

AUGUST STRINDBERG

August Strindberg (1849–1912) was born in Stockholm, Sweden, into a family of social unequals: His father was an aristocrat disowned by his family for marrying a barmaid. In the tightly controlled Swedish social establishment, Strindberg was an outsider, which was a source of bitterness, and he took issues of class struggle as a theme throughout his writing. It appears strongly in the biographical novel *Son of a Servant* (1886), in which he documents the Strindberg family's squalid living conditions and his own attempts to overcome them. The plight of the working class was an enduring social cause for Strindberg, and he criticized the aristocracy and the middle classes with passion.

Strindberg's education was spotty. He was a brilliant and irascible student, accepted to study at Uppsala University, but he never completed his courses. He thought he would study medicine but failed at it. He tried acting, but failed at that too. He left the university dissatisfied with formal learning but with a desire to become a writer. During a period of eight years, Strindberg received some small success as a writer, and he supported himself by working in the Royal Library. Strindberg wrote prose and poetry, but his major effort was *Master Olof*, a historical drama about the Protestant Reformation in Sweden, which he continually revised until it was finished in 1881. His luck changed at age thirty, when *The Red Room* (1879), a satirical novel about bohemian life (his own) in Stockholm, successfully launched his career.

Strindberg's nearly sixty plays show an extensive range of subjects and an eclectic mind able to interweave history, science, politics, and religion. He was particularly interested in history, and twenty-four of his plays are concerned with Swedish history, all written more or less in a conventional manner. Most of all, he was interested in using his own personal life as a source for literature. Like many artists, his creative genius was driven by the psychological crises in his life, particularly his three unhappy marriages: to Siri Wrangel (1877–1891), Frida Uhl (1893–1894), and Harriet Bosse (1901–1904). The relationship with Wrangel, in particular, is indicative of the conflicting forces in his character. Wrangel was an actress of small talent who was married to a Swedish baron when Strindberg began an affair with her. When she divorced Baron Wrangel they married, and over the next fourteen years they lived in increasing disharmony. Toward the end of this bitter relationship Strindberg suffered from a pathological belief that he was being betrayed by an unfaithful wife, and he cracked up. Divorce proceedings drained him, and he was left in despair when the court deprived him of parental rights over his children. Driven to make his voice heard, Strindberg wrote *Married* (1884), a collection of stories about the unhappiness of marriage that reveals a deep-seated misogyny, which periodically surfaced throughout his life. The stories were considered so scandalous by the staid society of Sweden that he was charged with blasphemy and brought to trial, but

ultimately acquitted. This personal attack on his character and his literature added to Strindberg's sense of alienation from his homeland.

By the late 1880s, Strindberg entered his most intense phase of writing, working particularly on autobiographical works, especially the novel *Son of a Servant* (1886) and the fictional memoir *A Madman's Defense* (1888), which starkly reveal his social biases and neuroses. He admitted that *A Madman's Defense* was an "analysis of the soul, or psychological anatomy," probably of his own, and he ended it with a discussion of marriage paranoia. It was during his work on *A Madman's Defense* that he wrote *The Father* (1887), a play that vents his frustration in the character of a man who cannot face the relentless power and sexual demands of his wife, and so goes mad. As with the best of Strindberg's works, characters in *The Father* transcend his personal life history. The Captain and his crushing defeat by his wife, Laura, may bear autobiographical scrutiny, but this disastrous conflict is meant to rival that of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra in Aeschylus's *Agamemnon* or Othello and Desdemona in Shakespeare's *Othello*. On another level, Strindberg may have been slyly responding to Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House*, which had become a rallying point for advocates of divorce and women's rights. Strindberg was opposed to such advocacy and was disdainful of the play. In addition, Strindberg disliked Ibsen, whom he viewed as a defender of the middle class.

Greatly disaffected by life in Sweden, Strindberg became an expatriate at the age of thirty-two. For fifteen years he moved about, living mainly in France, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Denmark, and occasionally Sweden, but without roots. When he finally resettled in Sweden in 1897, his spiritual and personal life was chaotic. His love life was unhappy; his marriage to Frida Uhl had ended in another divorce, and he was on the verge of a mental collapse. Still, he recorded all of this in *Inferno* (1897), a book about his life in Paris.

At home in Sweden, critics remained unfriendly to Strindberg and his work. But with a new vigor, Strindberg's imagination took a different turn, and he began to explore spiritual and religious themes through the outlets of historical drama and expressionist works. Important plays of this period include *To Damascus* (1898–1904), *Erik XIV* (1899), *Crimes and Crimes* (1899), *The Dance of Death* (1900), *Gustav Adolf* (1900), and *Carl XII* (1901). His greatest success came with the production of *Easter* (1901), about a young man's despair and eventual social and spiritual reconciliation. *Easter's* popularity rests on its sentimentality and optimism. Harriet Bosse, then his third wife, acted the female lead. Strindberg was at ease at the time, and the play shows an uncharacteristic side of the playwright's search for spiritual redemption. It is also a well-made play of the kind that Strindberg criticized as being old-fashioned.

Strindberg's last plays suggest his antithetical states of mind: drawing on the conventions of myth and melodrama, on one hand, but, on the other, creating works of great abstraction that break down traditional forms. *A Dream Play* (1902) and *The Ghost Sonata* (1907), in particular, show an imagination in flux and creative agitation. The latter play, which takes its name from the musical form of the sonata, perhaps inspired by the second movement of Ludwig van Beethoven's Opus 70 in D Major, is abstract in form and highly symbolic. It is a bleak vision of the cruelty of modern society. *A Dream Play* is

expressionistic and has the unpredictability and heightened unreality of a dream. These plays go well beyond the conventional aspects of theater that Strindberg advocates in the "Preface" to *Miss Julie*. But even while he was writing in an avant-garde vein, he was also writing fairy-tale plays, such as *The Bridal Crown* (1900) and *Svanenhjerte* (1901), and more conventional plays, such as *Storm Weather* (1907) and *The Pelican* (1907).

Eleven years after returning to Sweden, stomach cancer eroded Strindberg's health. He persevered, but in *The Great Highway* he wrote verses that might have been his epitaph:

Bless me, your human creature,
Who suffers from the life you gave;
Me first, who suffered most,
Suffered most the pain of not being
the human being I wanted to be.

Though he was, by then, secure and a powerful literary presence in Scandinavia and Europe, he was still an outsider in the artistic establishment. The Swedish Academy snubbed him by not awarding him the Nobel Prize for Literature. But as an act of homage, the workmen of Sweden took up a public subscription in his honor, and Strindberg accepted the award and its cash prize as his due. Four years later he was dead at sixty-three.

Of all his plays, *Miss Julie* (1888) best demonstrates Strindberg's advocacy of the new naturalism in the theater. Written in Paris when Strindberg was thirty-seven, it was rejected by his Swedish publisher because it was too risky. When it was finally published by another house in 1888, it was condemned by critics as being immoral. Its first scheduled performance in 1889 in Copenhagen was banned, and a private production had to be arranged in order to avoid censorship by the police.

Miss Julie presents a harsh portrait of the relationship between a servant and an aristocratic young woman who is destroyed by her sexual passion. It is a penetrating psychological examination filled with artful allusions to the magic associated with Midsummer's Night (the summer solstice) and the biblical story of Salomé and John the Baptist. The action takes place in the course of an evening ending with a sunrise that ironically brings death rather than new life. Middle-class audiences squirmed as they saw Miss Julie, an aristocrat and daughter of a count, seduce her father's valet.

Equally disturbing was Julie's confession of her sordid family relationships—her mother's insistence that she would never be a wife and that she married only after Julie was born; that the mother has been unfaithful to her husband, the count; and that Julie, like her mother, hates men. And finally, the audience was left ill at ease as Julie realizes her mistake and says to Jean: "Oh, I'm so tired. I'm not able to do anything. I can't repent, can't run away, can't stay, can't live—can't die! Help me! Order me, and I'll obey like a dog! Do me this last service, save my honor, save his name! You know what I *should* do, but don't have the will to . . . You will it, you order me to do it!" When Jean cannot act, Julie takes action; when the count arrives, Jean says to her finally, "It's horrible! But there's no other way!" and she "*walks firmly out through the door.*"

Julie's decision to kill herself rather than face the shame of succumbing to a man beneath her social class reflected Strindberg's hostility towards the aristocracy. Working-class audiences who shared Strindberg's opinions saw in the play the downfall of their oppressors and understood Strindberg's social purposes.

For contemporary audiences with knowledge of Strindberg's personal life, it is possible to see more clearly how he interweaves life and art, making use of his family situation. Miss Julie, the count's daughter, suggests Strindberg's wife, Siri Wrangel Strindberg, who had been married to an aristocrat. Jean, the valet, suggests Strindberg, the son of a servant. In life, Strindberg suffered from slights of the establishment and his experience with women. The play gave him the opportunity to rewrite events and settle his scores. Jean's sexual triumph represents a victory for the working class over the aristocracy. Miss Julie's anguish and suicide served as a wish fulfillment, a sort of revenge for Strindberg's messy divorce from Siri.

In the "Preface" to *Miss Julie*, which appeared with the published version of the text, Strindberg expounded ideas of theatrical naturalism on the stage, which he adapted from his literary mentor Émile Zola (1840–1902), the French novelist. Zola wanted an antimimetic literature based on realistic observation and scientific fact. He argued that characters must withstand the scrutiny of psychological analysis, and that scenery, approximating real living space, should define and suggest mood and atmosphere. Strindberg, too, was infused with the desire to deromanticize literature, and he adopted Zola's stern verisimilitude and made it his own.

