



Ibsendekonstruktion II: Brand

JÖRGEN DAHLQVIST

Ibsendekonstruktion II: Brand

Copyright © 2025 Jörgen Dahlqvist

Published by Jena Press 2025

Malmö Theatre Academy

ISBN: 978-91-88409-42-3 Jörgen Dahlqvist Dissertation

ISBN: 978-91-88409-43-0 Jörgen Dahlqvist Dissertation [Electronic]

ISSN 1653-8617, Doctoral Studies and Research in Fine and Performing Arts,
No 34.

Graphic design: Jan Petterson

Photos: Jörgen Dahlqvist

Typography: Dahlia, Tisa Pro

Dramatis Personae

Erling

Ingrid

Olav

Einar

Agnes

Brand

Sverre

Per

Tiril

Sonja

Gerd

IBSENDEKONSTRUKTION II:

Brand



Act 1

Scene 1. Marriage

[Ingrid is on stage. Erling enters.]

Erling

What an incredibly beautiful weather we have today.

Ingrid

Is it?

Erling

Yes, it is.

Ingrid

I see.

Erling

Don't you agree?

Ingrid

There is so much fog that you can barely see the top from here.

Erling

Yes, but it feels easy to breathe.

Ingrid

And the sun hasn't been seen for a while.

Erling

Breathing, that is.

Ingrid

I can't even remember the last time I saw it.

Erling

You mean to breathe? Can't you feel it?

Ingrid

What?

Erling

How easy it is to breathe.

Ingrid

Yes, perhaps.

Erling

It's easy to breathe, the weather is beautiful, and we're healthy. You and I. Healthy and happy.

Ingrid

Happy?

Erling

Healthy and happy people.

Ingrid

How do you know that?

Erling

What do you mean?

Ingrid

How do you know that you're happy?

Erling

You feel it.

Ingrid

You do?

Erling

I feel happy, anyway. Don't you?

Ingrid

Yes, maybe so. Yes, of course.

Erling

You should know.

Ingrid

How does one become happy?

Erling

One just knows. You should know how to stay healthy and happy.

Ingrid

How should I know?

Erling

You're a doctor. That's your profession. You've studied people from the inside, so to speak, studied diseases and how to avoid them. I don't have that knowledge. I'm just a simple teacher. I teach others' skills, while you know how to stay healthy. (Pause) There's a difference. (Pause) I feel healthy anyway. Healthy and happy in your company.

Ingrid

In my company?

Erling

Yes, exactly.

Ingrid

If so, what is so special about my company that makes you happy?

Erling

You're a beautiful person, right down to your soul.

Ingrid

A beautiful person?

Erling

All the way through. Yes, down to the soul.

Ingrid

What does that mean?

Erling

It's just how you are, all the way.

Ingrid

Enough of that now.

Erling

The soul.

Ingrid

Be quiet now. I don't want to hear any more of your talk. All this talking is giving me a headache. No more talking now. It only gives me a headache.

[Olav enters.]

Olav

What beautiful weather we have.

Ingrid

What?

Olav

The weather.

Ingrid

I see. Yes, I just said that.

Erling

Yes, it's beautiful weather today. It's fresh and clear. You're glad to be healthy and strong in weather like this.

Ingrid

But there is fog on the mountain.

Erling

And fog on the mountain. You can barely see the top.

Olav

It looks like a storm is coming.

Erling

From here.

Ingrid

Do you think so?

Olav

It looks like it. Out on the fjord, there are high waves. I think there's a storm coming.

Erling

But not yet. Now it's beautiful weather. Yes, there's fog up there, but we're happy, and that keeps us healthy.

Olav

Healthy?

Erling

Yes, we are healthy and happy.

Olav

Yes, maybe so.

Erling

Have you decided what to do about the mayoral election yet?

Olav

That's a long way off. It's a year away.

Ingrid

You would do a lot of good if you were elected for a second term.

Erling

The old school needs to be renovated. We need to buy new books and the same goes for the school desks. They really need to be renewed.

Ingrid

But perhaps there are other priorities. I mean, if there is something that people want.

Erling

Why wouldn't they want a better school?

Olav

If the people want it, I will do it.

Erling

Everyone knows we need a new school.

Olav

If not, then so be it. But there's a long time still.

Erling

A new school and new schoolbooks.

Ingrid

I think it is important to listen to what citizens want. That is the democratic duty. To listen.

Olav

Exactly. You have to listen and hear what the citizens want.

Ingrid

And don't act in self-interest. Don't push your agenda just because it benefits you. That's part of the democratic conversation.

Olav

Exactly. One shouldn't favour self-interest.

Erling

I just mean that the old schoolbooks are filled with unnecessary information that nobody wants to learn. That's what I mean.

Olav

Yes, you're right about that. Discipline is needed in schools. Order, discipline, and order. That's what we need. Young people must learn to sit and listen to what the teacher says.

Ingrid

There is no one else, is there?

Olav

What?

Ingrid

Who would do a better job than you would as mayor?

Olav

Yes. No, no, no. No, maybe not.

Ingrid

No, I don't think so. I will vote for you.

Olav

But it's a long time still. You can't claim victory in advance. Let's not stand here talking politics.

Ingrid

Although it is important.

Olav

Yes, exactly.

Ingrid

To think of the citizens.

Olav

Yes, exactly.

Ingrid

Are you ready? The young couple getting married is on their way.

Olav

Yes, that's right.

Ingrid

They said it was urgent.

Olav

Young people are always in a hurry, even though they have their whole lives ahead of them.

Erling

Yes, they believe everything can be rushed. Society, life, happiness. Everything should happen so fast. But there is no shortcut to acquiring knowledge. It takes time.

Ingrid

They will leave as soon as they are married.

Erling

They must learn to be patient.

Ingrid

Aren't that what schools are supposed to teach?

Erling

Schools can't do everything. If they're in such a hurry, they'll have to talk to someone else.

Ingrid

Anyone else? Who would that be?

Erling

I don't know. They are getting married, so they should talk to a priest.

Ingrid

There's no priest here. [To Olav] They specifically asked you to marry them. They are good people. I know them from before. Besides, they will pay well if they're in a hurry.

Olav

Yes, I do need money.

[Per enters.]

Per

Excuse me, please.

Olav

Yes?

Per

I'm sorry to interrupt. I realise that I may be interrupting something important, but I need to speak to the mayor.

Olav

Are you the one getting married? [To Ingrid] Is it him?

Ingrid

What?

Olav

Is he getting married?

Ingrid

No, it is not him.

Olav

No? Then what do you want?

Per

No, I'm not getting married. I'm already married. My wife is at home with our child.

Erling

But what do you want?

Per

I need to talk to the mayor.

Erling

Speak up, then.

Per

I have a child, and she is pale and hungry and needs food.

Erling

So what?

Per

The child needs food. My wife is at home looking after the baby, but I think the baby is sick. She is pale and crying.

Erling

So, you are already married?

Per

What are you talking about?

Erling

[To Ingrid] He's already married.

Olav

He's not the one getting married.

Per

No, I'm already married, and my wife is at home with our baby. We've run out of breast milk, and now the baby is hungry, screaming, and crying. I would need money to buy food for my baby because I don't know if she'll survive otherwise.

Erling

And now you want to borrow money?

Per

No, not borrow money. Just enough for food. For the baby. The baby will not survive if she is not fed. She cries so terribly, and I don't know how much longer it can go on. My wife is at home and can't help, so the baby keeps crying.

Olav

I have no money.

Per

What?

Olav

I have no money. I just said that when you arrived.

Per

But the child... I don't need a lot of money, just enough to feed her.

Olav

I can't help every person who comes here asking for money. You understand that, right?

Per

What?

Olav

I can't give money to everyone who comes here. But if I'm elected, I would build a house for the poor where people like you could go. But it's a long way from here, and now I have to marry a couple of young people who are in a hurry, as young people always are, to get married because the future can't wait. Sorry, but you'll have to leave. I don't have time for you.

Per

[At the same time] But what about the baby? I can't go home without food for the baby. NOT WITHOUT FOOD. I CAN'T.

Olav

[At the same time] I say NO. NO. YOU MAY NOT BORROW MONEY. DO YOU HEAR ME? I have no money, so you can't have any.

Per

Do you understand?

(Pause)

Olav

Do you?

(Pause)

Olav

Do you?

(Pause)

Olav

You're free to leave.

[Per exits.]

Olav

We must ensure that this society rests on a moral foundation, and I will see to that. If I win the election, I will build a house of the poor and combine it with a prison. Then we can lock up the poor before they commit crimes. No poverty and no crime.

[Agnes and Einar enter.]

Ingrid

Well, well, well. There you are. So, you were going to get married?

Einar

Yes.

Ingrid

You'll take care of her?

Einar

I have promised to take care of her. The best gift was when I met her here. My love.

Ingrid

How about you? Do you feel the same way?

Agnes

He is beautiful. My little boy, isn't he beautiful? Bold and happy as a king, his mind clear. I have promised to stay by his side.

Olav

That settles it. You are now husband and wife.

Ingrid

Please tell us again how you met.

Einar

Should you or I tell them?

Agnes

You do it.

Einar

No, it's better if you do it.

Agnes

We met up on the mountain.

Einar

[Interrupting] One day, I had this incredibly strong feeling to go to the mountain. And there she was. I saw her. She had come to drink in the clear mountain air and let the sun, the dew, and the scent of the pines caress her cheek. Then I saw that blush and the gleam of joy in her beautiful eyes. She was immaculate, with a smile that sang in her soul.

Ingrid

Love at first sight?

Agnes

Yes, you could say that.

Einar

In a blind move, I emptied the cup of life, and then you appeared.

Agnes

Then you proposed.

Einar

Just a couple of days ago, I suddenly realised that I had completely forgotten to propose. So, I proposed.

Ingrid

And you said yes?

Agnes

And I said yes.

Einar

And she accepted.

Ingrid

And then?

Agnes

And then there was us.

Einar

Everything was organised and carried out. Then we decided to get married here today.

Ingrid

Two young people who have found love. You look so happy. Happy, joyful, and healthy.

Agnes

So, we organised a party.

Einar

And we danced for three whole days.

Ingrid

It is no effort. You must celebrate love when you find it.

Erling

But you're on your way. We won't bother you anymore.

Ingrid

Where are you going? Are you leaving?

Agnes

Yes, we're moving out of here.

Einar

South.

Agnes

We're going south.

Einar

We'll leave on the next boat.

Erling

Forever?

Einar

Maybe forever. Probably forever.

Agnes

But we will probably be back.

Einar

Or we may stay there forever.

Agnes

But we still have family here, so we'll come back and visit.

Einar

Maybe someday. But it could be a while.

Agnes

In a while.

Einar

We want to see the world together. Experience everything. Together. See everything that's out there. Together. Live life together. A life of happiness and love. But first, we'll go for one last walk on the mountain.

Ingrid

Up the mountain? Why are you going up there?

Einar

There is fresh air up there.

Agnes

It is a final trip. So that we have the memory of the mountain with us when we leave.

Ingrid

You must be careful.

Erling

It should be fine.

Ingrid

It's foggy up there. You can barely see the top from here.

Einar

We will be fine. We know the mountain. That's where I met her for the first time. The clear mountain air, the scent of the pine trees, the rosebuds, and the joyful glow of her beautiful smile that sang in her soul.

[Einar, Agnes, Ingrid and Olav exit. Gerd enters.]

Erling

Where are you going?

Gerd

Why?

Erling

Why? Why what?

Gerd

Yes, exactly. That's what I'm asking.

Erling

You're not going up the mountain, are you?

Gerd

It is none of your business. I go wherever I want.

Erling

It's foggy up there. You can't even see the top if you stand and try, and it's dangerous. You can't go up there.

Gerd

You don't get to decide over me.

Erling

Yes, I do.

Gerd

We're not at school now.

Erling

No, but I can decide anyway. It's foggy, and there's a storm coming. The waves are all over the place, and it's foggy up there. You won't see a thing.

Gerd

I find my way to where I'm going. I'm there all the time.

Erling

Don't you understand that people get worried if you go up there?

Gerd

No, I don't.

Erling

But they are.

Gerd

Who?

Erling

What?

Gerd

Who would be worried? No one cares what I do. I'm up there all the time, and no one ever asks. Everyone has enough with just living their own lives down here, with their worries and their politics and their faith and their everything. Up there, you can be free. You see everything as it is, just as it is. The air is cold and clear, and the view is perfectly clear. You can see right into the soul of God.

Erling

No matter what, if you get lost, people must come and get you.

Gerd

But I don't get lost.

Erling

You can't know that.

Gerd

I know.

Erling

There is no way to know. No one can know that.

Gerd

I know.

Erling

If you get lost, you get lost. No one can know that until it happens.

Gerd

I have been up there a thousand times, and I have never gotten lost. Not once. Besides, I do what I want.

Erling

No, you'll do what I want.

Gerd

Leave me alone.

Erling

No, come here.

Gerd

Leave me alone, I say. LEAVE ME ALONE. It's the only place I feel at home. There's nothing down here for me. Nothing down here.

[Gerd exits. Then Erling exits.]

Scene 2. The Mountain

[Sverre and Brand enters.]

Sverre

No, this is the wrong way. We can't go here. It's dangerous. The fog is so thick I can't see my hand in front of me, and there are dangerous cliffs here, along with deep cracks.

Brand

If we just stick together, we'll be fine. What was that?

Sverre

What?

Brand

That sound?

Sverre

What sound?

Brand

It sounded like something cracking.

Sverre

I see. That was the ice cracking. There's a stream around here somewhere. If we fall in, we'll die. We must have respect for the ice.

Brand

Just walk straight across.

Sverre

Walk on water? Well, that's easier said than done. In the old days, you might have been able to walk on water like Jesus, but if we try to walk on thin ice now, we will sink straight to the bottom of the cold water and freeze to death.

Brand

There it was again.

Sverre

We need to turn around.

Brand

No. We can't turn back. We must go forward.

Sverre

It is too dangerous. There are cliffs and rocks and streams. We can't just walk straight into the fog.

Brand

But if the fog is that thick, there is no light on the way back either.

Sverre

It is dangerous.

Brand

But this is about your mother. She's going to die. don't you want to see her?

Sverre

Of course I want to.

Brand

Then we must move on.

Sverre

DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT I'M SAYING? TO CONTINUE MEANS DEATH. WE MUST TURN BACK.

Brand

She might die soon. Maybe even today. Don't you want to see her one last time?

Sverre

Of course I want to, but not if it means risking our lives. We must think about ourselves.

Brand

I will continue.

Sverre

It's not just your life. It's mine too.

Brand

Then I'll go alone if necessary. My life is in God's hands.

Sverre

THIS IS MADNESS. Can't you see that? You're being reckless!

Brand

God is on my side.

Sverre

TOTALLY CRAZY. No matter who you have on your side, God or not, we must turn back now. The weather will only get worse, and we could get lost in this fog.

Brand

I trust that God will show me the way.

Sverre

Even God can't find his way in this weather. Come on, let's go. I can't just leave you here alone.

Brand

Why not?

Sverre

Because if you disappear in this horrible weather and people find out I left you, I will go to jail.

Brand

I would die for a great deed.

