, and they see the world differently, and they have the right to that, but as mentioned in the GM section, it's up to you to find the balance.

Finally, they need to know that Sky Pirate is a tragedy in three acts. The first act is the longest, since it is where the setting is established. This happens via questions to the players, so that a common set of references is created from the children's points of view. Feel free to underscore that it is important that the players give input when you ask these questions.

The first act takes around an hour to an hour and a half, and acts two and three are about as long put together.

You can also tell them that every act is built up around Friday afternoon and evening with a visit to Grandma, followed by dinner and Disney Afternoon at home. It is a routine they know and take comfort in.

Lastly, it's important to say that this scenario is *play to lose*. It is not a happy story. It is a very guided story, but the experience is not about changing the outcome of the story, but rather the play between the characters while the story unfolds. It's about working through grief and finding a truth.

You should *not* say, that the characters will die. That part of the scenario should be a surprise. If they know they'll die when the scenario begins, the foreshadowing loses its potency.

Division of Roles

There are three roles to be divided: Solveig, Katinka and Cirkeline. How you divide the roles are up to you and your group.

Regarding the dynamic in the group, it should be said that:

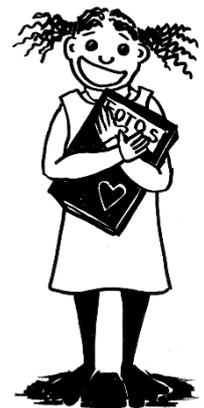
Solveig is the big sister, serious, and she is the one that knows the most about what really happened when Dad died. She usually takes Mom's side. She's the least childish of the three at 12 years, with one foot in both the kids' and the adults' world. It is good to give the character to a player that has nothing against being the frustrated teenager who hides their irritation beneath the surface, but letting it flare up every so often because little sister needs to be corrected, or Grandma is spouting shit again.

Katinka is the spiritual character, who had the deepest bond with Dad. She and her cat believe that they can still feel Dad. Katinka is additionally the diplomat who can mediate between Solveig and Cirkeline. Katinka doesn't need to be played by an extremely loud player, but one who likes playing emotionally and being poetic. Katinka should be able to give input on the small signs from the spiritual world.

Cirkeline is the fantasist, the creative and outgoing tornado, who believes everything Grandma says. She lives for the world of fantasies, and she is very assertive and doesn't believe in the art of compromise. It would be a good idea for her to be played by a player who enjoys being extroverted and conflict-seeking. But the player should also know how to tone down the confrontation in order to give space to others.

When the roles are assigned, it's time to send every player their character description, and give them the virtual background they will use for the rest of the game.

Now give the players time to read their characters.



Workshop

Finally, you will go through the four warm-up exercises. The job of the warm-up exercises is to construct some common memories. Read the following for them:

Now you will tell your favorite memories about Dad, Mom and Grandma, along with your favorite story from Cloudland.

You will each tell two stories in total, so for example a story about Dad and one about Mom. Or one about Mom and one about Cloudland and so on.

The stories must have a starting point in one of the ten headlines, which are attached to each of the four categories I'll show in a moment.

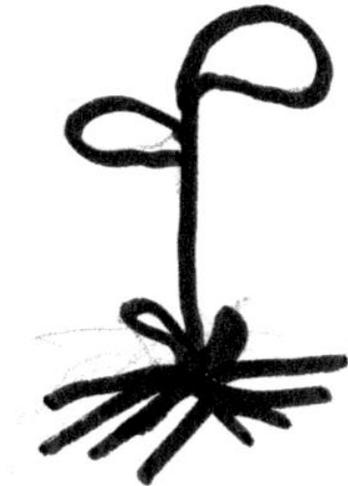
*Solveig **must** relate a memory about Mom. The second memory or story can be from any category.*

*Katinka **must** relate a memory about Dad. The second memory or story can be from any category.*

*Cirkeline **must** relate a memory about Grandma. The second memory or story can be from any category.*

Now show them all four categories for the favorite memories/stories and let them note down the headlines they want to talk about. Then take the first memory about Dad, then Mom, then Grandma and finally the favorite stories from Skyland.

You are now ready for the first act.



Favorite Memories

Dad: Cardboard castle, Indian camp, burger bingo, horror night, bedtime stories, shouting competition, emergency room, water fight, troll hunting, baking campfire bread indoors.

Mom: sewing machine, icecream parlor, trip to the beach, department store, bus ride, charter holiday, take your child to work day, birthday party, book worm, road trip.

Grandma: nick-nacks, old photo albums, slideshows, walks in the forest, vacuum cleaner, candy bowl, Christmas eve, lemon fromage, gardening, piano.

Skyland: The Revenge of the Black Trixie, Mutiny on the Cotton Ball, Cannibals of Skull Island, Air whales and sky sharks, the Pasta Plague, the Polka-Dotted Invisibility, Battle-hardened Penguins, the Turbulence generator, Robot Warriors from Gigantium, the 10,000 ninjas.

ACT 1



At Grandma's

You are confident that Grandma is the oldest person in the whole wide world. She looks so ancient, with wrinkles all over her face and long, big and gray curled hair, which as a rule sticks out in all directions so that she slightly resembles an old witch who just woke up. And Grandma also has the nicest eyes when she looks at you. They don't always look like that when they look at others.

Every Friday you walk directly from school to Grandma's house. Grandma's house is fantastic. Big and colorful. Full of old trinkets, brown furniture and things with tassels. And then there's a picture of a bearded fisherman with a pipe, who Grandma says is an old boyfriend from Esbjerg.

The kitchen smells of fresh-baked danishes with cream and glaze. You can never have too much of a good thing, Grandma says.

Let the players have a chance to do some storytelling.

What does the kitchen look like? What is on the walls? How does the floor look?



Birthday chat

There is always red soda in the refrigerator. Grandma gets out four sodas, puts them on the kitchen table and opens them with an old beer-opener.

What does it look like?

Are you looking forward to your birthday? Grandma asks Katinka.

Give the players the option to chat about the birthday, both in character, but also more generally. What does Katinka want for her birthday? Who's coming to the party? Who do they not want to come? Give the players the chance to compose family members, irritating cousins, fun cousins, burdensome uncles, boring aunts, deaf grandparents etc. The only guests they can't change are Mom, Grandma and Torben. The rest is up to the players.

Grandma can help them along by asking things like, will Mom's irritating sister, aunt Bente, be coming?

Air Mail

Grandma holds a letter in her hand, waves it around. It is air mail from Dad. Every week, air mail comes from Dad in Cloudland. One fantastic story after another. It's the high point of the week.

"Sit up straight like good children."

Read the first letter aloud. Before you read aloud, make it clear that the players can definitely come with comments or exclamations, ask questions and discuss what's going on during the reading. It's the high point of the week. It is something they've looked forward to as only children can. If they don't do it, Grandma can help them along the way, stopping in the middle of a sentence and saying things like, "Oh my, that could go really badly, do you think they can manage it?"

Afterwards, discuss the week's letter. What was at the bottom of the world's edge? Can you cast an anchor in the sky? How do you keep hold of a ship and simultaneously use the secret sky pirate sign language? No question is too large or small. See if you can direct the chatting towards Dad and Mom. Grandma doesn't like Mom. Mom left Dad. Grandma knows why, but she's forgiven Dad. Grandma's opinion of Mom can leak out around her words.

It shouldn't be offensive, just a little marker. Especially if Solveig says, "*yeah, but Mom says...*". Then Grandma can easily say something like, "*Now, not everything that lady says is the truth,*" or, "*But now we're at my house, and here, what I say goes.*"

You pass the rest of the afternoon by looking at old photo albums, playing with Dad's old toys, and the kids get stomachaches from too many danishes and too much red soda.

Transit

Mom Picks Them Up

When it's five-thirty, the doorbell rings. Ding dong. Grandma sighs deeply. It's Mom. There is a determined politeness between the two. Very formal.

"Hanne."

"Grandma."

"Have they been good?"

"Yes, they have."

"Have a good day."

"Have a good trip home."

Let them say goodbye to Grandma. She kisses them on the cheek and gives them a big hug. Mom snorts a little sourly in the background, but let the séance run its course and let the players give input on their farewell rituals.



In the car

You sit in the car. How do you sit? Do you always sit like that, or do you switch seats often?

The car coughs. Mom looks sour.

"Well, what picture did she put in your heads this time?"