Strindberg explained: "In the following play, instead of trying to do anything new—which is impossible—I have simply modernized the form in accordance with demands I think contemporary audiences make upon this art." Of course, he has made something profoundly new, and his suggestion that characters should be developed in depth psychologically to correct the notion that life is not "idiotically mathematical" shocked audiences and critics. "Every event in life," said Strindberg, "—and this is rather a new discovery!—is ordinarily the result of a whole series of more or less deep-lying motives. . . . Therefore, I do not believe in simple theatrical characters. And an author's summary judgements of people—this one is stupid, that one brutal, this one jealous, that one stingy—should be challenged by naturalists, who know how rich the soul-complex is and realize that 'vice' has a reverse side closely resembling virtue. . . . Our inquisitive souls are not satisfied just to see something happen; we want to know how it happened."

Among his other revisions for a new theater, Strindberg called for integrating monologue, mime, and ballet in drama to provide momentary interludes for the audience and the actors. These additions would allow the audience a rest from the intensity of the performance without losing the illusion that the play has created. Strindberg called for using realistic makeup for actors, for abandoning footlights, and for providing lighting from the sides and from above. Criticizing the arbitrary division of a play into acts, Strindberg asserted

that in *Miss Julie*, he experimented with eliminating act divisions because of the dwindling capacity for accepting illusion is possibly further disturbed by intermissions, during which the spectator has time to reflect and thereby escape the suggestive influence of the author-hypnotist. He said that "a ninety-minute theatre piece will not be too tiring."

Curiously, Strindberg insisted on applying techniques of impressionism and realism for setting, and he wanted the stage to be viewed as a room where the fourth wall is removed. "As for the scenery," he wrote, "I have borrowed from impressionist painting the device of making a setting appear cut off and asymmetrical, thus strengthening the illusion. . . . With only one setting we should be able to demand that it be realistic. . . . Even if the walls must be of canvas, it is surely time to stop painting shelves and kitchen utensils on them. We have so many other stage conventions in which we are asked to believe, we should not have to strain ourselves trying to believe painted pots and pans." Thus Strindberg's stage directions for *Miss Julie* call for a realistic kitchen in which the props are required to be off-center and the rear wall set diagonally to right so that it provides an exaggerated and asymmetrical sense of proportion. Seen through the window at the right is a garden and a fountain with a statue of Cupid. The opposition of kitchen and Cupid, obvious symbolism, is intended to amplify the contrast of Jean and Miss Julie.

Though the changes Strindberg advocated are now taken for granted, they were at the time avant-garde. His challenges to the traditional "bourgeois" portrayal of character and the ornamental theatrical techniques of the last decade of the nineteenth century have proved to be most influential, especially in the American theater, where Strindberg is the acknowledged master of playwright Eugene O'Neill and an inspiration for Tennessee Williams and Arthur Miller.

Film

Miss Julie (1950), directed by Alf Sjöberg, with Anita Björk, Ulf Palme, and Anders Henrikson. Swedish with English subtitles. Sandrew.

Miss Julie

TRANSLATED BY HARRY G. CARLSON

CHARACTERS

MISS JULIE, 25 years old
JEAN, her father's valet, 30 years old
KRISTINE, her father's cook, 35 years old

The action takes place in the court's kitchen on midsummer eve.

SETTING. A large kitchen, the ceiling and side walls of which are hidden by draperies. The rear wall runs diagonally from down left to up right. On the wall down left are two shelves with copper, iron, and pewter utensils; the shelves are lined with scalloped paper. Visible to the right is most of a set of large, arched glass doors, through which can be seen a fountain with a statue of Cupid, lilac bushes in bloom, and the tops of some Lombardy poplars. At down left is the corner of a large tiled stove; a portion of its hood is showing. At right, one end of the servants' white pine dining table juts out; several chairs stand around it. The stove is decorated with birch branches; juniper twigs are strewn on the floor. On the end of the table stands a large Japanese spice jar, filled with lilac blossoms. An ice-box, a sink, and a washstand. Above the door, the mouthpiece of a speaking tube is visible.

KRISTINE is frying something on the stove. She is wearing a light-colored cotton dress and an apron. JEAN enters. He is wearing ivory and carries a pair of high riding-boots with spurs, which he puts down on the floor where they can be seen by the audience.

JEAN: Miss Julie's crazy again tonight, absolutely crazy!

KRISTINE: So you finally came back?

JEAN: I took the Count to the station and when I returned past the barn I stopped in for a dance. Who do I see but Miss Julie leading off the dance with the gamekeeper! But as soon as she saw me she rushed over to ask me for the next waltz. And she's been waltzing ever since—I've never seen anything like it. She's crazy!

KRISTINE: She always has been, but never as bad as the last two weeks since her engagement was broken off.

JEAN: Yes, I wonder what the real story was there. He was a gentleman, even if he wasn't rich. Ah! These people have such romantic ideas. [sits at the end of the table] Still, it's strange, isn't it? I mean that

she'd rather stay home with the servants on midsummer eve instead of going with her father to visit relatives?

KRISTINE: She's probably embarrassed after that row with her fiancé.

JEAN: Probably! He gave a good account of himself, though. Do you know how it happened, Kristine? I saw it, you know, though I didn't let on I had.

KRISTINE: No! You saw it?

JEAN: Yes, I did.—That evening they were out near the stable, and she was "training" him—as she called it. Do you know what she did? She made him jump over her riding crop, the way you'd teach a dog to jump. He jumped twice and she hit him each time. But the third time he grabbed the crop out of her hand, hit her with it across the cheek, and broke it in pieces. Then he left.

KRISTINE: So, that's what happened! I can't believe it! JEAN: Yes, that's the way it went!—What have you got for me that's tasty, Kristine?

KRISTINE [serving him from the pan]: Oh, it's only a piece of kidney I cut from the veal roast.

JEAN [smelling the food]: Beautiful! That's my favorite delicé. [feeling the plate] But you could have warmed the plate!

KRISTINE: You're fussier than the Count himself, once you start! [She pulls his hair affectionately.]

JEAN [angry]: Stop it, leave my hair alone! You know I'm touchy about that.

KRISTINE: Now, now, it's only love, you know that. [JEAN eats. KRISTINE opens a bottle of beer.]

JEAN: Beet? On midsummer eve? No thank you! I can do better than that. [opens a drawer with yellow sealing wax] takes out a bottle of red wine with yellow sealing wax] See that? Yellow seal! Give me a glass! A wine glass! I'm drinking this pur.

KRISTINE [returns to the stove and puts on a small saucepan]: God help the woman who gets you for a husband! What a fuss-budget.

JEAN: Nonsense! You'd be damned lucky to get a man like me. It certainly hasn't done you any harm to have people call me your sweetheart. [tastes the wine] Good! Very good! Just needs a little warming. [warms the glass between his hands] We bought this in Dijon. Four francs a liter, not counting the cost of the bottle, or the customs duty.—What are you cooking now? It stinks like hell!

KRISTINE: Oh, some slop Miss Julie wants to give her dog Diana.

JEAN: Watch your language, Kristine. But why should you have to cook for that damn mutt on midsummer eve? Is she sick?

KRISTINE: Yes, she's sick! She sneaked out with the gamekeeper's dog—and now there's hell to pay.

JEAN: Miss Julie won't have it!

JEAN: Miss Julie has too much pride about some things and not enough about others, just like her mother was. The Countess was most at home in the kitchen and the cowed, but a one-horse carriage wasn't elegant enough for her. The cuffs of her blouse were dirty, but she had to have her coat of arms on her cuffs. And Miss Julie won't take proper care of herself either. If you ask me, she just isn't refined. Just now, when she was dancing in the barn, she pulled the gamekeeper away from Anna and made him dance with her. We wouldn't behave like that, but that's what happens when aristocrats pretend they're common people—they get common!—But she is quite a woman! Magnificent! What shoulders, and what—et cetera!

KRISTINE: Oh, don't overdo it! I've heard what Clara says, and she dresses her.

JEAN: Ha, Clara! You're all jealous of each other! I've been out riding with her . . . And the way she dances!

KRISTINE: Listen, Jean! You're going to dance with me, when I'm finished here, aren't you?

JEAN: Of course I will.

KRISTINE: Promise?

JEAN: Promise? When I say I'll do something, I do it! By the way, the kidney was very good. [Corks the bottle.]

JULIE [in the doorway to someone outside]: I'll be right back! You go ahead for now! [JEAN sneaks the bottle back into the table, drawer and gets up respectfully.] Miss Julie enters and crosses to KRISTINE by the stove. [Well? Is it ready? [KRISTINE indicates that JEAN is present.]]

JEAN [gloriously]: Are you ladies up to something secret business?

JULIE [flicking her handkerchief in his face]: None of your business!

JEAN: Hmm! I like the smell of violets!

JULIE [coquettishly]: Shame on you! So you know about perfumes, too? You certainly know how to dance.

JEAN [boldly, but respectfully]: Are you brewing up a magic potion for midsummer eve? Something to prophesy by under a lucky star, so you'll catch a glimpse of your future husband!