Sverre

Let's go.

Brand

If you had ten thousand, wouldn't you use it to see her again?

Sverre

Who are you talking about?

Brand

Your mother.

Sverre

Yes.

Brand

Twenty thousand?

Sverre

If it were just about money, I would sell my house and home. I would do anything to see her one last time. ANYTHING.

Brand

But not sacrifice your life?

Sverre

Why sacrifice my life?

Brand

You said you would do anything.

Sverre

Yes, but there are limits. She wouldn't want me to do that.

Brand

You only have one life, and if you lose it. What is left?

Sverre

What does that mean?

Brand

You either believe or you don't. There is nothing in between. It is all or nothing. You must sacrifice everything for what you believe in. ALL OR NOTHING, nothing else.

Sverre

All or nothing? I don't want to die in this fog, surrounded by cracks, ice, and cold water. You only have one life, and if you lose it, what is left? NOTHING.

Brand

Do whatever you want. I will continue.

Sverre

No, you're coming with me.

Brand

Leave me alone.

Sverre

No.

Brand

LEAVE ME ALONE! DO YOUR HEAR ME. LEAVE ME ALONE!

Sverre

I won't let you go until you come back with me.

Brand

It is my own responsibility. I will be fine. You go if you don't want to follow. I can manage on my own. I have God on my side. I'll be alright.

[A rumble is heard in the distance. Brand exits. Agnes and Einar enter.]

Agnes

What was that?

Einar

No, it was nothing. It was probably just the mountain. The mountain makes those sounds. It's fine.

Agnes

Are you sure?

Einar

Yes. Yes, I think so. I'm sure. Come on, let's continue.

Sverre

[To Einar and Agnes] Hello! Hey, you! Hold it right there! Stay where you are.

Einar

What?

Sverre

Don't move. You could fall through the ice if you keep going.

Einar

Where? Here?

Sverre

It is dangerous.

Einar

Let's go this way instead.

Agnes

[To Sverre] Is it really dangerous?

Einar

There is no need to worry.

Sverre

You must turn back. Go back down to the village.

Einar

It is not a problem. I know my way around. I will protect you. I promised to protect you from everything, and I'll do that. [To Sverre] Thanks for your help. We'll take a different route. I'm prepared to take a chance. Are you coming with me?

Agnes

Of course! We have promised each other to be together until death do us part.

Sverre

And then?

Einar

If we die now, we will still have lived a whole life together.

Sverre

And then what?

Einar

If we die, we're no longer alive. Then we're dead. If that's what is meant to be, so be it. If I'm with the person I love.

[Sverre exit. Gerd enters.]

Agnes

You shouldn't go there.

Gerd

Who says so?

Agnes

Someone just said that. It's dangerous.

Gerd

But it's not. Not if you know where you're going.

Agnes

Where are you going?

Gerd

I'm on my way up to the gorge. There's a church there, and I'm headed there.

[Gerd exits. Brand enters.]

Brand

Are you lost?

Einar

No, we're not. We're just going for a walk in the mountains. We're celebrating our anniversary. We just got married, and we're going to continue up the mountain to the top to see the view.

Agnes

Then go back. Head down to the village again.

Einar

Then we'll continue further south. And then. Then happiness. A life without sorrows. A life beyond bitterness and lies. What about you?

Brand

I'm going over the mountain to the other side.

Einar

I recognize you. From school. [To Agnes] I recognize him. [To Brand] I recognize you.

Brand

I recognized you from the very beginning.

Einar

It must have been, what, a long time ago? You don't look a day older. You look the same as you did then.

Brand

Young and naive. But I'm not anymore.

Einar

Exactly. [To Agnes] He mostly kept to himself. [To Brand] You kept to yourself. [To Agnes] He never wanted to hang out with the rest of us. [To Brand] You never wanted to hang out with us.

Brand

No, I never felt at ease among any of you.

Einar

But this is your home village down there. You never moved away, did you?

Brand

Yes. For a while longer.

Agnes

Where are you going?

Brand

I will also be heading south.

Einar

We're going there too. To the south, that is. Now that we're married. And maybe we'll never come back.

Agnes

Maybe at some point.

Einar

Yes, we might come back at some point. But we will probably stay there. Settle there. This village is... we're going on the next boat. So, maybe we'll have company?

Brand

Well, maybe. But I have things to do first. I have to organise a funeral.

Agnes

A funeral? Who is being buried?

Brand

This country.

Einar

This country?

Brand

Exactly.

Einar

Why do you say that?

Brand

Because all this must end. Once and for all.

Einar

An end to what?

Brand

All of this.

Einar

All of this? What does it mean?

Brand

The people who live here have let everything fall into disappear.

Einar

What does it mean? It means nothing.

Brand

It must stop.

Einar

I don't understand what you are talking about.

Brand

People like you. It must stop.

Einar

People like me.

Brand

Yes, especially people like you.

Einar

You're just like before.

Brand

You want life to be easy.

Einar

Exactly the same.

Brand

Joy and delight.

Einar

Just like at school.

Brand

But life is a struggle. You must fight.

Einar

You think you are better than everyone else.

Brand

I think nothing of the sort.

Einar

But you do. You think you are better than others. You stand there and believe you are better than me.

Brand

I only report what I see.

Einar

So everyone should think the same as you?

Brand

Everyone can think what they want.

Einar

But you can't dictate that.

Brand

Only those who follow the right faith can.

Einar

And what does that mean? Tougher punishment and harsher everything?

Brand

It is all or nothing.

Einar

And otherwise, I will burn in hell?

Brand

You can say and believe what you want, but at least I see the disease that is consuming this country.

Einar

You're the disease. I don't want to live in poverty and dress in ashes.

Brand

You can't do things half-heartedly.

Einar

It is easy to show contempt for everything and everyone.

Brand

At least I don't just talk.

Einar

I try to live a decent life.

Einar

What you do means nothing.

Einar

Unlike you?

Brand

What I'm talking about is reality. Real problems.

Einar

You know nothing about reality.

Brand

Eventually, you must pay the dues for all your broken promises. One day, the payment will be due.

Einar

The same applies to you.

Brand

You keep doing what you're doing.

Einar

You'll do the same.

Brand

At least you won't be doing any harm.

Einar

I think it's best that we stop here.

Brand

Yes, perhaps it is. If you go there, I'll go this way.

Einar

Yes, that might be for the best.

[Brand exits.]

Agnes

Did you see?

Einar

What?

Agnes

How he seemed to grow larger when he spoke. He scares me. Come on, let's go back.

Einar

Already? We're going to the top.

Agnes

It's cold here. I'm freezing. I want to go back.

Einar

It's just the wind coming through the gap. The wind and the fog.

Agnes

It's black and dark here. Does it usually feel this dark?

Einar

Ignore him. He's just talking. It means nothing.

Agnes

I don't care about him. I'm freezing. Come on, let's go. I have had enough of all this darkness and everything. And it's going to get harder on the way down if we take this route.

[Agnes and Einar exit. Brand and Gerd enter.]

Brand

Where are you going?

Gerd

To the church.

Brand

Then we will follow you. Come on, let's go this way, please.

Gerd

No, I'm not going down to the village. I'm going up there.

Brand

You can't go there. It's dangerous. There are cracks, water, and the ice is thin.

Gerd

I'm careful. As long as you're careful, there's no danger.

Brand

There's a church down in the valley too.

Gerd

I don't like it.

Brand

No? Why not?

Gerd

It is small and ugly. I don't like small churches.

Brand

So you have seen bigger?

Gerd

That's where I'm headed.

Brand

There is only snow and ice, and nothing else. Just mountains and rocks.

Gerd

That church is built of ice and snow.

Brand

Do you mean the gorge at the top of the mountain?

Gerd

It is a church. A big, mighty church made of ice.

Brand

You can't go there, do you hear? All it takes is the slightest noise up there, and it could trigger an avalanche. If it's big enough, it will cover the village, and we will all go under.

Gerd

One must just avoid loud noises. It's not safe to go down there either.

Brand

No, it doesn't. But there is a difference. The weather can change at any time, and you could get stuck up there.

Gerd

Up there, the winds will keep you warm. You will follow me there one day.

Brand

I don't think so.

Gerd

But you will. You and I will be up there together one day.

[Brand and Gerd exit.]

Scene 3. Hunger

[Sonja enters. Olav enters shortly afterward. Ingrid enters later but does not announce her presence.]

Olav

Excuse me for interrupting.

Sonja

No, you're not interrupting. I'm just leaving. I thought I'd meet a person here, but I think he's up on the mountain.

[Sonja starts to leave.]

Olav

No, please wait. I would really like to talk to you.

Sonja

With me?

Olav

Yes, I need to have a word with you. I really want to talk to you.

Sonja

Yes?

Olav

Well, it's been a while since we last saw each other.

Sonja

I see. Yes, maybe it has.

Olav

Or talked to each other, perhaps.

Sonja

Yes, talked to each other, yes. Yes, it's been a while.

Olav

How long has it been since we spoke?

Sonja

It must be a long time ago now. I can't remember.

Olav

No, I don't remember either. It must have been a very long time ago. You must have seen that I'm running for re-election.

Sonja

Re-election? No, I have not seen that. I didn't know you were.

Olav

Mayor. I have been the mayor, and now I'm running for re-election.

Sonja

But that's a long way time still, isn't it?

Olav

What?

Sonja

The elections.

Olav

Yes, that's right.

Sonja

Yes, it's a long time. A long way to go. I guess it's not yet.

Olav

Yes, that is true. It's not until next year. Well, anyway, you may have heard about it.

Sonja

What?

Olav

That I will be running. Even if it's a long time still, I'll be running.

Sonja

No, I have not heard that.

Olav

No? But that's the case anyway. Even though the elections are a long time still, I'm going to run for office.

Sonja

I see. Yes, no, I didn't know that.

Olav

And if I'm re-elected, I have big plans for this community. Big plans. Change is necessary, and change will be possible if I win. The ability to prioritise will be the most important task in a difficult time, and that plan will be crucial for success. That is, if I win. Social cohesion must be strengthened. That is my plan. If it breaks down, the damage will be incalculable. That's what I believe. So, my message is quite direct. It's a tough situation, and it could well get a lot worse. But my message is also hopeful. We have solved difficult problems before, and we can do it again.

Sonja

Are you afraid of people's contact with the depraved world outside? I don't think it's easy to ignore poverty, hunger, and deprivation.

Olav

That's where I hope for you.

Sonja

On me?

Olav

Yes, on your help.

Sonja

How can I help you?

Olav

You have heard my plans. With your help, we can reach a decisive moment in spreading prosperity and strengthening social cohesion. I want you to help me.

Sonja

With what?

Olav

I hope you will speak well of me to others.

Sonja

Speak well of you?

Olav

Not to say anything unfavorable, at least.

Sonja

I can't help you with anything.

Olav

It could become a lever for the whole society. Imagine how much we could achieve together, you and I.

Sonja

I can't do it. I have enough problems of my own. You'll have to talk to someone else.

[Sonja exits. Ingrid approaches Olav. Erling enters.]

Erling

You were right.

Ingrid

What are you talking about?

Erling

It's a terrible storm.

Ingrid

Yes, exactly. That's what I said.

Erling

It's really a terrible storm. It would have been nice to be inside, warm and safe, instead of out in this storm.

Ingrid

So why are you outside?

Erling

What do you mean?

Ingrid

Why are you outside? You could just go home.

Erling

But I didn't want to leave you all alone.

Ingrid

You're kind and thoughtful.

Erling

Do you think so?

Ingrid

You want to keep me company, but I'll be fine. Go home instead.

Erling

I don't get any peace at home anyway.

Ingrid

Yes, some people find it hard to be alone. You enjoy socialising with others.

Erling

You are the same.

Ingrid

No, I'm not like that. Not like you. You're sociable and see the best in everyone. I don't mind being alone.

Erling

No?

Ingrid

No, you know I like my solitude.

Erling

But you do enjoy meeting other people.

Ingrid

Yes, but that's only when I'm working. I meet people all day, and when I get home, it's nice to be alone. You can practice being on your own.

Erling

Practice being alone.

Ingrid

Yes.

Erling

I don't need to practice. I prefer your company.

Ingrid

And I like yours. But you shouldn't be out in this weather.

Erling

It's not a sacrifice.

Ingrid

There are plenty of other people who would love your company. Go talk to them instead of being out in the storm with me. I'll be fine.

[Ingrid exits. Sverre enters.]

Ingrid

Did you reach your mother?

Sverre

No, I didn't. I had to turn back. It was too dangerous to continue.

Ingrid

Did you go there alone?

Sverre

Yes, exactly. There was such terrible fog up on the mountain. You couldn't see anything, not even your hand in front of your face. There were so many cracks and that fog. You have to be able to walk on water if you don't want to fall into the water while you're up there.

[Olav enters.]

Sverre

There he is. Hey, hey, hey. People are hungry.

Olav

What are you talking about?

Sverre

We have no food. No one has. We're hungry.

Olav

But there is no food.

Sverre

You said you would solve the problem of poverty when you became mayor. People are sick and poor.

Olav

I work every day to address this situation, but it can't be resolved in just a few days.

Sverre

But you promised you would take care of it. Said we would be fed.

Olav

It takes time.

Sverre

You said it would be easy. That there would be changes once you were elected.

Olav

There was one reality before the elections and another after. I'm doing everything I can, but it will take time.

Sverre

But there is no time! We need change now. People are poor and sick.

Olav

Change takes time and hard work. From everyone. Sacrifices must be made.

Sverre

All I ask is for some bread. There must be money available to help us. Give us food to get by.

Erling

He can't solve all your problems. You also have a responsibility. Everyone has to contribute with what they have. It's the same for all of us.

Sverre

Do you know what it's like to beg every day for enough food to survive? One day, you realise you're just cattle. Your dignity is lost. If nothing is done, it will lead to death.

Olav

Now is not the best time to discuss these matters.

Sverre

You've lied to us. He lied to us. You lied when you said there would be a difference. YOU lied.

Olav

I'm NOT LYING!

Ingrid

That kind of talk helps no one.

Sverre

WHY DID YOU SAY IT WOULD GET BETTER IF IT'S NOT IMPROVING?

Olav

I'M NOT LYING. I DIDN'T LIE. IT TAKES TIME. EVERYTHING TAKES TIME. I do everything for you. Everything. And you should be grateful. Instead, you are acting ungrateful.

Sverre

I just want what you promised. You promised that we would be better off. If we followed you and did what you said, we wouldn't have to go hungry.

Olav

You will be better off. I will give you everything. If I only get the chance, I will give you everything.

Sverre

People are suffering. Everyone is doing all they can to satisfy their hunger, but it is no longer possible. There is no time. Soon, people will die.

Olav

It will get better. I promise you. I promise it will change.

Sverre

You say so, yes. What about the rest? Do you have enough food to survive? Do you believe him? That things will get better?

Erling

Everyone understands that it takes time. You can't change things overnight.

Sverre

You can see who holds the authority here.

Olav

Now you are being unfair. I understand how you feel, but it takes time. Change takes time. I promised you that things would improve, and they will. You have to trust me.

[A storm is coming.]

Erling

What is that noise?