Use the question as an impetus to get them both to talk about what they've done, but also get a discussion going on Grandma and her never-ending stories. The girls may quarrel with each other. Mom can always put in a sarcastic remark, but she closes off if the kids ask about Dad, or why she's mad at Grandma.

The car stops at the red light by the cemetery. It is here that Dad is buried. It's as though it's always red, when they get here.

Give them time to do something if they want. Discuss, draw a heart on the window pane. Sit in silence.

After an eternity, the light finally turns green. Mom drives on.

Mom

In the beginning of each act, Mom is described as tired and angry, and should be played as an adult with a relatively short fuse. She has just come from work, and she and Grandma just can't with each other.

But Mom is also a sweet mom. As soon as they come home, she perks up and tries to make the best of a bad situation. That doesn't mean that she can't put the girls in their place if they shout/argue/fight etc.

Mom is also just a person, who long ago hit her limits.

Home

The Elevator

The car finds its permanent spot in the parking lot. The gray cement blocks tower toward the sky. The whole thing is ugly and old. This is where one moves when one can't find anything else. They live just up there. On the fifth floor. When you get to the entrance, you can see that there is a sign on the elevator again. Out of Service. That's not so bad. It always smells like pee, anyway.

Allow time to complain about the elevator and the insane number of stairs. They can quarrel, or race to see who comes first. If they race, ask what goes wrong. It may end with a twisted ankle or a bloody nose. Or just a big argument over someone who cheated.

Mom is tired, and it doesn't help to have three quarreling girls.

The Apartment

You finally get up to the apartment. The lock is playing up again. The janitor promised to look at it. Last week.

The door opens and Mr. Herman is his own little welcome committee on the other side. Little, fat and black. And hungry.

All three sisters have a room together. Ask the players how the room looks. Is there a king bed, single bed, mattresses, hammocks? Who sleeps where? There are clouds painted on the ceiling. Who has painted them? Where does the cat sleep? What's the view like? What is on the walls?

Mom calls. It's dinnertime. Dinner is spaghetti with meat sauce Mom has thrown it together without a lot of care.

What does the kitchen look like?

The opportunity to chat with Mom. If the girls don't say anything, let Mom start. She asks whether Katinka is looking forward to her birthday tomorrow. Let the conversation focus on what she wants. Who's coming. Who is invited besides Grandma and Torben? What does Katinka want? Who's doing what?

If the topic is quickly exhausted, you can also continue a discussion from the car. Or ask how it's going, if one of the girls injured herself on the way up the stairs. Or if there is anyone who wants to bet with her about when the elevator will be fixed. Or when the janitor will fix the door. Who is he? Let them tell it.

Disney Afternoon

After dinner, it's time for Disney Afternoon. They always watch. Solveig, you have long since stopped thinking that Disney Afternoon is fun.

Ask why she always watches along anyway.

You watch it on your old crappy television. It's one of those you have to go and push the buttons on. The remote doesn't work. Or it's lost. The TV is a big brick. No smart flat screen. This one has to warm up, and has antenna. It takes a little time before a picture appears. It flickers if you don't smack it on the exact right spot.

Who knows the television best? What do the others do, while she gets the TV ready? What are your rituals? Who sits where?

You sit with duvets, because the windows over the TV leak. You can see it in the curtains, which move a little bit.

Who complains the most? What about?

Disney Afternoon is like it always is. You get an hour before you have to go to bed. Mom needs to get ready for the birthday.



Mr. Herman

Remember the cat Mr. Herman.

Every time the girls have a scene at home, you can ask, if Katinka doesn't do it herself, "What is Mr. Herman doing?" In this way you can help Katinka take ownership of the cat.

And remember, you can always use Mr. Herman as a catalyst, to underscore a point or interrupt a situation underway. The cat is Dad's extended arm.

The Birthday

The birthday comes to a close.

Let the players tell a bit about the party. What food and treats did you have? Who was there besides the girls, Mom, Torben and Grandma?

Was it cozy? Embarrassing? Boring? Amazing? Something that just had to be endured? What was the atmosphere like? Stressed? Rowdy? Cozy? Did something happen to change the tone?

What gifts did Katinka get?

When you have unwrapped all the presents, Grandma comes forward and gives you an extra gift. Big and square. Like a board game.

There is a card with it. The card has a lovely picture of a zeppelin in the skies. It reads:

"To Princess Katinka, from Dad. May only be opened after all the guests are gone."

The lock sticks when the guests go. "This is really a trick," Mom says with embarrassment, and tussles with the lock.

Try to make sure the birthday scene doesn't go too long. It's more important to hear the short highlights about what happened than to play what happened.

The Ouija seance

You can read aloud to them or tell them, while they explain their actions themselves.

The gift from Dad is big and square. It's wrapped in blue wrapping paper with small white clouds. Around it is tied a thin hemp string with the card attached.

Inside is a neat, unadorned board with the letters A to Z, the numbers 0-9, a YES, a NO, and a GOODBYE. There is also a planchette and an instruction booklet. The planchette is a little triangle made of wood, with a round glass in the middle. The instruction booklet looks old.

See the full instruction booklet in handouts. You will send that now to the players. Let them read it aloud in character.

The first seance should be relatively safe. Let them ask questions, maybe discuss what they can and cannot ask questions about, according to the guide book.

When they have said, "Is somebody there?" in unison three times, the planchette moves to "yes." It is Dad. He starts by writing, "Hi, Princesses."

Dad answers as best he can. There's not much of a filter on dad. He talks about how he misses them, and how living as a sky pirate is fantastic. If they ask about the suicide or variations thereof, he slips around the question and says things like, "I would rather be a sky pirate."

If it is said that it was he who left them, and that it's his own fault that he misses them, he says that they can always come to him.

The first seance is relatively short, and the most important thing is that contact is established. If the séance doesn't stop automatically, with one of the girls lifting a finger, you can use Mr. Herman, who jumps down and messes up something or other. Or maybe he right out scratches Solveig's hand when she gets too aggressive with her questions.

ACT 2



At Grandma's

It's Friday, and you are again at Grandma's. The scent of Danishes wafts through the little kitchen. The red soda has been set out along with Grandma's bottle opener.

The Gift

The old lady smiles her subtle smile and wants to know all about the gift from Dad. What was it?

Make room for a chat about the Ouija board and the girls' séance. Grandma knows exactly what a Ouija board is, and wants to know all about what Dad said. How did they know it was him? Did they remember to follow the guidebook? She will shiver with happiness at the excitement and remind them that it is not entirely without danger.

And Grandma will be quick to turn what the girls tell her Dad said into truth. Unless it's negative. Dad is definitely not dead. He cheated death and is now a sky pirate in Cloudland.

If Katinka says that that's silly, and Mom also says that sort of thing is a lie, Grandma is quick to reply.

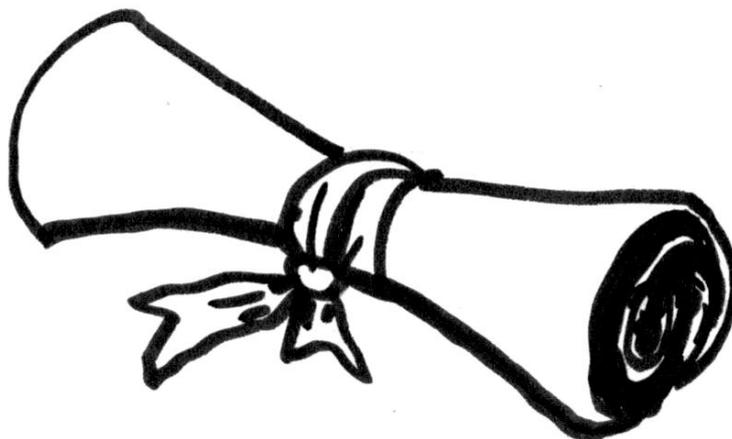
"You could write a really thick book on what your mom doesn't know about death. Just because someone is dead, doesn't mean he couldn't be a sky pirate."

Air mail

There is, naturally, air mail from Dad. Let Grandma gather the troops in the best, softest chairs in the living room. Read letter number 2 aloud.

Just like before, it's important to make space for comments, discussions, arguments and anything else that can arise in the course of the reading. Entirely as usual.

Afterwards it is time to talk about the rainbow worm and the rain dance, look at the clouds and whatever else the kids want to use their time for, before Mom gets them.