JULIE [amusingly]: You'd need sharp eyes to see him! [to KRISTINE] Pour out half a bottle and cork it well.—Come and dance a schottische with me, Jean.

JEAN [hesitating]: I don't want to be impolite to anyone, and I've already promised this dance to Kristine . . .

JULIE: Oh, she can have another one—can't you, Kristine? Won't you lend me Jean?

KRISTINE: It's not up to me, ma'am. [to JEAN] If the mistress is so generous, it wouldn't do for you to say no. Go on, Jean, and thank her for the honor, whether it's wise for no offense intended. I wonder with the same partner, especially since these people are quick to jump to conclusions.

JULIE [flaring up]: What's that? What sort of conclusions? What do you mean?

JEAN [submittingly]: If you don't understand, ma'am, I must speak more plainly. It doesn't look good to play favorites with your servants . . .

JULIE: Play favorites? What an idea! I'm astonished! As mistress of the house, I honor your dance with my presence. And when I dance, I want to dance with someone who can lead, so I won't look ridiculous.

JEAN: As you order, ma'am! I'm at your service!

JULIE [genially]: Don't take it as an order! On a night like this we're all just ordinary people having fun, so we'll forget about rank. Now, take my arm!—Heart! [JEAN offers his arm and leads MISS JULIE out.]

MEME: The following should be played as if the actress playing KRISTINE were really alone. When she has to, she turns her back to the audience. She does not look toward them, nor does she hurry as if she were afraid they would grow impatient. Schottische music played on a fiddle sounds in the distance. KRISTINE hums along with the music. She clears the table, washes the dishes, dries them, and puts them away. She takes off her apron. From a table drawer she removes a small mirror and leans it against the bowl of lilacs on the table. She lights a candle, heats a hair-pin over the flame, and uses it to set a curl on her forehead. She crosses to the door and listens, then returns to the table. She finds the handkerchief MISS JULIE left behind, picks it up, and smells it. Then, preoccupied, she spreads it out, stretches it, smooths out the wrinkles, and folds it into quarters, and so forth.

JEAN [enters alone]: God, she really is crazy! What a way to dance! Everybody's laughing at her behind her back. What do you make of it, Kristine?

KRISTINE: Ah! It's that time of the month for her, and she always gets peculiar like that. Are you going to dance with me now?

JEAN: You're not mad at me, are you, for leaving . . . ?

KRISTINE: Of course not!—Why should I be, for a little thing like that? Besides, I know my place . . .

JEAN [puts his arm around her waist]: You're a sensible girl, Kristine, and you'd make a good wife . . .

JULIE [entering, uncomfortably surprised, with forced good humor]: What a charming escort—running away from his partner.

JEAN: On the contrary, Miss Julie. Don't you see how I rushed back to the partner I abandoned!

JULIE [changing her tone]: You know, you're a superb dancer!—But why are you wearing livery on a holiday? Take it off at once!

JEAN: Then I must ask you to go outside for a moment. You see, my black coat is hanging over here . . . [gestures and crosses right]

JULIE: Are you embarrassed about changing your coat in front of me? Well, go in your room then. Either that or stay and I'll turn my back.

JEAN: With your permission, ma'am! [He crosses right. His arm is visible as he changes his jacket.]

JULIE [to KRISTINE]: Tell me, Kristine—you two are so close—. Is Jean your fiancé?

KRISTINE: Fiancé? Yes, if you wish. We can call him that.

JULIE: What do you mean?

KRISTINE: You had a fiancé yourself, didn't you? So . . .

JULIE: Well, we were properly engaged . . .

KRISTINE: But nothing came of it, did it? [JEAN returns dressed in a frock coat and bowler hat.]

JULIE: Très gentil, monsieur Jean! Très gentil!

JEAN: Vous voulez plaisanter, madame!

JULIE: Et vous voulez parler français! Where did you learn that?

JEAN: In Switzerland, when I was wine steward in one of the biggest hotels in Lucerne!

JULIE: You look like a real gentleman in that coat! Charming! [sits at the table]

JEAN: Oh, you're flattering me!

JULIE [offended]: Flattering you?

JEAN: My natural modesty forbids me to believe that you would really compliment someone like me, and so I took the liberty of assuming that you were exaggerating, which polite people call flattering.

JULIE: Where did you learn to talk like that? You must have been to the theatre often.

JEAN: Of course. And I've done a lot of traveling.

JULIE: But you come from here, don't you?

JEAN: My father was a farm hand on the district attorney's estate nearby. I used to see you when you were little, but you never noticed me.

JULIE: No! really?

JEAN: Sure. I remember one time especially . . . but I can't talk about that.

JULIE: Oh, come now! Why not? Just this once!

JEAN: No, I really couldn't, not now. Some other time, perhaps.

JULIE: Why some other time? What's so dangerous about now?

JEAN: It's not dangerous, but there are obstacles. . . . Her, for example. [Indicates KRISTINE, who has fallen asleep in a chair by the stove.]

JULIE: What a pleasant wife she'll make! She probably snores, too.

JEAN: No, she doesn't, but she talks in her sleep.

JULIE [critically]: How do you know?

JEAN [laudaciously]: I've heard her! [pause, during which they stare at each other]

JULIE: Why don't you sit down?

JEAN: I couldn't do that in your presence.

JULIE: But if I order you to?

JEAN: Then I'd obey.

JULIE: Sit down, then.—No, wait. Can you get me something to drink first?

JEAN: I don't know what we have in the ice box. I think there's only beer.

JULIE: Why do you say "only"? My tastes are so simple I prefer beer to wine. [JEAN takes a bottle of beer from the ice box and opens it. He looks for a glass and a plate in the cupboard and serves her.]

JEAN: Here you are, ma'am.

JULIE: Thank you. Won't you have something yourself?

JEAN: I'm not partial to beer, but if it's an order . . .

JULIE: An order?—Surely a gentleman can keep his lady company.

JEAN: You're right, of course. [opens a bottle and gets a glass]

JULIE: Now, drink to my health! [He hesitates.] What? A man of the world—and shy?

JEAN [in mock romantic fashion, he kneels and raises his glass]: Skål to my mistress!

JULIE: Bravo!—Now kiss my shoe, to finish it properly. [JEAN hesitates, then boldly seizes her foot and kisses it lightly.] Perfect! You should have been an actor.

JEAN [rising]: That's enough now, Miss Julie! Someone might come in and see us.

JULIE: What of it?

JEAN: People talk, that's what! If you knew how their tongues were wagging just now at the dance, you'd . . .

JULIE: What were they saying? Tell me!—Sit down!

JEAN [sits]: I don't want to hurt you, but they were saying things—suggestive things, that . . . well, you can figure it out for yourself! You're not a child. If a woman is seen drinking alone with a man—let alone a servant—at night—then . . . Kristine is here.

JEAN: Asleep!

JULIE: Then I'll wake her up. [rising] Kristine! Are you asleep? [KRISTINE mumbles in her sleep.]

JULIE: Kristine!—She certainly can sleep!

JULIE: You're proud.
 JEAN: In certain ways, but not in others.
 JULIE: Have you ever been in love?
 JEAN: We don't use that word, but I've been fond of many girls, and once I was sick because I couldn't have the one I wanted. That's right, sick, like those princes in the Arabian Nights—who couldn't eat or drink because of love.

JULIE: Who was she? [JEAN is silent.] Who was she?
 JEAN: You can't force me to tell you that.
 JULIE: But if I ask you as an equal, as a—friend! Who was she?

JEAN: You!
 JULIE [stis]: How amusing . . .
 JEAN: Yes, if you like! It was ridiculous!—You see, that was the story I didn't want to tell you earlier. Maybe I will now. Do you know how the world looks from down below?—Of course you don't. Neither do hawks and falcons, whose backs we can't see because they're usually soaring up there above us. I grew up in a shack with seven brothers and sisters and a pig, in the middle of a wasteland, where there wasn't a single tree. But from our window I could see the tops of apple trees above the wall of your father's garden. That was the Garden of Eden, guarded by angry angels with flaming swords. All the same, the other boys and I managed to find our way to the Tree of Life.

Now you think I'm contemptible, I suppose.
 JULIE: Oh, all boys steal apples.
 JEAN: You say that, but you think I'm contemptible anyway. Oh well! One day I went into the Garden of Eden with my mother, to weed the onion beds. Near the vegetable garden was a small Turkish pavilion in the shadow of jasmine bushes and overgrown with honeysuckle. I had no idea what it was used for, but I'd never seen such a beautiful building. People went in and came out again, and one day the door was left open. I sneaked close and saw walls covered with pictures of kings and emperors, and red curtains with fringes at the windows—now you know the place I mean. I—

[JULIE'S NOSE]—I'd never been inside the manor house, never seen anything except the church—but this was more beautiful. From then on, no matter where my thoughts wandered, they returned—just once, the full pleasure of—*erjfin*. I sneaked in, saw, and marvelled! But then I heard someone coming! There was only one exit for ladies and gentlemen, but for me there was another, and I had no choice but to take it! [MISS JULIE, who has taken the lilac sprig, lets it fall on the table.] Afterwards, I started running. I crashed through a raspberry bush, flew over a strawberry patch, and came up

onto the rose terrace. There I caught sight of a pink dress and a pair of white stockings—it was you. I crawled under a pile of weeds and I mean under—under thistles that pricked me and wet dirt that stank. And I looked at you as you walked among the roses, and I thought: if it's true that a thief can enter heaven and be with the angels, then why can't a farmhand's son here on God's earth enter the manor house garden and play with the Count's daughter?

