

A THORN IN THE FLESH

Written by

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Based on the Life of Regine Olsen

and the Life and Works of

Soren Kierkegaard

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The tragic love story of the troubled Danish writer Soren
Kierkegaard and the beautiful Regine Olsen.

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FADE IN:

EXT. COPENHAGEN, DENMARK - DAY (1838)

People walk or ride in horse-drawn carts and carriages in the port city's downtown Nytorv ("New Market") Square. There's a fountain in the center of the cobblestoned square.

SUPERIMPOSE: "COPENHAGEN, DENMARK, 1838."

INT. PLEISCH'S TEAROOM - DAY

SOREN KIERKEGAARD, 24, looks at the time on his pocket watch.

He is slim, with a pleasant face. Wearing a buttoned coat, he holds a bamboo walking stick, his top hat on the table where he sits.

He expectantly watches passersby on Amagertorv, one of the city's main streets, through the front window. He seems oblivious to the tearoom's other patrons.

He sees pretty REGINE OLSEN and her girlfriend THRINE DAHL, both 17 and fashionably dressed, walk by on the street.

Soren grabs his hat and rises, taking money from a pocket for his coffee.

EXT. AMAGERTORV STREET - DAY

Regine and Thrine walk, unaware that Soren -- greeting friends and acquaintances among passersby -- follows them.

EXT. JANSEN HOME - DAY

Soren watches as Regine says goodbye to Thrine and enters a two-story home. Thrine proceeds down the street.

Soren stops by the home and regards it.

A YOUNG MAN ON THE STREET walks by from a neighboring house. Soren points with his cane toward Jansen's.

SOREN

Excuse me. Can you tell me who lives at this address?

YOUNG MAN

That's Mrs. Jansen, sir.

SOREN

Thank you.

Soren seems unsure what to do next. Then an upper window opens and MRS. JANSEN, 68, beats some dust from a cloth.

Soren tips his hat with a smile.

SOREN

Good afternoon. Mrs. Jansen, I believe.

MRS. JANSEN

Good afternoon. Do I know you, sir?

SOREN

I am Soren Kierkegaard. My father is Michael.

MRS. JANSEN

Oh, yes, I certainly know your father! I bought so many clothes from him, before he sold his business. How is he?

SOREN

He is well. And he has often spoken kindly of you.

MRS. JANSEN

So you are his son.

SOREN

The youngest of two surviving.

MRS. JANSEN

Would you like to come in for a fresh cup of tea?

INT. JANSEN HOME - SITTING ROOM - DAY

Soren and Mrs. Jansen have tea.

MRS. JANSEN

I am flattered, Mister Kierkegaard, that you would want to spend some time chatting with an old lady like me.

SOREN

Why do you think that I wouldn't?

MRS. JANSEN

Well, you must have many friends your own age at the university and all.

SOREN

Why, madam, I would much rather talk with you older ladies than with those young fellows, so full of themselves. You should hear their pretentious discussions of Hegel, or of Schleiermacher, or of liberalism, or of censorship of the press.

MRS. JANSEN

What do you like to talk about with us older ladies?

SOREN

Why, it doesn't matter. Some good family gossip, the weather, or how much milk it takes to produce a pound of butter.

Regine enters the room with her cousin HENRIETTE, 18. Soren rises.

MRS. JANSEN

Mister Kierkegaard, this is my niece Regine Olsen, and my grandchild Henriette.

SOREN

I am pleased to meet you, Henriette.

HENRIETTE

Likewise, Mister Kierkegaard.

SOREN

Regine, haven't we met before?

They sit down.

REGINE

Yes. At the home of Bolette Rordam, about two years ago.

SOREN

Ah! That's right. When you were -- how old?

REGINE

Fifteen. A group of us girls were there. And you came by to borrow a book, I believe.

SOREN

I remember. To return a book,
actually. I do such odd things,
returning things that I borrow.

REGINE

I believe you were seeing Bolette.

SOREN

Yes. Till she saw the last of me.

Regine and Henriette giggle.

REGINE

She asked you to speak to us.

SOREN

What did I speak of?

REGINE

I don't remember. I just remember
how the words seemed to flow like
a stream.

SOREN

I remember your face, your
expression. You know how some
images stick in your mind?

REGINE

Yes.

HENRIETTE

I was there too.
(mock hurt)
But you don't remember me.

SOREN

Why, if Regine had not grabbed my
attention first, I would have been
absorbed by your presence.

The girls giggle again, then,

REGINE

You know, my parents have open
house once a week. Wednesday
evenings. You are welcome to come,
Soren.

SOREN

I would like that.

MRS. JANSEN

Her father is State Councillor
Olsen.

SOREN

I know him. I would like that
indeed. One Wednesday evening I
just might show up.

A pause, Soren gazing at Regine. She smiles in a self-conscious way. She rises.

REGINE

Well, Auntie, I'll be running along
now.

SOREN

(rises)

You are going home, are you?

REGINE

Yes. I was on my way home from my
music lesson, but I had to tell
Henriette something.

SOREN

Well then, let me escort you. I
was out walking anyway, as I do
every day in this fair town of
ours.

(takes last sip of tea)

Mrs. Jansen, you should open a
tearoom. I would be your best
customer.

MRS. JANSEN

Oh, Mister Kierkegaard, really.

EXT. OLSENS' STREET (BORSGADE) - DAY

Soren and Regine chat as they walk on Borsgade. There is a row of four-story gabled mansions on one side of the street, and a canal on the other.

REGINE

My sister is the oldest -- she's
married -- then my older brother
and me. And you?

SOREN

One surviving brother. Gone are
two brothers, and three sisters.

REGINE
You mean they've all died?

SOREN
Yes. All five. Would you believe there's a curse on the family? I must warn you.

REGINE
My goodness. Are you sure it's a curse, Soren?

They stop at the front door of the Olsen mansion.

SOREN
None of them lived past the age of Christ. Thirty-three.

A pause, Soren gazing at her, Regine seemingly not knowing what to say.

SOREN
I enjoyed the walk with you.

REGINE
I enjoyed it too.

SOREN
Well, that was the purpose.

Regine opens the door.

SOREN
It was a pleasure to meet you again, Regine.

REGINE
Don't forget the open houses.

SOREN
How could I? I may see you this Wednesday. Goodbye.

Soren starts to go.

REGINE
Soren... How did you happen to be at my aunt's house?

SOREN
Do you know what I think? An angel led me there. Do you believe in angels?

REGINE
Yes, I suppose so.

SOREN
So do I.

Soren moves off, Regine watching him.

EXT. KIERKEGAARD HOME (NO. 2 NYTORV) - NIGHT

The four-story town house stands next to the courthouse on Nytorv Square. A few people move about on the square.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Soren dines in silence with his white-haired father MICHAEL KIERKEGAARD, 82, and Soren's brother PETER KIERKEGAARD, 33.

Michael sits at the head of the long table, Soren and Peter across from each other. A HOUSEKEEPER, 54, attends.

Michael breaks the silence as they eat,

MICHAEL
Soren, have you given any further thought to taking the theological exam?

SOREN
No, Father, I haven't.

MICHAEL
Have you given any thought to taking any sort of exam?

Soren eats with no apparent concern.

SOREN
Not anytime soon, Father. It requires much preparation.

MICHAEL
Are you attending any university lectures at all?

SOREN
Why, yes, Father, ask my brother the professor. He sees me there now and then.

PETER
(snidely)
Yes. Usually lying on the couch in the student union.

SOREN
A good place to think.

PETER
Or to get over a hangover.

SOREN
That too. I am also busy at present, working on a rather long essay, which I hope to have published.

PETER
An essay on what?

SOREN
Hans Christian Andersen.

Michael and Peter look mystified.

MICHAEL
Hans Christian Andersen?

SOREN
Yes. My thesis being, as an author he totally lacks a life view.

PETER
No "life view"? He is unlike you, I suppose. Do you have a life view, Soren?

SOREN
Yes, Peter, I do, though not the subject of the essay. My life view?

Soren speaks amiably despite the bitter nature of his words,

SOREN
Why, the darkest Christianity imaginable, instilled in me by my father from the earliest age. What else would you expect?

MICHAEL
(kindly)
We have all sinned, my son, and fall short of the glory of God.

SOREN
(to Peter)
There, you see?
(MORE)

SOREN (CONT'D)

(to Michael)

This fear of hell and damnation
in which you raised me, Father --
depriving me of a childhood --
still weighs on my soul every day.
For how does one get rid of it?
I am just as unhappy as you are.
Doesn't that please you?

Peter glares at Soren.

PETER

Have you finished? Must you sit
there and mock our father?

SOREN

(pleasant air)

Mock him? Nonsense. If someone
should be mocked, it is me. Let
me tell you a secret -- yes, there
should be no secrets in what is
left of this curséd family. Am
I seen as a prodigal son? I have
friends who view me as a carefree
bon vivant. But it's all just a
pretense. I can go to a party and
be the soul of wit, I can entertain
everyone there -- then go home and
want to shoot myself. That is the
secret. But you needn't fear. For
suicides go to hell, do they not?
So there is no escape from this
situation.

(resumes eating)

I am finished now, Peter.

Michael has a downcast look. Peter stares at Soren.

MICHAEL

I will pay the rent for your
apartment, for one more year.

SOREN

Thank you, Father.

MICHAEL

Do you need more money yet?

SOREN

Yes, Father. I could use about
fifty rixdollars, thank you.

MICHAEL

I fear, Soren, that nothing will
become of you, as long as you have
any money.

SOREN

Yes, Father.

Silence again descends.

INT. JANSEN HOME - DAY

Regine stands beside Mrs. Jansen as the latter prepares tea
for two elderly lady visitors.

REGINE

Auntie, why was Soren Kierkegaard
here yesterday?

MRS. JANSEN

Well, I saw him standing outside,
and he introduced himself.

REGINE

What did you talk about with him?

MRS. JANSEN

Well, we didn't have time to talk
about much before -- Regine, do you
think he was here to meet you?

REGINE

I've been wondering. Do you know
what he told me? That an angel led
him here.

MRS. JANSEN

Why, that silver-tongued devil.

REGINE

But he told me there's a curse on
his family.

MRS. JANSEN

A curse?

REGINE

So many deaths, at young ages.
Isn't that odd, that he would want
to meet me and walk me home, and
then try to scare me off?

MRS. JANSEN

I don't know. If there's a curse
around, I would want to be told.

INT. AN INN - PRIVATE DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Soren, EMIL BOESEN (24), ANDREAS (25), JOHANNES (24), and
JULIUS (23) are tipsy on wine, a couple of them still
nibbling food.

They laugh, all seated except Julius.

ANDREAS

Sit down, Julius, I believe you've
exhausted the subject.

JOHANNES

He has exhausted me, that's for
sure.

Julius gladly sits down.

ANDREAS

And now we come to Soren
Kierkegaard. On your feet, S.K.

Soren rises, a glass of wine in hand.

ANDREAS

Soren will speak to us all about --
what?... Not everyone at once.
Emil?