Ingrid

It's building up into a storm out on the water. The sea is dark, and the sky is black. Can you see it? Do you see the dark horizon?

[Tiril enters. Followed by Agnes and Einar, and then Brand.]

Tiril

Is there anyone who can help?

Ingrid

What has happened?

Tiril

That's my little girl on the other side of the fjord. My husband was here before, but then no one could help. Now she's getting worse, and he's at home. I told him, "This time I'm going. I'm going",

Ingrid

Please calm down. What is it? What is happening?

Tiril

The little one is sick, and I don't know what to do anymore. She screams and cries so terribly. We try to comfort her, but she is inconsolable. Someone has to look after her. Someone has to help her.

Ingrid

Of course you should get help.

Erling

But how will you get there? It's impossible in this weather.

Ingrid

I'll take the path.

Tiril

No, that can't be done. A gust of wind tore the bridge apart. You have to get across by boat.

Ingrid

It's not possible to cross in this weather.

Tiril

It's the only way.

Ingrid

But there is a storm.

Tiril

My child is dying.

Ingrid

It isn't possible.

Tiril

Please, please, please. MY CHILD IS DYING.

Ingrid

I can't.

Tiril

SHE WILL DIE. SHE'S GOING TO DIE. THE LITTLE ONE IS GOING TO DIE, AND YOU DON'T EVEN WANT TO HELP HER. NOBODY WANTS TO HELP HER. WHAT KIND OF PEOPLE ARE YOU?

Ingrid

It's impossible to cross in this weather. DO YOU HEAR ME? IT'S NOT POSSIBLE. I CAN'T RISK DYING TOO. It has to wait until the storm has passed.

Erling

Calm down now. You hear what she says. There's no way to get across in this weather. THERE'S NO WAY ACROSS. DON'T YOU HEAR WHAT SHE'S SAYING?

Brand

Arrange a boat, and I will go.

Tiril

Are you a doctor?

Brand

I'm a priest.

Tiril

Then you can help.

Einar

You can't travel in this weather.

Brand

I will go. If someone gives me a boat, I will go.

Einar

It is far too dangerous. Look at the water out there.

Brand

A person facing judgment day can't wait. It doesn't matter what the weather is like. If someone agrees to lend me the boat, I need someone to help me. Who will come? You?

Sverre

I won't go. It's a sure way to die.

Brand

I need someone to help me get the boat out and to row. No one?

Ingrid

It is not safe to go out in this weather. We can't risk people dying.

Agnes

What about you?

Einar

Me?

Agnes

Yes, didn't you hear what he said?

Einar

Yes. I don't know if he is reckless or brave.

Agnes

He is brave. Just like you, my dear beloved husband. [To Brand] Here's one who wants to follow you.

Einar

Who? Me? I can't go.

Agnes

You can't let him go on his own.

Einar

I could have done it earlier. Then I could have sacrificed everything. My life, everything. But that was before I met you. Now everything is different.

Agnes

How?

Einar

I can't leave now and risk losing everything. I'm finally happy with you. I just can't.

Agnes

What do you mean? It isn't possible. What does it mean?

Einar

I can't. I don't want to.

Agnes

Don't want to?

Einar

I don't dare.

Agnes

You don't have the courage? How can we be together if you don't have the courage to do the right thing?

Einar

I was lost before I met you, and if I lost you, I would be just as lost again.

Agnes

[To Brand] I'll go with you.

Einar

You're not allowed to leave. Think of me.

Agnes

That is what I do.

Brand

Come on, let's go. [To Tiril] You show the way.

Einar

Let the storm calm down a bit before heading out.

Agnes

We'll be fine. Which way is the house?

Tiril

Over there, behind those black rocks.

Brand

Let's go.

[Agnes, Brand, and Tiril exit.]

Erling

Now they're leaving.

Einar

Why don't you stop them? You have to stop them.

Olav

There's nothing we can do.

Erling

You just let her go.

Einar

I don't know what to do. It is her own choice. She decides for herself.

Erling

Nothing to do? It's a terrible storm.

Ingrid

The Lord does not want you to go out on the water in this weather.

Einar

Can we follow them?

Erling

It is not possible. Not now.

Olav

Not when it storms like this.

Ingrid

I hope the baby will be okay.

Olav

We will leave as soon as the waters calm down.

Sverre

The Lord has probably given up on that child.

Olav

As soon as the storm has passed, we will leave.

Einar

I don't know how I would have stopped her. Why did I let her go?

Sverre

We will follow as soon as the storm has passed.

Ingrid

I no longer see them.

Erling

They are at the rocks. Look at them. The black rocks.

Einar

Has the boat sunk?

Ingrid

Yes, there they are. I can see them now.

Einar

Has the boat sunk?

Ingrid

No, they are just behind the cliff.

[Everyone exits. Gerd enters.]

Gerd

They will be fine. They will make it across the water to the other side, to the shore. The storm on the water will subside, but not the storm inside the people. They will be fine. But not the child. The child will die. The children will not make it. The children are getting hurt, and how can you ever understand that? Please don't go. I can only see what I see. That loneliness that is within all people. I see it. This darkness, the loneliness that consumes us from within if we let it take hold. I see it. The sorrow that eats us up from within. I see it. The sorrow of loneliness. I see that. Everything else is hidden. I have to look in the grey scales, beyond laws, beyond faith and politics, between people. In the void that exists between people. In the emptiness, the space that exists between us. Then maybe even me. I don't know. I don't know if I will make it. And if I don't make it, I'll have to. No, I can't think like that. Soon, the calmness will be here.

Soon, the calmness will come when the storm outside dies down. But not the storm inside us humans.

Scene 4. Silence

[Per enters. Tiril enters.]

Tiril

I came as soon as I could. I hurried, but I couldn't cross the bridge because of the storm. But now I'm finally here.

Per

It is too late.

Tiril

Too late?

Per

Yes.

Tiril

Too late for what?

Per

What?

Tiril

Too late for what? Tell me what you mean! What has happened? WHAT DO YOU MEAN? TOO LATE FOR WHAT?

Per

The child.

Tiril

The child?

Per

Our baby.

Tiril

WHAT'S WRONG WITH HER? WHAT'S WRONG WITH OUR BABY?

Per

She couldn't be saved.

Tiril

Couldn't be saved? What does it mean?

Per

It means what it means.

Tiril

What do you mean? What does it mean?

Per

IT DIDN'T WORK.

Tiril

DIDN'T WORK? WHAT ARE YOU SAYING? WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?
WHAT? PLEASE, JUST SAY WHAT YOU ARE SAYING!

Per

It means what it means. It didn't work. That's what it means.

Tiril

I don't understand. I don't understand anything. I don't understand any
of this. Is it really true? What is the meaning of all this?

Per

There is none.

Tiril

But God has a purpose for everything. For everything. So there must be a reason for this pain too.

Per

God? I don't know.

Tiril

But there is. There is meaning in all pain. There is meaning in everything in the pain, in everything. There must be. There must be a meaning to everything. There must be.

Per

I can't stand it. This pain. What does it even mean? Losing a child? What does it mean? I don't understand.

Tiril

If there is a meaning, this will pass.

Per

No, it never goes away.

Tiril

Don't say that! Tell me it will pass.

Per

IT WILL NEVER GO AWAY.

Tiril

It has to.

Per

How do you know it will ever go away?

Tiril

I don't know. But it will pass. One day it will be over. I don't know. I don't know anything. Right now, I know nothing.

Per

I wish she had never seen the light of day. It would have been easier.

[Brand enters.]

Tiril

It is too late. We were too late. Way too late. She's dead, and... and...
FUCKING HELL.

Brand

This is unfortunate. Is there anything I can do?

Per

We don't need your help.

Brand

But what about the urgent needs of the soul?

Per

The what of the soul?

Brand

The urgent needs of the soul. The needs of the soul.

Per

Is there even a soul? I don't know. Is there?

Brand

Of course there is. In the believer, there is a pure soul. And it also has needs. It also needs comfort. It also needs to grieve.

Per

We must grieve as best we can. Our child has died. For now, that's all. We have to do the best we can.

Brand

I can give my blessing.

Per

What difference would it make? Blessings are not enough. If God existed, He could have prevented what happened. Instead, it all falls on my shoulders. If I could have saved her, I would have.

Brand

But you didn't.

Per

No, I didn't.

[Sverre enters.]

Sverre

The storm has calmed down. I came as soon as I could.

Tiril

It is too late.

Sverre

Too late for what?

Tiril

For everything. For everything. It is too late for everything. It's too late to repent your sins because the punishment has already been carried out. It's too late to live because how can you live with this? With this pain, this loneliness? The experience of a child dying? There is nothing to give it meaning.

Brand

If you look closely enough, you can see the light. Even if it is just darkness, there is always light.

Sverre

So there is a meaning to everything?

Brand

Exactly. If you live your life according to His wishes, everything has a meaning. As long as love exists, it is also possible to live, no matter what happens.

Sverre

But how does it work?

Brand

It is simple. Just follow Him. It is the only way.

Sverre

We need your help.

Brand

Mine?

Sverre

Stay here. With us.

Brand

Here?

Sverre

We have no priest, and the church is empty. This used to be a livid place. Now we barely survive. People are sick and poor.

Brand

I can understand the resignation, but it is dangerous. And it is not true. It is possible to get good things done.

Sverre

That is why I'm asking you to stay.

Brand

I can't do it. Important things are waiting. There is nothing here for me.

Sverre

I have met young and old, but I have never encountered anyone who asks anything exceptional of themselves or anyone else. People don't ask for big plans, grand visions, or thousand-year-old empires. They want someone like you. A person who can lead us out of the darkness.

Brand

There is a world out there. A world that is waiting for me. I have a difficult and important job ahead of me. Out there.

Sverre

It is your actions that matter. Not where you are. The world is as much here as it is there. The challenges are the same here as anywhere else. We live a life that no longer works. In poverty. This poverty, hunger, and crying have become our new normal.

Brand

Stop it now. I'm going to leave. I can't stay.

Sverre

You only have one life, and if you lose it, what is left?

Brand

Who told you that?

Sverre

You. You said that when we were up on the mountain.

Brand

That's right. You have to have a conviction. If you don't have conviction, you can't do anything.

Sverre

And I thought you had one. But maybe I was wrong. Do what you have to do. Do what you think is right.

Brand

I can't do it. I can't. I have more important things to do.

[Brand exits. Agnes enters.]

Agnes

What are you thinking about?

Tiril

I don't know. I don't know if I'm thinking about anything. Everything feels so terribly empty.

Agnes

Do you have someone who can give you comfort?

Tiril

There is no comfort for someone like me. One who has lost a child.

Agnes

You can't know that. One day, it may all be over. Everything changes. And eventually, you forget.

Tiril

I don't think you can forget.

Agnes

Life is changing. My life was lonely and empty. And then I met a man I fell in love with.

Tiril

Then you don't know what it's like to lose something for real.

Agnes

But I do. I have lost my old life. And now I will lose my new one too. I don't want to understand it, but I can't see it. I can't anymore. And it hurts.

Tiril

It is not the same thing.

Agnes

No, it's not the same thing. But I also feel pain.

Tiril

This pain is something else. I don't know. I don't FUCKING KNOW ANYTHING. Why would this happen to me? I haven't done anything. OR HAVE I?

[Tiril leaves. Sonja enters. Agnes is still there.]

Sonja

I waited for you, but then I had to leave. When I heard you were here and went out into the storm, I was worried about you.

Brand

I'm about to leave.

Sonja

You have always been like that. Can't stop for a second. Always somewhere else. Oh, well. Take care of yourself then.

Brand

What do you want?

Sonja

I just wanted to see you. Nothing else. Just to look at you and see that you're healthy.

Brand

There is always something more.

Sonja

You should always know best.

Brand

Always something more. Always.

Sonja

You could have died out there, on the fjord. You always do what you want, without thinking of others. Without considering me, who gave you your life. If you die, I won't have anyone left. You must take care of yourself. You don't even come to see me anymore.

Brand

So that's why you're here?

Sonja

I'm not getting any younger, you know. And that means that one day I will end up in the grave. I won't live forever, if that's what you think. But that's not the case. I'm getting old too. But you might not think that.

Brand

I know. You say so.

Sonja

And then you will have everything that is mine. You will have everything.

Brand

And with what reservations?

Sonja

That you are not risking your life. That you take care of yourself. That you visit your mom a little more often.

Brand

I do what I want. I don't want your money or anything from you. We never got along, you and I. You didn't even like me when I was a little kid. I have not been a son, and you have not been a mother.

Sonja

You can be whoever you want. You can be tough and indifferent, even hate me, but we're still family. If you're going to inherit my money, though, you need to be careful. Above all, I just want us to be friends again. Just step away from this. Whatever this is.

Brand

What if I burn all the money and scatter the ashes in the wind instead?

Sonja

You would never do that.

Brand

But maybe I would.

Sonja

You couldn't do that. You wouldn't do that. You are going to kill your mother? After everything I did to you?

Brand

You have done nothing for me.

Sonja

I gave you your life. I provided you with food, shelter, and love. You have received everything from me. Everything. And yet, this ingratitude. I don't even understand how you became the way you are.

Brand

You don't?

Sonja

No.

Brand

I have got it from you.

Sonja

That's not true. You didn't get it from me anyway.

Brand

When my father was dying, you went into his room and took all his money. I heard you rummaging through his things. I heard you threaten him when he was dying. Is this it? Is this it? He was too sick and tired to respond, so you kept searching through his belongings.

Sonja

It was my money. He was a bad man, a bad person his whole life. It was a payment for the life I lived with him. Mean. I took the money he owed me for putting up with him. The bad, bad man. I had paid with my youth and sanity, and now it was time to collect.

Brand

So, you admit it?

Sonja

I admit that I have been unhappy all my life and that the money was compensation for the life I was forced to live. I walked around all day feeling unhappy and scared, and I was relieved when he finally died. Yes, I WAS.

Brand

There is nothing that can forgive that debt.

Sonja

The debt? What debt? There is no debt. The debt is settled now. He owed me for my life, and I took the money he owed me.

Brand

You have a debt inside. You can't escape it. THE DEBT.

Sonja

Please don't. I don't want to fight with you anymore. You know I have always loved you. All this just makes me sad. Tell me what to do, and I'll do it.

Brand

The debt you have inside. The debt you have in your soul. You need to repent for that. You must ask for forgiveness.

Sonja

Should I regret taking what was mine?

Brand

You must admit your sins and be prepared to repent of them. Or you will die in here. Then I will forgive your sins. I will be there for you. Let me know when you're ready.

Sonja

You can't be so hard and cold.

Brand

I'm not hard. I'm warm and compassionate. If you do what I say, you'll be free of that guilt you carry in your soul.

Sonja

And then we will be friends again? Then we will be a family again? Then you will come back to me?

Brand

Once you have asked God for forgiveness, all is forgiven.

Sonja

How do I do it?

Brand

You must get rid of all your belongings. You must go to the grave completely pure. Only then will God forgive you.

Sonja

Get rid of all my money? I'll transfer my money to you, and you can take care of it.

Brand

I don't need money.

Sonja

What should I do then? Give them away? You can't do that to me. You can't force me to get rid of all my possessions. I don't need God's forgiveness. I'm leaving now.