JULIE [romantically]: Do you think all poor children would have felt the way you did?

JEAN [at first hesitant, then with conviction]: If all poor—yes—of course. Of course!

JULIE: It must be terrible to be poor!
 JEAN [with exaggerated suffering]: Oh, Miss Julie! Oh! can have his nose patted by a young lady's hand, but a servant—[changing his tone]—Oh, I know—now and then you find one with enough stuff in him to get ahead in the world, but how often?—Anyhow, do you know what I did then?

I jumped in the millstream with my clothes on, was pulled out, and got a beating. But the following Sunday, when my father and all the others went to my grandmother's, I arranged to stay home. I scrubbed myself with soap and water, put on my best clothes, and went to church just to see you! I saw you and returned home, determined to die. But I wanted to die beautifully and pleasantly, without pain. And then I remembered that it was dangerous to sleep under an elder bush. We had a big one, and it was in full flower. I plundered its treasures and bedded down under them in the oat bin. Have you ever noticed how smooth oats are?—and soft to the touch, like human skin . . . !

Well, I shut the lid and closed my eyes. I fell asleep and woke up feeling very sick. But I didn't die, as you can see. What was I after?—I don't know. There was no hope of winning you, of course.—You were a symbol of the hopelessness of ever rising out of the class in which I was born.

JULIE: You're a charming storyteller. Did you ever go to school?

JEAN: A bit, but I've read lots of novels and been to the theatre often. And then I've listened to people like you talk—that's where I learned most.

JULIE: Do you listen to what we say?

JEAN: Naturally! And I've heard plenty, too, driving the carriage or rowing the boat. Once I heard you and a friend . . .

JULIE: Oh?—What did you hear?

JEAN: I'd better not say. But I was surprised a little. I couldn't imagine where you learned such words. Maybe at bottom there isn't such a great difference between people as we think.

JULIE: Here I am chattering with you about dreams. Come, let's go out! Just into the park! [She offers him her arm, and they start to leave.]

JEAN: We'll have to sleep on nine midsummer flowers, Miss Julie, to make our dreams come true! [They turn at the door. JEAN puts his hand to his eye.]

JULIE: Did you get something in your eye?
 JEAN: It's nothing—just a speck—it'll be gone in a minute.

JULIE: My sleeve must have brushed against you. Sit down and let me help you. [She takes him by the arm and seats him. She tilts his head back and with the tip of a handkerchief tries to remove the speck.] Sit still, absolutely still! [She slaps his hand.] Didn't you hear me?—Why, you're trembling, the big, strong man is trembling! [Jeels his biceps.] What muscles you have!

JEAN [warning]: Miss Julie!
 JULIE: Yes, monsieur, Jean.
 JEAN: Attention! Je ne suis qu'un homme!

JULIE: Will you sit still!—There! Now it's gone! Kiss my hand and thank me.

JEAN [rising]: Miss Julie, listen to me!—Kristine has gone to bed!—Will you listen to me!

JULIE: Kiss my hand first!
 JEAN: Listen to me!

JULIE: Kiss my hand first!
 JEAN: All right, but you've only yourself to blame!

JULIE: For what?
 JEAN: For what? Are you still a child at twenty-five? Don't you know that it's dangerous to play with fire?

JULIE: Not for me. I'm insured.
 JEAN [boldly]: No, you're not! But even if you were, there's combustible material close by.

JULIE: Meaning you?
 JEAN: Yes! Not because it's me, but because I'm young—

JULIE: And handsome—what incredible conceit! A Don Juan perhaps! Or a Joseph! Yes, that's it, I do believe you're a Joseph!

JEAN: Do you?
 JULIE: I'm almost afraid so. [JEAN boldly tries to put his arm around her waist and kiss her. She slaps his face.]

How dare you?
 JEAN: Are you serious or joking?
 JULIE: Serious.

JEAN: Then so was what just happened. You play games too seriously, and that's dangerous. Well, I'm tired of games. You'll excuse me if I get back to work. I haven't done the Count's boots yet and it's long past midnight.

JULIE: Put the boots down!
 JEAN: No! It's the work I have to do. I never agreed to be your playmate, and never will. It's beneath me.

KRISTINE [in her sleep]: The Count's boots are brushed—put the coffee on—right away, right away—uh, huh—oh!

JULIE [grabbing KRISTINE'S NOSE]: Will you wake up!
 JEAN [severely]: Leave her alone—let her sleep!
 JULIE [sharply]: What?
 JEAN: Someone who's been standing over a stove all day has a right to be tired by now. Sleep should be respected . . .

JULIE [changing her tone]: What a considerable thought—it does you credit—thank you! [Offering her hand.] Come outside and pick some lilacs for me! [During the following, KRISTINE awakens and shambles sleepily off right to bed.]

JEAN: Go with you?
 JULIE: With me!

JEAN: We couldn't do that! Absolutely not!
 JULIE: I don't understand. Surely you don't imagine . . .
 JEAN: No, I don't, but the others might.

JULIE: What? That I've fallen in love with a servant?
 JEAN: I'm not a conceited man, but such things happen—and for these people, nothing is sacred!

JULIE: I do believe you're an aristocrat!
 JEAN: Yes, I am.

JULIE: And I'm stepping down . . .
 JEAN: Don't step down, Miss Julie, take my advice. No one'll believe you stepped down voluntarily.

People will always say you fell.
 JULIE: I have a higher opinion of people than you. Come and see!—Come! [She stares at him broodingly.]

JEAN: You're very strange, do you know that?
 JULIE: Perhaps! But so are you!—For that matter, everything is strange. Life, people, everything. Like floating scum, drifting on and on across the water, until it sinks down and down! That reminds me of a dream I have now and then. I've climbed up on top of a pillar. I sit there and see no way of getting down. I get dizzy when I look down, and I must get down, but I don't have the courage to jump. I can't hold on firmly, and I long to be able to fall, but I don't fall. And yet I'll have no peace until I get down, no rest unless I get down, down on the ground! And if I did get down to the ground, I'd want to be under the earth . . .

Have you ever felt anything like that?
 JEAN: No, I dream that I'm lying under a high tree in a dark forest. I want to get up, up on top, and look out over the bright landscape, where the sun is shining, and plunder the bird's nest up there, where the golden eggs lie. And I climb and climb, but the trunk's so thick and smooth, and it's so far to the first branch. But I know, if I just reached that first branch, I'd go right to the top, like up a ladder. I haven't reached it yet, but I will, even if it's only in a dream!

JEAN: That's the life, you know. Always new faces, new languages. No time to worry or be nervous. No hunting for something to do—there's always work to be done: bells ringing night and day, train whistles blowing, carriages coming and going, and all the white gold rolling into the till! That's the life!

JULIE: Yes, it sounds wonderful. But what'll I do? JEAN: You'll be mistress of the house; the jewel in our crown! With your looks . . . and your manner—oh—success is guaranteed! It'll be wonderful! You'll sit in your office like a queen and push an electric button to set your slaves in motion. The guests will file past your throne and timidly lay their treasures before you.—You have no idea how people tremble when they get their bill.—I'll salt the bills and you'll sweeten them with your prettiest smile.—Let's get away from here—[takes a timetable out of his pocket]—Right away on the next train!—We'll be in Malmö six-thirty tomorrow morning, Hamburg at eight-forty; from Frankfurt to Basel will take a day, then on to see, three days. Three days!

JULIE: That's all very well! But Jean—you must give me courage!—Tell me you love me! Put your arms around me!

JEAN [hesitating]: I want to—but I don't dare. Not in this house, not again. I love you—never doubt that—you don't doubt it, do you, Miss Julie?

JULIE [sigh; very faintly]: "Miss!"—Call me Julie! There are no barriers between us any more. Call me Julie!

JEAN [tormented]: I can't! There'll always be barriers between us as long as we stay in this house.—There's the past and there's the Count. I've never met anyone I had such respect for.—When I see his gloves lying on a chair, I feel small.—When I hear that bell up there ring, I jump like a skittish horse.—And when I look at his boots standing there so stiff and proud, I feel like bowing! [kicking the boots] Superstitions and prejudices we learned as children—but they can easily be forgotten. If I can just get to another country, a republic, people will bow and scrape when they see my livery— they'll bow and scrape, you hear, not me! I wasn't born to cringe. I've got stuff in me, I've got character, and if I can only grab on to that first branch, you watch me climb! I'm a servant today, but next year I'll own my own hotel. In ten years I'll have enough to retire. Then I'll go to Rumania and be decorated. I could—mind you I said *could*—end up a count!

JULIE: Wonderful, wonderful! JEAN: Ah, in Rumania you just buy your title, and so you'll be countess after all. My countess!

Then the swineherd lost his true love, and the princess grieves him still, and never more she'll wander from atop the golden hill.

JULIE: I know all these people and I love them, just as they love me. Let them come in and you'll see. JEAN: No, Miss Julie, they don't love you. They take your food, but they spit on it! Believe me! Listen to them, listen to what they're singing!—No, don't listen to them!

JULIE [listening]: What are they singing? JEAN: It's a dirty song! About you and me! JEAN: Disgusting! Oh! How cowardly! — JEAN: The rabble is always deceitful! And in a battle like this, you don't fight; you can only run away! JULIE: Run away? But where? We can't go out—out into Kristine's room.