EMIL

Talk to us about life, Soren.

SOREN

You want me to talk about life?
Well, let's start with mine. I
was born in 1813 -- the year the
state of Denmark went bankrupt. I
confess: There were so many
counterfeit bills going round, I
might as well be considered one of
them.

Soren sips while the others laugh.

SOREN

The thing about life is, it only
makes sense looking back. But you
can only live it moving forward.
Which makes it hard to know what
to do. We must make absurd choices.

Soren sips again. He becomes serious.

SOREN

Looking back... Imagine that you are a father -- an old one at that, with a tormented soul, almost sixty when your youngest is born. You show this young child -- and he is only a child -- a picture of the crucified Christ.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. KIERKEGAARD HOME - STUDY - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

In lamp light a man's hand holds for show a print of Grunewald's dark painting "Crucifixion." Christ's body is distorted, his arms elongated, with John the Baptist, Bible in hand, pointing at him as Christ suffers on the cross.

SOREN (V.O.)

You tell him that this is the Savior. But the child doesn't know what that means.

Soren gazes into space as he remembers.

SOREN

You tell him this crucified man was the most loving man who has ever lived.

In the study, 5-YEAR-OLD SOREN looks bewildered, almost frightened, by the stark image of Christ he is shown by his 63-year-old father.

SOREN

And the child will naturally ask, "Why were they so mean to him, then?" And the child will wonder why God in heaven did nothing to prevent this. And this picture was the only impression the child had of the Savior. It would follow him throughout his life, he could never get away from it. The more dread he had of Christianity, the more he was drawn to it. This dreadful image seemed to require something of him.

END INTERCUT

As the adult Soren continues,

SOREN

What then should I make of my life?
Please my father, become a pastor
in the state church of Denmark?
What does God want me to do? What
good would it do me to discover
some great objective truth, if it
doesn't then become part of me?
That, you see, is what I lack in
this life. A truth that is true
for me. An idea -- something --
for which I can live and die.

EXT. CARRIAGE - MOVING - NIGHT

Soren, Emil, Johannes, and Julius enjoy more wine -- they
have brought along a bottle and glasses -- as a coachman
drives them in an open horse carriage toward town.

SOREN

Emil, do you know Terkild Olsen?
The state councillor?

EMIL

I know of him. Why?

SOREN

He has a lovely daughter.

JULIUS

Here's to lovely daughters.

EMIL

Whatever happened to Bolette,
Soren?

SOREN

Did something happen to her?

Johannes and Julius laugh. As Johannes refills Soren's
glass,

JOHANNES

Have some more wine, S.K.

SOREN

What do you suppose Andreas is up
to? Why did he leave us?

Johannes and Julius both seem amused, as if sharing a secret.

JULIUS

I guess we'll find out soon enough.

INT. BROTHEL - OLGA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Andreas gives some money to the MADAM, 50, while OLGA, 28, a fairly attractive prostitute in a red frilly robe, stands by.

ANDREAS

This is a surprise for our friend,
and it may be his first time.

MADAM

He will be in good hands. Olga can
be full of surprises.

Andreas looks at Olga as she smiles.

ANDREAS

Yes, I wouldn't be surprised.

EXT. BROTHEL - NIGHT

It's an ordinary-looking two-story house from outside, as Soren and his three companions arrive in the carriage.

Andreas appears and steps to the side of the carriage.

ANDREAS

Welcome, lads! Come along inside.
You first, Soren.

When Soren, a bit drunker than before, is out of the carriage, Andreas takes his arm and distracts his attention from the house as they walk toward it.

ANDREAS

Soren, I hear you're writing
something about Hans Christian
Andersen.

SOREN

Yes.

ANDREAS

What is it you're saying about him?

Johannes and Julius smile knowingly as they follow Andreas and Soren. Emil, walking last, seems to have misgivings.

INT. BROTHEL - NIGHT

Andreas leads Soren directly from the front room to the stairs, the others following.

ANDREAS

Let's go on upstairs, shall we?

The Madam watches approvingly as they start up the steps.

Soren looks around, apparently with some drunken sense of déjà vu, as they walk up the stairs.

SOREN

Is this Mrs. Jansen's?

ANDREAS

Why, yes -- Yes, it is Mrs. Jansen's.

They reach the top of the stairs.

ANDREAS

This first door here is her daughter's room.

(knocks on door)

You wait here with her, Soren, and we'll be back soon.

Olga, still in her robe, opens the door from inside the room and smiles at them.

ANDREAS

(to Olga)

Entertain our friend, will you?

OLGA

That's what we're here for.

Andreas turns back toward the stairs.

SOREN

Where are you going?

ANDREAS

To find Mrs. Jansen.

OLGA

(to Soren)

Come on in, dear.

INT. OLGA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Soren, hat in hand, looks around as Olga closes the door.

OLGA

Let me take your hat, dear.

Soren hands the hat to her.

OLGA

I'm Olga. Your name is Soren?

SOREN

Soren Kierkegaard. I have been here before.

OLGA

Have you? It is not your first time?

SOREN

Well, it was not in this room.

OLGA

No, I don't remember you being here. I'm sure that I would. What would you like, Soren?

SOREN

What would I like?

OLGA

What can I do for you?

SOREN

Can you play a little Mozart?

Olga laughs, as she leads Soren to the bed.

OLGA

I don't have a piano or harp, and we have no orchestra. Sit down here.

Soren sits down on the bed.

OLGA

Go ahead and lie down.

She pushes on him, Soren reclining.

SOREN

But I might go to sleep.

Olga opens her robe.

OLGA

Oh, I'll try to keep you awake.

She shows off in her corset.

SOREN

What are you doing?

OLGA

I'm going to take off my things,
dear. Shouldn't you start doing
the same?

SOREN

What if Mrs. Jansen comes in?

OLGA

There is no Mrs. Jansen.

Olga gets on the bed with Soren, and gives his shirt a tug.

OLGA

Come on, dear, let's get undressed.

SOREN

There is no Mrs. Jansen?

OLGA

Don't you like this surprise? It
was arranged by your friends.

SOREN

You aren't her daughter.
(looks around)
Am I in a brothel?

OLGA

Where did you think you were?

Olga starts to unbutton Soren's shirt.

SOREN

No! Get your hands off me!

Soren scrambles up off the bed.

OLGA

What's wrong with you?

SOREN

My God. The sins of my father.

OLGA

What?

SOREN

I have to get out of here.

OLGA

There's the door. Go ahead and
get out.

Before Soren reaches the door, his legs seem to buckle and he falls to his knees.

OLGA
Get up and get out of here.

As Soren stays down, on his hands and knees, Olga sees that something is wrong, as he shakes. She leans down to him.

OLGA
Are you all right?

Olga starts to put a hand on his back. Then she suddenly steps back as if repulsed.

OLGA
Do you have the falling sickness?

Soren, through shaking, slowly gets up on one knee, then rises to his feet. He walks out, Olga watching him.

EXT. BROTHEL - NIGHT

Soren's four friends wait by the carriage. Soren comes out of the house.

ANDREAS
Soren! Why so quick?

SOREN
Damn you! You bastards!

ANDREAS
Soren --

SOREN
How could you do that? Do you know what it means?

Soren, still a bit unsteady, walks away.

ANDREAS
Soren, wait. Where are you going?

SOREN
Home.

EMIL
Soren, wait. We will take you.

SOREN
I would rather walk.

Olga appears at an upstairs window.

OLGA

Here, your friend forgot his hat.

Olga throws the hat down, Julius catching it.

INT. SOREN'S LOVSTRAEDE APARTMENT - DAY (NEXT MORNING)

Soren, still clothed from the night before, stirs awake on his bed in the second-floor apartment. It rains outside, with THUNDER.

Soren continues to lie in bed, as if in despair on top of a hangover.

EXT. STREET (LOVSTRAEDE) - DAY

In the rain, under flashes of lightning and RUMBLES OF THUNDER, someone with an umbrella and Soren's hat walks to 7 Lovstraede.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Soren, disheveled, answers the door. Outside stands Emil.

EMIL

You forgot your hat last night.
(hands it to Soren)
I tried not to get it wet.

SOREN

Thank you. Would you like to come in?

EMIL

I'm on my way to a lecture. Soren, that brothel last night, I knew nothing about it -- where we were going.

SOREN

I understand.

EMIL

Andreas said to tell you he's sorry.

SOREN

Tell him I forgive him.

EMIL

Are you all right?

SOREN

Yes. Thank you.

Emil nods and turns to go.

EXT. OLSEN MANSION - NIGHT

It's slightly foggy as Soren, with top hat and cane, stops in front of the Olsen mansion.

A few guests can be seen through a living-room window.

Soren stands gazing at the window. His cane falls from his hand. He looks down at the hand. It shakes.

Soren stoops and picks up the cane. There are FOOTSTEPS. Rising, he is joined by gentleman FRITZ SCHLEGEL, 28.

SCHLEGEL
Mister Kierkegaard.

SOREN
Good evening, Mister Schlegel.

SCHLEGEL
Going to the Olsens' open house?

SOREN
No. I was just passing by.

Schlegel proceeds to the front door and knocks.

A young OLSEN MAID answers the door, and Schlegel goes in, while Soren watches.

Soren gazes at the window a moment longer. He flexes his hand, and moves off down the street.

INT. OLSEN MANSION - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Several guests are at open house, hosted by TERKILD OLSEN, 38, and MRS. OLSEN, 37.

Regine enters the room. She looks around, nods to a guest, then sees Schlegel, drinking coffee. Smiling, he rises from his chair. She walks over.

REGINE
Hello, Fritz.

SCHLEGEL
Good evening, Regine. Will you join me?

REGINE
Of course.

They sit down together.

SCHLEGEL

There is something I've been wanting to tell you, my dear. You were always my favorite pupil.

REGINE

Well thank you. And you are a marvelous teacher.

Regine looks around again, as if for a particular person.

SCHLEGEL

Are you expecting someone?

REGINE

Sort of. I mean he was invited. Do you know Soren Kierkegaard?

SCHLEGEL

When I came here this evening, he was standing outside. Claimed he was just passing by. Dropped his cane. I think he may have been drunk. Do you know him well?

REGINE

Well, I haven't known him for long. He was standing outside?

SCHLEGEL

A rather odd fellow. Walks the streets every day, as if he has nothing better to do. Perhaps he doesn't. His wealthy father supports him. If I were his father, I would tell him to go find a charity.

EXT. AMAGERTORV STREET - DAY

Regine and her friend Thrine walk together as before when Soren followed them. People pass.

THRINE

What are you going to do if Fritz Schlegel proposes?

REGINE

I don't know.

THRINE

Well what do you really think of him?

REGINE

I'm not in love with him, if that's what you mean. But I have always liked him.

THRINE

But you're waiting on Soren.

REGINE

I haven't said that.

THRINE

What makes you think Soren might propose?

REGINE

Well, he followed me to my aunt's, I think, and then walked me home. And it's the way that he talked.