Transit

Mom Picks Them Up

When it is five-thirty, the doorbell rings. Ding dong. Grandma sighs deeply again. It's Mom. There is once again a determined politeness between the two. Very formal.

"Hanne."

"Grandma."

"Have they been good?"

"Yes, they have."

"Have a good day."

"Have a good trip home."

Let them say goodbye to Grandma. She kisses them on the cheek and gives them a big hug.

It is important that the players can see, that it is a ritual. It is the same thing that happens every single Friday, and the same thing gets said every Friday. Strained, determined politeness. And again it's okay for the girls to chime in. They have time to get a big hug from Grandma.



In the Car

Mom is mad. You can already feel it before you reach the car. The rain doesn't make it better.

Do you sit like you usually do, or is there a fight over the passenger seat today?

The car sputters.

Mom is tired, and not much has to happen to blow the fuse. And she can't really stand to hear about Grandma's fantasies about Dad, but nor can she keep herself from asking *"what did the old coot put in your heads today?"*

Make space for a retelling or discussion about whether Grandma really is a coot, or is actually a witch, etc.

The light is red when you get to the cemetery. Again. The sun peeks out and you can see a huge rainbow over the cemetery.

Let them react, debate, dwell in the moment.

It turns green, and the car continues home.

Home

The Elevator

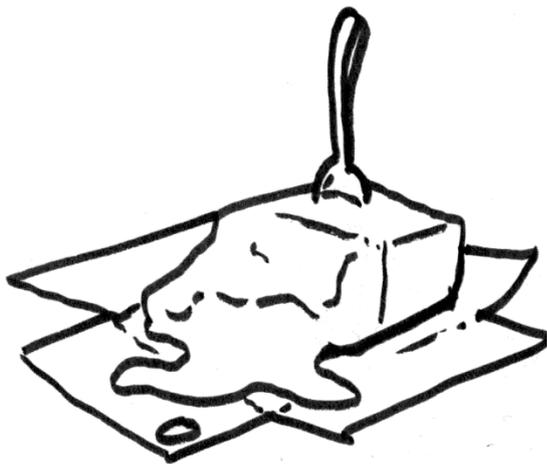
The car finds its parking spot. It's still raining. On the way in to the apartment complex, three big boors overtake you and close the elevator right in front of your noses.

Do you say something?

They are some large boys, who flip off the girls and laugh. The elevator goes up. Then stops. It's stuck. They shout and scream.

They girls are on the stairs again. Do they race about? What goes wrong? Who cheats? Who falls? Or is it just complaint after complaint? Or a quiet walk five stories up?

Maybe mom remembers to say that Torben has made dinner, and they should be happy about that.



The apartment

The lock plays up. Mom snaps. Torben tries to open the door from the other side. After a little time, it works.

Mr. Herman is there immediately.

It smells strange in the otherwise normal apartment. It is dinner that smells...different. Mom smiles and kisses Torben.

Torben made dinner. The food sits on the table, which is decorated with a cloth and candles. The menu is meatballs with feta and olives, potatoes and brown sauce and salad with tomatoes, cucumbers and mushrooms.

Torben means so well, but he doesn't have children of his own and has a naïve understanding that children eat anything and do what you tell them because you are an adult. Thus he wants to correct the girls when he believes they're behaving badly. Mom says nothing and doesn't back him up.

He will definitely end up in conflict with at least Cirkeline, and if one of the girls says, "you aren't my dad!", he will snap back, "No, fortunately." If the conflict escalates, he will send one or more of the girls to their room. Without Disney Afternoon.

The others can either choose their room, or Disney Afternoon.

The Seance

Mom's boyfriend is stupid. It's time to talk to dad. The characters should preferably come to this conclusion themselves, but if they don't, use Mr. Herman. Or say that Katinka can smell Dad's all too powerful deodorant for a brief moment.

Dad starts as he usually does with, "*Hi, princesses.*" The girls can ask questions, but this time Dad is a little more proactive.

"I miss you," he writes.

Before they can ask more, he writes, "*Grandma is in danger,*" and "*Save her,*" "*Now!*" if they need to be pushed to action.



Grandma

If it isn't established already, one of the girls, probably Solveig, can have a mobile phone. Not an expensive model, but nevertheless one that works.

Grandma does not pick up.

In the kitchen, Mom and Torben are fighting. Loudly. If the girls try to get Mom to help, the adults shout at them and send them back to their room.

The girls can ring for an ambulance themselves or wait until Torben goes. That can be a long wait.

Who falls asleep first? After hearing low-key quarreling for a little time, whoever is awake hears a high, irritable banging on the door. Torben slams it hard after him. Stupid door.

Solveig, you are awakened by an all too well-known sound. The sound of Mom crying.

Mom sits alone in the living room and sobs. Let it be a quiet scene between Solveig and Mom. Mom doesn't say a lot. If she's asked about Torben, she says, "*You don't have to think about him anymore.*"

If Solveig asks, Mom will ring Grandma to hear if she is ok. Mom will be disappointed if Solveig tells her that Dad is the one who said it. "*It's just not true, and you should be big enough not to believe in that sort of thing.*"

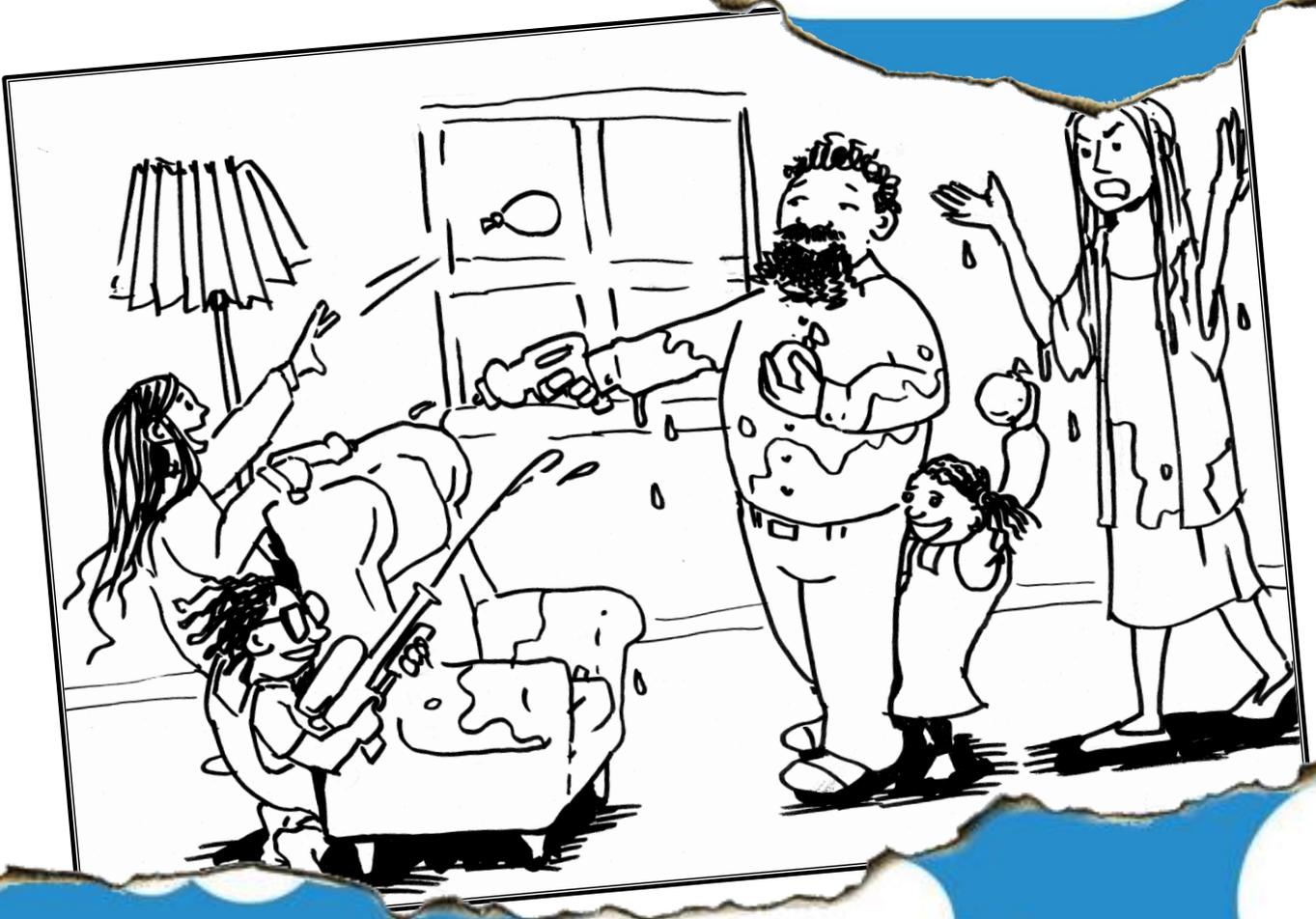
Grandma still doesn't pick up the telephone. Mom can be persuaded to go to her. If an ambulance has already been called, she can also contact the hospital. Then she finds out that Grandma has been admitted. Mom leaves.