JEAN: True. But there's my room. Necessity knows no rules. Besides, you can trust me. I'm your friend and I respect you.

JULIE: But suppose—suppose they look for you in there?

JEAN: I'll bolt the door, and if anyone tries to break in, I'll shoot! —Come! [on his knees] Come!

JULIE [urgently]: Promise me . . . ? JEAN: I swear! [Miss Julie runs off right. JEAN hastens after her.]

BALLET: Led by a fiddler, the servants and farm people enter, dressed festively, with flowers in their hats. On the table they place a small barrel of beer and a keg of schnapps, both gal-landed. Glasses are brought out, and the drinking starts. A dance circle is formed and "The Swineherd and the Princess" is sung. When the dance is finished, everyone leaves, singing.

[Miss Julie enters alone. She notices the mess in the kitchen, wrings her hands, then takes out her powder puff and powders her nose.]

JEAN [enters agitated]: There, you see? And you heard that. We can't possibly stay here now, you know that.

JULIE: Yes, I know. But what can we do? JEAN: Leave, travel, far away from here.

JULIE: Travel? Yes, but where? JEAN: To Switzerland, to the Italian lakes. Have you ever been there?

JULIE: No. Is it beautiful? JEAN: Oh, an eternal summer—oranges growing everywhere, laurel trees, always green . . .

JULIE: But what'll we do there? JEAN: I'll open a hotel—with first-class service for first-class people.

JULIE: Hotel?

JULIE: Shame on you! We don't act like you when we're engaged.

JEAN [staring at her]: Is that true?—You don't have to play innocent with me, Miss . . .

JULIE: The man I gave my love to was a swine. JEAN: That's what you all say—afterwards.

JULIE: All? JEAN: I think so. I know I've heard that phrase before, on similar occasions.

JULIE: What occasions? JEAN: Like the one I'm talking about. The last time . . .

JULIE [singing]: Quiet! I don't want to hear any more! JEAN: That's interesting—that's what she said, too. Well, if you'll excuse me, I'm going to bed.

JULIE [gently]: To bed? On midsummer eve? JEAN: Yes! Dancing with the rabble out there doesn't amuse me much.

JULIE: Get the key to the boat and row me out on the lake. I want to see the sun come up.

JEAN: Is that wise? JULIE: Are you worried about your reputation?

JEAN: Why, not? Why should I risk looking ridiculous and getting fired without a reference, just when I'm trying to establish myself. Besides, I think I owe something to Kristine . . .

JEAN: Yes, but you, too.—Take my advice, go up and go to bed!

JULIE: Am I to obey you? JEAN: Just this once—for your own good! Please! It's very late. Drowsiness makes people giddy and liable to lose their heads! Go to bed! Besides—

unless I'm mistaken—I hear the others coming to look for me. And if they find us together, you'll be lost! [The CHORUS approaches, singing.]

The swineherd found his true love a pretty girl so fair. The swineherd found his true love but let the girl beware.

For then he saw the princess the princess on the golden hill, but then saw the princess, so much fairer still.

So the swineherd and the princess they danced the whole night through, and he forgot his first love, to her he was untrue.

And when the long night ended, and in the light of day, the dancing too was ended, and the princess could not stay.

JULIE: But I don't care about that—that's what I'm putting behind me! Show me you love me, otherwise—what am I?

JEAN: I'll show you a thousand times—afterwards! Not here! And whatever you do, no emotional outbursts, or we'll both be lost! We must think this through coolly, like sensible people. [He takes out a cigar, snips the end and lights it.] You sit there, and I'll sit here. We'll talk as if nothing happened.

JULIE [desperately]: Oh, my God! Have you no feelings?

JEAN: Me? No one has more feelings than I do, but I know how to control them.

JULIE: A little while ago you could kiss my shoe—and now!

JEAN [harshly]: Yes, but that was before. Now we have other things to think about.

JULIE: Don't speak harshly to me!

JEAN: I'm not—just sensibly! We've already done one foolish thing, let's not have any more. The Count could return any minute, and by then we've got to decide what to do with our lives. What do you think of my plans for the future? Do you approve?

JULIE: They sound reasonable enough. I have only one question: for such a big undertaking you need capital—do you have it?

JEAN [hearing on the cigar]: Me? Certainly! I have my professional expertise, my wide experience, and my knowledge of languages. That's capital enough, I should think!

JULIE: But all that won't even buy a train ticket. JEAN: That's true. That's why I'm looking for a partner to advance me the money.

JULIE: Where will you find one quickly enough? JEAN: That's up to you, if you want to come with me.

JULIE: But I can't! I have no money of my own. [pause] JEAN: Then it's all off . . .

JULIE: And . . .

JEAN: Things stay as they are.

JULIE: Do you think I'm going to stay in this house as your lover? With all the servants pointing their fingers at me? Do you imagine I can face my father after this? No! Take me away from here, away from shame and dishonor—Oh, what have I done! My God, my God! [She cries.]

JEAN: Now, don't start that old song!—What have you done? The same as many others before you.

JULIE [screaming contemptuously]: And now you think I'm contemptible!—I'm falling, I'm falling!

JEAN: Fall down to my level and I'll lift you up again. JULIE: What terrible power drew me to you? The attraction of the weak to the strong? The falling to the rising? Or was it love? Was this love? Do you know what love is?

JEAN: Me? What do you take me for? You don't think this was my first time, do you?

want to cover up your mistake by telling yourself that you love me! You don't. Maybe there was a physical attraction—but then your love is no better than mine—I could never be satisfied to be no more than an animal to you, and I could never arouse real love in you.

JULIE: Are you sure of that?
JEAN: You're suggesting it's possible—Oh, I could fall in love with you, no doubt about it. You're beautiful, you're refined—[*approaching and taking her hand*—cultured, lovable when you want to be, and once you start a fire in a man, it never goes out. [*putting his arm around her waist*] You're like hot, spicy wine, and one kiss from you . . . [*He tries to lead her out, but she stubbornly frees herself.*]

JULIE: Let me go?—You'll never win me like that.
JEAN: How then?—Not like that? Not with caresses and pretty speeches. Not with plans about the future or rescue from disgrace! *How then?*
JULIE: How? How? I don't know!—I have no idea!—I detest you as I detest rats, but I can't escape from you.

JULIE: Escape with me!
JULIE [*pulling herself together*]: Escape? Yes, we must escape!—But I'm so tired. Give me a glass of wine? [*JEAN pours the wine. She looks at her watch.*] But we must talk first. We still have a little time. [*She drains the glass, then holds it out for more.*]

JULIE: Don't drink so fast. It'll go to your head.

JULIE: What does it matter?
JEAN: What does it matter? It's vulgar to get drunk!

What did you want to tell me?
JULIE: We must escape! But first we must talk, I mean I must talk. You've done all the talking up to now. You told about your life, now I want to tell about mine, so we'll know all about each other before we go off together.

JEAN: Just a minute! Forgive me! If you don't want to regret it afterwards, you'd better think twice before revealing any secrets about yourself.

JULIE: Aren't you my friend?

JEAN: Yes, sometimes! But don't rely on me.

JULIE: You're only saying that.—Besides, everyone already knows my secrets.—You see, my mother was a commoner—very humble background. She was brought up believing in social equality.

JULIE: Wait a minute—no, I don't.

JEAN: You mean the Count's, unless they didn't sign an agreement when they were married.
JULIE: They didn't.—My mother had a small inheritance which she didn't want under my father's control, so she entrusted it to her—friend.
JEAN: Who stole it!

But now his friends avoided him and his life was restricted to taking care of the estate, which couldn't satisfy him. I came into the world—against my mother's wishes, as far as I can understand. She wanted to bring me up as a child of nature, and, what's more, to learn everything a boy had to learn, so that I might be an example of how a woman can be as good as a man. I had to wear boy's clothes and learn to take care of horses, but I was never allowed in the cowshed. I had to groom and harness the horses and go hunting—and even had to watch them slaughter animals—that was disgusting! On the estate men were put on women's jobs and women on men's jobs—with the result that the property became run down and we became the laughing stock of the district. Finally, my father must have awakened from his trance because he rebelled and changed everything his way. My parents were then married quietly. Mother became ill—I don't know what illness it was—but she often had convulsions, hid in the attic and in the garden, and sometimes stayed out all night. Then came the great fire, which you've heard about. The house, the stables, and the cowshed all burned down, under very curious circumstances, suggesting arson, because the accident happened the day after the insurance had expired. The quarterly premium my father sent in was delayed because of a messenger's carelessness and didn't arrive in time. [*She fills her glass and drinks.*]

JULIE: Don't drink any more!

JULIE: Oh, what does it matter.—We were left penniless and had to sleep in the carriages. My father had no idea where to find money to rebuild the house because he had so slighted his old friends that they had forgotten him. Then my mother suggested that he borrow from a childhood friend of hers, a brick manufacturer who lived nearby. Father got the loan without having to pay interest, which surprised him. And that's how the estate was rebuilt.—[*drinks again*] Do you know who started the fire?

JEAN: The Countess, your mother.

JULIE: Do you know who the brick manufacturer was?

JEAN: Your mother's lover?

JULIE: Do you know whose money it was?

JULIE: Wait a minute—no, I don't.

JULIE: It was my mother's.

JEAN: You mean the Count's, unless they didn't sign an agreement when they were married.