THRINE

He could charm all the girls.

REGINE

So who is he charming? Do you know?

THRINE

The only one I've known about is Bolette.

REGINE

Bolette. That was two years ago.

THRINE

Has Soren been once to your open house?

REGINE

No, but he wanted to. He was seen outside.

THRINE

Well did someone not let him in? If you wait for Soren, and he never proposes, you could lose out on both.

REGINE

Well it won't be the end of the world. I don't think I'll be an old maid.

THRINE

No. But it would be the end of Soren. You might die of a broken heart.

INT. PLEISCH'S TEAROOM - DAY

Soren, at the same table as before, this time with Emil, looks out the window.

SOREN

There, Emil.

Emil looks. Regine walks by outside with Thrine.

SOREN

I have watched her each week go home from her music lesson. Once I dared to follow her.

One of the patrons, HANS BROCHNER, 37, sits watching Soren with a knowing look.

SOREN

(to Emil)

You, my old childhood friend, are the only one I can show her to.

EXT. AMAGERTORV STREET - DAY

Soren and Emil walk together.

EMIL

Why don't you go after her, Soren?

SOREN

You mean marry her? Don't you know that there are but two of us left, my brother Peter and I? And that our father, who is eighty-two years old, is fated to outlive us both?

Emil looks quizzically at Soren.

EMIL

You don't know that.

SOREN

Yes, I do. It's a curse.

EMIL

And that's why you can't marry?

SOREN

It would be irresponsible.

They stop at a corner where they are to part ways.

SOREN

I will see you tomorrow, Emil.

Soren starts to walk off.

EMIL

Soren... What is the source of this
"curse"?

SOREN

I can't talk about it, outside of
the family. Do you want to know a
favorite Bible verse? "The father
has eaten sour grapes, and the
children's teeth are set on edge."

Soren walks away, Emil watching him.

INT. OLSEN MANSION - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Regine, with sheet music, plays the piano. Her brother
JONAS, 19, steps to the piano and leans on it, to speak
confidentially.

JONAS

Do you know what Hans Brochner told
me?

Regine glances at him as she plays.

REGINE

How would I know what he told you?

Jonas waits, a little smirk on his face, till she stops
playing and looks at him.

JONAS

Each time you walk home from your
music lesson, Soren Kierkegaard
sits in Pleisch's Tearoom and
watches you.

Regine looks intrigued, then,

REGINE

If he spends a lot of time there,
what is strange about that?

JONAS

You are why he is there, when you
go walking past.

Regine looks intrigued again. Then, as she looks at her
sheet music,

REGINE

How does Hans Brochner know this?
Is he there to watch me too?

JONAS

There are others with eyes, my
dear. It will soon be common
knowledge.

REGINE

I know Soren watches me.

JONAS

You know?

REGINE

Well I know he followed me once, to
Henriette's. And then he walked me
home.

JONAS

You probably thought he just saw
you on the street and followed you.
He does walk the streets every day
like a vagrant.

REGINE

(amused)

He is hardly a vagrant. Are you
jealous of his independence?

JONAS

(spitefully)

I thought my little sister might
like to know he's been watching you
as if he were some old lecher.

Jonas turns to go.

REGINE

Have you never watched a girl,
Jonas?

Jonas gives her a look and walks off.

Regine thinks. She looks delighted and smiles to herself.

INT. SOREN'S LOVSTRAEDE APARTMENT - NIGHT

Soren, drinking a glass of wine, sits trying to read a book. He gives up in disinterest. He seems totally at loose ends.

There is an urgent KNOCKING on the door. Rising, Soren goes to the door and opens it.

Outside Soren finds Peter's servant ANDERS, 21.

SOREN
Anders, what is it?

ANDERS
Your brother sent me. It's your father. He seems gravely ill.

INT. KIERKEGAARD HOME - MICHAEL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Michael lies semiconscious in bed. Peter sits prayerfully at the bedside. A DOCTOR, 55, sits on the other side.

Soren enters. The doctor rises and walks over to him.

DOCTOR
He passed out today. He refuses to go to the hospital. I think your father is simply worn out.

INT. SITTING ROOM - NIGHT

Soren sits alone with a glass of sherry, the decanter nearby.

Peter steps to the decanter and pours himself some sherry. He sits down across from Soren.

PETER
If he dies, will that settle the curse for you?

SOREN
But that is just it. How can he die, before you and I do?

PETER
You really believe that. You are convinced there's a curse.

SOREN

I know that our father has been convinced. Has there not been enough death to convince even you?

PETER

And what brought about this curse? Let me be sure that I have this right. You believe it because our father, quite the rounder in his day, had to marry our mother the housemaid, soon after his first wife's demise.

Soren looks grim upon being reminded.

SOREN

What an earthquake that was in my life, the day I learned the truth about Father and Mother.

PETER

Is that all there is to it?

SOREN

Yes, that's all there is to it, I suppose, as unjust as it may seem. You and I and all of our siblings came into existence against God's will. Because of our father's sin. And save you and me, all have paid the price. So believes our father. I am inclined to believe it myself.

Soren finishes his sherry and sets aside the glass.

PETER

He never told you about the Jutland moor?

SOREN

The Jutland moor? What about it?

Rising, Peter refills Soren's empty glass, hands it to him, then pours more sherry for himself.

PETER

As he told it to me, when our father was about twelve years old -- a dirt-poor shepherd boy from the village of Sedding in Jutland -- he was tending their few sheep one day on the moor.

(MORE)

PETER (CONT'D)

Miserable as always, cold and hungry, the boy finally had all he could take. He raised a fist to the heavens, and cursed Almighty God.

SOREN

How? What did he say?

PETER

Oh, I don't know the words. He didn't tell me that.

(sits down)

But very soon after his cursing of God, he received the great news that he was being sent to Copenhagen, to work for his uncle, because there were too many mouths to feed in Sedding. You know the story. Father worked for his uncle here, learned the hosiery trade, set up his own business, and became a rich man.

Peter sips, Soren intently waiting.

PETER

It all seemed too good to be true. And it was. In his prosperity he had seven children. But then one by one they were taken from him, and then the wife too, till there were left only you and myself. All of his wealth meant nothing, could not assuage his guilt, his torment and grief.

Peter regards Soren, who stares at him.

PETER

All through the years, you see, since he was twelve years old, our father has believed that on the Jutland moor he committed the unpardonable sin.

Soren rises impulsively.

SOREN

But it isn't so. There is no unpardonable sin. I don't care what he said to God on the moor.

PETER

Then there is no curse.

SOREN

And all of the deaths?

PETER

Misfortune. An unfair lot in life.
Nothing more, nothing less.

SOREN

And none of them -- none of them --
lived past the age of Christ.

PETER

No. I am thirty-three, Soren. I
don't plan to die soon. It is time
to put away the Kierkegaard family
curse.

Soren gazes thoughtfully at his brother.

INT. MICHAEL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Soren sits close at the bedside. He places his hand on
Michael's hand, which lies on Michael's chest.

SOREN

Father...

Michael opens his eyes. He looks weakly, fondly at Soren.

SOREN

How can I say how much I owe you?
I owe you my life. The greatest
debt of all is to owe one's life to
another. It is a debt that cannot
be repaid, or even fathomed. I am
grateful that I am your greatest
debtor. And remember this, Father.
God forgives, and forgets. Even
God, being all-powerful, can forget
our sins if he wills it. As long
as we are repentant before him.
Are you truly repentant, Father?

Michael weakly nods "yes."

SOREN

Then that's all that matters.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Soren, Peter, and other mourners (including the Lunds, who will be met later) are gathered around the casket. BISHOP JAKOB MYNSTER, 65, officiates.

MYNSTER

The Lord bless thee and keep thee,
the Lord make his face shine upon
thee, and be gracious unto thee,
the Lord lift up his countenance
upon thee, and give thee peace.

INT. SCHLEGEL HOME - NIGHT

Fritz Schlegel, all dressed up to go somewhere, finishes adjusting his tie in a mirror.

SUPERIMPOSE: "THREE MONTHS LATER."

Schlegel looks at himself and talks to his image.

SCHLEGEL

As I have told you before, Regine,
you were always my favorite pupil.
Tonight I would like to ask you if
you might favor me with your hand
in marriage.

Noting a speck of lint on his coat, Schlegel interrupts himself to remove it.

SCHLEGEL

I have yet to speak to your father,
as I wish to know first what you
think of my proposal.

Moments later, MRS. SCHLEGEL, 62, sits knitting as Fritz, in a winter coat, stops on his way to the front door.

MRS. SCHLEGEL

Off to the Olsens', dear?

SCHLEGEL

Yes, Mother.

MRS. SCHLEGEL

I do hope something comes of it.

EXT. OLSEN MANSION - NIGHT

Light snow falls. Soren in top hat steps out of the shadows, to gaze at the lit window, on open-house night, as before.

INT. OLSEN MANSION - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The young Olsen Maid serves several open-house guests with a tray of pastries.

Schlegel sees Regine, looking lovely, stroll demurely through the room. Their eyes meet. Regine and Schlegel smile at each other.

Regine is now pleased to see Soren. Mrs. Olsen has just let Soren in, takes his hat and coat, and chats with him.

Schlegel, served a pastry, starts to take a bite. His hand freezes in front of his mouth as he watches Regine walk over to Soren.

REGINE

Soren, I am so glad to see you.

SOREN

I warned you I would show up some night.

Terkild Olsen steps over to Soren and Regine. He and Soren shake hands.

OLSEN

Soren, what a pleasant surprise. You have met my daughter Regine?

SOREN

Yes. It is always a special occasion.

LATER

Among the guests, Schlegel, with a cup of coffee, chats with GENTLEMAN #1, 58. Regine begins playing the piano.

Schlegel notes how Soren and Olsen sit together, sharing amiable glances of approval, as they listen to Regine play.

Regine's brother Jonas, with sort of a resigned smirk, watches Soren and Olsen too.

LATER

Soren and Regine chat, as other guests have their own conversations.

SOREN

I would have come sooner, but I've been very busy, since my dear father died.

(MORE)

SOREN (CONT'D)

As he wished, I am planning to take the examination for a degree in theology.

REGINE

Why, that's good. I am proud of you, Soren.

SOREN

It's almost as if he died for me, that I might make something of myself, at long last. Anyway, I am having to hit the books for a change.

REGINE

How is your brother?

SOREN

He's all right, I guess. We don't see much of each other.

REGINE

Is he married?

SOREN

He was. His wife died only about a year after the wedding.

REGINE

Oh. Would that be part of -- I'm sorry, I shouldn't ask. The curse you told me about.

Soren looks fondly at Regine.

SOREN

There is no curse, Regine. Only an unfortunate number of deaths. And a great sense of guilt that my father carried for most of his life. Forget that I mentioned a curse.

Schlegel sits by Gentleman #1, who glances at Schlegel as if he wants to chat. Schlegel sullenly watches Soren and Regine.