[Sonja exits. Einar enters. Brand is on his way out.]

Agnes

[To Brand] Where are you going? Are you going to leave? Don't leave. Stay here. They need you. I need you. I didn't realise it at first, but now I understand. My old life is lost, and now I will lose my new one too. I didn't want to understand it, but now I see it. I can't lie anymore. I can't. Anymore.

Einar

Please don't take her away from me. Let her go. Let her go. Please. I can't bear to be left alone. don't take her away from me. [To Agnes] Please. Please don't leave me.

Agnes

I have no choice.

Einar

You have a choice. We all have a choice. You promised me "for better or worse". You said those words. They must mean something.

Agnes

I can't lie. Not to myself and not to you. I just can't.

Einar

You will not be happy. His heart is hard. There's no room for anyone else in there.

Agnes

A heart may be hard at first; it must be hard before it becomes soft. Then it becomes soft. That's how it is with some people. I must open that heart. No man can love all humankind unless he has loved one person first.

Einar

He hits instead of caresses.

Agnes

Not me.

Einar

No, but to others. He doesn't agree with what others call love.

Agnes

He understands God's love because it is uncompromising. It is a tough love. God sacrificed His son on the cross for us humans. He is prepared to do the same.

Einar

It is not easy for a human being to live up to such love.

Agnes

The only thing we can do is remain true to our ideals until the end. Even if you lack strength, you must possess the will to do what is right. This applies to everyone. You can't be afraid. I will follow him wherever he goes. [To Brand] Are you coming? There's an empty church here waiting for a priest. It's waiting for you.

/



Böner







Act 2

Scene 1. Prayers

[Einar enters, followed by Gerd.]

Einar

Hey. (Pause) I recognise you. I have seen you before. Weren't you up on the mountain?

Gerd

When?

Einar

I don't remember when it was. It feels like it was so long ago. Another lifetime. No, no, no, please, don't go. Not until I talk to you.

Gerd

How do you know I want to talk to you?

Einar

We're talking now.

Gerd

This is not talking. When people talk to each other, they have something to say. Not like this.

Einar

We talk to each other and then we talk to each other. There's nothing more to it. I like you.

Gerd

Have you been drinking?

Einar

What?

Gerd

I asked if you have been drinking.

Einar

No more than I need. Or perhaps not enough.

Gerd

You're drunk.

Einar

Yes, maybe I am. Maybe just a little. But that doesn't mean I'm lying. I saw you up on the mountain and thought, "I like her." When I saw that blush and the gleam of joy in your beautiful eyes.

Gerd

Why do you drink?

Einar

What else should I do?

Gerd

You will kill yourself if you keep drinking.

Einar

And?

Gerd

Is that what you want?

Einar

I don't know what I want. I gamble and I drink. Then I drink and gamble. That's my life. In the big picture, it takes up most of my time.

Gerd

You can't continue to live like this.

Einar

Why not?

Gerd

You have to believe in something.

Einar

Believe in something? Like what?

Gerd

In something. Anything at all.

Einar

That's just a delusion. The idea that you need to believe in something is simply not true.

Gerd

If you don't believe in something, you're lost.

Einar

Then I might be lost.

Gerd

You're not lost.

Einar

But maybe I am.

Gerd

You can't give up so easily.

Einar

I once believed in something but look at me now. LOOK AT ME. DO YOU SEE?

Gerd

Yes, I see.

Einar

Then you understand.

Gerd

I see a person who needs something to believe in. A faith. Not the old church, but a new one. Something else to believe in.

Einar

I used to believe in love. Now I only believe in loneliness, darkness, silence, coldness. All of that. I try to escape from it. That's why I drink. To save myself.

Gerd

That won't help.

Einar

BUT IT DOES. IT HELPS ME. IT HELPS ME THAT I DRINK AND GAMBLE.

Gerd

Please stop. You're scaring me.

Einar

I'm sorry, I didn't mean to. Please forgive me.

Gerd

It won't help. You have to try believing in something.

Einar

Can't you show me?

[Gerd leaves.]

Einar

No, you can't. Please, don't go. DON'T GO. DON'T LEAVE ME, PLEASE. PLEASE SAVE ME. CAN NO ONE SAVE ME? NO ONE CAN SAVE ME.

[Einar exits. Erling and Ingrid enter.]

Erling

There you are.

Ingrid

Yes, here I am.

Erling

I have been looking for you.

Ingrid

I see. And now you've found me.

Erling

Now I have found you, yes. Finally.

Ingrid

I didn't know I was missing.

Erling

I was just wondering where you went.

Ingrid

I'm working.

Erling

Do you want to go for a walk?

Ingrid

Now?

Erling

Yes.

Ingrid

That would have been nice.

Erling

Yes?

Ingrid

But I can't.

Erling

Of course you can.

Ingrid

I would love to do that instead of what I have to do.

Erling

Never mind that. We could go down to the fjord and walk on the ice.

Ingrid

I actually have a job to do.

Erling

What is so important?

Ingrid

I have a home visit.

Erling

A home visit? Can't you take just a short walk? You'll have time for the visit later.

Ingrid

It can't wait.

Erling

Half an hour here or there makes no difference.

Ingrid

I promised to come right away.

Erling

Don't you want to spend time with me?

Ingrid

Of course I do. Why do you ask that?

Erling

Because you never get in touch.

Ingrid

It has just been a lot lately.

Erling

Have you met the mayor?

Ingrid

The mayor? Why should I meet him? (Pause) Why should I meet him?

Erling

I need to talk to him. I was just wondering if you'd seen him.

Ingrid

I haven't seen anyone. I'm working, and I really have to go. I'm sure you have things to do too.

Erling

I have already marked all the tests and prepared all the lessons for next week.

Ingrid

Anyway, I have things to do. I'm sure you'll find someone to hang out with.

[Ingrid starts to leave while Erling remains standing.]

Erling

Let me know if you want to go for a walk later. I'll be here, standing right here.

[Einar enters.]

Erling

What are you looking at?

Einar

Nothing.

Erling

It's not nothing. It looks like something. It's the opposite of nothing. What is it that you want?

Einar

Nothing. I see that you are a good person. A good and kind person who cares about others.

Erling

What are you talking about?

Einar

Your fellow human beings.

Erling

Do you think you're better than the rest of us?

Einar

No, I don't think so.

Erling

So why are you standing there staring? Because you think you're better than me?

Einar

I don't think I'm better than anyone. I'm worse than everyone else. That's the truth. I'm not making fun of you. I'm a bad person. A rotten human being. There is no salvation for me.

Erling

There is salvation for all.

Einar

Not for me. Not for someone like me. Everything is already over for me. I'm beyond rescue.

Erling

Then you might be the exception.

Einar

Yes, that's probably right. I'm the exception. The human exception. The one who is not even a human being but is in a human body.

Erling

Which confirms that rule. So, what are you doing out here?

Einar

Don't you have anything to drink?

Erling

No.

Einar

Is it true? Not even a drop?

Erling

You're already drunk.

Einar

I'm cold and need something warm to keep me warm, so I don't freeze. It's cold outside, and if I only had a little something, I wouldn't be cold.

Erling

You have had enough. You shouldn't have another drink.

Einar

Do you have any money?

Erling

What?

Einar

Do you have money?

Erling

Leave me alone. I said, leave me alone.

Einar

I haven't eaten for I don't know how long, and now I'm terribly hungry. I just need money to buy food. Money enough to buy a sandwich.

Erling

If I gave you money, you would just spend it on booze.

Einar

No, I was going to buy food. I haven't eaten for days.

Erling

I can buy you a sandwich. But you'd rather have the money for alcohol. I won't give you a single penny. You can't hold on to anything. What really happened to the girl you married?

Einar

With the person I married?

Erling

Yes. You did get married.

Einar

But that was a long time ago. A different life. I was happy then. I had my whole future ahead of me. Not like now. Now I'm just a miserable person who doesn't understand the meaning of life. I wasn't like that before she abandoned me.

Erling

You just let her go.

Einar

It was her choice, not mine. I loved her.

Erling

You let her go.

Einar

That is not true. I did everything I could to make her stay.

Erling

Then you would have fought to keep her.

Einar

But I did.

Erling

You would have fought, but you are a quitter. One who does not do everything possible to keep the one you love.

Einar

It is not true.

Erling

You let her down, and now you are letting yourself down in your own life.

Einar

My life has not been easy.

Erling

But then take her back. If you love her, take her back.

Einar

I can't. She is married and has a child. It is too late. I can't go to her now.

I had a chance earlier, in the past, but not now. Maybe if I can stay sober. Then maybe I can talk to her, and maybe she will want to come back, but not as long as I drink.

Erling

Yes, you do what you want. I will not give up the one I love. Never.

Einar

Did you have something to drink or not?

Erling

You shouldn't have anything.

[Einar leaves.]

Erling

What are you doing? You should be home sleeping? Go home to your real home instead.

Gerd

I have no home.

Erling

Everyone has a home.

Gerd

Not me.

Erling

Somewhere.

Gerd

I don't. I have no home. I have nothing.

Erling

Your parents are worried.

Gerd

They are not my parents. You know I was given away when I was little, and since then I have been on my own. They don't even like me.

Erling

They'll be worried if you don't come home. You'll get into trouble here. The kind of life you lead won't lead to happiness.

Gerd

But I'm already happy.

Erling

I don't believe in that.

Gerd

But it is true. My life belongs to the Church.

Erling

Yes, you say that. But I know it is not so, from my own experience.

Gerd

You don't have a home either.

Erling

Of course I have a home.

Gerd

Not a real home. You're alone, and you will be alone for the rest of your life.

Erling

That is not true. I have someone I love. A beautiful person. A warm and kind soul.

Gerd

But she doesn't love you.

Erling

She will love me. One day she will love me. One day we will be together,
and she will love me.

[Gerd and Erling leave. Sverre and Olav enter.]

Olav

You were right.

Sverre

What are you talking about?

Olav

I haven't done what I promised. People are hungry. People are poor and
hungry. They have nothing. You were right.

Sverre

At least we have the church now.

Olav

The church does not feed people.

Sverre

At least it gives hope.

Olav

You can't live on hope.

Sverre

It's better than believing in lies.

Olav

I have never lied.

Sverre

No?

Olav

I said it would take time to solve these problems. I said I would do the best I could. I really want to help.

Sverre

You want to be re-elected.

Olav

I want to help. And the easiest way for me to do that is to get elected.

Sverre

You said that last time too.

Olav

But this time I mean it. This time I really mean it. Let me help you.

Sverre

I don't understand why you're asking me for permission. You can do what you want.

Olav

I want you to help me.

Sverre

Me?

Olav

Yes.

Sverre

Helping you? How can I help you?

Olav

People are listening to you.

Sverre

They listen to God.

Olav

No, they don't. They listen to you.

Sverre

I don't think so.

Olav

But it's the truth. They listen to you. With your help, I can solve these problems.

Sverre

Why would I want to help you?

Olav

You get to have your say.

Sverre

I have too much to do.

Olav

Create a better society.

Sverre

I don't want to get involved in politics. I can't.

Olav

Can't?

Sverre

I don't want to.

[Sverre and Olav exit. Ingrid and Sonja enter.]

Ingrid

I apologize for being late. I hurried as much as I could.

Sonja

I'm in no hurry. I'm not going anywhere.

Ingrid

Neither am I. Nowhere and nothing. How do you feel now?

Sonja

I don't know. I feel something in my body, but I don't know how to describe it. I feel nothing after my husband's passing. Not even when I'm sick. Is it supposed to feel a certain way?

Ingrid

No, it doesn't. As long as you are not in pain, it's okay.

Sonja

I feel pain here, but that's something different. It's about my son. But tell me the truth.

Ingrid

The truth?

Sonja

I can see it in your eyes. How serious is it?

Ingrid

Would you like to hear it straight?

Sonja

There's no reason to delay.

Ingrid

It's impossible to say for sure. It depends on how much your body can fight. But it doesn't look good.

Sonja

What does "not looking good" mean?

Ingrid

It means it may not be long now. But as I said, there's no way of knowing. We only understand how long life is after it is too late.

Sonja

Is there nothing that can be done? No treatment for what I have?

Ingrid

I have already tried everything. Your body has not responded to treatment.

Sonja

But you said I would be fine.

Ingrid

I said I would do everything in my power.

Sonja

YOU SAID I WOULD BE FINE! THAT IT WAS ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE I WAS WELL AGAIN!

Ingrid

There's no way to know. The chances are greater if the patient does not give up hope.

Sonja

So, this was my life. This is the end. This whole unhappiness is what I leave behind. Time feels both too long and too short. No matter how short the time, you always wish for more.

Ingrid

Yes.

Sonja

But there never is. Life is finite, and you have to make do with what you get—the short time you get.

Ingrid

Yes.

Sonja

And you go your whole life thinking there is so much time, so you don't make the most of it.

Ingrid

Yes.

Sonja

You waste valuable time on the smallest pettiness and the smallest oppressions, keeping those you love at a distance and those you dislike close.

Ingrid

Yes.

Sonja

Why do I have to die?

Ingrid

I don't know.

Sonja

I have done my best.

Ingrid

I know.

Sonja

Nobody is perfect. I know this. It's true for me too. I have tried to live a good life to the best of my ability.

Ingrid

You need to organise the sacrament. Have you spoken to him?

Sonja

Who? God? He is silent. He says nothing anymore.

Ingrid

No, your son.

Sonja

Yes. No.

Ingrid

Aren't you going to do it?

Sonja

What good would that do? I tried to talk to him earlier, but he didn't want to talk to me.

Ingrid

But he must come now that you're sick.

Sonja

He is not coming.

Ingrid

You must receive the sacrament.

Sonja

He says I must repent of my sins before he will see me. Regret.

Ingrid

Regrets?

Sonja

Yes. Show regret. How do you avoid regretting many things in life? I feel regret, but not the kind that pleases the church.

Ingrid

You need to talk to him.

Sonja

It won't help. I have tried to talk to him, but it's too late. He doesn't want to see his sick mother, even as she is dying. He says I have ruined his life. But what about my life? No one thinks about me. No one ever thinks about me.

Ingrid

I will talk to him.

[Brand enters.]

Brand

I have my principles.

Ingrid

So do I. There is no difference.

Brand

You can't act without considering the consequences. You get rewarded based on your actions.

Ingrid

But I would go there even if I weren't paid for it. Does that mean my actions aren't worth anything?

Brand

She specifically asked for you to come. I have no part in this. I'm not coming until she asks me to.

Ingrid

But she is asking you now.

Brand

Did she say that?

Ingrid

That's what she means. She won't live much longer. If you leave now, you have a chance to reconcile with her.

Brand

I don't want to reconcile with her after everything she's done to me.

Ingrid

You can't be like this.

Brand

What do you mean?

Ingrid

As you are now.

Brand

I will not go to her until she truly seeks God's forgiveness for what she has done. Real remorse.

Ingrid

She needs you. She is suffering.

Brand

I hope you can help ease her pain then.

Ingrid

That's not enough.

Brand

I'll ask someone from the parish to visit her so she has someone to talk to.

Ingrid

You can't be so harsh. She is your mother.