JULIE: They didn't.—My mother had a small inheritance which she didn't want under my father's control, so she entrusted it to her—friend.

JEAN: Who stole it!

JULIE: How can anyone be so thoroughly filthy?

JEAN: Better clean up then!

JULIE: You lackey, you menial, stand up, when I speak to you!

JEAN: Menial's strumpet, lackey's whore, shut up and get out of here! Who are you to lecture me on coarseness? None of my kind is ever as coarse as you were tonight. Do you think one of your maids would throw herself at a man the way you did? Have you ever seen any girl of my class offer herself like that? I've only seen it among animals and streetwalkers.

JULIE [*crushed*]: You're right. Hit me, trample on me. I don't deserve any better. I'm worthless. But help me! If you see any way out of this, help me, Jean, please!

JEAN [*more gently*]: I'd be lying if I didn't admit to a sense of triumph in all this, but do you think that a person like me would have dared even to look at amazed . . .

JULIE: And proud . . .

JEAN: Why not? Though I must say it was too easy to be really exciting.

JULIE: Go on, hit me, hit me harder!

JEAN [*rising*]: No! Forgive me for what I've said! I don't hit a man when he's down, let alone a woman. I can't deny though, that I'm pleased to find out that what looked so dazzling to us from below was only tinsel, that the hawk's back was only gray, after all, that the lovely complexion was only powder, that those polished fingernails had black edges, and that a dirty handkerchief is still dirty, even if it smells of perfume. . . ! On the other hand, it hurts me to find out that what I was striving for wasn't finer, more substantial. It hurts me to see you sunk so low that you're inferior to your own cook. It hurts like watching flowers beaten down by autumn rains and turned into mud.

JULIE: You talk as if you were already above me.

JEAN: I am. You see, I could make you a countess, but you could never make me a count.

JULIE: But I'm the child of a count—something you could never be!

JEAN: That's true. But I could be the father of counts—if . . .

JULIE: But you're a thief. I'm not.

JEAN: There are worse things than being a thief! Besides, when I'm working in a house, I consider myself sort of a member of the family, like one of the children. And you don't call it stealing when a child snatches a berry off a full bush. [*His passion is aroused again.*] Miss Julie, you're a glorious woman, much too good for someone like me! You were drinking and you lost your head. Now you

JULIE: The things you say, the thoughts you think! JEAN: That's the way I was taught, and that's the way I am! Now don't get excited and don't play the grand lady, because we're in the same boat now!—Come on, Julie, I'll pour you a glass of something special! [*He opens a drawer in the table, takes out a wine bottle, and fills two glasses already used.*]

JULIE: Where do you get that?

JEAN: From the cellar.

JULIE: My father's burgundy!

JEAN: That'll do for his son-in-law, won't it?

JULIE: And I drink beer! Beer!

JEAN: That only shows I have better taste.

JULIE: Thief!

JEAN: Planning to tell?

JULIE: Oh, oh! Accomplish of a common thief! Was I drunk? Have I been walking in a dream the whole evening? Midsummer eve! A time of innocent fun!

JEAN: Innocent, eh?

JULIE [*pacing back and forth*]: Is there anyone on earth more miserable than I am at this moment?

JEAN: Why should you be? After such a conquest?

JULIE: Think of Kristine in there. Don't you think she has feelings, too?

JULIE: I thought so awhile ago, but not any more. No, a servant is a servant . . .

JEAN: And a whore is a whore!

JULIE [*on her knees, her hands clasped*]: Oh, God in Heaven, and my wretched life! Take me away from the filth I'm sinking into! Save me! Save me!

JEAN: I can't deny I feel sorry for you. When I lay in that onion bed and saw you in the rose garden, well . . . I'll be frank . . . I had the same dirty thoughts all boys have.

JULIE: And you wanted to die for me!

JEAN: In the oat bin? That was just talk.

JULIE: A lie, in other words!

JEAN [*beginning to feel sleepy*]: More or less! I got the idea from a newspaper story about a chimney sweep who curled up in a firewood bin full of lilacs because he got a summons for not supporting his illegitimate child . . .

JULIE: So, that's what you're like . . .

JEAN: I had to think of something. And that's the kind of story women always go for.

JULIE: Swine!

JEAN: *Merde!*

JULIE: And now you've seen the hawk's back . . .

JEAN: Not exactly, his back . . .

JULIE: And I was to be the first branch . . .

JEAN: But the branch was rotten . . .

JULIE: I was to be the sign on the hotel . . .

JEAN: And I the hotel . . .

JULIE: Sit at your desk, entice your customers, pad their bills . . .

JEAN: That I'd do myself . . .

romantic ideas; there's not this kind of hate between us. Love is a game we play when we get time off from work, but we don't have all day and night, like you. I think you're sick, really sick. Your mother was crazy, and her ideas have poisoned your life.

JULIE: Be kind to me. At least now you're talking like a human being.

JEAN: Be human yourself, then. You spit on me, and you won't let me wipe myself off—

JULIE: Help me! Help me! Just tell me what to do, where to go!

JEAN: In God's name, if I only knew myself.

JULIE: I've been crazy, out of my mind, but isn't there any way out?

JEAN: Stay here and keep calm! No one knows anything!

JULIE: Impossible! The others know and Kristine knows.

JEAN: No they don't, and they'd never believe a thing like that!

JULIE [hesitant]: But—it could happen again!

JEAN: That's true!

JULIE: And then?

JEAN [frightened]: Then?—Why didn't I think about that? Yes, there is only one thing to do—get away from here! Right away! I can't come with you, then we'd be finished, so you'll have to go alone—away—anywhere!

JULIE: Alone?—Where?—I can't do that!

JEAN: You must! And before the Count gets back! If you stay, we both know what'll happen. Once you make a mistake like this, you want to continue because the damage has already been done . . .

Then you get bolder and bolder—until finally you're caught! So leave! Later you can write to the Count and confess everything—except that it was me! He'll never guess who it was, and he's not going to be eager to find out, anyway.

JULIE: I'll go if you come with me.

JEAN: Are you out of your head? Miss Julie runs away with her servant! In two days it would be in the newspapers, and that's something your father would never live through.

JULIE: I can't go and I can't stay! Help me! I'm so tired, so terribly tired.—Order me! Set me in motion—I can't think or act on my own . . .

JEAN: What miserable creatures you people are! You strut around with your noses in the air as if you were the lords of creation! All right, I'll order you. Go upstairs and get dressed! Get some money for the trip, and then come back down!

JULIE [in a half-whisper]: Come up with me!

JEAN: To your room?—Now you're crazy again! [hesitates for a moment] No! Go, at once! [takes her hand to lead her out]

JULIE [as she leaves]: Speak kindly to me, Jean! JEAN: An order always sounds unkind—now you know how it feels. [JEAN, alone, sighs with relief. He sits at the table, takes out a notebook and pencil, and begins adding up figures, counting aloud as he works. He continues in dumb show until KRISTINE enters, dressed for church. She is carrying a white tie and shirt front.]

KRISTINE: Lord Jesus, what a mess! What have you been up to?

JEAN: Oh, Miss Julie dragged everybody in here. You mean you didn't hear anything? You must have been sleeping soundly.

KRISTINE: Like a log.

JEAN: And dressed for church already?

KRISTINE: Of course! You remember you promised to come with me to Communion today!

JEAN: Oh, yes, that's right.—And you brought my things. Come on, then! [He sits down. KRISTINE starts to put on his shirt, front and tie. Pause. JEAN begins sleepily.] What's the gospel text for today?

KRISTINE: On St. John's Day?—the beheading of John the Baptist, I should think!

JEAN: Ah, that'll be a long one, for sure.—Hey, you're choking me!—Oh, I'm sleepy, so sleepy!

KRISTINE: Yes, what have you been doing, up all night? Your face is absolutely green.

JEAN: I've been sitting here gabbing with Miss Julie.

KRISTINE: She has no idea what's proper, that one! [Pause]

JEAN: You know, Kristine . . .

KRISTINE: What?

JEAN: It's really strange when you think about it.—Her!

KRISTINE: What's so strange?

JEAN: Everything! [Pause]

KRISTINE [looking at the half-empty glasses standing on the table]: Have you been drinking together, too?

JEAN: Yes.

KRISTINE: Shame on you!—Look me in the eye!

JEAN: Well?

KRISTINE: Is it possible? Is it possible?

JEAN [thinking it over for a moment]: Yes, it is.

KRISTINE: Ugh! I never would have believed it! No, shame on you, shame!

JEAN: You're not jealous of her, are you?

KRISTINE: No, not of her! If it had been Clara or Sofie I'd have scratched your eyes out—I don't know why, but that's the way I feel.—Oh, it's disgusting!

JEAN: Are you angry at her, then?

KRISTINE: No, at you! That was an awful thing to do, awful! Poor girl!—No, I don't care who knows it—I won't stay in a house where we can't respect the people we work for.

JEAN: Why should we respect them?

JULIE [nervously]: Why after three weeks? JEAN: They quarrel, of course! But they still have to pay the rent in full! And so you rent the villas out again. And that's the way it goes, time after time. There's never a shortage of love—even if it doesn't last long!

JULIE: You don't want to die with me?

JEAN: I don't want to die at all! For one thing, I like living, and for another, I think suicide is a crime against the Providence which gave us life.

JULIE: You believe in God? You?