GENTLEMAN #1

Did you know that the king has been awarded the Spanish Order of the Golden Fleece?

SCHLEGEL

What?

GENTLEMAN #1

The Order of the Golden Fleece, in Spain.

GENTLEMAN #2, 55, has stepped over with his coffee and overhears.

GENTLEMAN #2

Good for him. And when will the king award us a constitution, right here in Denmark?

GENTLEMAN #1

Good question.

SCHLEGEL

As if things were not bad enough, I am surrounded by liberals.

LATER

Regine walks the departing Soren to the door. Most of the guests are gone.

REGINE

After you get your degree, will you teach, or go to a seminary?

SOREN

Well, first things first. Can you see me as a pastor? In some out-of-the-way neck of the woods?

REGINE

With your gift of communication, you will make a fine one, Soren.

SOREN

I don't know if my path lies that way or not yet. But I will certainly communicate with you again soon. Good night, my dear.

REGINE

Good night.

Soren leaves. Moments later, Schlegel, hat in hand, speaks to Regine.

SCHLEGEL

Regine, I -- I would just like to say that... you were always my favorite pupil. But I've already told you that, haven't I?

REGINE

And you were my favorite teacher. I still want to call you Mister Schlegel.

SCHLEGEL

Well please don't do that. And I've enjoyed this evening, as usual. So, uh -- I shall see you next week?

REGINE

You are always most welcome, Fritz.

SCHLEGEL

Well, good night, then.

REGINE

Good night.

Schlegel hesitates, then heads for the door.

Mrs. Olsen steps over to Regine.

MRS. OLSEN

What did Soren have to say to you?

Before Regine can answer, Jonas stops by in passing as he eats a pastry.

JONAS

So the vagrant came in off the street.

MRS. OLSEN

(disapprovingly)

What do you mean "vagrant"?

JONAS

Too bad for Schlegel, eh?

Jonas walks off with a chuckle.

EXT. THE STROGET (COPENHAGEN'S MAIN STREET) - DAY

It's spring. Soren walks along with top hat and cane. He greets a couple of the people who pass.

SUPERIMPOSE: "FOUR MONTHS LATER."

Soren sees Regine walk with Henriette. Soren goes over to them.

REGINE

Good afternoon, Soren. You know my cousin Henriette.

SOREN

Yes. How is Mrs. Jansen?

HENRIETTE

Fairly well. She was hoping you would come back to see her.

SOREN

Please tell her I've been dreadfully busy. Which brings me to my news.

(to Regine)

I was going to send you a note. I took the examination in theology yesterday.

REGINE

And?

SOREN

I have a degree, summa cum laude.

REGINE

Oh, that's wonderful.

HENRIETTE

Congratulations.

SOREN

Thank you. I am off now to Jutland for a while, to recover.

REGINE

Oh. Are you going alone?

SOREN

With a servant. I'm going to borrow my brother's.

REGINE

Do you have family in Jutland?

SOREN

Some cousins. I want to visit
Sedding, the village my father was
from. And to see the Jutland moor.

EXT. JUTLAND MOOR - DAY

Lonely. Mostly flat, green terrain, with a treeline, under
overcast sky.

A coachman drives Soren and the servant Anders in a horse
carriage across the moor.

EXT. CARRIAGE - MOVING - DAY

Soren looks absorbed by the scenery. He speaks softly,

SOREN

Here all lies naked and exposed
before God.

ANDERS

Why did you say, sir?

SOREN

Stop here, coachman.

EXT. MOOR - DAY

The coachman stops the carriage. Soren gets out, followed by
Anders, and walks from the road.

Moments later, Soren stops. He looks off at a shepherd boy
with his flock of sheep in the distance.

The coachman sits waiting. He watches a solitary hawk in
flight.

Soren seems deeply moved as he looks around at the terrain
and the foreboding sky. Anders, standing a few feet away,
seems also in awe.

SOREN

Here can it truly be said...

Anders looks at him, Soren gazing off mystically.

SOREN

"Whither can I flee from thy
presence?"

INT. OLSEN HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Schlegel sits across from Regine. They are alone in the room.

SCHLEGEL

As I have told you before, Regine, you were always my favorite pupil. I wish to ask if you might favor me with your marriage in hand -- with your hand in marriage. I know there is someone else with possibly similar interest. So I felt that I have to speak now.

REGINE

I am very touched, Fritz, that you would want me as your wife. There is someone else, as you say, who may have possible interest. So please forgive me if I take some time, to think it all over.

SCHLEGEL

Of course. I understand fully. And decide what is best for you. I want that more than anything else.

INT. LARS MATHIESEN RESTAURANT (COPENHAGEN) - NIGHT

Soren dines with Emil among the patrons.

SOREN

I'm going to move back in with my brother at the house.

EMIL

I think that's good.

SOREN

We have never been very close.

A pause, Soren looking eager to tell Emil something.

SOREN

I'm going to write a book, Emil. This came to me on the Jutland moor, like the ten commandments to Moses. It is called "Either/Or."

EMIL

It's a good-sounding title.

SOREN

I have always loved those words,
either/or.

EMIL

What's it about?

SOREN

The importance of making a choice.
When my father died, I knew I must
choose the kind of life I'm to
live. I only regret that I didn't
choose while Father was still
alive. I shall regret that
forever. So, I am writing this
book. Which is only the beginning.
I've been having a flood of ideas.
It's like a shower bath, Emil.
I've pulled the chain, and ideas
are pouring all over me.

EMIL

Good. Speaking of making a choice,
have you been to see Regine yet?

SOREN

No. Emil, I just got back today.
But you are right to ask the
question. Either/or. I must
choose.

EXT. OLSEN MANSION - DAY

Regine stands near her front door with a girlfriend, 18.

They see Soren, with top hat and cane, walk toward them. He
has some sort of paper material tucked under his arm.

The girlfriend leaves as Soren walks up to Regine.

REGINE

Soren.

SOREN

Hello, Regine.

REGINE

When did you get back from Jutland?

SOREN

Yesterday.

REGINE

You must tell me all about it.

SOREN
I will. Shall we go inside?

REGINE
There is no one home.

He shows her the music sheets he has brought.

SOREN
I brought some music that I would
like you to play.

She seems unsure what to do.

INT. OLSEN MANSION - FOYER - DAY

Regine comes in the front door. Soren, removing his hat,
follows her in. She closes the door.

She looks at him shyly, then walks toward the living room.

Watching, Soren follows her.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Regine sits down at the piano, the music sheets before her.
Soren stands by the piano as Regine begins playing.

He watches her with adoring eyes as she plays.

Finally, to Regine's surprise in the middle of the piece,
Soren reaches over and takes the music sheets. He tosses
them aside.

SOREN
That's not what I'm here for.

He sits down beside her on the piano bench. He takes her in
his arms. They passionately kiss, till flustered Regine
pulls away from him.

As Regine gets up, Soren tries to hold on to her, and his
right hand or forearm lands on the left side of the keyboard,
producing a loud bass discordance. He rises, rattled.

SOREN
An ominous note.

Regine, breathing a bit heavily, backs away a few steps.

He looks at her awkwardly.

SOREN

I will leave. I will go see your father. I will go see him right now. Is that all right?

She nods "all right." He retrieves his hat from a chair.

SOREN

I will go, then.

Regine, still regaining her composure, watches him leave.

INT. MINISTRY OF FINANCE - OLSEN'S OFFICE - DAY

Soren stands waiting as OLSEN'S SECRETARY, 30, comes out of the inner office.

SECRETARY

You may go ahead in, sir.

Olsen has already come to the door.

OLSEN

Soren, how are you?

SOREN

Good afternoon, Councillor.

They shake hands as Soren enters the inner office.

OLSEN

Good to see you. Have a seat.

SOREN

Thank you.

They sit down.

OLSEN

What's on your mind?

SOREN

I went by to see Regine. There was no one home with her, so I didn't stay. I was there for, oh, no time at all. But I told her I would come to see you. She agreed, but she didn't say yes or no with respect to the reason I'm here. She had no chance to, really -- as I say, I was there for, oh, no time at all.

OLSEN

And the reason you are here?

SOREN

I would like to marry Regine. I can provide for her well, through my considerable inheritance. I've been putting this off for too long, regrettably so. That's why I'm here. I would like to have talked with her too, but...

OLSEN

You were there for no time at all. Well then, let's do it properly. Why don't you come see her this evening?

INT. OLSEN MANSION - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Soren and Regine sit across from each other. They are alone in the room.

REGINE

I should tell you, Soren, that I have had one proposal.

SOREN

From whom? Oh, wait. I think I know.

He pretends to be trying to remember the name, snapping his fingers as if that would help.

SOREN

Fritz, uh -- Fritz, Fritz...

REGINE

Schlegel. Stop being silly.

SOREN

Fritz Schlegel. Well, let Schlegel be a parenthesis. I am the new paragraph. To be read like a book. Put Schlegel back on the shelf. I love you, Regine. I wish to marry you. Shall we become engaged?

REGINE

Yes. You don't know how I've waited.

Soren seems suddenly speechless.

INT. MINI'S CAFE - DAY

Soren and Regine put their hands side by side over the table, to compare their gold engagement rings.

They raise their teacups in a toast.

INT. ROYAL THEATER - NIGHT

Soren and Regine, sitting in box seats, laugh with the rest of the audience as some actors chase and pummel each other onstage.

Soren looks at Regine as she laughs. There is love but also sadness for some reason in his eyes.

EXT. CARRIAGE - MOVING - DAY

A coachman drives Soren and Regine along the road to Frederiksberg Gardens.

Regine looks at Soren as he thoughtfully regards the scenery.

REGINE

Kiss me, Soren.

He takes her in his arms.

EXT. ON THE ROAD - DAY

As Soren and Regine kiss, a carriage passes the other way, with a young couple and male chaperone aboard. They get a kick out of Soren and Regine kissing.

INT. LUNO'S PRINTING SHOP - DAY

The printer BIANCO LUNO, 45, hands Soren the first elegantly bound copy of "Either/Or." Soren examines it with pride.

LUNO

Congratulations, sir. Not just on the book. Your engagement.

SOREN

Oh. Thank you, I guess.

INT. PLEISCH'S TEAROOM - DAY

Among the patrons, Andreas looks eagerly for something in "The Fatherland" newspaper. With him at the table are Johannes and Julius.

ANDREAS

Here it is, lads.

(reads)

"A new literary comet has soared into the Danish heavens. The book is 'Either/Or,' the author Soren Kierkegaard."

INT. SCHLEGEL HOME - DAY

Schlegel reads the same article to his mother.

SCHLEGEL

(reads)

"One can only feel disgust for the author, while admiring his talent." Hear, hear.

INT. PLEISCH'S TEAROOM - DAY

Andreas and friends as before.

ANDREAS

(reads)

"Kierkegaard is a first-rate intellect who scoffs at the whole human race."

EXT. FREDERIKSBERG GARDENS - DAY

Soren and Regine sit on the grass by one of the park's canals. Park visitors move about.