Brand

I would do anything for her.

Ingrid

YOUR OWN MOTHER.

Brand

If only she would let me.

Ingrid

Start by doing the right thing.

Brand

But if she doesn't repent for what she has done, I will inherit all her sins. It's inherited. The sins. If God forgives her, He forgives me too.

Ingrid

You have to do the right things if God is to forgive you.

Brand

I promised her I would come if she did what I said. My promise stands. All or nothing. I can't have two different standards.

[Ingrid exits. Sverre enters.]

Sverre

What's the matter? You look really upset.

Brand

My mother is ill.

Sverre

Is it serious?

Brand

I'm afraid so. I'm afraid it's very serious.

Sverre

Will she...?

Brand

They say that there isn't much time left.

Sverre

Yes, it is. It is...

Brand

I need you to do something for me. I wouldn't ask if it weren't important. You know that.

Sverre

Yes, of course.

Brand

You know that if it weren't important, I would never ask you.

Sverre

Yes, of course I know that.

Brand

I need to talk to her, but I can't. I can't. I was wondering if you would consider doing it in my place.

Sverre

Are you asking me?

Brand

Yes, I'm. I'm wondering if you would.

Sverre

Should I go instead of you?

Brand

I can't go to her until she asks God for forgiveness. I just can't.

Sverre

But it's your mother.

Brand

It's not possible. I can't. I can't have two different yardsticks. One for my family and one for everyone else.

Sverre

But what would I say to her?

Brand

What?

Sverre

When she wants to see you?

Brand

I have told her that it's all or nothing. Plain and simple. Either she repents her sins, or she dies without the sacraments. I said that to her.

Sverre

I don't know. How can I say that when she is facing death?

Brand

You're the only one I can ask. You know that, right? You're the only one I trust.

Sverre

I understand that, but it's your mother.

Brand

I wouldn't ask if it weren't important. And it is important. That's why I'm asking you. If you can talk to her in my place, tell her that there is salvation to be had. As soon as she repents of her sins, there is salvation.

Sverre

I'll talk to her.

[Sverre exits. Agnes enters.]

Brand

What is it?

Agnes

No, it's nothing. I don't think so.

Brand

I see that there's something. Tell me what it is. It's something.

Agnes

It's our little boy.

Brand

What's wrong with him?

Agnes

He looks pale.

Brand

Pale? It's probably just temporary.

Agnes

He didn't look like that before. Now he looks pale. He hardly even cries anymore. Should a child look so pale?

Brand

Children look pale. There hasn't been any sun outside for a long time. He'll get his colour back once the sun shines again. Where is he?

Agnes

Inside.

[Tiril and Per enters.]

Tiril

I don't remember what she looked like anymore.

Agnes

Shh. He is asleep.

Tiril

The memory of her.

Brand

He is asleep, sleeping and dreaming.

Tiril

When I try to think of her, it's all blank.

Agnes

We must not disturb his sleep.

Tiril

There is nothing.

Brand

You and the boy are the best I have.

Tiril

It is blank.

Agnes

He is beautiful.

Tiril

I don't remember her face.

Agnes

His little nose.

Tiril

Not her laughter. Nothing.

Agnes

And small hands.

Brand

Sometimes I think about what life would have been like without you.

Tiril

As much as I try to remember...

Agnes

His light breathing.

Tiril

I don't remember.

Brand

It's because of you that I can do this.

Tiril

And long moments...

Agnes

Our little boy.

Tiril

Long moments...

Agnes

A gift that no god can take away from us.

Brand

Everything I have achieved depends on it.

Tiril

At times, I even forget.

Brand

All individual souls.

Tiril

I forget that I had her.

Brand

I don't think anything bad can happen as long as the three of us are together.

Agnes

You, me, and our little boy.

Tiril

I thought I would always remember. I thought I would never forget. Do you feel the same way?

Per

No. I can't get rid of the image of her. Her little face is stuck in my mind. It was so unfair that our child should die. We never did anything to anyone. I have tried to be kind to everyone I meet, never raising my voice to anyone. And then God punishes us like this. It is not fair. It's not right. It's been more than a year, but the pain is still the same. I think the grief after losing a child never goes away. I don't understand how I can ever...

Tiril

How can we move forward?

Per

I don't know.

Tiril

You can't disappear from me.

Per

I won't.

Tiril

Promise me that you won't disappear from me.

Per

[At the same time] I promise. But I just need to understand how to live on with this weight. I can hardly breathe. We sit and try to pass the time. I don't know what to do.

[Per exits.]

Tiril

[At the same time] You! You can't disappear from me. YOU CAN'T DISAPPEAR. YOU CAN'T LEAVE ME HERE ALONE. I CAN'T STAND BEING ALONE ANYMORE. YOU CAN'T JUST... disappear. Don't go away. I can't see you anymore. You have disappeared.

Scene 2. Crises

[Ingrid and Olav enter.]

Ingrid

Do you think we humans are made for happiness?

Olav

Yes, I think so. I believe happiness is found in what we achieve and in what we can leave behind for our fellow human beings.

Ingrid

Do you mean that happiness is found in great ideals?

Olav

I believe we're built for duty- Duty and work.

Ingrid

Fighting for a better world?

Olav

That's where happiness lies.

Ingrid

But don't you think there can be happiness even in the small things?

Olav

What do you mean?

Ingrid

The small life, with those who are close to us. Maybe there is someone for all of us on this earth who is meant to bring us happiness.

Olav

Of course, there must be happiness in the small things, in the family.

Ingrid

I believe that too. I also see happiness there. You know that I do.

Olav

What are you talking about?

Ingrid

I adore you. I have done so for a long time. Yes, as long as I have known you.

Olav

Yes, I know that.

Ingrid

And I feel there is a higher plan for us humans when I'm with you. You have an idea of what life could be, and I share that idea with you. You know that.

Olav

Yes, I'm aware of that.

Ingrid

And you know that I would do anything for you, anything you ask.

Olav

And the same goes for you. I would do anything for you, anything you ask.

Ingrid

Do you think there would be happiness for someone like me?

Olav

Someone like you? Yes, I think so. You're a good person. I believe happiness is for everyone, even for someone like you.

Ingrid

So shouldn't we do what makes us happy?

Olav

But you're already happy, right?

Ingrid

Am I?

Olav

You're happy with your work. You have a good job, and you are a good friend—someone others can talk to.

Ingrid

I mean happiness beyond work, beyond friendship. I mean the happiness that is in the small life. A happiness that involves both of us, both you and me. Do you think that happiness exists? (Pause) I'm sorry. I'm sorry for asking a question you can't answer. It was not my intention.

Olav

No, it's not like that at all.

Ingrid

How is it then?

Olav

I was just so taken aback.

Ingrid

The question is sincere.

Olav

I haven't thought of such a possibility at all. You're a beautiful woman.

Ingrid

Yes?

Olav

But it's me. It is someone else who...

Ingrid

Anyone else? Who is it?

Olav

No, I didn't mean it that way.

Ingrid

You have someone else. I'm sorry, I didn't know.

Olav

Not really anyone else. I have no one.

Ingrid

You don't have anyone else?

Olav

No, no. I don't know.

Ingrid

I'm sorry.

Olav

No, that's not what I meant at all.

Ingrid

Yes, I'm sorry.

Olav

I just meant that I don't know anything. About anything.

Ingrid

I'm sorry for asking.

Olav

I just wasn't prepared for your question.

Ingrid

You don't need to say more. I can hear what you are saying.

Olav

No, don't go. Don't go.

Ingrid

I hear what you're saying. I have my work and my friendships. And you're right. It makes me happy. The work. You're right. Happiness is in work, in friendship. But now I have to work. And you have to work too.

Olav

[At the same time] No, don't go. Please don't go. I didn't mean it like that.

[Olav is still standing as Ingrid walks out and meets Gerd.]

Ingrid

But what are you doing here? Don't you have anywhere to go? You look sad. Did something happen?

Gerd

Not yet. Not yet. But soon. I was looking for you. A child will die. A child will die.

Ingrid

But the child has already died. It died over a year ago.

Gerd

No, another child.

Ingrid

Another child? Has something happened?

Gerd

No, not yet.

Ingrid

What do you mean by that? Stop making jokes like that. It's not funny.

Gerd

But it is true.

Ingrid

No, it isn't. It's not true, and it's not funny. You can't go around saying things like that. People take offence if you say things like that.

Gerd

Should I not say what I see?

Ingrid

You make people sad if you say things like that.

Gerd

What should I do then?

Ingrid

You don't have to do anything.

Gerd

I don't need to?

Ingrid

No.

Gerd

What should I do then?

Ingrid

Sometimes it is enough to be silent. Sometimes it is enough to do nothing and say nothing. It is enough just to be there, to have no dreams and no longing for anything. Sometimes that is enough.

[Ingrid and Gerd exit. Sverre and Per enter.]

Sverre

What are you doing here?

Per

I don't know. I don't know anything anymore. It's just empty. I'm just trying to find a way forward, but I can't escape this.

Sverre

What?

Per

What are you talking about?

Sverre

Get away from what?

Per

The face.

Sverre

The face?

Per

The face. THE FACE.

Sverre

What are you talking about?

Per

I'm talking about the face. The little one. The little one's face. I see it all the time. Here. When I sleep and when I'm awake. I can't escape it. I see her all the time. Her face. Her face. And I don't know what to do.

Sverre

Come to church.

Per

What?

Sverre

You have stopped coming to church. I never see you there these days.

Per

What should I do there?

Sverre

Get solace.

Per

How can I find solace when God lets children die?

Sverre

You can't know what God is thinking.

Per

What does that mean?

Sverre

That some things can't be understood.

Per

Some things? Nothing makes sense. Everything is incomprehensible.
EVERYTHING.

Sverre

The grief and pain may not be understood, but it can be comforted.

Per

THERE IS NO CONSOLATION TO BE HAD. Not for someone like me.

Sverre

There is consolation. If you come to church, you'll get solace.

Per

How can this be done?

Sverre

If you talk to a priest.

Per

I don't need a priest.

Sverre

He can help you.

Per

He couldn't help me before. He can't help me now either.

Sverre

He can help you. He will help you.

Per

How?

Sverre

In the same way that I help him. I'm on my way to talk to his mother..

Per

His mother?

Sverre

I'm on my way there now.

Per

What are you going to talk to her about?

Sverre

She is dying. It is important that she repents of her sins before she dies.

Per

But why doesn't he talk to her himself?

Sverre

You can't have one standard for the family and another for everyone else.

Per

But if he can't help her, how can he help me?

Sverre

There is a difference. He is a good person.

Per

He is not a good person. He is uncompromising.

Sverre

He will help you.

Per

He scares me.

Sverre

There is no compromise when it comes to faith.

Per

Why not? Why is he so hard?

Sverre

He has his principles. All or nothing. You can't just throw everything overboard and do as you please when it comes to faith.

Per

But how can anyone live up to his terms? How can I? When I can't even live up to my own?

Sverre

We need to go back to a time that is gone. Then you have to be tough.

Per

But we're human, aren't we? Or are we not?

Sverre

But today's generations are not afraid of flames or burning bushes. Human behaviour is the order of the day, but God's love is something else.

Per

The little one was a human being, a tiny little human being, and now she's gone. Now there is only this damn pain left inside me. Nothing else.

Sverre

That is why you must come. There is solace. There is help. The church is open if you need it.

Per

No, thank you. I can manage on my own.

[Sverre and Per exit. Sonja and Olav enter.]

Olav

It is cold. You need warmth when it's this cold outside. The cold goes right to your soul.

Sonja

The soul can cope. If your soul is pure, it will survive the cold. It's not always an easy life up here in the mountains. It's dark even when it's light.

Olav

But it's sunny sometimes too.

Sonja

But the sun doesn't reach the houses for more than a few weeks in summer.

Olav

I think it is beautiful. The glacier is covered in snow.

Sonja

Yes.

Olav

Yes, the elections are coming up.

Sonja

Yes, they say so. And you're still thinking about running?

Olav

The people here need something to believe in. I still hope for your help.

Sonja

My help?

Olav

We spoke earlier. I don't know if you remember.

Sonja

Yes, I remember that. I remember that.

Olav

I had hoped that you had changed your mind.

Sonja

What did you expect me to do?

Olav

Everyone knows you have a sense of family life. Everyone knows. That you have values that focus on family. You know people around here. .

Sonja

Do you want money?

Olav

No, it's not about money. I was hoping for your support.

Sonja

My support?

Olav

Together, we could do so much good for this community.

Sonja

How would that work?

Olav

You're alone, and I'm alone. Together we would complement each other.

Sonja

Complement? What does that mean?

Olav

I'm saying that with my ideas and your support, we could fundamentally change this society. You know I want to give the poor a home, and I would make sure that happens.

Sonja

What if I don't agree with you?

Olav

Just tell me, and we'll find a compromise.

Sonja

A compromise?

Olav

We'll find a middle ground between us. I have promised the prison and the poorhouse, but everything else is open for negotiation. Together, we could make a difference, you and I.

Sonja

I don't know how much longer I will live.

Olav

I didn't know you were sick.

Sonja

They say it's not long now.

Olav

I didn't know that. That's unfortunate. (Pause) You can't die.

Sonja

Why not?

Olav

Because I don't want you to. Because... because I don't want you to. Do you have someone who take care of you?

Sonja

My son takes care of me.

Olav

But he doesn't even want to see you.

Sonja

So people are talking about me behind my back. (Pause) What do they say?

Olav

There are always rumours about this and that.

Sonja

What are these rumours?

Olav

I don't know. Just things that people talk about.

Sonja

What are they saying?

Olav

There's talk about that girl.

Sonja

Who is she?

Olav

The orphan girl. The one who runs up the mountain. People talk and wonder about her parents. Who gave her away.

Sonja

You too?

Olav

What do you mean?

Sonja

Do you also go around wondering about her behind my back?

Olav

No, it's not like that. I'm not saying anything. I don't say anything. (Pause)
But sometimes I do wonder.

Sonja

What do you want?

Olav

What do you mean?

Sonja

I wonder what you want. What do you want?

Olav

I don't want anything. I just want to talk to you.

Sonja

Do you want my money?

Olav

No.

Sonja

I have no money.

Olav

Have you disposed of your entire fortune?

Sonja

I will give the money to my son.

Olav

To your son? But he asked you to get rid of it. He wants you to give it away.

Sonja

You're just like my husband, you know that?

Olav

No, I'm not.

Sonja

Yes, you are. Just the same.

Olav

I would never hurt you. Not ever.

Sonja

But I will not give in.

Olav

No way. I'm not like that.

Sonja

You can do what you want, and I will do what I want.

Olav

Don't you hear what I'm saying? I would never. I don't WANT YOUR MONEY.

Sonja

I have earned this money. It's my money. I'd rather take it to my grave. I don't care about any rumours or people talking behind my back.

Olav

I don't want your money. Don't you hear what I'm saying? I don't want it. I just want to talk to you.

[Sonja and Olav exit. Erling and Per enter.]

Per

What do you want?

Erling

What are you talking about?

Per

I asked what you want. What do you want?

Erling

I don't want anything.

Per

Then stop it.

Erling

What do you want for yourself? Are you going to beg for money?