The girls are alone now. It's a little spooky in the living room. The TV is an old piece of shit. It makes noise.

There is a possibility for chatting between the sisters. Solveig can wake one or both of them.

Mom calls. Grandma has fallen and has to be admitted to the hospital. Mom's going too. She cries. Grumbles about the crappy car.

ACT 3



At Grandma's

It is Friday, and you are once again with Grandma. But this time there is no heavenly smell of danishes or red soda in the little kitchen.

Grandma has been admitted to the hospital. Everything is white and sterile and stinks of kitchen cleaner. The old lady lies in a hospital bed. She doesn't look like herself. It is as though she's become a hundred years older in a week.

Use this scene to say goodbye. It is Grandma who says farewell to the girls. The girls who see Grandma for the last time.

Grandma knows she doesn't have much time left, and doesn't hide it.

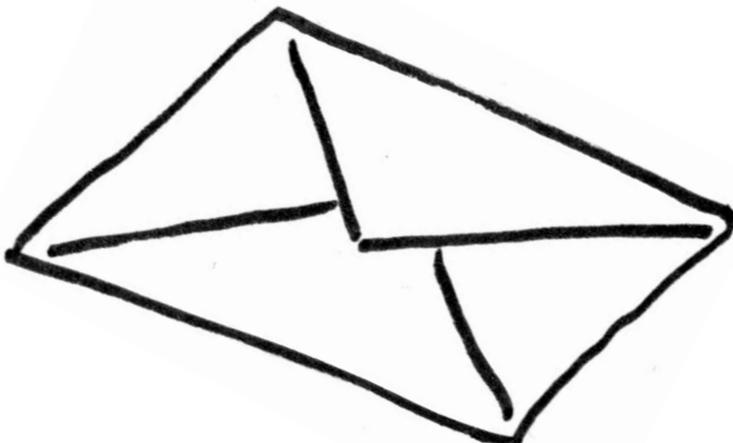
"Don't be sad. I'm going to a good place. I've waited a long time for it."

She isn't sad. This is long awaited. Now she can be with her son again. She's looking forward to it.

But she doesn't mention Cloudland by name. And she deflects questions about it. It is *"on the other side"* or something similar.

But she has one last letter for the girls. It's a different type of envelope than usual. She says they may not open the letter until they get home.

Let the girls ask, chat, cry, hug. Let Grandma be old, tired and thankful.



The Letter

The letter they get this time is not a letter from Dad in Cloudland, but rather an apology and an explanation from Grandma. A last farewell from a sorrowful woman.

The girls can open the letter at whatever point they like after the scene in the hospital. In the car, in the apartment stairwell, when they get home. You don't have to say it to them, but if they have forgotten the letter when they get home, remind them that *the letter weighs heavy in your pocket*, or similar.

The letter will most likely lead to a fierce discussion. Give the discussion and the frustration space. Mom was right. Grandma was full of lies. They are heavy things to process. It's completely okay to become mad, frustrated, say it's a lie. Let the feelings run freely.

If Mom's around when the letter is read aloud, she becomes angry and hurt over the last part. Let her react according to the situation. Is there a need for anger or impotence, tears or understanding?

Transit

Mom Picks Them Up

When it's five-thirty, a knock comes at the door to the hospital room. Grandma sighs deeply. It's Mom. She looks sad. She goes over and gently holds Grandma's hand.

"Hanne."

"Grandma."

"Have they been good?"

"Yes, they have."

"Have a good day."

"Have a good trip home."

Let them say goodbye to Grandma. She kisses them on the cheek and gives them as big a hug as her ebbing strength allows.

They go.



In the Car

Let the players contribute. It can be time for quiet reflection or twenty questions to the professor. There's a chance to talk about Grandma, and what will happen with her. Where she will go.

If there is a conversation, it's a hard conversation for Mom. Mom tries to comfort the girls. To answer as well as she can, without downplaying what Grandma said.

At the cemetery, the light is red. The car coughs and stops. The phone rings. Grandma is dead.

It starts to rain.

Let the players react.

The light turns green. The car starts. You drive on.

Home

The Elevator

The car finds its spot. The rain falls.

It looks like the elevator works.

It is entirely up to the players whether they will take the elevator. There are no big louts who squeeze in front of them, and if they do take the elevator it works like it should, for once.

Or it's the stairs. Again.

The Apartment

The door sticks. Mom finally gets it open.

They are greeted by Mr. Herman, who looks sad. Make space for reactions and conversation.

It's dinnertime. Spaghetti and meat sauce, which Mom has thrown together without enthusiasm. There can be chatter about the food, otherwise the meal occurs in silence.

Whether the letter (see page 25) is read before or after dinner is up to the players. They can manage to read it while Mom makes food.

No matter what, the letter can give rise to a hefty debate either before or during dinner. A last apology or final complaint about an old nag.

To clear her head and give a slightly better atmosphere to a hard evening, Mom decides to go out to get candy, and lets the girls be home alone. She will hurry, so she can make it back for Disney Afternoon.



The Tragedy

Before the tragedy is over, all they have to do is turn on the television.

The television is acting up. Flickers. And suddenly it says POOF and a tongue of flame sticks up from the back. There is a draft from the windows. The curtains flutter in, over the flames, and the fire takes hold. It spreads. Quickly. From the curtains to the wallpaper. Polyester pillows with tassels. In no time at all, half of the apartment is in flames.

Let the players react. Let them throw water on the fire. But let them also understand that a good deal more water is required.

The door won't open.

If they ring Mom, she's on the way in the elevator. CLONK. It's stuck. She screams for help. She has to hang up to get help. If the girls don't hang up, she stays on the phone for as long as they want her to. Crying. Begging.

The girls are trapped. The fire has gotten into the kitchen and living room and spreads all too quickly. It's just a question of time before it's in Mom's bedroom, the bathroom or the girls' bedroom.

Let the girls decide where they want to be. If they can't, the cat shows them the way. Into their bedroom.

Close the door. Smoke seeps slowly under the door.

The windows on the fifth floor are childproof, and therefore can only be opened a very little bit.

Let them tell what they do, as the room slowly is filled with smoke.

So much smoke has been drawn into the room, it looks like the room is full of clouds. Like being in a whole other world.

What is the last thing you do?

The seance in the end scene

There is space and time for the girls to hold a seance in the final scene.

It can happen if the girls decide to have a seance before Disney Afternoon.

It can also happen if they, in desperation during the fire, try to contact Dad.

No matter what, they quickly make contact with Dad. He listens to them, but just says, "Grandma is here," and "Everything will become good again."

If the seance happens during the fire, he writes, "I'm coming to get you."