Regine reads a copy of "Either/Or," while Soren stares off, musing.

She notes that he is paying no attention, and slyly puts aside the book, which she clearly finds boring.

REGINE

What are you thinking about?...
Soren?

SOREN

I'm sorry. I was thinking.

REGINE

About what?

SOREN

Ahasuerus.

REGINE

Who?

SOREN

Ahasuerus. A man who was condemned to wander the earth. Regine, think of these three figures from literature. Don Juan -- he represents pleasure. Faust -- he represents doubt. And Ahasuerus. That's me.

REGINE

What does he represent?

SOREN

Despair.

REGINE

Do I cause you to despair?

SOREN

Of course not. I despair in spite of you, Regine.

He muses again.

SOREN

Only God can save all three. I wish I had pen and paper.

EXT. KIERKEGAARD HOME - DAY

People walk past the house on the square.

INT. SOREN'S SECOND-FLOOR QUARTERS - DAY

Soren writes at his stand-up desk. He stops to check the time on his pocket watch.

He sighs with frustration. He picks up his coat to leave.

EXT. THE STROGET - DAY

Soren and Regine stroll together, arm-in-arm, along the main street. He seems preoccupied, as she notes. Some of the passersby greet them.

INT. CLOTHING STORE - DAY

A nice shop. At the window the CLOTHIER'S WIFE, 45, watches admiringly as Soren and Regine walk past on the street.

CLOTHIER'S WIFE

There they go.

The CLOTHIER, 50, steps to the window to see.

CLOTHIER'S WIFE

What a lovely couple they make.

CLOTHIER

A wealthy young man makes a name for himself as a writer. Has a beautiful lady to wed. I would say the man leads a charmed life.

She looks at her husband. He smiles at her.

CLOTHIER

As do I.

She looks satisfied and moves off. He stops smiling.

EXT. STROGET - DAY

Regine glances at Soren, who seems in some serious thought, as they stroll.

REGINE

How much farther to go with your new book, Soren?

SOREN

It'll be ready for the printer before too long.
(taps his head)
And there's another one here still waiting to start.

REGINE

Are you still thinking of going to the seminary, for training as a pastor?

SOREN

I don't have time to think about anything.

INT. KIERKEGAARD HOME - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Soren and Peter dine across from each other in silence at the long table.

The Housekeeper serves two glasses of sherry. She leaves.

PETER

What did you have for lunch today, Soren?

SOREN

Bouillon. Why do you ask?

PETER
You must really like it.

Soren looks annoyed, which Peter seems to enjoy.

SOREN
What is your point?

PETER
I'm told you've had it for lunch
for ten days in a row.

SOREN
Then you are justified in assuming
that I like bouillon.

They eat in silence, then,

PETER
You know, since you've been engaged
you've become a bit testy. Not
that it's all that unusual.

Soren looks somewhat surprised by the comment.

SOREN
Well tell me, why do you think that
is?

PETER
You mean since you've been engaged?
How should I know? Perhaps I
shouldn't have mentioned it.

SOREN
No, please, as my brother your
observations are welcome. You've
noticed, you must have a theory.

PETER
I have a suspicion.

SOREN
What is it?

PETER
You don't really want to get married.
Am I right?

A pause, Soren with a thoughtful look.

SOREN
No, but you're close.

EXT. OLSEN MANSION - DAY (LATE AFTERNOON)

Soren walks Regine to her door. He seems downcast as she regards him.

REGINE
What is wrong, Soren?

SOREN
I feel this is all a mistake.

REGINE
Why? Don't you love me?

SOREN
Oh yes. I always will. You will
be the love of my life.

REGINE
Then I don't understand.

SOREN
I can't make you happy. Or any
girl happy. I can never be happy
myself, except when I'm writing.
That is my calling. I know that
now.

REGINE
But I won't interfere, Soren.

SOREN
I'd be no kind of husband. You'd
be miserable. You wouldn't be able
to bear it.

REGINE
Let me be the judge of that.

He sighs as if with impatience.

REGINE
If you can't be happy, then what
does it matter if I'm with you or
not? So for my sake, let me be
with you. I'll be willing to live
in a cupboard, while you write to
your heart's content.

EXT. FREDERIKSBERG GARDENS - DAY

Soren and Emil, walking, stop on a canal bridge.

SOREN

I knew, the moment she said yes, that I had made a mistake. But she doesn't understand.

EMIL

Well I don't understand either. Do you?

SOREN

Yes. It's just hard to explain.

EMIL

Try. Explain it all to me now.

SOREN

God has cast a veto. He is against this engagement.

EMIL

Why would God be against it?

SOREN

Because he has given me something to do. I have found what is true for me. Besides, I...

He hesitates, glancing at Emil.

SOREN

I am not all that well.

EMIL

What is wrong?

SOREN

Do I make her a widow in five or ten years?

EMIL

Soren, you must get over this notion that you're going to die young.

SOREN

Could I give her children who are healthy and sound?

EMIL

Why not?

SOREN

There are times, Emil, when...

He hesitates again.

SOREN

Well, I have never been very healthy.

EMIL

Soren --

SOREN

Anyway, you asked me to explain. That's the best I can offer. The thing is, she has to break the engagement. For her reputation, it has to be her. I cannot just drop her. It has to be entirely her choice.

EMIL

"The importance of choice." So what do you plan to do?

SOREN

Be an absolute cad, I suppose. Till she can no longer take it.

EXT. LUND TOWN HOUSE - NIGHT

Soren and Regine wait at the front door. Regine seems nervous, while Soren acts bored.

REGINE

He was married to which one did you say?

Soren sighs as if with forbearance.

SOREN

My late sister Nicoline.

INT. LUND TOWN HOUSE - NIGHT

A maid opens the door. CHRISTIAN LUND, 40, warmly greets Soren and Regine as they come in.

LUND

Hello, Soren.

SOREN

(introducing them)
My brother-in-law Christian Lund.
This is Regine.

LUND
Pleased to meet you, Regine.

As ANNA CATHERINE LUND, 45, joins them with a smile,

LUND
This is my wife Anna Catherine.

ANNA
How do you do?

REGINE
Fine.

YOUNG HENRIK LUND, 13, joins Soren and Christian, while Anna and Regine move off chatting.

HENRIK
Hi, Uncle Soren.

Soren, looking genuinely pleased to see him, puts an arm around Henrik's shoulders.

SOREN
Henrik, you grow more every day.
What are you planning to be?

HENRIK
A doctor, Uncle Soren.

SOREN
Good for you.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Soren and Regine dine with Lund, Anna, Henrik, and Henrik's 11-year-old sister.

LUND
How is your new book going? Is it finished?

SOREN
No. It keeps going and going.

ANNA CATHERINE
Does it have a title yet?

SOREN
"Stages on Life's Way."

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Soren and Regine sit together as Lund brings them two glasses of sherry.

LUND

Here you go. We'll leave you two to enjoy your sherry together.

REGINE

Thank you.

Lund leaves. Soren sips his sherry. He gazes at the floor.

REGINE

The Lunds are a lovely family.

SOREN

Yes.

A pause. Soren sighs as if bored.

REGINE

What's wrong, Soren? You haven't talked much tonight. The last time we were together you didn't talk much either.

SOREN

What shall we talk about?

REGINE

I don't know. It just isn't like you not to talk very much.

SOREN

All right, let's talk about "Either/Or." You have read it?

REGINE

Yes. It wasn't easy, but I read it.

SOREN

So what do you think?

REGINE

Well it's very impressive, Soren. There's a lot that I don't understand, but then I --

SOREN

Well, let's talk about what you do understand.

REGINE

Well, it's not easy, Soren, I --

SOREN

Let's make it easy, then. The title is "Either/Or." What is the Either?

REGINE

The aesthetic life.

SOREN

Which is?

REGINE

Well, living for pleasure.

SOREN

Good. And what is the Or?

REGINE

The ethical life.

SOREN

Which is?

REGINE

Living for ethics.

He looks at her with displeasure.

SOREN

What does that mean? You said you read the book.

She seems flustered, clearly not knowing how to answer.

REGINE

I'm sorry, Soren, I --

SOREN

(impatiently)

It is choosing oneself. It is knowing oneself as an individual, and taking responsibility in the world for that individual. That is the ethical life. So either/or means what?

REGINE

We must make a choice?

SOREN

Yes. So what do you think of it all?

REGINE

It's hard for me, Soren, to talk about subjects like this. It --

SOREN

Very well, then, tell me this. How much milk does it take to produce a pound of butter?

INT. OLSEN MANSION - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Regine and her mother knit together. Mrs. Olsen notes Regine's seeming sadness.

MRS. OLSEN

Is something wrong between you and Soren?

REGINE

Yes.

MRS. OLSEN

What is it?

REGINE

I don't know. It's like he's trying to drive me away. He said we couldn't be happy. He says it's his writing. But I think it's more than that. He's trying to keep something from me.

MRS. OLSEN

How do you know?

REGINE

I don't, Mama. The way he's been brooding. Something bothers him. It's like there's something in his heart that he can't let out.

MRS. OLSEN

It sounds like melancholy. Depression. Do you know who suffers from that?

REGINE

Who?

MRS. OLSEN

Your own father. Have you never noticed?

REGINE

Well, I've seen his moods, yes. I always just thought that, well, there was something going on.

MRS. OLSEN

One day he seems all right, the next day...

REGINE

Why do I have these depressed men in my life? Fritz Schlegel is depressed now too. What should I do, Mama?

MRS. OLSEN

The same thing I do, Regine, if you really love Soren. All you can do is love him.

REGINE

I do, Mama. I love him so much.

EXT. CARRIAGE - MOVING - DAY

Soren and Regine are driven by a coachman along the road to the Deer Park north of town.

Soren sits slumped, looking bored again.

REGINE

Would you care to take me to the opera tonight?

SOREN

No.

REGINE

Would you care to take me to the Royal Theater, then?

SOREN

No. I don't care to do anything. Except to ride in this carriage, and I will soon be tired of that.

He looks at her. She says nothing.

SOREN

I am tired of everything.

He keeps looking at her, and she keeps seemingly ignoring him.

SOREN

Regine, I think you should break off the engagement.

(no response)

Do it for your own sake.

(no response)

Can you hear me?

REGINE

Oh, I hear a demon talking, not you.

SOREN

A demon? Do you think I'm possessed?

REGINE

No, I didn't mean that. We all have our demons, don't we? We just can't let them get the best of us.

He gazes at her, Regine looking calmly ahead.

SOREN

Coachman, turn around!

The coachman slows the carriage.

REGINE

But Soren, we're almost to the park.

SOREN

I know. If you're going to marry me, you need to start learning now how to deny yourself pleasure. You are going to be living with demons.

EXT. KIERKEGAARD HOME - NIGHT (OCTOBER)

People walking past No. 2 Nytorv wear winter clothing.

INT. SOREN'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

Soren paces the floor. Stopping, he decisively steps to his desk and starts writing.