Per

I don't need money anymore. I just want to get rid of what I have here. This picture that I... THAT I HAVE HERE. Can you help me with that?

Erling

No, I can't. No one can.

[Per and Sverre exit. Einar and Gerd enter.]

Einar

Follow me.

Gerd

Follow you? Where to?

Einar

Let's get out of here.

Gerd

Where to?

Einar

I don't know. South. We'll take the boat. You and me. I can't stop thinking about you. I have been thinking about you ever since we met. We'll

move, and then we'll find somewhere to live. We would be happy together. Then we can have a baby.

Gerd

A child? How would we afford a child?

Einar

It will all work out. We will be able to afford it. If you want it to work out, it will.

Gerd

You have no money.

Einar

I can get some money.

Gerd

How?

Einar

I'll take care of it.

Gerd

But how?

Einar

Somehow. I'll get you the money.

Gerd

Are you going to gamble? To get the money?

Einar

I borrow. Then I'll pay the money back when we're settled. And in the evenings, we'll have a good time with singing and dancing. I would do anything for you. You know I would.

Gerd

How much money can you get?

Einar

Enough.

Gerd

Then we can set up a church on the mountain.

Einar

We must go.

Gerd

It won't be better anywhere else.

Einar

We can't stay. We can't. Are you following me or not?

Gerd

Even if we could find the money to get out of here, we would have no money when we arrived. There is no easy way out.

Einar

If I stay, I'm lost. There's nothing here for people like us. It's just a bunch of ghosts. Wraiths from the past.

[Einar exits. Tiril enters.]

Gerd

I know who you're looking for.

Tiril

What are you talking about?

Gerd

You will not find him.

Tiril

Have you seen him?

Gerd

He was just here.

Tiril

Where did he go?

Gerd

He disappeared. It doesn't help to look.

Tiril

I have to.

Gerd

If you don't want to be found, you won't be.

Tiril

I won't cope if he disappears too.

Gerd

You'll be fine.

Tiril

How?

Gerd

You just do it.

Tiril

But how? This whole existence feels like that. I don't know how.

Gerd

Yes, I know.

Tiril

I don't even understand how my life became like this. It's so hard to live. One day you're happy and joyful, and the next day everything is shattered. It feels like everything is broken. All that you fought for.

Gerd

Yes, I know.

Tiril

And this darkness feels endless. It reaches into the hearts of everyone who lives here and won't let go.

Gerd

Yes, I know.

Tiril

And it's unclear how we can survive.

Gerd

Yes, I know.

Tiril

And there is no light either. There is no sun. It's all just this darkness, all this despair, and we just try to endure it, hoping that the children will bring us happiness or love. But love disappears too.

Gerd

Yes, I know.

Tiril

And now I'm alone. Everyone disappears from my life or dies and retreats into their own grief, staying there. I'm left here all alone, and I can't cry anymore because the tears have run out. There's only salt left, scratching my eyes. THIS FUCKING LIFE.

Gerd

Yes, I know. I know how you feel. But it won't be like that forever. One day you'll wake up, and the darkness will be gone.

Tiril

Do you think so?

Gerd

Yes.

Tiril

Do you promise?

Gerd

Yes, I promise.

Tiril

And what about you?

Gerd

What?

Tiril

You also have the right to a home and happiness.

Gerd

I don't need any happiness. I can manage on my own.

Tiril

Everyone needs some kind of happiness. So do you. Everyone needs to feel that there is meaning in life. So do you. That there is someone who cares about you. A parent, a child, someone who loves you. And if there is no one to love you, you have to love someone yourself. There's no difference for you.

Gerd

But what if it's too late for that?

Tiril

Too late for what?

Gerd

To love and to be loved. I was left alone.

Tiril

It is never too late. You're a good person.

Gerd

I don't think so. I don't think anyone can like me. For real, without reservation.

Tiril

If you were my child, I would love you unconditionally. Do you hear me? Unconditionally.

Gerd

But you're not my mother. You're not my mother, and I'm happy the way I am. Happy with my life. I can manage on my own.

Tiril

You don't have to do anything yourself. Not if you ask for help. Someone will help you.

[Gerd and Tiril exit. Sonja and Sverre enter.]

Sonja

Not even now. Even when I'm dying, my own son does not come to visit me.

Sverre

He asked me to come.

Sonja

Did he send you?

Sverre

Yes.

Sonja

Instead of coming himself?

Sverre

Yes.

Sonja

And you think that's okay?

Sverre

He asked me. He wanted me to talk to you.

Sonja

And what does he want?

Sverre

He hopes you will get well.

Sonja

Did he say that?

Sverre

Yes. (Pause) He did.

Sonja

Tell him it's too late for that.

Sverre

He wants to know if you have repented of your sins.

Sonja

Repented my sins? Did he say so?

Sverre

Yes. That's what he said. He wants to know if you have repented of your sins. If you feel remorse.

Sonja

And if I don't? What happens then?

Sverre

He didn't say anything about that. Do you not feel remorse?

Sonja

For what?

Sverre

For your sins.

Sonja

What sins are you thinking about?

Sverre

What?

Sonja

Are there any particular sins that come to mind?

Sverre

I don't know. All sins. I know nothing about sins. I just want to know if you've repented of them or not.

Sonja

I feel a deep regret for many things.

Sverre

So you regret them?

Sonja

The sins?

Sverre

Yes.

Sonja

Before God?

Sverre

Yes, exactly. Do you repent before God for the sins you have committed?
Do you ask for forgiveness?

Sonja

Not before God.

Sverre

Even in the face of death, you don't feel remorse before God. You must.

Sonja

Why?

Sverre

Because you have to. You have to repent of your sins.

Sonja

But why? WHY?

Sverre

I don't KNOW! Because he says so.

Sonja

Not even God has a heart as hard as his.

Sverre

He wants the best for you.

Sonja

My best?

Sverre

Yes.

Sonja

How can he even know what's best for me when he doesn't want to see me? I'm his mother. How can he do this to his own mother?

Sverre

Rules must apply to everyone.

Sonja

But these are his own rules. They are not God's rules. He made them up himself.

Sverre

The rules must apply whether it's your family or not. It's all or nothing.

Sonja

All or nothing? What does that mean?

Sverre

It means following your ideals and beliefs. You can't compromise on what you believe in.

Sonja

God is not as harsh as he is. You have to show mercy. You can't be that strict. Mercy.

Sverre

That word only hides weakness.

Sonja

Weakness?

Sverre

It's a word that fearful and cowardly people resort to when they lack the courage or will to act decisively. When they don't dare to put everything on the line to win. Did God show mercy to Jesus Christ? If God had been merciful, he would have shown mercy before the cross, but he sacrificed his son for our sake.

Sonja

So, I'm lost.

Sverre

Not if you repent of your sins. Get rid of your money, and you'll be fine.

Sonja

I won't get rid of all my money.

Sverre

What will you do with it? You won't have any use for it when you're dead.

Sonja

So, you think I should give it away?

Sverre

I have no opinion.

Sonja

But that's what you're saying?

Sverre

I'm not saying anything. I only say that God forgives.

Sonja

I can give the money away, but I will keep the house.

Sverre

The house?

Sonja

I can give away everything but the house.

Sverre

You can't keep it. You have to get rid of everything. It's all or nothing.

[Sverre and Sonja exit.]

Scene 3. Farewell

[Tiril and Per enters.]

Tiril

Where are you?

Per

I'm here.

Tiril

No, you're not. You're somewhere else.

Per

I'm here.

Tiril

[At the same time] You're somewhere else. Stay with me. You promised. You promised that you would be with me, that you wouldn't leave.

Per

[At the same time] I'm here. I have not left you. I'm doing the best I can. I can't do better than this. I'm also lost. I try, but I can't do anything anymore. I can't do anything anymore. I can't do anything anymore. I'm doing the best I can. I just have to try to understand why we're left alone. [Repeated]

Tiril

[At the same time] But I can't handle this loneliness on my own. I can't do it. I can't handle grieving on my own. I can't do it. I can't remember on my own. I'm not doing it. [Repeated]

[Per exits. Tiril stays. Olav and Brand enter.]

Brand

I have been asked to be in the election.

Olav

In the election?

Brand

Yes.

Olav

Please don't get in my way. You know that I'm also running.

Brand

It is too late for that. I have already said yes.

Olav

What is the reason for this?

Brand

Because people here need me. People are trapped in poverty.

Olav

Then there will be a fight. And if you lose, it's all for nothing. Everything you've built here.

Brand

And if I choose to fight?

Olav

You can still say no.

Brand

But what if I do?

Olav

Then you will lose.

Brand

Better that than to lose myself.

Olav

You're a man of vision; a man destined for great things. This community is too small for you. The best thing for you to do is to leave us now, while you have the chance.

Brand

This is my home. I will stay.

Olav

Then stay, as long as you don't go beyond your limits.

Brand

If I'm to follow your advice, I must change both my soul and my ideals. I set my own limits.

Olav

Not if I win.

Brand

You won't win.

Olav

But if I win? If I win, I still have the majority.

[Agnes enters.]

Brand

What is it?

Agnes

It's our boy.

Brand

Yes?

Agnes

He is very warm. You said it was no problem. You said that he just needed to sleep.

Brand

He does. I don't know what it could be.

Agnes

He's sick and pale. He's sick and pale and crying.

Brand

He needs sleep.

Agnes

I have tried to get him to sleep, but he can't. I don't know what to do. We can't just let him lie there inconsolable. It hurts so much to see him like that.

Brand

There is nothing to worry about. Children cry sometimes.

Agnes

But not like this. It can't be right. We have to ask for help.

[Ingrid enters.]

Agnes

[To Ingrid] You have to come. I don't know what to do anymore.

Ingrid

What has happened?

Agnes

It is our child.

Ingrid

The child? Has something happened?

Agnes

His is very varm. He is pale and inconsolable. He cries so hard it hurts, all through the night.

Ingrid

It is the darkness. He needs to get away from this darkness.

Brand

You see? It was nothing serious.

Agnes

We can take him out of his room.

Ingrid

This doesn't help.

Agnes

We can leave him in the clear, cold air. Outside.

Ingrid

But there is no sun there either. The sun does not reach this valley.

Agnes

What should we do then?

Ingrid

You must leave here. If you stay, your child will die. There is only darkness here. Darkness and more darkness, with not a ray of sunlight.

Agnes

Would it help? To leave?

Ingrid

It is the only thing that helps.

Agnes

Do you promise?

Ingrid

What?

Agnes

Do you promise it will help?

Ingrid

I promise you. As long as he gets sunlight and stays away from the darkness, he'll be fine again.

Agnes

So, if we leave, he will be fine?

Ingrid

If you leave, he will be fine.

Agnes

Then we have to go.

Brand

But where should we go?

Agnes

Where there is sun. Sun and warmth. We can't stay here.

Brand

But I have my work.

Agnes

We have to leave.

Brand

I got my work. I can't just leave.

Agnes

Our child will die if we don't leave. We can't stay here.

Brand

Where should we go?

Agnes

Anywhere that is warm, as long as our little boy gets well again.

Brand

To the south?

Agnes

Wherever we can to get out of here.

Brand

But we can't just leave without knowing where we're going. What will we do there?

Agnes

You sound scared.

Brand

I'm not.

Agnes

Yes, you are. You're scared, and you don't want it to show. But I can see it in you. You are afraid.

Brand

It's the same for you.

Agnes

Yes, it is the same for me. I'm also afraid.

Brand

Then it's the same thing.

Agnes

I'm afraid we won't be able to leave. I'm afraid that we'll stay here and

that our child... that our child... that he won't live much longer. You don't want that, do you?

Brand

Of course I don't want that.

Agnes

Come on, then. We need to pack up our things and get ready.

[Agnes and Brand exit. Sonja and Gerd enter.]

Sonja

I will die soon.

Gerd

I have heard that.

Sonja

And when you die, it's time to regret the things you have done. I want to apologise to you.

Gerd

An apology? For what?

Sonja

You have had a tough life, been left behind. I can't even imagine everything you have been through. All of it. It's all my fault.

Gerd

It is not your fault.

Sonja

Yes, it's all my fault. Everything.

Gerd

It is nobody's fault.

Sonja

I never should have.

Gerd

What is it?

Sonja

You should have had a better life. A good life. Not the life you have now. It should have been different. But I have got money.

Gerd

Money?

Sonja

And now I want to give it to you.

Gerd

I don't want your money.

Sonja

But it's for you.

Gerd

You can keep it.

Sonja

But you must take it.

Gerd

I don't want it. I have survived all my life without your money, love, and care. I have gotten nothing from you and nothing from anyone else. I know what you did. I have always known. And now you want to give me money, but I don't want anything from you.

Sonja

You must forgive me.

Gerd

Even if I forgive you, nothing will change.

Sonja

But if it doesn't matter, why can't you just say it.

Gerd

It doesn't matter as long as you don't forgive yourself.

Sonja

I can't do that. I can't. Please, can't you just say it? Can't you forgive me anyway? Please, just...

Gerd

You have to do it yourself.

Sonja

But I can't. I just can't. I don't know how to do it. PLEASE TELL ME HOW TO DO IT. I DON'T KNOW. I DON'T KNOW HOW TO DO IT.

[Sonja and Gerd exit. Sverre and Per enter.]

Per

I'm here now.

Sverre

Yes, I can see that.

Per

I come for solace.

Sverre

Unfortunately, that is not possible.

Per

Not possible? Why not?

Sverre

He is leaving.

Per

Is he leaving? Where to?

Sverre

The south.

Per

To the south?

Sverre

Yes, he is leaving.

Per

And leave everyone? Are you sure?

Sverre

I just know it. He'll leave the church. I never thought he'd let me down.
Us.

Per

You said I could get consolation here.

Sverre

I know what I said.

Per

What is the reason for this?

Sverre

What?

Per

Why is he leaving?

Sverre

I don't know. I don't know. He said this was his home.

Per

So there is no consolation to be had?

Sverre

No.

Per

What about you?

Sverre

I don't know what to do. I don't want him to go. I don't want him to go. Everything got brighter the day he came to the village. He brings light. A hope in this total darkness. And now he's leaving us, and I don't know what to do about it.

[Brand enters.]

Brand

I'm packing.

Sverre

So, you are going to leave us?

Brand

I have to.

Sverre

What is the reason for this?

Brand

My child.

Sverre

Your child?

Brand

He is sick. If I don't leave, he'll die.

Sverre

You said that faith is uncompromising.

Brand

I have to take care of my child.

Sverre

God sacrificed His own son on the cross, but as soon as it comes to your own child, the same rules don't apply.

Per

He's doing what any parent would do.

Sverre

He said all or nothing.

Per

It is not that simple.

Sverre

No?

Per

No, it's not. I understand him. My life fell apart when my child died.

Sverre

He said all or nothing. You said all or nothing.

Brand

That is asking too much of me.

Sverre

Is it?

Brand

I can't let my child die. I have to take care of him.

Sverre

Do you not understand that it is God who's testing you?

Brand

God?

Sverre

This is a test. It is God testing you, just as He tested him.

Brand

Shouldn't being a father come before being a priest?

Sverre

Only God knows the answer to that question. You have to choose.

