

## Infection

‘I’m afraid your father does indeed have RDS. It’s a strange mental illness that, long ago, actually used to be quite widespread among the population.’

‘Will you have to operate?’

‘We could, but at his age I wouldn’t recommend it. Unlike, say, schizophrenia or epilepsy, which only need relatively simple interventions, this would require quite a large-scale restructuring. And from what I’ve read of similar cases, many chronic patients are able to live contentedly to a ripe old age.’

‘What are the symptoms?’

‘Mainly, what you yourselves must already have observed: a prolonged state of delirium in which the patient believes certain hallucinations or fictions to be true. Obviously, this impedes a proper understanding of reality, but he should be able to carry out simple tasks without any risk. You’ll just have to keep an eye on him and probably go along with him a bit in his dementia, so he stays happy.’

‘How do you think he could have been infected?’

‘RDS is usually hereditary, it has probably remained latent since his infancy.’

‘But in that case...’

‘Oh, don’t worry; it’s not transmitted genetically, but rather... Ah, here he comes with the nurse.’

‘Come on, dad, we can go home now.’

‘Well, thank God.’