INT. OLSENS' FRONT DOOR - DAY

The Olsen Maid opens the door. Outside stands the Kierkegaard servant Anders, who gives her an envelope.

ANDERS

A letter for Regine Olsen, from
Soren Kierkegaard.

OLSEN MAID

Thank you.

INT. REGINE'S ROOM - DAY

Regine opens the envelope and removes a note. She sees something else in the envelope and takes it out. It's her engagement ring.

Regine reads the note.

SOREN (V.O.)

"Dear Regine, What has to be done,
should be done and be done with.
Please forgive the fact that, while
I may be capable of something, I
could never be capable of making
you happy. Love, S.K."

EXT. STREET - DAY

Regine runs down the street in the cold, as passersby curiously watch.

EXT. NYTORV SQUARE - DAY

Regine runs through the square, as people watch her, to the Kierkegaard town house. She knocks on the door.

Across the square, Soren, walking toward the house, stops as he sees Regine at the front door.

Soren watches as Anders opens the door, Regine speaks with him, and Anders lets her in.

Soren turns and walks off in another direction.

INT. KIERKEGAARD HOME - SOREN'S QUARTERS - DAY

Regine writes a note. She puts it in an envelope, and leaves it atop Soren's desk.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE SOREN'S QUARTERS - DAY

As Regine comes out of Soren's quarters, Anders is waiting.

REGINE

Be sure that he sees it, will you?

ANDERS

I will.

REGINE

Thank you.

She starts to go, then turns again to Anders.

REGINE

Anders, is anything wrong with Soren? I think there's something that he hasn't told me.

ANDERS

Nothing that I know of, madam. He can be peculiar.

Looking frustrated, she turns to go.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Regine walks homeward, pedestrians passing.

As she walks past the corner of a building, she doesn't see Soren, standing propped against the building in an alley, solemnly watching her pass.

INT. KIERKEGAARD HOME - SOREN'S QUARTERS - DAY

Soren takes the envelope from the desk. With a look of dread he opens it and reads the note inside.

REGINE (V.O.)

"Soren, I know you have done this because of a depressed state of mind. Please, for the love of Christ, do not leave me. Come let me talk to you. Love always, Regine."

After a moment, Anders looks in at the open door. Soren, standing by the desk with note in hand, looks at him.

ANDERS

She asked me to be sure you saw it, sir.

SOREN

Did she say anything else?

Anders seems unsure how to answer.

ANDERS

She asked how you were, sir.

Anders moves off, leaving Soren with a tormented look.

INT. BOESEN HOME - FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

Emil answers the door. Soren stands outside in the cold. Emil looks at him quizzically.

SOREN

Emil...

EMIL

Hello, Soren.

SOREN

Are you free this evening?

EMIL

Yes.

SOREN

Could we go to the opera or something? I just need some company tonight. Or I might go mad.

INT. OLSEN MANSION - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Olsen grimly leaves the room. He stops and looks back at Regine, who sits weeping in the arms of Mrs. Olsen.

INT. OPERA HOUSE - NIGHT

Soren and Emil sit in a box at a performance of "Don Giovanni." Onstage LEPORELLO sings "The Catalog Aria."

Emil casts glances at Soren, who looks abstracted.

EXT. OPERA HOUSE - NIGHT

Soren and Emil leave the opera house with others after the performance. It is cold with light fog.

Olsen walks up to them.

OLSEN

Soren, may I have a word with you?

Emil nods politely to Olsen.

EMIL

(to Soren)

I will see you at Pleisch's.

Emil walks off. After a moment,

OLSEN
Regine told me that you returned
her engagement ring.

SOREN
Yes. I'm sorry. I told her, more
or less, the engagement was a
mistake, sir.

OLSEN
Any particular reason?

SOREN
I can't go into it all.

OLSEN
That complicated, is it?

Soren doesn't respond, avoiding Olsen's eyes.

OLSEN
This is not easy for me. I am a
proud man. I beg you, don't break
off with her. She is devastated.

SOREN
I will talk with her, sir. But I
believe the matter is settled.

OLSEN
Tomorrow night, will you dine with
us? And talk with her afterwards?
Before you say it is settled?

SOREN
Of course.

INT. OLSEN MANSION - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Soren dines with Regine, her parents, and Jonas.

There is an awkward air, Regine scarcely looking up from her
plate.

OLSEN
What are you writing now, Soren?

SOREN
About the leap of faith, by virtue
of the absurd. About becoming
a Christian.

OLSEN
"By virtue of the absurd"?

SOREN

The absurd is the paradox. God
becoming man. Is that not absurd?

Awkward silence. Regine looks miserable.

Soren notes that Jonas stares across the table at him with a
look of hatred.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Soren sits listening while Regine plays the piano. They are
alone in the room.

Finishing, Regine gets up from the piano and goes to sit
beside Soren. She waits for him to say something.

Soren cries. He leans forward, elbows on knees. Regine puts
a hand on his shoulder.

SOREN

Regine, I have done you such an
injustice.

REGINE

Soren...

SOREN

Fritz was all set to marry you, and
I interfered. For what?

Regine seems at a loss for words. Soren takes a moment to
regain his composure.

SOREN

You think you understand me,
because of my demons, as you put
it.

REGINE

I have tried, Soren.

SOREN

Then try to understand this. It is
only when I'm working, producing,
that I have any semblance of
contentment. When I'm wrapped up
in thought, pen in hand, I forget
about suffering. I believe there
is a reason for this. It is what
God wants me to do, for the time
I'm allotted.

He rises to pace.

SOREN

And there is this. I'm a fairly rich man, but I won't be for long. You see, I intend only to write, nothing else. What my father left me should last me quite a few years. But if I outlive my fortune, well, I'll have to go find some work to put food on the table. There isn't much money, I'm afraid, in my kind of books. Is that what you want for a future?

She rises and moves to him.

REGINE

I told you I would live in a cupboard.

He seems to search for words.

SOREN

Regine, I'm sorry for the callous way I've behaved lately. I didn't know what else to do. I loved you the first day I saw you. You were only fifteen. So I waited. And now... What greater sacrifice could I make?

REGINE

Why? Is there something else, Soren, that you haven't told me? Is it just your writing?

He seems again at a loss for words.

SOREN

There is nothing more I can tell you.

REGINE

That's it? You are giving me up.

He says nothing. Reluctantly she slips off his engagement ring and hands it to him.

REGINE

Then you're free. I will never forget you.

She kisses him, then turns and leaves the room.

INT. KIERKEGAARD HOME - SOREN'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

Soren lies weeping in his bed.

INT. CLOTHING STORE - DAY

As she shops near the window, a well-dressed LADY CUSTOMER, 53, notes Soren walk by outside, cane in hand.

LADY CUSTOMER
(with contempt)
There goes that Soren Kierkegaard.

The Clothier's Wife, folding some cloth, looks out.

CLOTHIER'S WIFE
(equal contempt)
Doesn't he look proud of himself?
Oh that poor Olsen girl.

EXT. STROGET - DAY

As Soren strolls, GENTLEMEN #3 and #4 walk past among passersby. Soren greets them with a nod.

Instead of greeting him, Gentleman #3 speaks to #4 just loud enough for Soren to hear,

GENTLEMAN #3
Heartless scoundrel.

Soren looks pained as he continues on his way.

INT. SOREN'S QUARTERS - DAY

Soren packs a trunk. Peter steps in.

PETER
Going somewhere, Soren?

SOREN
I am going to Berlin for a while.

PETER
Running away, are you?

SOREN
I will hear the lectures by Schelling. See some theater. Brush up on my German.

PETER
You have finished your new book?

SOREN

I will finish the book in Berlin.
Then I'll come home and publish it,
and then start another, and then
more after that.

PETER

That is all you plan to do, from
now on?

SOREN

That is all I plan to do. It's
my calling.

Peter watches Soren pack for a moment.

PETER

Suppose I go to her for you, Soren.
Suppose I explain to her that --

SOREN

(sharply)
If you do, I will shoot you, brother,
by God, I swear it.

Peter looks resentful and angry.

PETER

Well, you have disgraced yourself
in Copenhagen, with your treatment
of her. Perhaps it is best that
you go away for a while.

Peter walks out.

EXT. COPENHAGEN HARBOR - DAY

Soren, Emil, and Anders arrive at the quay in a carriage
driven by a coachman. It is cold.

Anders and the coachman take Soren's trunk from the carriage,
and head for the quay with it.

Soren and Emil still sit in the carriage. Soren gazes off,
Emil looking at him.

SOREN

This has been so hard. To have a
thorn in the flesh that prevents
ordinary relationships. And so
to choose instead to be -- what?

Soren looks at Emil, who seems puzzled by Soren's train of
thought.

SOREN
Out of the ordinary.

Soren gives Emil a slap on the knee.

SOREN
Thank you for seeing me off, old
friend. No need to get out.

Soren gets out of the carriage.

EMIL
What do you mean, Soren, by a thorn
in the flesh?

SOREN
(indulgently)
Have you not read the Apostle Paul,
Second Corinthians? "So that I
might not be too conceited, because
of the great things revealed to me,
I was given a thorn in the flesh."

Soren starts toward the quay.

EMIL
What does that mean to you?

As Soren turns, walking backwards a few steps,

SOREN
Does it matter now, Emil?

Emil watches him wonderingly as Soren turns and proceeds
toward the quay.

INT. OLSEN MANSION - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Regine and Schlegel sit across from each other, alone in
the room.

SUPERIMPOSE: "ONE MONTH LATER."

SCHLEGEL
In my new position with the
colonial office, I have more to
offer you now, Regine, than I did
when I first proposed. And since
you're no longer engaged -- it
matters not to me whether you broke
off with him, or he broke off with
you, it doesn't matter -- I would
like to ask you again.
(MORE)

SCHLEGEL (CONT'D)

It doesn't even matter if you still love the man, as long as -- as long as you might love me too as a husband.

EXT. KIERKEGAARD HOME - NIGHT

It's spring as people pass on the street.

SUPERIMPOSE: "THREE MONTHS LATER."

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Soren, through eating, sips sherry as the Housekeeper clears Soren's place midway along the long table.

Peter arrives.

PETER

Welcome home. How was Berlin?

SOREN

My book is finished.

HOUSEKEEPER

Some dinner, sir?

PETER

I have already dined, thank you.

The Housekeeper leaves. Peter stands across the table from Soren.

PETER

I am going to be moving away, in two weeks or so. You will have this whole house to yourself.

Soren looks quizzically at Peter.

PETER

I am going to be the pastor at a church in Pedersborg.

Soren seems rather annoyed by the news. He considers.

SOREN

Well then, I suggest that we sell the house. I hate to let it go. But an apartment will meet all my needs.

PETER
That will be satisfactory. I hate
to see it go too.

Peter starts to leave.

SOREN
How is Regine? Do you know?

PETER
Engaged to be married.

Soren looks stunned.

SOREN
To whom?

PETER
Fritz Schlegel.

Soren sits motionless. Peter leaves.