The Land in the Clouds

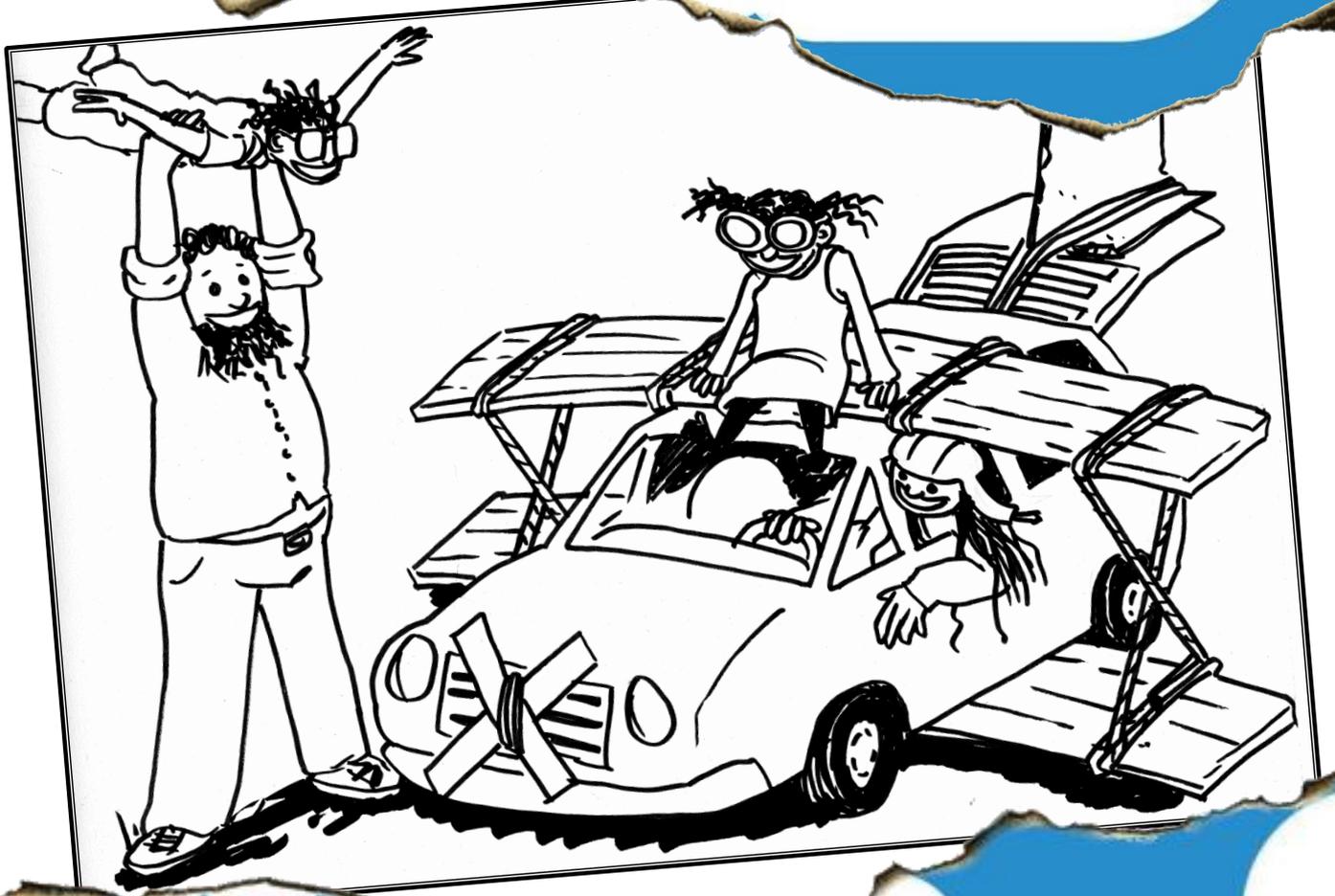
Let the tragedy sink in. Then read aloud.

You slowly awaken. You each lie in your own creaking hammock. You are in a wooden cabin, and can make out the sun's rays shining from a berth on the other side of the ship. You hear a familiar deep voice.

"Princesses! There you are. I said I would get you, didn't I? Want to come with me to the End of the Earth, or what?"



Characters



SOLVEIG

"Can't you just be happy that I'm happy now?" Dad shouts.

"You're not happy. You're manic! So take your damn pills!" Mom shouts back.

"I don't like the father I become with those pills," Dad says.

They don't know that you're awake, and you can hear them.

Solveig knows more than her sisters, but has spared them so as not to destroy their picture of Dad.

Dad

It was you who found him. In the chair. With half a bottle of red wine and an empty pill bottle. You've never forgiven him that. Nor have you told your two sisters: Katinka, who is 9 years old, and Cirkeline, 8. There's a lot you haven't told them.

Dad was ill. You know that. He couldn't control his mood. Mom has tried to explain it to you. When Dad was happy, he lit up like a lighthouse in a storm. When he was sad, he was the storm. And Mom was the boat who steered the family, so it didn't get smashed to pulp on the rocks.

That was why he was often away. "He's on holiday," Mom said to you girls. You knew he was away because he was the storm. The storm that raged. Yelled at mom. Cried himself to sleep. Who left everything. Abandoned you in the shopping mall, because he couldn't handle that many people at once. The Dad that forgot to pick up Cirkeline from kindergarten, so they had to call Mom at work because Dad didn't answer the phone. Silent Dad. In those periods you avoided him. Tried to help Mom as well as you could.



When he was Silent Dad, he was mostly with Katinka. You often saw them sitting in your treehouse and looking out to the horizon, while they mumbled low conversations that you never caught. Sometimes you can hear Katinka mumbling in the same way, when she lies in her bed at night and talks to her cat. You don't say anything.

As frustrating as Silent Dad was, he was equally fantastic when he was happy. Once he built a carpet-fort with pillows and comforters and rugs and clothespins and old Christmas lights, that filled the whole living room and most of the kitchen. You ate there in the cave for two days, until Mom had had it with sitting on the floor. Cirkeline was furious when mom cleared out the entire carpet fort. She refused to speak with her for an entire week. Cirkeline worshipped dad. Everything he did was amazing, and anything he said was truth. Now she feels the same way about Grandma.

Mom

You know mom doesn't have it easy. The last few years have been hell for her. She had to do everything to maintain the house and the home and a fulltime job, while dad just wrecked everything. Not that he meant to, but that's what happened. Even when he was at his best and happiest things often went overboard. And it turned out worse and wilder after every time he'd been on "vacation". And mom couldn't deal with it. She kept setting boundaries and rules, and he kept forgetting and breaking them. The last straw was a day he made a campfire inside. "But it's raining outside," was his excuse when you came home with mom. He sat by a burning fire in the middle of the living room floor boiling noodles in chocolate milk while the smoke alarm was beeping, without him reacting. It had been beeping for so long that the battery was almost drained. She packed your clothes, and then you'd all moved out.

You're pretty sure mom lost a fair amount of money on the house when it was sold. At least she keeps saying she owes the bank a billion, and that's why you have to live where you live. So you never complain to mom. It's not her fault.

But Katinka and Cirkeline don't know that.



Torben

And mom has found a new boyfriend. Torben. Torben is okay. He wants to do right by you, but he's not fun like dad. He is not a lighthouse in the storm. More like a bike light in a gloomy basement. He cooks well. But it's never pancakes on a grey Wednesday or cocoa soup with biscuits because the rain was a bit dreary. It's meat and potatoes, and not too much gravy. Dad once made pink gravy. It tasted awful. But it was pink, which made Katinka and Cirkeline eat three portions.

Mom likes Torben. That's enough for you, She needs someone who makes her happy. Cirkeline hates Torben. That's probably mostly because he's not dad. Everything he does is wrong according to her. Katinka doesn't really say anything.

Cirkeline and Katinka

You are the oldest of three sisters. And for that reason, you are also the wisest. That goes without saying.

Cirkeline is the youngest, and also the most annoying. She takes up a bunch of space and acts like a... kid. You could live with her childishness, if only Grandma wasn't filling her head with all kinds of stories about dad not being dead but being a sky pirate. All kinds of crap that Cirkeline just swallows hook, line and sinker. You don't like arguing with her, but you often do argue. She is so damn sure of herself. She drives you nuts. And she hates Torben, which she often lets people know. Let mom be happy, damn it! But no, the world revolves around Cirkeline. She's also sweet, though. When she's not yelling. Her enthusiasm is infectious. She knows everything about Cloud Land, and she taught herself to read to be able to read the letters from dad.

Katinka is 9. She'll be 10 tomorrow. She may have been the one of you who was closest to dad, when it all comes down to it. The one to know him the best. You worry that it might have made her a bit odd. Her best friend is her cat, Mr. Herman. She found Mr. Herman the same day you came home from the funeral. He is a black, shaggy cat. A bit chubby, like dad. Sometimes you can even hear her talking to it, as if it was dad. As if she can hear it answering back, which it isn't actually doing. Like that – odd. Katinka is also the diplomat who will throw herself in between Cirkeline and you when you are arguing.

But no matter how annoying Cirkeline is and how quiet Katinka is, you're still sisters, and you love them both more than life itself. When you are lying in a big pile every Friday watching Disney Afternoon, that might just be the best time in the week for you.

The Letters

When dad died, there was a letter for you. For the princesses. In the letter it said that Dad had gone on. He was now a sky pirate in the heavenly realm of Cloudland. And he was looking forward to when you'd all be together again. You have never understood what he meant by that. Dad is gone. He will never be back. Shortly after, Grandma started receiving letters from dad. Airmail from the clouds, she says. One each week. As if. Grandma writes them herself. That's what mom says as well. But Katinka and Cirkeline are happy, and look forward every week to a new letter from dad. So perhaps it's okay that it's not really from dad.