Brand

How can I make such a choice?

Sverre

Listen to your heart.

Brand

No, I can't.

Sverre

Of course you can. You just have to choose.

Brand

No, I can't. It is not possible.

Sverre

It is simple.

Brand

You have to help me.

Sverre

I can't help.

Brand

Please.

Sverre

You have to do it on your own.

Brand

Can't you just say something? Something that helps. [To Per] What about you? Say something. HOW CAN I CHOOSE WHEN THE ALTERNATIVES ARE SO MANY? I can't. I can't. I'm not human enough to make that decision.

Agnes

Everything is packed. Are you ready to go?

(Pause)

We have to go now if we want to catch the boat south.

(Pause)

Are you coming? Do you hear what I'm asking? ARE YOU COMING?

(Pause)

ARE YOU COMING OR NOT?

(Pause)

Please, please, please. Please come now. We have to go if our baby is going to be okay.

Brand

I don't know. It is not possible.

Agnes

What are you talking about?

Brand

It is not possible. I can't choose.

Agnes

What do you mean?

Brand

I don't know. I don't know.

Agnes

What are you saying?

Brand

I DON'T KNOW. CAN'T YOU HEAR WHAT I'M SAYING? I DON'T KNOW.

Agnes

What?

Brand

I don't know.

Agnes

What is it you don't know?

Brand

I don't know if we should go or stay. I don't know.

Agnes

But what about our child? Don't you think about him?

Brand

That's who I'm thinking of.

Agnes

But come on then.

Brand

That's who I'm thinking of.

Agnes

We have to go now. He's not going to make it if we don't leave now. You heard what she said. HE WON'T MAKE IT IF WE STAY. WE HAVE TO GO.

Brand

No, I can't. I can't make such decisions.

Agnes

WE MUST LEAVE NOW IF WE ARE TO SAVE OUR LITTLE BOY.

Brand

Don't force me to make these decisions.

Agnes

We have to go.

Brand

I'm not human enough. I'm not human enough for decisions like that.

Agnes

What does that mean?

Brand

It means that God is in charge.

Agnes

God?

Brand

It is God. Not me. He decides whether someone lives or dies. Not me. I have to take care of the church too. God doesn't do that. I can't leave them. God takes care of our little boy and me. I'm lost if I don't. I don't know. I can't decide.

[Agnes and Brand exit. Erling and Ingrid enter.]

Ingrid

Here I am now.

Erling

There you are.

Ingrid

I'm standing here now. Right here. In front of you.

Erling

Yes.

Ingrid

Maybe I should go?

Erling

No, don't go. Stay here.

Ingrid

Do you believe in happiness?

Erling

Yes, I do.

Ingrid

True happiness?

Erling

Yes, I do.

Ingrid

On the happiness found in the small life? Sharing the small life with each other?

Erling

Yes, I do.

Ingrid

Do you think it applies to people like us?

Erling

Yes. I think it applies to people like us. To you and me, too.

Ingrid

Then maybe we can be happy together?

Erling

Yes, I think so. We could be happy together. You and me. I think we could.

Ingrid

I think so too. Then let's say so.

[Ingrid leaves. Erling stays behind. Olav enters.]

Erling

Is he staying?

Olav

Yes, he's staying.

Erling

I thought he was leaving.

Olav

He has been persuaded to run for office.

Erling

What are you going to do?

Olav

He has the support of the people. I won't be able to win.

Olav

You can't give up. You mustn't.

Olav

But what should I do then?

Erling

You have to fight.

Olav

Fight? How can I do that?

Erling

You just have to fight.

Olav

I have done what I can. I don't know what else to do.

Erling

I will help you.

Olav

You?

Erling

You can't give up on your plans.

Olav

What are you talking about?

Erling

You promised to get a new school and new schoolbooks.

Olav

THERE WILL BE NO NEW SCHOOL. THERE WILL BE NO POORHOUSE.
NO SCHOOL. NOTHING.

Erling

You can't just give up.

Olav

Why not? It's just as well to give up everything.

Erling

Because you promised. YOU HAVE PROMISED.

Olav

STOP IT. There is nothing I can do.

Erling

I thought it meant something.

Olav

What?

Erling

All of this. All of this.

Olav

IT IS IMPORTANT, BUT ALL IS LOST. DON'T YOU GET IT? I HAVE LOST.
EVERYTHING IS LOST.

Erling

It is not lost.

Olav

Yes, it is. It's lost.

Erling

Even if you give up, it can still be a fight.

Olav

What are you talking about?

Erling

Even if he gets elected, it's not all over. Don't you remember how it was for you? It will be the same for him as it was for you.

Olav

I don't know. Maybe it is.

[Erling exits. Sonja enters.]

Olav

How is it?

Sonja

It's not long now.

Olav

Let me help.

Sonja

No, I'm fine. I'll be fine.

Olav

Please, let me help.

Sonja

No, you don't need to help me.

Olav

But I want to. I want to help you.

Sonja

I don't need your help. I'll be fine.

Olav

But if only...

Sonja

I SAID I'LL BE FINE.

Olav

I don't understand.

Sonja

What?

Olav

We could have had a good life together. You and me.

Sonja

It happened only once.

Olav

It happened more than once.

Sonja

It happened only once. It was no more than that. It was a mistake. Everything was a mistake.

Olav

It was not a mistake. And it happened more than once. I hope, in any case, you will be better off where you are going. I hope it will be better than this. Better than this life struggle.

[Olav exits. Einar enters.]

Sonja

Where are you going?

Einar

Where am I going? I don't know. I don't think I know. Away from here.

Sonja

Aren't you going home now? You have been away from home for a long time.

Einar

I have no home.

Sonja

Are you lost?

Einar

I don't know what it means anymore. I have gambled away all my money, and the drugs don't work. Once I drank deep from life, but now it's all just a waste. I HAVE NO PLACE IN THIS WORLD.

Sonja

Neither do I.

Einar

I have tried to live, but it was too hard.

Sonja

It's because life is difficult. You live in debt. For every happy moment, there is only sadness in the end. And I haven't even had any happy moments, just a struggle for survival. It doesn't matter if you have money or not. Happiness is here. Being unhappy is too. It's all in here.

Einar

I would be happy if I had money.

Sonja

Money doesn't make you happy. You would just drink it away.

Einar

No, I wouldn't.

Sonja

Yes, you would. You would gamble and drink away all the money you got.

Einar

No, I can't take it anymore. I would do something worthwhile and good.

Sonja

Like what?

Einar

I would do missionary work.

Sonja

Missionary work? Where to?

Einar

I would go somewhere where no one believed in God. Start from scratch and teach the right faith. Far away from all this. This ugly empty church and everything.

Sonja

Here you go.

Einar

What is this?

Sonja

It's money. If you leave, you can have it.

Einar

What about you?

Sonja

I'm leaving soon too, but I don't need money where I am going. Take it. I want you to have it.

[Sonja exits. Gerd enters.]

Einar

I have money. I'm going. Are you coming with me?

Gerd

Where are you going?

Einar

I'm going to do missionary work. I want you to follow.

Gerd

I can't.

Einar

We would have a good time together.

Gerd

I know.

Einar

I would take care of you.

Gerd

And I would take care of you.

Einar

Why don't you want to come then?

Gerd

I'm not done here yet.

[Gerd exits. Tiril enters.]

Einar

What about you?

Tiril

What
?

Einar

Are you coming?

Tiril

Where to?

Einar

To get away from here.

Tiril

No, I can't. I have to stay here. I can't leave.

Einar

What will you do here?

Tiril

I'm searching for the memory of my daughter. It has disappeared. I don't remember her face or her laugh. It must come back. As soon as I find it, I can go on living. I can't until then.

[Tiril and Einar exit. Ingrid enters.]

Gerd

What has happened? Are you crying?

Ingrid

No, I'm not. I'm happy.

Gerd

You don't look happy.

Ingrid

But I am. I think I have finally found happiness. Sometimes it's just a decision. It is possible to decide to be happy, isn't it?

Gerd

For some.

Ingrid

I hope it is the happiness I have found.

Gerd

Happiness?

Ingrid

I hope so.

Gerd

But then you shouldn't cry, should you?

Ingrid

I don't know. You laugh and you cry. It's the same thing, right?

Gerd

Yes. Maybe.

Ingrid

Are you happy?

Gerd

Up on the mountain. I'm happy there. Not down here. Down here, it's just the simple life to be lived.

Ingrid

The simple life. What does it mean?

Gerd

It means that people are just struggling to avoid being crushed by the

weight of everyday life. And then they do. That's the simple life. Living in the dark and looking for the light. Up there, there's something more. Something bigger. You can live there every day, not only in the dark and in the light, but also on the days that are grey. There, it's also possible to live in the grey scales.

Scene 4. Death

Olav

You always think that things will work out and that you will win. And you're equally surprised when you don't win. You have got to try to move on. I'm not a bad loser.

Sverre

He will build a new church.

Olav

A new church?

Sverre

He will demolish the old one and build a new one where the old one stood.

Olav

Is he going to waste the village's money on it?

Sverre

He is entitled to the money.

Olav

Entitled to it? What do you mean?

Sverre

The people have elected him.

Olav

The money must be used for the public good. That's what the law says.

Sverre

It does.

Olav

He is building a new church. How can that be for the common good?

Sverre

It's necessary.

Olav

But we already got a church.

Sverre

The church is too small.

Olav

But surely no one needs a new church.

Sverre

The current one is too small.

Olav

It is not even half full.

Sverre

You can't connect with God in it.

Olav

Is it really the size of the church that matters?

Sverre

It is too small. We need a bigger one. It will be a great and mighty church, the most powerful in the whole country.

Olav

Other things should come first.

Sverre

THE CHURCH IS TOO SMALL. WE NEED A BIGGER ONE.

Olav

People go hungry.

Sverre

You can't solve all problems at once.

Olav

The money must go to what is urgent. People are going hungry. The church should be able to cover its own costs.

Sverre

The church has no money. He would have used his own if he had any, but he doesn't. He will address the other problems as soon as possible.

Olav

But then the money is gone.

Sverre

He will do everything he can. He is concerned about his legacy.

Olav

The same goes for me.

[Olav and Sverre exit. Brand and Agnes enter.]

Agnes

To think that just a while ago, he was here with us, stretching his little hand towards us. He was such a happy child. I feel like it was all a dream. I feel like I was dreaming and now I have woken up from that dream.

Brand

Stop it.

Agnes

I need to talk about him.

Brand

But I don't want to listen. We all have to make sacrifices.

Agnes

I have tried to forget him, but I can't.

Brand

You'll have to.

Agnes

It's not possible.

Brand

You'll have to think of something else.

Agnes

I can't do it. I just can't. I can't stop thinking about him.

Brand

This means nothing. don't you understand that?

Agnes

What do you mean?

Brand

It means nothing. He means nothing.

Agnes

He means everything.

Brand

HE MEANS NOTHING AND YOU MEAN NOTHING. Neither do I. The only one who matters is God.

Agnes

But I feel what I feel. God can't object to that.

Brand

God doesn't want to know what you feel.

Agnes

But I will tell Him. It's just a big abyss. All of this. I could rip my own heart out and it wouldn't matter.

Brand

Don't say that.

Agnes

I say what I want.

Brand

God doesn't listen to words like that.

Agnes

If God is everywhere, surely, He will listen?

Brand

He doesn't want to. Stay away from those thoughts.

Agnes

You're suffering too. I know you are suffering.

Brand

No, I don't. I'm strong in my faith and strong in my love for you.

Agnes

You're building that church, but I know it's just a way to keep you away from suffering. And from me. Me too. You don't even touch me anymore.

Brand

You think too much. You need to stop doing that.

Agnes

Is that why you won't touch me?

Brand

Stop it now. I love you, and that's a good thing.

Agnes

Your love is so tough and uncompromising.

Brand

Is it too hard?

Agnes

Don't ask.

Brand

I need to know.

Agnes

Please don't ask.

Brand

Because if you think I'm too harsh, we have to part ways. Say it now.

Agnes

Don't ask. You must not ask that. I will follow wherever you go.

Brand

Then you have to stop doing this. Stop distracting me. If you're going to follow, you need to give up all of yourself.

Agnes

Tell me what to do.

Brand

Please leave me alone. I have more important things to do. They're going to demolish the old church soon.

Agnes

Are you going to tear up the cemetery?

Brand

The new church will be built where the old one stood.

Agnes

But that is where our little boy is buried?

Brand

They have to demolish everything to make way for the new one. There is no other way. If I could do it any other way, I would. But I can't.

[Brand exits.]

Agnes

Don't leave me here alone. Don't leave me here alone. DON'T LEAVE ME.

[Olav and Gerd enter.]

Olav

What do you want?

Gerd

Nothing. (Pause) I have been looking for you.

Olav

And?

Gerd

And now I have found you.

Olav

What do you want?

Gerd

You have to help me.

Olav

Help you with what? I can't help you. You understand that, right? YOU UNDERSTAND THAT RIGHT?

Gerd

I need to know.

Olav

What? GET TO KNOW WHAT? WHAT IS IT YOU WANT TO KNOW?

Gerd

Whether we look the same or not.

Olav

Why are you looking at me like that? Stop doing that. (Pause) Do we? Do we look alike?

Gerd

I think we do. Yes, we do.

Olav

You have made a mistake.

Gerd

I think you're my father.

Olav

I don't think so.

Gerd

I think so.

Olav

You're mistaken.

Gerd

No, I'm sure. You're my father.

Olav

That can't be right. It happened once. Just once. And it was a mistake. Everything was a mistake. A FUCKING MISTAKE. What will people say? A MISTAKE. I have my own life to think about. I have got my work to think about. I HAVE MY DUTY TO THINK ABOUT. I HAVE MY WORK TO THINK ABOUT. I HAVE MY OWN LIFE TO THINK ABOUT. I HAVE MY DUTY TO THINK ABOUT.

[Olav exits. Ingrid and Erling enter. Tiril is sitting next to Ingrid.]

Erling

Where are you?

Ingrid

I'm working.

Erling

Are you not coming home?

Ingrid

Soon.

Erling

It's terribly lonely at home when you are not there.

Ingrid

I can't come yet. I have work to do.

Erling

Do you not like being at home?

Ingrid

Of course I do.

Erling

You're more at work than at home. You look unhappy.

Ingrid

I'm not unhappy.

Erling

Have I done something wrong? Don't you love me anymore?

Ingrid

Of course I love you.

Erling

If so, why don't you want to be with me?

Ingrid

Of course I want to. But I have other things to do. Things that I have to do. I'm sure you have lots of things you have to do too.

Erling

I'm sitting at home alone, waiting. Waiting for you to come. And sometimes I think it's you. I hear a noise and I go to the window, but there is no one there. No one is coming. I'm alone. And I think maybe she doesn't love me anymore. Maybe it was all a mistake. Maybe it was all a fantasy. This happiness that I felt. I don't know. I don't know. I apologize if I said anything stupid.

Ingrid

I'm just going to finish here, and then I'll come home.

[Per and Tiril enter.]

Tiril

I think I'm pregnant again.

Per

A child?

Tiril

Yes, it is. I think so. She says so. That I'm pregnant again. So I think so.