JEAN: Of course I do. And I go to church every other Sunday.—To be honest, I'm tired of all this, and I'm going to bed.

JULIE: Are you? And do you think I can let it go at that? A man owes something to the woman he's shamed.

JEAN [linking out his purse and throwing a silver coin on the table]: Here! I don't like owing anything to anybody.

JULIE [pretending not to notice the insult]: Do you know what the law states . . .

JEAN: Unfortunately the law doesn't state any punishment for the woman who seduces a man!

JULIE [as before]: Do you see any way out but to leave, get married, and then separate?

JEAN: Suppose I refuse such a *mesalliance*?

JULIE: *Mesalliance* . . .

JEAN: Yes, for me! You see, I come from better stock than you. There's no arsonist in my family.

JULIE: How do you know?

JEAN: You can't prove otherwise. We don't keep charts on our ancestors—there's just the police records!

But I've read about your family. Do you know who the founder was? He was a miller who let the king sleep with his wife one night during the Danish War. I don't have any noble ancestors like that. I don't have any noble ancestors at all, but I could become one myself.

JULIE: Is that what I get for opening my heart to someone unworthy, for giving my family's honor . . .

JEAN: Dishonor!—Well, I told you so: when people drink, they talk, and talk is dangerous!

JULIE: Oh, how I regret it!—How I regret it!—If you at least loved me.

JEAN: For the last time—what do you want? Shall I cry; shall I jump over your riding crop! Shall I kiss you and lure you off to Lake Como for three weeks, and then God knows what . . . ? What shall I do? What do you want? This is getting painfully embarrassing! But that's what happens when you stick your nose in women's business. Miss Julie! I see that you're unhappy. I know you're suffering, but I can't understand you. We don't have such

JULIE: Exactly! He kept it.—All this my father found out, but he couldn't bring it to court, couldn't repay his wife's lover, couldn't prove it was his wife's money! It was my mother's revenge for being forced into marriage against her will. It nearly drove him to suicide—there was a rumor that he tried with a pistol, but failed. So, he managed to live through it and my mother had to suffer for what she'd done. You can imagine that those were a terrible five years for me. I loved my father, but I sided with my mother because I didn't know the circumstances. I learned from her to hate men—you've heard how she hated the whole male sex—and I swore to her I'd never be a slave to any man.

JEAN: But you got engaged to that lawyer.

JULIE: In order to make him my slave.

JEAN: And he wasn't willing?

JULIE: He was willing, all right, but I wouldn't let him. I got tired of him.

JEAN: I saw it—out near the stable.

JULIE: What did you see?

JEAN: I saw—how he broke off the engagement.

JULIE: That's a lie! I was the one who broke it off. Has he said that he did? That swine . . .

JEAN: He was no swine, I'm sure. So, you hate men, Miss Julie?

JULIE: Yes!—Most of the time! But sometimes—when the weakness comes, when passion burns!

Oh, God, will the fire never die out?

JEAN: Do you hate me, too?

JULIE: Immeasurably! I'd like to have you put to death, like an animal . . .

JEAN: I see—the penalty for bestiality—the woman gets two years at hard labor and the animal is put to death. Right?

JULIE: Exactly!

JEAN: But there's no prosecutor here—and no animal. So, what'll we do?

JULIE: Go away!

JEAN: To torment each other to death?

JULIE: No! To be happy for—two days, a week, as long as we can be happy, and then—die . . .

JEAN: Die? That's stupid! It's better to open a hotel!

JULIE [without listening]:—on the shore of Lake Como, where the sun always shines, where the laurels are green at Christmas and the oranges glow.

JEAN: Lake Como is a rainy hole, and I never saw any oranges outside the shores. But tourists are attracted there because there are plenty of villas to be rented out to lovers, and that's a profitable business.—Do you know why? Because they sign a lease for six months—and then leave after three weeks!

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JEAN: Please don't make a scene! Your whole future is at stake! Hurry up! [He snatches the bird from her, carries it over to the chopping block, and picks up a neat cleaver. Miss JULIE turns away.] You should have learned how to slaughter chickens instead of how to fire pistols. [He claps off the bird's head.] Then you wouldn't feel faint at the sight of blood.

JULIE [screaming]: Kill me, too! Kill me! You, who can slaughter an innocent animal without blinking an eye! Oh, how I hate, how I detest you! There's blood between us now! I curse the moment I set eyes on you! I curse the moment I was conceived in my mother's womb!

JEAN: What good does cursing do? Let's go!

JULIE [approaching the chopping block, as if drawn against her will]: No, I don't want to go yet. I can't . . . until I see . . . Shh! I hear a carriage—[She listens, but her eyes never leave the cleaver and the chopping block.] Do you think I can't stand the sight of blood? You think I'm so weak . . . Oh—I'd like to see your blood and your brains on a chopping block!—I'd like to see your whole sex swimming in a sea of blood, like my little bird . . . I think I could drink from your skull! I'd like to bathe my feet in your open chest and eat your heart roasted whole!—You think I'm weak. You think I love you because my womb craved your seed. You think I want to carry your spawn under my heart and nourish it with my blood—bear your child and take your name! By the way, what is your family name? I've never heard it. Do you have one? I was to be Mrs. Boothblack—or Madame Pigsty.—You dog, who wears my collar, you lackey, who bears my coat of arms on your buttons—do I have to share you with my cook, compete with my own servant? Oh! Oh! Oh!—You think I'm a coward who wants to run away! No, now I'm staying—and let the storm break! My father will come home . . . to find his desk broken open . . . and his money gone! Then he'll ring—that bell . . . twice for his valet—and then he'll send for the police . . . and then I'll tell everything! Everything! Oh, what a relief I'll be to have it all end—I only it will end!—And then he'll have a stroke and die . . . That'll be the end of all of us—and there'll be peace . . . quiet . . . eternal rest!—And then our coat of arms will be broken against his coffin—the family title extinct—but the valet's line will go on in an orphanage . . . win laurels in the gutter, and end in jail!

JEAN: There's the blue blood talking! Very good, Miss Julie! Just don't let that miller out of the closet! [KRISTINE enters, dressed for church, with a psalmbook in her hand.]

JULIE [rushing to KRISTINE and falling into her arms, as if seeking protection]: Help me, Kristine! Help me against this man!

KRISTINE [removed and cold]: What a fine way to behave on a Sunday morning! [sees the chopping block] And look at this mess!—What does all this mean? Why all this screaming and carrying on?

JULIE: Kristine! You're a woman and my friend! Beware of this swine!

JEAN [uncomfortable]: While you ladies discuss this, I'll go in and shave. [slips off right]

JULIE: You must listen to me so you'll understand! KRISTINE: No, I could never understand such disgusting behavior! Where are you off to in your traveling clothes?—And he had his hat on.—

JULIE: Listen to me, Kristine! Listen, and I'll tell you everything—

KRISTINE: I don't want to hear it . . .

JULIE: But you must listen to me . . .

KRISTINE: What about? If it's about this silliness with Jean, I'm not interested, because it's none of my business. But if you're thinking of tricking him into running out, we'll soon put a stop to that!

JULIE [extremely nervous]: Try to be calm now, Kristine, and listen to me! I can't stay here, and neither can Jean—so we must go away . . .

KRISTINE: Hm, hm!

JULIE [brightening]: You see, I just had an idea.—What if all three of us go—abroad—to Switzerland and start a hotel together?—I have money, you see—and Jean and I could run it—and I thought you, you could take care of the kitchen . . . Wouldn't that be wonderful?—Say yes! And come with us, and then everything will be settled!

—Oh, do say yes! [embracing KRISTINE and patting her warmly]

KRISTINE [coolly, thoughtfully]: Hm, hm!

JULIE [presio tempo]: You've never traveled, Kristine.—You must get out and see the world. You can't imagine how much fun it is to travel by train—always new faces—new countries.—And when we get to Hamburg, we'll stop off at the zoo—you'll like that.—And then we'll go to the theatre and the opera—and when we get to Munich, dear, there we have museums, with Rubens and Raphael, the great painters, as you know.—You've heard of Munich, where King Ludwig lived—the king who went mad.—And then we'll see his castles—they're still there and they're like castles in fairy tales.—And from there it isn't far to Switzerland—and the Alps.—Imagine—the Alps have snow on them even in the middle of summer!—And oranges grow there and laurel trees that are green all year round—

in travel clothes and carrying a small birdcage, covered with a cloth, which she places on a chair.]

JEAN: I'm ready now.

JEAN: Shh! Kristine is awake.

JULIE [very nervous during the following]: Does she suspect something?

JEAN: She doesn't know anything. But my God, you look awful!

JULIE: Why? How do I look?

JEAN: You're pale as a ghost and—excuse me, but your face is dirty.

JULIE: Let me wash up then.—[She goes to the basin and washes her hands and face.] Give me a towel!

JEAN: Then the goblins will disappear.

JULIE: Yes, there must have been goblins out last night!—Jean, listen, come with me! I have some money now.

JEAN [hesitating]: Enough?

JULIE: Enough to start with. Come with me! I just can't travel alone on a day like this—midsummer day on a stuffy train—jammed in among crowds of people staring at me. Eternal delays at every station, while I'd wish I had wings. No, I can't, I can't! And then there'll be memories, memories of midsummer days when I was little. The church—decorated with birch leaves and lilacs; dinner at the big table with relatives and friends; the afternoons in the park, dancing, music, flowers, and games. Oh, no matter how far we travel, the memories will follow in the baggage car, with remorse and guilt!