Cloudland

For about a year now, Grandma has told you about dad's experiences in Cloudland, or The Land in the Clouds as Katinka calls it. It's not really a country in the skies, but a different world, where dad is an air pirate aboard the airship The Cotton Ball.

He is the captain of a sorry crew of thieves and outcasts, sailing about and trying to steal all kinds of things from all kinds of people. Like when they wanted to steal the world-famous "Blood-Red Ruby" from a genuine desert sheikh, but ended up taken prisoner. That time they had to vacuum the desert palace all the time, because sand kept blowing in from the desert.

Other times there's a mutiny on the Cotton Ball because of a disastrous lack of pancakes. Or Dad's arch enemy, Black Trixie is devising nefarious plans again. Or that time the Cotton Ball was losing air and they had an emergency landing in the middle of the Cannibal Jungle.

Really crazy stories about crazy adults doing crazy things. Your sisters love it.

Summary - Solveig

- **Solveig** is the oldest of three sisters. She is serious and is on mom's side.
- It was Solveig who found dad after the suicide. She hasn't told her sisters this.
- It was dad's disease that ruined everything. Silent dad was stupid. Happy dad was wonderful, as long as it didn't get to be too much.
- **Katinka** is the middle child of the three, and she has a birthday tomorrow. She has a cat that she keeps chatting with.
- **Cirkeline** is the youngest. She thinks Dad is an air pirate, because Grandma says so.
- **Mom** is lovely. It's not her fault.
- Mom has a new boyfriend, who is called **Torben**. Torben is okay. As long as mom is happy, you're happy.
- **Grandma** tells you new stories of Cloudland every week.



Princess

KATINKA

"Do you believe in life after death, Dad?"

"What do you think, princess?"

"I believe there is. I don't know why. But I think I can feel it in my belly."

"Remember that feeling. Little princesses know a lot more about that sort of thing than people realize."

Katinka has a good imagination. She is curious and wants to know more about Dad. There is something about Dad that people don't talk about.

Katinka is the diplomat between Solveig and Cirkeline, when tempers run high.

The Birthday

Tomorrow it is your 10th birthday! If Dad had been here, he would have said, "10 years, that's damned big!" He believed all birthdays were large events and should be celebrated in style. That meant tons of flags, wild decorations and the biggest gifts he could find. He was of the belief that big gifts were better than little ones. You know that Mom doesn't have a lot of money, so you purposefully didn't wish for big or expensive gifts this year. Small, sensible gifts at affordable prices. It's important to you that everyone can participate.

You hope that a lot of guests come and have a good time and don't eat all the cake. Nothing's better than birthday cake the day after. You learned that from Dad. He always made two cakes for his birthday. One for the day itself, and one that could wait until the day after. Because it was always better.

It is also your first birthday after Dad's death. You're afraid that you can't have a good birthday without Dad.

Dad

In two weeks, it will be one year since Dad died. Mom says it's because Dad was really sick. But you don't really know if that's right. He never had fevers. Mom says he was in pain and took pills, and then he ended up taking too many, but you don't believe that either. A person doesn't just end up taking too many pills. You hate pills. Just one and you're ready to choke on it. Nobody can eat a whole jar of pills, just because they taste good. It just doesn't happen. But Dad needed to take some pills, you know that. Sometimes he wasn't himself. Normally, he was happy and good at playing. Building paper castles instead of cleaning. Painting monsters on the wall in your room. Mom got angry about that. Mom was always angry when dad was at his most fun.

At other times, Dad was quieter. Almost sad. Thoughtful. Silent. It was as though Dad had millions of thoughts inside his head and could only get a hold of them by asking questions. And taking pills. Sometimes he woke you in the night. Then you spent hours whispering about the universe's secrets and life's riddles and the coincidences of whims and fate. You loved that. To sit in the treehouse all night, wrapped in duvets.

But Mom didn't love it. She could always tell in the morning when you had been up all night. She never scolded you. But you could often hear her and Dad quarreling in their bedroom. "She has to go to school! It's bad enough you're up all night. Are you going to drag the whole family down with you?" You wish Mom had tried staying up all night with Dad.

Mom

Mom is great, but she hasn't been herself the last couple of years. She has shouted a lot. Mostly at Dad. And when Dad wasn't there anymore, at Grandma. Now she is mostly quiet. She looks sad when she doesn't think you are looking.

Maybe she misses Dad just as much as you do. The lovely fat man. Maybe she's just sick of being only able to afford living in this stupid apartment where everything's about to fall apart. Maybe she's sad that she and Grandma can't manage to talk.

Mom and Grandma aren't friends. Grandma is mad at Mom about something, but won't say what. And Mom is mad at Grandma, because Grandma says that Dad is a Sky Pirate. You don't entirely understand why that is a problem.

Mr. Herman

You have a cat. It is yours. Mr. Herman is his name. The same day you buried Dad he was there when you came back to the apartment. Black. Fluffy. And a little fat just like Dad. You just knew that he was there only for you. So you took him inside with you. Mom wasn't happy about that. She's a dog person.

But you love Mr. Herman. And he loves you. But he hates Torben. Torben is Mom's new boyfriend. Solveig says that he's ok. Grandma says he's a sop. You mostly think that he's a little boring. He doesn't have a beard and always goes around with his shirt tucked into his pants. Dad could never do that.



Sometimes you think you can feel Dad. See him out of the outermost corner of your eye. Round and mild. Hear his voice. You think Mr. Herman can, too. At least he sometimes behaves as though Dad is in the room. Purrs. Meows in that *Dad is around* way. When you think he's there, you talk to him like you did when you sat in the treehouse in the middle of the night. You ask the big questions, and sometimes you also get the feeling that you get an answer.

Solveig and Cirkeline

You are the middle sister. Squeezed in between two fighting roosters, one big and one small.

Solveig is the oldest. She is 12, and she is always very serious. She has forgotten how to be a child. It's only when you watch Disney Afternoon together every Friday night that she appears to relax. When talk turns to Dad, she always takes Mom's side. Never Grandma's.

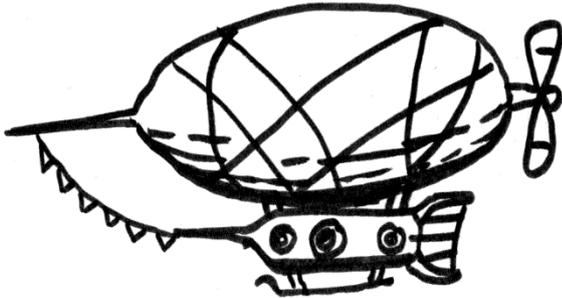
Cirkeline is the youngest of you. She's 8 and the one who shouts the most. She believes fully and unwaveringly in EVERYTHING Grandma says. She was also like that when Dad was alive. If he said that you got chocolate milk from feeding cows with chocolate and then milking them, then so it was. And if you shook the cows, you got chocolate milkshakes. She collects all the stories from the Land in the Clouds. Cirkeline hates Torben and is angry at Mom most of the time, because Mom is mad at Grandma.

It isn't easy to be trapped between Cirkeline and Solveig. You are always trying to be the diplomat.

You learned that from Dad. He always got between Mom and Grandma, when they argue about the best way to make duck for Christmas. But no matter how much Solveig and Cirkeline get at each other's throats, you are still sisters, and you love them more than life itself. When you lie in a pile every Friday and watch Disney Afternoon, it's maybe the best time of the week for you.

Grandma

Grandma is lovely. Old and gray and lovely. Every Friday she has a new story about Dad. She says he's a sky pirate in the Land of the Clouds. She calls it Cloudland, but you like Land in the Clouds better. It sounds more like a fairy-tale. She says the stories come by airmail from Dad, but you don't really know if that makes sense. Maybe. It isn't so important. As long as the stories are fantastic, it will always remind you of everything warm and wonderful about Dad and hold the emptiness at bay for a little while yet. Your Fridays with Grandma are a sanctuary.



Cloudland

Grandma has told you of Dad's adventures in the Land of the Clouds for one year now. It's not actually a land that lies in the clouds. It's a whole other world, where Dad is a sky pirate on the airship Cottonball.