Yes, I'm. Yes, I think so. I feel that way. One day, the darkness is gone when you wake up, and then you feel the light. When the darkness disperses. The memory of the baby. Those memories finally come back, and it doesn't hurt as much anymore. The pain isn't as painful anymore. (Pause) Don't you want to have a child?

Per

Of course I want to. Of course I do.

Tiril

But?

Per

No, no buts, no buts, no fucking BUTS. Of course, I'm happy. Of course, I want another child.

Tiril

You can't go away.

Per

I won't.

Tiril

Not again. Do you hear what I'm saying?

Per

I'm here, after all.

Tiril

You can't disappear again.

Per

I'm here, after all.

Tiril

THIS TIME YOU HAVE TO STAY.

Per

But I'm here. I'm here. I'm standing right here.

Tiril

Aren't you happy?

Per

Of course I'm happy. But how will we manage?

Tiril

Of course we will manage.

Per

We have no money.

Tiril

It will be fine.

Per

How?

Tiril

Somehow, if we do it together. What about you? Don't disappear. Of course, we can do it if we help each other. Otherwise, I'll have to figure it out on my own. If you don't... you won't? If you disappear, then I'll have to do it on my own.

[Per exits. Agnes enters.]

Agnes

What do you want?

Tiril

I wonder if you can help me.

Agnes

Unfortunately, I can't help anyone. You will have to talk to my husband.

Tiril

It was you I was looking for. You're a good person. Warm and kind. I don't know anyone else I can ask.

Agnes

What do you want? Are you hungry? Do you want food?

Tiril

They will just think I stole the food.

Agnes

No one will distrust you. Not if you say you got it from me.

Tiril

Especially if I got it from you. They'll think I took it from the church.
(Pause) I'm sorry about what happened. Do you have someone who can give you solace?

Agnes

There is no solace for someone like me, someone who has lost a child.

Tiril

One day it will pass.

Agnes

I don't think so.

Tiril

But it does. One day, when you wake up, the darkness is gone. Then there's light. When the darkness goes away, it doesn't hurt as much anymore. The pain isn't as painful anymore.

Agnes

Well, maybe it does, or I don't KNOW. Why would this happen to me? I haven't done anything. OR HAVE I?

Tiril

No, you haven't. You haven't done anything. (Pause) I wonder if you still have your children's clothes.

Agnes

My children's clothes? Why do you ask?

Tiril

I'm pregnant. And I don't have money to buy clothes. I wonder if you could get rid of the ones you don't use anymore.

Agnes

These are my child's clothes. They belong to him.

Tiril

But he doesn't need them now, does he?

Agnes

What are you talking about?

Tiril

He has no use for them anymore, does he? The clothes are no longer useful.

Agnes

But I can't give them away.

Tiril

It would really help if you could.

Agnes

It's not possible.

Tiril

Why not?

Agnes

It is the last thing I have left of him. If I give them away, there's nothing left.

Tiril

Your memories will remain.

Agnes

I don't remember him anymore.

Tiril

The memories come back.

Agnes

How can you be so sure?

Tiril

My little daughter came back. It will be the same for you.

Agnes

How?

Tiril

One day he will come back.

Agnes

No, it is not possible. I can't get rid of them. Then he's gone forever.

Tiril

You talk about God and living a life of love, but if you don't show it in action, it means nothing in practice. Isn't it better that the clothes are put to good use? That you give them to someone who truly needs them? Then what happened would still have meaning.

(Pause)

Agnes

Maybe you're right. *(Pause)* Here, take them. Take the whole lot. That's

the last of it. Now there is nothing more. Now it's empty.

[Tiril is on her way out.]

Agnes

Wait, wait, wait. I'm lying.

Tiril

What?

Agnes

That is not all.

Tiril

No?

Agnes

No, there is one more garment. This blanket. It's right here.

Tiril

Is that his blanket? You can still sense his smell.

Agnes

Yes.

Tiril

Here. You can have it back. Keep it.

Agnes

No, you don't. Take it.

Tiril

Are you sure? Are you really going to give it away too? I can't accept it.

Agnes

Just take it.

Tiril

But then you have nothing left. You would have let go of everything. Then there is nothing left.

Agnes

Maybe then I will finally be free. Free from darkness, shadow, and the abyss. Free at last from everything. Then maybe I can leave.

[Tiril exits. Einar enters. Agnes is still present.]

Einar

I'm getting out of here.

Agnes

Where are you going? Where are you headed? South?

Einar

I will become a missionary.

Agnes

Really?

Einar

The Lord has tested me. I gambled and drank, but then I found God.

Agnes

That's a good thing. It is good that you have finally found your place. That you have found peace.

Einar

I understand why you left me.

Agnes

No, we can't talk about that.

Einar

But we have to.

Agnes

That was a long time ago. We were both different people back then. We were happy and carefree, dreaming of a life of simplicity. But look at us now.

Einar

I'm grateful. Grateful that the Lord tested me in that way.

Agnes

You have had a good life.

Einar

You can do the same.

Agnes

Maybe I will. (pause) They're digging up the cemetery. My child's grave. Not even that will be left alone.

Einar

You don't have to stay.

Agnes

It is not possible. I told you. I'm following him. Wherever he goes, I follow. And I... I don't know. I don't know where we're going. Where I'm going.

Einar

But then follow me.

Agnes

No, don't ask me to do that.

Einar

But I have to. I want to.

Agnes

Please don't do that. Please don't ask me to do that.

Einar

Why not?

Agnes

Because I can't. You must not ask me to.

Einar

We would be happy.

Agnes

No.

Einar

I still love you.

Agnes

No, you can't. You must not say such things.

Einar

But I do. I love you. I still do. Ever since the day we got divorced.

Agnes

I'm married. I'm married and I have promised. I have promised. I can't do it.

Einar

We can go together. Go south like we planned. I don't need to preach.

Agnes

You have to go. Without me. I can't follow.

Einar

You'll die if you stay here. This place will kill you.

Agnes

Then so be it. I'm staying with my little boy. I can't go with you.

Einar

Now I understand. God has sent you.

Agnes

No, I don't. I'm no longer in contact with God.

Einar

If it is not God, it is the devil. God has sent you to tempt me. This is a test. I understand that now. You will burn in hell for this.

Agnes

I already do. DON'T YOU REALISE THAT I'M ALREADY LOST? THERE IS NOTHING LEFT FOR ME. I have GIVEN AWAY THE LAST OF MY LIFE. I'M FREE NOW. FREE TO GO WHEREVER I WANT.

[Agnes exits. Then Erling exits. Olav and Sverre enter.]

Scene 5. Church

Erling

Everyone will come to the opening ceremony. Now the crowd comes to life. They sleep for most of their lives, but then they suddenly wake up for a moment. Everyone thinks this is how life should be lived. This is not how you run a society. You have to have control. Discipline and education. You shouldn't allow agitation and politics. You should have won the election. You've been mayor. You know how it works. He builds a church, and everyone is impressed.

Olav

People have expectations, dreams, and hopes.

Erling

What kind of expectations?

Olav

About things that will happen in the future. Expectations for the future. People vote for what they dream will happen in the future.

Erling

And when will it come?

Olav

What?

Erling

The future? When will it come? The future.

Olav

It will never come.

Erling

No? What do you mean?

Olav

When the future is here, there is no longer a future. We'll just be in the present.

Erling

And what happens to all the expectations?

Olav

They are never fulfilled. To promise things is to present a shared dream that everyone can believe in. You can make it better or worse. He will see that too. He promises a better future, that it will be better. He promised to build a bigger church that would bring us closer to God, but now that the future is here, everyone will realise that they have to live the same life as before.

[Sverre enters.]

Sverre

The day is finally here.

Olav

Yes, it is. Now it's here.

Sverre

Now we will inaugurate the new church.

Olav

Yes, it's time.

Erling

It looks big.

Sverre

And it is. The biggest church in the whole country. There is no bigger.

Olav

What is he doing?

Sverre

Shh! Do not disturb him. He is here until late and comes early in the mornings.

Erling

Does he no longer sleep?

Sverre

Not since she killed herself. He's up all night, wandering around, off and on. He's consumed by grief.

[Brand enters]

Sverre

It is time to consecrate the church.

Olav

Aren't you going to say anything?

Brand

What are you talking about?

Olav

You must give a speech.

Brand

What should I say? That we replaced one lie with another?

Olav

What do you mean?

Brand

I'm saying it didn't turn out the way it was supposed to.

Sverre

It is an amazing church.

Brand

The church is not big enough. To pretend is to lie. The church is too small.

Erling

You can't mean that. That the church is too small?

Brand

No?

Olav

The plaque says that it's the largest church built in this country.

Brand

Then the plaque is probably lying. I'm just saying it like it is.

[Brand leaves. Sverre follows.]

Sverre

You should be proud of what you have achieved. You have done a fantastic job.

Brand

That isn't true. I want nothing to do with that. They'll have to find a new tenant.

Sverre

It wouldn't have been built if it wasn't for you. You have to understand that we're grateful for everything you have done for us. How are you doing? You look tired.

Brand

I don't want to talk about it.

Sverre

You haven't received any help. You have had to do everything yourself. But the worst is over. Here you are. Here, let me help you.

Brand

No, leave me alone.

Sverre

But I'm just trying to help. I want to assist you.

Brand

No, I don't want you to come close.

Sverre

But I just want to help.

Brand

I don't want any company. Do you hear me? I don't want you near me. I don't want anyone near me.

Sverre

I just want to help.

Brand

Stop doing that. Get out of here. Go away and leave me alone. I don't want anyone near me.

Sverre

But it's for your own good.

Brand

I DON'T WANT YOUR HELP. CAN'T YOU HEAR WHAT I'M SAYING?

[Sverre leaves. Einar enters.]

Brand

There you are. The only one I can talk to. How's it going? Come into my arms.

Einar

No, thank you. That is not necessary.

Brand

Are you still angry with me?

Einar

Why should I be angry with you?

Brand

Because I took your wife away from you.

Einar

On the contrary. I'm grateful. She kept me from all of my desires before faith cleansed me. I'm glad she is no longer in the way of my thoughts. You were just a blind tool sent by God to get me on the right path. I'm going on a mission. You chose a different life.

Brand

We had a good life, but it was far too short. I lived with her for one brief moment, and then she was gone the next. Now I'm inconsolable when I visit the cemetery.

Einar

But that means nothing.

Brand

No?

Einar

No, not if you have God. The only thing that matters is how she died.

Brand

She died with a pure heart and with great gratitude for the life she had lived. She was a beautiful person.

Einar

But that is the same vanity. She is lost, just like you. You will go to hell too.

Brand

SHE WAS A BEAUTIFUL, PURE HUMAN BEING. BEAUTIFUL AND PURE, AND HER FAITH WAS FIRM. You can't say that. Do you hear me? God will punish you if you keep saying that about her.

Einar

I have repented of my sins and washed myself clean in faith. I will be fine.

Brand

GET OUT OF HERE. I DON'T WANT TO HEAR ANYMORE. I DON'T WANT TO SEE YOU ANYMORE.

[Einar exits. Olav enters.]

Olav

Come on, let's go. Everyone is waiting for you. They are ready to go to church now.

Brand

They will have to do without me.

Olav

You must come. Everyone is waiting for you.

Brand

I'm staying here. I don't want to see anyone.

Olav

You must come. Otherwise, there will be trouble.

[Per, Tiril, Ingrid, Sverre, and Erling enter.]

Per

Is it starting soon?

Sverre

Soon.

Erling

It should start soon. That was what was said.

Ingrid

He can't keep everyone waiting.

Tiril

Shouldn't he consecrate the church?

Sverre

Soon.

Ingrid

It will take time.

Sverre

It will start soon.

Tiril

Will there be nothing?

Erling

Has he fooled everyone?

Sverre

It will start soon.

Olav

You need to get started.

Tiril

There will be nothing.

Erling

Has he lost his mind?

[Brand enters]

Brand

Maybe I'm crazy. I'm crazy to think that people like you. like God. Can get along with each other. The old church was too small, and I thought if we just built a bigger one, maybe it could work. But I forgot that it doesn't work that way. It's all or nothing. There are no compromises.

Sverre

What does it mean? That you don't believe in us anymore?

Brand

No, you are... No, you are no better than this. It's all my fault. You don't need this church.

Sverre

What do you mean?

Brand

This church means nothing. It's just a way to hide the emptiness and the pain. The sermons, the sound of the organ, the church bell. All of this is just empty. It means nothing. It's all lies. All of it.

Sverre

Don't listen to him. That is not God speaking. That's someone else speaking through him.

Per

But he admits he's wrong.

Sverre

He promised to show a way out of the darkness. He would lead us to the light. You said it.

Per

But he says that no human being is perfect. That's what he says.

Sverre

But that doesn't help any of us. Then we're all lost.

Erling

Should we not consecrate the church?

Brand

Not that church. We're going up the mountain. God is not here. He's up there. You do what you want. You know what you have to do. I have no more mandate. I give up everything. You can do what you want. I'm going up the mountain.

[Everyone exits. Agnes enters. Then Sonja.]

Brand

Agnes? Is that you, Agnes?

Agnes

Yes, that's me.

Sonja

I'm here too.

Brand

No, this can't be true.

Agnes

It is me

.

Brand

No, it's not. No, it's all just a dream. The sorrow.

Agnes

That sadness you felt is just your imagination.

Sonja

The emptiness inside.

Agnes

It's all in your head.

Brand

You disappeared.

Agnes

I have never been away from you.

Brand

I have to touch you to be sure.

Agnes

No, don't come near. Stay where you are. It's me.

Brand

What happened to our child?

Agnes

He is also here.

Brand

Is he alive?

Agnes

Our little boy is big now.

Brand

Where is he?

Agnes

He's here.

Sonja

He asks for you.

Brand

Does he?

Sonja

He really wants to see his dad again.

Brand

And I would love to meet him.

Sonja

If you follow us, you will meet him.

Brand

No, I can't. All this is just temptation. [To Agnes] Come with me.

Agnes

And the child?

Brand

He can stay here.

Agnes

We can't leave him.

Brand

I can't stay here.

Agnes

Leaving him means death.

Sonja

What are you going to do that is so important?

Brand

I have to get up there. I have to move on.

[Agnes and Sonja exit. Gerd enters.]

Gerd

Have they disappeared?

Brand

Yes. It was just a nightmare. Who are you?

Gerd

Don't you recognise me?

Brand

May I see? Yes, now I recognise you.

Gerd

Do you know where we are?

Brand

No, I don't know. I don't recognize myself. Have I been here before?

Gerd

We're at the church up the mountain. What is it? Are you crying?

Brand

No, I don't know. I cry because I can finally cry. I can finally cry.

[Gerd sets off the avalanche.]

Gerd

I'm not as crazy as everyone thinks.

Brand

I don't think you are crazy.

Gerd

Then you are the only one who understands what I have to do.

Brand

What are you doing?

Gerd

I wake the great white beast. It's coming now, tumbling down the slope. Do you hear it? Do you hear it? It's swirling like a cloud of feathers. Seven times bigger than the sky. Here it comes. IT'S COMING. NOW IT'S ALL OVER.



Jena Press



MALMÖ
THEATRE
ACADEMY