JEAN: I'll go with you—but right away, before it's too late. Right this minute!

JULIE: Get dressed, then! [picking up the birdcage]

JEAN: But no baggage! It would give us away!

JULIE: No, nothing! Only what we can have in the compartment with us.

JEAN [his taken his hat]: What've you got there? What is it?

JULIE: It's only my greenfinch, I couldn't leave her behind.

JEAN: What? Bring a birdcage with us? You're out of your head! Put it down!

JULIE: It's the only thing I'm taking from my home—the only living being that loves me, since Diana was unfaithful. Don't be cruel! Let me take her!

JEAN: Put the cage down, I said!—And don't talk so loudly—Kristine will hear us!

JULIE: No, I won't leave her in the hands of strangers! I'd rather you killed her.

JEAN: Bring the thing here, then, I'll cut its head off!

JULIE: Oh! But don't hurt her! Don't . . . no, I can't.

JULIE [taking the bird out of the cage and kissing it]: Oh, my little Serena, must you die and leave your mistress?

KRISTINE: You're so clever, you tell me! Do you want to wait on people who can't behave decently? Do you? You disgrace yourself that way, if you ask me.

JEAN: But it's a comfort to know they aren't any better than us.

KRISTINE: Not for me. If they're no better, what do we have to strive for to better ourselves.—And think of the Count! Think of him! As if he hasn't had enough misery in his life! Lord Jesus! No, I won't stay in this house any longer!—And it had to be with someone like you! If it had been that lawyer, if it had been a real gentleman . . .

JEAN: What do you mean?

KRISTINE: Oh, you're all right for what you are, but there are men and gentlemen, after all.—No, this business with Miss Julie, I can never forget. She was so proud, so arrogant with men, you wouldn't have believed she could just go and give herself—and to someone like you! And she was going to have poor Diana shot for running after the gatekeeper's mutt!—Yes, I'm giving my notice, I mean it—I won't stay here any longer. On the twenty-fourth of October, I leave!

JEAN: And then?

KRISTINE: Well, since the subject has come up, it's about time you looked around for something since we're going to get married, in any case.

JEAN: Where am I going to look? I couldn't find a job like this if I was married.

KRISTINE: No, that's true. But you can find work as a porter or as a caretaker in some government office. The state doesn't pay much, I know, but it's secure, and there's a pension for the wife and children . . .

JEAN [grimacing]: That's all very well, but it's a bit early for me to think about dying for a wife and children. My ambitions are a little higher than that.

KRISTINE: Your ambitions, yes! Well, you have obligations, too! Think about them!

JEAN: Don't start nagging me about obligations, I know what I have to do! [listening for something outside] Besides, this is something we have plenty of time to think over. Go and get ready for church.

KRISTINE: Who's that walking around up there?

JEAN: I don't know, unless it's Clara.

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JEAN: I don't know, unless it's Clara.

JEAN: Yes! But—understand—wouldn't do it! That's the difference between us!

JULIE: Because you're a man and I'm a woman? What difference does that make?

JEAN: The usual difference—between a man and a woman.

JULIE [*with the razor in her hand*]: I want to, but I can't—My father couldn't either, the time he should have done it.

JEAN: No, he shouldn't have! He had to revenge himself first.

JULIE: And now my mother is revenged again, through me.

JEAN: Didn't you ever love your father, Miss Julie?

JULIE: Oh yes, deeply, but I've hated him, too. I must have done so without realizing it! It was he who brought me up to despise my own sex, making me half woman, half man. Whose fault is what's happened? My father's, my mother's, my own? My own? I don't have anything that's my own. I don't have a single thought that I didn't get from my father, not an emotion that I didn't get from my mother, and this last idea—that all people are equal—I got that from my fiancé.—That's why I called him a swine! How can it be my fault? Shall I let Jesus take on the blame, the way Kristine does?—No, I'm too proud to do that and too sensible—thanks to my father's teachings.—And as for someone rich not going to heaven, that's a lie. But Kristine won't get in—how will she explain the money she has in the savings bank? Whose fault is it?—What does it matter whose fault it is? I'm still the one who has to bear the blame, face the consequences. . . .

JEAN: Yes, but . . . [*the bell rings sharply twice. Miss Julie jumps up. Jean changes his coat.*] The Count is back! Do you suppose Kristine—*[He goes to the speaking tube, taps the lid, and listens.]*

JULIE: He's been to his desk!

JEAN: It's Jean, sir! [*listening: the audience cannot hear the Count's voice.*] Yes, sir! [*listening*] Yes, sir! Right half an hour!

JULIE [*desperately frightened*]: What did he say? Dear Lord, what did he say?

JEAN: He wants his boots and his coffee in half an hour.

JULIE: So, in half an hour! Oh, I'm so tired, I'm not able to do anything. I can't repent, can't run away, can't stay, can't live—can't die! Help me! Order me, and I'll obey like a dog! Do me this last service, save my honor, save his name! You know what I should do, but don't have the will to . . . You will it, you order me to do it!

KRISTINE:—to stop me from doing anything that's beneath me. You can't say that the Count's cook has been up to something with the groom or the swineherd! Can you?

JEAN: No, you were lucky enough to get hold of a gentleman!

KRISTINE: Yes, a gentleman who sells the Count's oats from the stable.

JEAN: You should talk—taking a commission from the grocer and bribes from the butcher.

KRISTINE: What?

JEAN: And you say you can't respect your employers any longer. You, you, you!

KRISTINE: Are you coming to church with me, now? You could use a good sermon after your fine deed!

JEAN: No, I'm not going to church today. You'll have to go alone and confess what you've been up to.

KRISTINE: Yes, I'll do that, and I'll bring back enough forgiveness for you, too. The Savior suffered and died on the Cross for all our sins, and if we go to Him with faith and a penitent heart, He takes all our sins on Himself.

JEAN: Even grocery sins?

JULIE: And do you believe that, Kristine?

KRISTINE: It's my living faith, as sure as I stand here. It's the faith I learned as a child, Miss Julie, and kept ever since. "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound!"

JULIE: Oh, if I only had your faith. If only . . .

KRISTINE: Well, you see, we can't have it without God's special grace, and that isn't given to everyone—

JULIE: Who is it given to then?

KRISTINE: That's the great secret of the workings of grace, Miss Julie, and God is no respecter of persons, for the last shall be the first. . . .

JULIE: Then He does respect the last.

KRISTINE [*continuing*]: . . . and it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God. That's how it is, Miss Julie! Anyhow, I'm going now—alone, and on the way I'm going to tell the groom not to let any horses out, in case anyone wants to leave before the Count gets back!—Goodbye! [*leaves*]

JEAN: What a witch!—And all this because of a greenfinch!

JULIE [*fatally*]: Never mind the greenfinch!—Can you see any way out of this? Any end to it?

JEAN [*thinking*]: No!

JULIE: What would you do in my place?

JEAN: In your place? Let's see—as a person of position, as a woman who had—fallen. I don't know—wait, now I know.

JULIE [*taking the razor and making a gesture*]: You mean like this?

[JEAN can be seen in the wings right, sharpening his razor on a strap which he holds with his teeth and his left hand. He listens to the conversation with satisfaction, nodding now and then in approval. Miss Julie continues tempo prestissimo.] And then we'll start a hotel—and I'll be at the desk, while Jean greets the guests. . . . does the stopping . . . writes letters. —You have no idea what a life it'll be—the train whistles blowing and the carriages arriving and the bells ringing in the rooms and down in the restaurant.—And I'll make out the bills—and I know how to salt them! . . . You'll never believe how timid travelers are when they have to pay their bills.—And you—you'll be in charge of the kitchen.—And you—you'll be in charge of the bills.—Naturally, you won't have to stand over the stove yourself.—And since you're going to be seen by people, you'll have to wear beautiful clothes.—And you, with your looks—no, I'm not flattering you—one fine day you'll grab yourself a husband!—You'll see!—A rich Englishman—they're so easy to—*[slowing down]*—catch—and then we'll get rich—and build ourselves a villa on Lake Como.—It's true it rains there a little now and then, but—*[fatally]*—the sun has to shine sometimes—although it looks dark—and then. . . . of course we could always come back home again—*[pause]*—here—or somewhere else.

KRISTINE: Listen, Miss Julie, do you believe all this?

JULIE [*enraged*]: Do I believe it?

KRISTINE: Yes!

JULIE [*yearningly*]: I don't know. I don't believe in anything any more. [*She sinks down on the bench and cradles her head in her arms on the table.*] Nothing! Nothing at all!

KRISTINE [*turning right to where Jean is standing*]: So, you thought you'd run out!

JEAN [*embarrassed; puts the razor on the table*]: Run out? That's no way to put it. You heard Miss Julie's plan, and even if she is tired after being up all night, it's still a practical plan.

KRISTINE: Now you listen to me! Did you think I'd work as a cook for that. . . .

JEAN [*sharply*]: You watch what you say in front of your mistress! Do you understand?

KRISTINE: Mistress!

JEAN: Yes!

KRISTINE: Listen to him! Listen to him! and talk less! Miss Julie is your mistress. If you despise her, you have to despise yourself for the same reason!

KRISTINE: I've always had enough self-respect—

JEAN:—to be able to despise other people!