He is the captain of a big crew of lovable thieves and sweet outcasts, who sail around and try to steal all sorts of things from all sorts of people. Like the time they wanted to steal a genuine desert sheikh's world-renowned "Blood Red Ruby," but ended up being taken prisoner. They had to vacuum the desert palace all the time, because sand always flew in from the desert.

Other times, there's a mutiny on the Cotton Ball because of a severe shortage of pancakes. Or Dad's arch-enemies, the Dark Trixies, are making scary plans again. Or that time the Cotton Ball lost air and made an emergency landing in the midst of the Cannibal Jungle.

There's never a dull moment in the Land in the Clouds.

Summary - Katinka

- **Katinka** is the middle of three sisters and has her birthday tomorrow, but is afraid it won't be good now that Dad is gone.
- **Solveig** is the oldest. She is serious and takes Mom's side.
- **Cirkeline** is the youngest. She believes **Dad** is a sky pirate, because **Grandma** says so. Grandma is always right.
- Katinka is the diplomat who mediates between Solveig and Cirkeline.
- Katinka has a cat called **Mr. Herman**. He can tell when Dad is around.
- Katinka loved to sit all night and talk with Silent Dad.
- Katinka doesn't believe that **Dad** accidentally took too many pills.
- **Mom and Grandma** do not like each other.
- Mom has a new boyfriend named **Torben**. Torben is a little boring.



Princess

CIRKELINE

"How old must you be to be an sky pirate, grandma?"

"Old enough to hold a sabre, but not old enough to forget your imagination."

"So I can become a sky pirate?"

"Can you hold a sabre?"

"Yes."

"Then you are ready."

Cirkeline is the historian. She gathers every bit of knowledge about Dad and the Land in the Clouds. She believes 100 percent in EVERYTHING that Grandma says. She has no filter.

Dad's death

The others say that Dad died by mistake. Because he ate too many pills. As long as you only eat one or two, the pills help. But if you eat a whole lot, you die. And Dad ended up eating too many. Maybe they just tasted too good. A bit like when you've promised that you'll only eat one, maybe two, chocolate biscuits. And then you end up eating the whole package. Except you don't die from that. Maybe you end up with a tummy ache.

It happened six months after you had moved. You didn't want to move away from Dad, but Mom said you had to. Dad needed rest, she said. But he didn't at all. He needed you three. That's what Grandma says. And now he's not there anymore, because you weren't there to tell him that you weren't allowed to eat all the pills you wanted, even if they taste good.



Mom

Mom is nice, but she is just so mad and tells everybody off all the time. She's on your case in particular. About all sorts of things. You can be certain that if you do something that dad would have thought is funny, mom thinks it's terrible. She did the same thing back when Dad was alive. Dad once built a pillow fort out of pillows and duvets and blankets and clothespins and old fairy lights you use for the Christmas tree, and it filled the entire living room and most of the kitchen. It was fantastic. You ate and slept and lived in the fort for two whole days, until Mom had had it with sitting on the floor. Next day when you came home from school, the fort was gone. Mom had cleaned up everything while you were gone. You. Were. Furious. You refused to speak to mom for a week.

You don't know why she is such a grump. She used to be happy all the time. Or at least you don't remember her being so sour all the time when you were younger. And she's always mad at Grandma, and you really don't understand that. Grandma is amazing and never gets mad at you.

Things you hate

You hate Torben. Torben is Mom's new boyfriend. He is not dad, but he wants to be. But he's just plain wrong. His entire face lacks a beard. Dad had an amazing beard. And he always smelled like pipe tobacco and deodorant.

And you hate Mom's new apartment. It's all a bunch of cheap crap. But Mom says it's what you can afford. Dad's house was better, you tell her. She always gets mad, but she knows you're right. It used to be your house. But when Mom moved out and took you with her, it became Dad's House. An amazing place where you could draw on the walls and were never told off. You slept in hammocks. All of the mattresses were outside, so you could jump out of the windows whenever you wanted. There was a treehouse in the garden and the lawn could grow in peace.

Now the house has been sold. The guy who sold the house for you was mad. So were the ones who bought it from you. "Decay! Dereliction!" they'd said. You don't know what that means, but it probably doesn't mean what you hope. In Torben's apartment you can't draw on the walls. He got very mad when you did. And it was even a very lovely airship. Dad would have been proud. But not Torben. Torben is the most boring and the stupidest man in the whole world. And he is not your dad. He will never be. Why Mom thinks he's so great, you'll never understand.

You always call Torben "you there" or "that guy" when you're talking to him or about him. You know it annoys Mom no end, so you guess it's ok.

Torben also cooks food that's gonna give you an ulcer. That's what you say about food you don't like. You once heard Dad say that to Mom. It was something about some pills he didn't want. They were gonna give him an ulcer, is what he said. You think it's because they tasted so bad they made sores in your belly. Goodness gracious, that's real bad.

Katinka and Solveig

You are the little sister. Boo hiss. And you have two big sisters.

Solveig is the oldest. She is 12 years old, and she always sounds sooo clever, you'd think she was born in a library. So boring, and she's always on Mom's side. Never on Grandma's. It's as if she's forgotten how wonderful Dad was.

Katinka is 9 years old. She will be ten very soon. Katinka is an odd duck. Her best friend is her cat, Mr. Herman. She found Mr. Herman the same day you came home from the funeral. He's a black, shaggy cat. A bit chubby, just like Dad. Sometimes you can even hear her talking to it as if it was Dad. As if she can hear it responding to her, even if it doesn't answer at all. Katinka likes the stories about The Land in the Clouds, as she calls it. Katinka is also the diplomat, who throws herself between you and Solveig when you're fighting like crazy.

But no matter how much you get at each other's throats you're still sisters, and you love them both more than life itself. When you're lying in a big pile every Friday watching Disney Afternoon might be the best time of week for you.

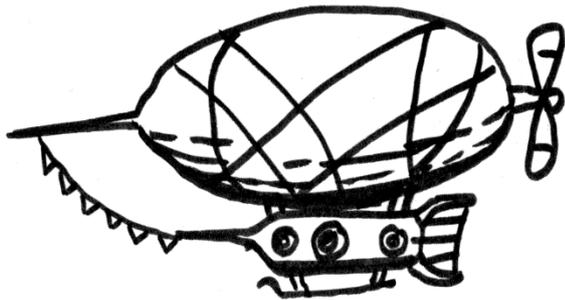


Grandma

"Goodness gracious!" you often say. You'd much rather say darned shitty ass, but Grandma has taught you that it's bad. At her house, you have to say "Goodness gracious!" instead. You can also say "Oh, get outta here!"

Grandma is the only adult who understands you. Grandma also hates Torben. And she's not too fond of Mom, either. She says it's Mom's fault that Dad isn't here anymore. She should never have moved, she says.

You love your Grandma, the old witch. She says so herself, you didn't make that up. "Watch out," she'll say, "or I'll put a spell on you to turn you into a slimy slug!" You wish that she'd turn Torben into a slimy slug someday.



Airmail from Cloudland

Grandma gets letters from Dad. Airmail. Every week he flies by with the airship The Cotton Ball and drops a letter. The airmail always lands on her balcony. He writes about all of his adventures as a Sky Pirate in the Heavenly realm of Cloudland. You save all of the letters in a folder. They are amazing tales.

Like that time when your dad's ship was stuck on the top of the highest mountain in the world. All of their water turned to ice, but luckily it was vanilla. So it wasn't so bad. Or about Black Trixie's revenge. About air whales and sky sharks. The cannibals on Skull Island. That time Dad won the Cloudland pancake eating championships. Or when there was a mutiny on the Cotton Ball, because there were no more pancakes left.

You love, love, LOVE those stories, and you have collected all of the letters from Dad in nice folders, where you have also drawn illustrations for all of the stories and glued in pictures of Dad. You've even taught yourself to read, so that you can read all of the letters again and again. Not an easy task, because it's all written in some kind of cursive. A bit like when Grandma writes.

Summary - Cirkeline

- Cirkeline is the youngest of three sisters
- Solveig is the oldest. She is boring and smart and sticks with Mom.
- Katinka is the middle sister. She is quirky and has a cat, Mr. Herman, that she is always talking with.
- Cirkeline loves Grandma and trusts everything she says.
- Cirkeline doesn't swear, but says things like "goodness gracious" and "get outta here". Grandma taught her that.
- Grandma might be a witch.
- Cirkeline collects all of the stories from Cloudland in a folder. The letters have taught her how to read.
- Mom is grumpy and is always telling them off.
- Cirkeline hates Mom's boyfriend, Torben. He is not dad.
- Dad was amazing and funny and wonderful, and it seems like Mom and Solveig have forgotten.