INT. PETER'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

Peter looks over books on a shelf, as if deciding which ones
to keep. He sets one on a table among others.

Anders appears anxiously at the door.

ANDERS
Sir, something's happened to Soren.

Peter quickly follows Anders.

INT. SOREN'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

Soren lies on his side on the floor. He shakes, loose pages
lying scattered around him.

Peter and Anders help Soren up. As they help him sit in a
chair, Soren stutters,

SOREN
I--I--I -- I'm all right.

Peter looks at Anders and nods toward the door, as if telling
him to leave.

SOREN
I'm all right.

Anders reluctantly goes.

Peter stands stoically over him as Soren, breathing rather heavily, recovers.

LATER

Peter hands him a glass of sherry as Soren sits subdued in his chair. Peter watches him sip.

PETER

What did you expect, Soren? That she would come begging again?

SOREN

No.

PETER

Then what?

Soren looks resentfully at Peter.

SOREN

Nothing, brother. I've tried not to think about it.

INT. PLEISCH'S TEAROOM - DAY

Soren and Emil have tea together.

SOREN

Where is the church, Emil?

EMIL

Horsens in Jutland.

SOREN

Jutland. Well, congratulations.

Soren gestures a toast with the tea.

SOREN

May God guide your ministry.

They sip. Soren looks off and sighs.

SOREN

Everyone deserts me for the state church of Denmark.

EMIL

(after a moment)

Are you going to the wedding tomorrow?

Soren gives Emil a look.

SOREN

Do you really think I would go?
Better yet, do you think they would
let me in? Her brother Jonas would
probably club me at the door.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

It's peaceful, the church empty of people.

Soren enters. He walks slowly down the aisle, hat and cane
in hand.

Soren stops where the bride and groom would stand at a
wedding. He stares toward the altar.

After a moment, Soren hears or imagines,

PASTOR (V.O.)

Those whom God has joined together
let no one put asunder.

CONGREGATION (V.O.)

Amen.

LATER

The PASTOR, 60, walks over to Soren, who sits alone in the
church, his face buried in one hand, by the aisle in a front
pew, near where he had been standing.

Soren looks up, suddenly aware of the Pastor.

PASTOR

May I be of assistance?

Soren rises. After a moment,

SOREN

I just wanted to see your church.

Soren turns and walks away toward the entrance.

INT. LUNO'S PRINTING SHOP - DAY

Soren looks over a first elegant copy of his book "Stages on
Life's Way," while the printer Luno looks on.

SOREN

Another good job. I look forward
to our next production.

LUNO

As do I, sir.

EXT. PRINTING SHOP - DAY

Anders, carrying a boxful of book copies, comes out of the printing shop with Soren.

SOREN
Take those copies to Reitzel's
Bookshop. He's expecting them.

ANDERS
Yes, sir.

EXT. STROGET - DAY

Walking homeward, Soren looks suddenly tense. He sees Regine and Schlegel's Mother coming the other way, people passing.

PASSERBY #1
Good afternoon, Mrs. Schlegel. And
Mrs. Schlegel.

Soren and the ladies pass each other, Soren avoiding their eyes, Regine looking at him with fondness.

MRS. SCHLEGEL
Good afternoon, Mister Kierkegaard.

SOREN
Good afternoon.

REGINE
Hello, Soren.

SOREN
Hello.

He looks desolate as they have passed.

EXT. CARRIAGE - MOVING - DAY

Soren sits alone on a carriage ride through the Deer Park forest, a coachman driving him.

SOREN (V.O.)
"Dear Regine... "

INT. SOREN'S NYTORV QUARTERS - NIGHT

Soren writes a letter at his desk.

SOREN (V.O.)
"For my cruelty, for the suffering
I caused you, I ask your
forgiveness.
(MORE)

SOREN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

God knows what I have suffered.
You will always have my love. Now
that you are married, I dare to ask
if I might offer my friendship. If
we might see each other, now and
again, as friends, please let me
know right away. If your answer is
no, at least I have made this
attempt. Devotedly yours, S.K."

INT. SCHLEGEL'S OFFICE - DAY

At his desk Schlegel opens an envelope. Inside it, he finds a smaller sealed envelope, addressed "To Regine." There is also a note, which Schlegel reads.

SOREN (V.O.)

"Mister Schlegel, might the
enclosed letter be delivered to
Regine? I would not wish to
send it without your approval.
With kindest regards, Soren
Kierkegaard."

Schlegel looks at the envelope for Regine. He angrily grabs pen and paper and starts writing. Then, seemingly angrier still, he wads up the paper and throws it in a trash can.

INT. KIERKEGAARD HOME - FRONT ROOM - DAY

Soren opens an envelope, apparently just delivered, as he walks away from the front door.

Inside the envelope, Soren finds only the letter he wrote to Regine, still sealed in its envelope.

He morosely gazes off.

EXT. REITZEL'S BOOKSHOP - DAY

A sign identifies the shop.

SUPERIMPOSE: "TWO YEARS LATER."

INT. REITZEL'S BOOKSHOP - DAY

Gentleman RASMUS NIELSEN, 35, browses through books. He picks one up.

NIELSEN

Another new Kierkegaard book.
"Fear and Trembling."

He sees another one and picks it up.

NIELSEN
Another new Kierkegaard book.
"The Concept of Dread."

Nielsen looks over at the shop owner THEODOR REITZEL, 50.

NIELSEN
You know, he would probably sell
more books if he didn't compete
with himself so much.

REITZEL
I don't quite follow you.

NIELSEN
Well, I don't either. I'll take
both of these.

INT. SCHLEGEL HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Regine, now 22, plays the piano. It's the same piece she
played for Soren on the day they first kissed.

Schlegel, 33, enters, apparently home from work. He gives
Regine a kiss on the cheek.

REGINE
Have a good day?

SCHLEGEL
Very good. A nice piece you're
playing.

REGINE
Yes.

As Schlegel walks over to a chair,

SCHLEGEL
I have some news.

He sits down and relaxes, Regine playing. He has a sly look
on his face.

SCHLEGEL
How would you like to get away for
a while?

REGINE
What do you mean?

SCHLEGEL
I mean for a pretty good while.

REGINE

To where?

She stops playing and looks at him. She seems to know what he means.

REGINE

Fritz, don't tell me.

SCHLEGEL

What do you think of it?

She doesn't look thrilled.

INT. SECHI'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Soren, now 29, alone at his table, eats a meal of roast duck. Other patrons chat together.

GENTLEMEN #5 and #6 sit down at a neighboring table.

GENTLEMAN #5

(to Gentleman #6)

Did you see where Hans Fedderson,
governor of the Danish West Indies,
has died?

GENTLEMAN #6

Yes.

Overhearing, Soren shows no reaction as he eats. A waiter gives the two Gentlemen menus.

GENTLEMAN #6

(to waiter)

Thank you.

(to Gentleman #5)

I wonder who will get that appointment.

GENTLEMAN #5

It's already been made.

GENTLEMAN #6

Oh? Who got it?

GENTLEMAN #5

Fritz Schlegel.

Soren looks stunned.

GENTLEMAN #6

Well, the Indies would be a nice
place to visit, assuming safe
passage.

(MORE)

GENTLEMAN #6 (CONT'D)
 I'm not sure, though, I would want
 to go live there.

INT. COLONIAL OFFICE - DAY

Soren approaches a female OFFICE CLERK and politely removes
 his top hat. Other clerks are at work.

SOREN
 Excuse me...

OFFICE CLERK
 Yes, may I help you?

SOREN
 Can you tell me if the Schlegels
 have left for the Indies yet?

OFFICE CLERK
 They are leaving on Friday, sir.

SOREN
 Thank you.

EXT. COLONIAL OFFICE - DAY

Exiting the building, Soren stands for a moment in solemn
 thought.

INT. SOREN'S APARTMENT (9 ROSENBOGGADE) - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Soren lies awake and forlorn in the dark.

EXT. COPENHAGEN HARBOR - DAY

Regine and Schlegel get out of a horse carriage by the quay.
 Four male workers fetch their two trunks.

Soren, with top hat and cane, watches from the corner of a
 building across the street.

Regine and Schlegel walk toward the quay with its moored
 ships and boats.

Glancing toward the street, Regine sees something and stops.
 Schlegel stops and looks too.

Soren approaches them. He walks up and removes his hat.

SOREN
 (to Regine)
 Forgive me. I had to say goodbye.

Regine glances at Schlegel, who stares at Soren.

SCHLEGEL
 (to Regine)
 I will wait for you.
 (to Soren)
 Make it brief.

Schlegel walks several feet toward the quay, and stops to wait for Regine.

Standing half-turned toward them, Schlegel watches Soren say something, quietly and earnestly, to Regine.

Regine sobs once, then controls it. Schlegel looks concerned as he watches.

She looks at Soren with tears in her eyes.

REGINE
 May God bless you. You'll always
 have a place in my heart. I hope
 things go well for you, Soren.

She goes to join Schlegel. Soren leaves.

SCHLEGEL
 What did he say to you?

As she heads toward the quay, her voice thick with emotion,

REGINE
 I'll tell you later.

Schlegel looks aggravated. He follows her.

Soren stops and looks back. He is teary-eyed as he watches Regine. He slowly turns to go.

EXT. THE INDIES - SCHLEGEL HOME - DAY

A nice home on a beautiful Saint John island bay.

SUPERIMPOSE: "DANISH WEST INDIES, SIX YEARS LATER."

INT. FRONT DOOR - DAY

A black maid opens the door. MR. JORGENS, 52, stands outside with a book. His horse buggy sits out front.

JORGENS
 Is Mrs. Schlegel home?

Regine, now 28, is already on her way to the door.

REGINE

Mister Jorgens, how are you?

JORGENS

Mrs. Schlegel, this just arrived today at the bookshop.

Jorgens hands Regine the book, and she looks at it.

JORGENS

I knew you would want it, so I thought I would bring it by.

REGINE

Oh, thank you. How much do I owe you?

JORGENS

The next time you're at the shop, Mrs. Schlegel. Good day.

REGINE

Thank you so much.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Regine sits reading the book.

Schlegel, now 39, looking freshened up in a robe, sits down across from her with a book of his own.

SCHLEGEL

What's the book you're reading, dear?

REGINE

It's called "The Sickness unto Death."

SCHLEGEL

"Sickness unto Death"? Oh, let me guess. A new book by Soren Kierkegaard.

REGINE

Yes.

SCHLEGEL

And what is the sickness unto death, may I ask?

REGINE

Despair.

SCHLEGEL

Of course. Despair. Is the book about despair, or does despair come after reading it?

REGINE

It's about the despair that exists without God.

Schlegel starts reading his book. Regine gives him a look and continues reading hers.

INT. CARPENTRY SHOP (COPENHAGEN) - DAY

A CARPENTER, 42, shows Soren, now 35, a nice new rosewood cabinet. It has no shelves and sits on a table.

SOREN

It is splendid. Just how I imagined it.

CARPENTER

Would you like it delivered, sir?

SOREN

Yes. To Number Nine Rosenborggade.