APPENDIX

Scene Overview

Letter One: The end of the world

Letter Two: The rainbow earthworm

Letter Three: From Grandma. An apology.

OUIJA BOARD guide

OUIJA BOARD

Memories of Dad

Memories of Mom

Memories of Grandma

Stories of Cloudland

Pictures

SCENE OVERVIEW

Scene	Summary
ACT 1	Establishment of routines, locations and relations.
At Grandma's	The birthday is discussed, danish is eaten, the letter is read aloud, and it is discussed what really is the end of the world.
Transit	Mom is angry and the light is red at the cemetery where Dad lies buried.
Home	The elevator is out of order. Mom makes Friday spaghetti with meat sauce. Disney Afternoon.
The Birthday	How did the party go? Katinka gets the Ouija board. The séance and contact with Dad.
ACT 2	The conflicts become clearer.
At Grandma's	Talk about the "gift" and reading air mail. Chat about the rainbow earthworms, and about life and death.
Transit	Mom is mad. It is raining. The sun peeks through near the cemetery and there is a big rainbow.
Home	Torben made food. Not spaghetti. Argument. Disney Afternoon is cancelled. During the séance Dad says Grandma is in danger. Torben and Mom fight and Torben leaves Mom. Mom cries and is comforted by Solveig. Grandma must be saved.
ACT 3	The tragedy is completed.
At Grandma's	Grandma is in the hospital. Gives the girls a letter. The girls leave.
The Letter	Grandma's letter is an apology and a bitter jab at Mom. Causes a fight.
Transit	Mom is quiet. The car stops at the cemetery. The hospital calls. Grandma is dead.
Home	Friday spaghetti. Mom goes to get candy for Disney Afternoon. The TV catches fire and sets fire to the apartment. Séance with Dad, who wants to save them. They burn.
The land in the clouds	The girls wake up in Cloudland.

Letter One – At the End of the World

To my lovely princesses,

Today I floated to the end of the world. Did you know you could do that? You can, in fact. It is a fascinating place. At the end of all things. Where the sky and sea end, and then it is just darkness and a very long way down. Exactly what is at the bottom of the world's end nobody knows, but I was close to finding out. And not on purpose.

We drew close to the edge of the world in my lovely and fantastic airship, the Cottonball, and for safety we dropped anchor in the nearest cloud. Unfortunately, it was an extremely malicious, dark and nasty rain cloud, who did not at all like getting an anchor in the head. I can kind of understand that, when I think about it. But the cloud zapped our balloon with a violent stroke of lightning, and the following thunderclap made us all deaf for a week. So no one could hear me shout, "WATCH OUT!" while the air leaked out of the balloon and the airship turned down into the dark nothingness.

Luckily, the anchor caught on the edge of the world, and now we were hanging there with our head facing down. Even though we couldn't speak to each other because we'd been made deaf, we could of course use the air pirates' sign language, and I managed to order the crew to patch the hole, and inflate the balloon in a hurry. But before we rose into the air I looked down. And down there, I saw a little glimmer of light. A little, tiny glimmer, as of something larger. Something unknown. Something that should definitely be explored.

I look forward to exploring it together with you.

Big Hugs from Captain Dad.

Letter 2 – Rainbow Earthworm

To my lovely princesses,

Today I was visited by a rainbow earthworm. When I say earthworm, it's not just a little puny thing like the ones we dug up at home in the back garden. Cloudland's earthworms are 10-20 meters long when they're born, and they never stop growing. And they can get reaaaaaally old.

The rainbow earthworm looked a little faint, so we started a rainstorm.

In Cloudland, you can always start a rainstorm if you have plenty of salt and a little rhythm in your body.

We sprinkled five big sacks of road salt down into the clouds, and then I ordered my entire rhythmless crew to dance as though their lives depended on it. It did, a little, because if you don't follow orders, I throw you over the railing.

You should have seen the rainbow earthworm when the rain began to pelt down. It was like seeing you dance in the sprinklers in the garden in the summer heat at home. The rainbow rainworm shone and glimmered in every possible and impossible color. It sparkled in colors that haven't gotten a name yet. It danced through the clouds and the rain caused it to grow before my eyes.

They say the largest rainbow earthworm can become several hundred kilometers long. Those are the ones you can see when the sun shines through a storm. It'll probably be some years before this rainbow earthworm gets to be that big, but it will get there. Until then, it can come call on me and get a little rain. But I don't know what I will call it.

Do you have a good name for a rainbow earthworm?

Big hugs from Captain Dad.

Letter Number Three

To my three lovely grandchildren,

I'm sorry.

I'm sorry that I lied to you.

I'm sorry that I'm a silly old woman, who doesn't want to forget the magic my son created.

I'm sorry I couldn't let go, but instead held fast in my memories of him and all that he stood for. Fantasy. The inner child. Optimism. The madly beautiful boy full of crazy ideas like no one else.

I'm sorry that we adults tried to screen you from your father's difficult mind, by lying. That we sent Dad on a holiday. He wasn't on holiday. He was committed in order to get better.

And I'm sorry that it was you, Solveig, who had to find him. It should never have been your lot to do that.

But you can thank your mother for that. Your mother gave up. She left him, not the other way around. And she took you with her. And that killed him. It is your mother's fault that Dad died. That my son died.

And I will never forgive her that.

Take care.

Grandma

OUIJA BOARD

Congratulations on your new OUIJA BOARD. You are now ready to step into the magical sphere of the mystic and spiritual. It is very important that you follow THE RULES, and treat the OUIJA BOARD with respect. It is a portal to another world.

THE RULES

About the space in which the séance is performed:

1. The space shall be undisturbed by outsiders during the séance.
2. The space may only be sparsely lit by candles during the séance (the candles may not be black or red).

Begin the séance:

1. Light the candles, turn off all other lights in the room.
2. The participants should now sit around the board. The planchette is placed in the middle of the board, and each participant places a finger on the planchette.
3. The participants now say, at the same time, "Is anyone there?" three times.
4. If the planchette moves itself over to "YES," there is contact with the spirit world and the participants can now ask questions.

Questions:

1. You may NOT ask about when you will die, or when others will die.
2. You may NOT ask about God (the Gods) or life after death (the spirit world).
3. You may NOT ask about or after, or otherwise refer to the devil.

Remember! Ask your questions loudly and clearly into the room, one question at a time, and let the spirit answer. Express yourselves simply and clearly, so that the question cannot be misinterpreted. Let the spirit have time to answer before asking a new question.

During the séance:

It is important that when everyone has laid their finger on the planchette, that they do not remove their finger again before the séance is finished and the spirit has said farewell. Neither may the planchette be removed from the table before the spirit has said goodbye.

What can happen if the rules of the séance are not followed:

The spirit can escape and manifest itself! A spirit can manifest itself by blowing out the candles, throwing things around the room or sticking itself to an unlucky participant, and the participant can faint.

Finish the séance. Say goodbye to the spirit:

It is important to say goodbye to the spirit before the séance finishes. Say, "Thank you for the help" - even if the spirit has not necessarily been so helpful.

Or say a simple, "Goodbye." When the spirit moves the planchette up to "Goodbye," it should be safe to stop the séance.

ENJOY!

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O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z Æ Ø Å

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

FARVEL

MEMORIES OF DAD

Cardboard castle

Indian games

Hamburger bingo

Thriller night

Bedtime story

Shouting and yodeling competition

Emergency room

Starry heavens

Troll hunt

Campfire bread indoors

MEMORIES OF MOM

Sewing machine

Ice cream truck

The beach

The mall

Make-up

Charter holiday

Take your child to work day

Birthday party

Bookworm

Hairdresser

MEMORIES OF GRANDMA

Nick-nacks

The old photo album

Crystal chandelier

Old vacuum

Candy bowl

Christmas duck

Lemon fromage

Apple tree

Slide shows

Piano notes

STORIES OF CLOUDBLAND

Revenge of Black Trixie

The Mutiny on the Cotton Ball

Cannibals of Skull Island

Air Whales and Sky Sharks

The Spaghetti Plague

The Polka-dotted Invisibility

Battle-hardened Penguins

The Turbulence Generator

The Robot Warriors from Gigantium

The 10,000 Ninjas