CARPENTER

Right away, Mister Kierkegaard.

EXT. 9 ROSENBORGGADE - DAY

Emil, now 35, arrives in a horse carriage driven by a coachman. Emil looks up toward Soren's second-floor apartment as he gets out of the carriage.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Preparing to go out, Soren tries on a new hat at a mirror. Unlike his top hat, this one is low and wide-brimmed.

Removing the hat, he walks over to pick out a cane from about twenty propped in a row by the wall. Before he can choose, there are KNOCKS at the door.

Moments later, Soren opens the door, and is pleased to find Emil outside.

EMIL

Hello, Soren.

SOREN

Emil! So good to see you.

They shake hands. Emil comes in, Soren closing the door.

SOREN

What brings you from Jutland?

EMIL

A short vacation, to visit my parents.

SOREN

So how is the life of a country parson, old friend?

EMIL

Not too bad. How have you been?

SOREN

Busy as ever. Look here.

Soren shows him manuscript pages in stacks on the table.

SOREN

My next book is nearly complete.

Emil notes the rosewood cabinet on a table near the desk. He steps over to it.

EMIL

This is nice. Looks new.

Soren joins him at the cabinet. Soren lovingly opens it to show the inside, containing copies of his books and some letters.

SOREN

This is my rosewood cupboard. I designed it myself. Without any shelves. Here I keep my most precious things. Letters, copies of my first editions.

EMIL

Why no shelves?

Soren's eyes remain on the cabinet as he gently closes it.

SOREN

Regine once said she'd be willing to live in a cupboard.

Emil looks at Soren, who turns and moves off.

Emil gazes at the cabinet.

INT. AN APARTMENT (35 NORREGADE, COPENHAGEN) - DAY

The LANDLORD, 45, shows Soren the empty second-floor apartment, a bit smaller than the one at Rosenborggade.

SUPERIMPOSE: "ONE YEAR LATER."

LANDLORD

May I ask, sir, why you're leaving the apartment you're in?

SOREN

I can no longer bear the stench of the neighboring tannery. I cannot write when I'm sick to my stomach.

LANDLORD

Well, you won't have any smell like that around here, sir. That I can guarantee.

SOREN

I'll take it.

EXT. THIRD-FLOOR WINDOW (35 NORREGADE) - DAY

A DOG at the window BARKS at the street below.

INT. SOREN'S NEW APARTMENT - DAY

Soren stands trying to write at his desk while the DOG (O.S.) BARKS upstairs.

INT. SCHLEGEL HOME IN INDIES - BEDROOM - DAY (MORNING)

Schlegel wakes up. Regine is not in bed.

EXT. PORCH - DAY

On the porch overlooking the bay, Regine sits alone in her robe at a table. She cries.

Seeing her from a window, Schlegel comes out in his robe. He sits down across from her.

SCHLEGEL

Regine, why are you crying?

REGINE

I want to go home... I want to see my mother and father again before they die... I want to see my sister and brother...

SCHLEGEL

We could go home. But you know it's best career-wise, Regine, to let the colonial office decide these things, instead of me.

Regine, wiping her eyes, says nothing.

SCHLEGEL

You could go back alone, for a visit.

She considers and sighs.

REGINE

My Lord, Fritz, just getting here was dreadful enough. That storm --

SCHLEGEL

I know.

REGINE

We could have drowned. And I got so sick. Now to sail home, and then have to sail back here again.

SCHLEGEL

There is always risk in a sea voyage. I don't want you to go. I have never considered it. I suggest it only because of the way that you feel now. All I'm saying is, I won't stand in your way.

EXT. A SAILING SHIP AT SEA - DAY

The ship cuts through ocean waves, a strong wind filling its sails.

AT THE SHIP'S RAILING

Regine stands clinging to a shroud. She's sick as a dog.

INT. REGINE'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

Regine reads Soren's book "Fear and Trembling" as the ship sways and strains on the sea.

SOREN (V.O.)

"Fear and trembling is constraint before God. And only constraint can lead to true freedom. It can so take hold of a man that he is bound to make the right choice.

(MORE)

SOREN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
At the hour of death, most people
choose the right thing."

EXT. 2 NYTORV TOWN HOUSE - DAY

The house looks the same as before as people pass.

INT. FRONT DOOR - DAY

A BUTLER, 47, answers the door. Regine stands outside.
Behind her stands her brother Jonas, now 30.

REGINE
Good afternoon. I'm Regine
Schlegel. This is my brother Jonas
Olsen. Does Soren Kierkegaard
still live here?

BUTLER
No, madam. Not for several years.

REGINE
Do you know where he lives?

BUTLER
No, I am sorry.

EXT. REITZEL'S BOOKSHOP - DAY

Regine and Jonas go into the shop, people passing.

INT. SOREN'S NORREGADE APARTMENT - DAY

Soren writes at his stand-up desk.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Regine and Jonas walk toward the apartment.

JONAS
I'm going to go in with you.

REGINE
You are not.

They stop and she looks at him firmly.

REGINE
He's an old friend, and we are
going to have a private
conversation, if you don't mind.

She walks off. Jonas follows with irritation.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Soren stands thinking by his desk. There are KNOCKS at the door. He walks over and opens it.

Outside stand Regine and Jonas. Regine smiles at Soren, Jonas doesn't.

Soren gazes at Regine with a dumbfounded look.

REGINE

Hello, Soren. I am home for a visit. I couldn't come home without seeing you.

She looks at Jonas.

REGINE

It's all right now, Jonas. I'll see you in a few minutes. Thank you.

Jonas clearly doesn't like this, but leaves. Soren still seems dumbfounded as he and Regine look at each other.

REGINE

May I come in?

Soren steps back and awkwardly motions for her to enter. She comes in, Soren closing the door.

She sits down in a chair. He sits down across from her, but not directly facing her. He gazes off at the floor.

REGINE

Have you been well?

SOREN

As well as can be expected. And you?

REGINE

Yes. I'm still recovering from the sea passage. Soon I'll have to face it again.

He stares at the floor.

SOREN

How is Fritz?

REGINE

He is well.

A pause. He looks at her.

SOREN
Have you had children?

REGINE
No. It apparently is not meant
to be.

He gazes off again in silence.

She looks around at the apartment. She notices the rosewood
cupboard on its table.

REGINE
An interesting cabinet.

SOREN
I designed it myself. Without any
shelves.

Silence again.

REGINE
Where I live, Soren, there's a
bookshop in town. It gets books
from the homeland. I have tried
to read everything that you've
written. Keeping up with your
books is one thing that has kept
me busy.

SOREN
I do tend to go on.

More silence.

REGINE
Shall we talk about anything?

SOREN
What is there to say?

REGINE
I don't know. Is there anything
you would like to tell me, after
all this time? I would be glad
to listen.

He looks at her.

SOREN
Nothing I haven't already told you.
I said I would always love you.
(MORE)

SOREN (CONT'D)

That is still true. A day doesn't pass I don't think of you. What else is there to say?

A pause. She rises, walks over, and caresses his head.

REGINE

I love you too, Soren, and think of you constantly.

She kisses him on the head. She rests her hand on his shoulder. He looks up at her.

SOREN

Can I show you the cupboard?

REGINE

Yes.

He rises and follows her to the rosewood cupboard. He opens it to show her. Inside are two first editions.

SOREN

Do you like it?

REGINE

Yes. It looks like you keep special things there.

He gazes at her, her eyes on the cupboard.

SOREN

I do.

He takes out one of the books.

SOREN

This is a first edition. I want you to take it with you. Please.

He hands it to her. She reads the title,

REGINE

"Works of Love." I haven't seen this one.

He looks at her longingly.

SOREN

It's about Christian love.

REGINE

Thank you. I will read it and treasure it.

He looks heartsick.

SOREN
Oh, Regine.

He puts a hand on her shoulder.

SOREN
For all the years, all I can give
you is a book. I'm so sorry.

He takes her in his arms. She tosses the book onto the table. They hungrily embrace and kiss.

Their passion mounts. Then he gently shoves her away with his left hand.

Backing against the table, Soren puts his right hand behind his back and looks down, breathing heavily.

Regine, breathing heavily too, looks at Soren as if with uncertainty.

SOREN
Regine, please go.

Behind his back, out of her view, his right hand shakes jerkily.

REGINE
All right.

She takes the book from the table. She looks again at Soren.

REGINE
I can come back if --

SOREN
No. Please go now.

His eyes down, his right hand still behind him, Soren rubs his right shoulder, as anyone might do (so Regine perhaps thinks) when overwrought.

REGINE
Goodbye, my love.

SOREN
Goodbye.

She starts toward the door, then stops and turns.

REGINE

Remember what you told me the first
time I left for the Indies?

Soren, looking down, still rubs his shoulder, his right hand
behind him. He seems full of anxiety.

SOREN

Yes, I remember.

REGINE

Do you still believe it?

He looks at her. He sounds full of emotion,

SOREN

With all my heart.

REGINE

Then so do I.

Smiling sadly at him, she turns and leaves.

After a moment, Soren's whole body shakes. He tries to get
to a sofa to lie down, but falls from its edge to the floor.

He lies shaking, jerking, biting his tongue.

EXT. APARTMENT - DAY

Jonas stands sullenly waiting as Regine comes out of the
building, the book cradled in her arm.

JONAS

Well?

She looks at him. There are tears in her eyes. She walks
off.

Jonas, looking troubled, glances at the building, then
follows her.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Soren lies on his back on the floor. No longer shaking, he
breathes heavily. He clenches his teeth and grimaces with a
hand to his mouth.

EXT. BAY IN THE INDIES - DAY

It's sunny on the beautiful bay.

SUPERIMPOSE: "FOUR YEARS LATER."

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Regine, now 33, reads Soren's book "Philosophical Fragments" as she lounges on the beach.

She puts the book down and picks up "Works of Love." She turns to a page that is bookmarked, and reads.

SOREN (V.O.)

"What, then, shall we say of the commandments to love in the scriptures? Thou shalt love. Love is a duty. And only when love is a duty is it everlastingly free, without change, and secure."

INT. LARS MATHIESEN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Soren, now 40 and not looking well, sits alone, almost through dining. He argues with gentleman HENRIK HERTZ, 58, who sits at a neighboring table with GENTLEMAN #7.

Other patrons look disturbed.

HERTZ

What was wrong, Mister Kierkegaard, with the eulogy?

SOREN

Calling Bishop Mynster a witness to the truth.

HERTZ

What was wrong with that?

SOREN

Who, Mister Hertz, is a witness to the truth? Saint Paul, Saint Peter, such men who have suffered for the faith. Martyrs. The Bishop Primate of Denmark is nothing but a privileged official of the royal court. Tell me how much he has suffered.

HERTZ

Say what you wish, sir, about the state church. But don't insult the good bishop's memory while he's fresh in the grave.

SOREN

The state church of this kingdom exemplifies all that is wrong with official Christianity. It is worldly and --

HERTZ

You don't like the church, sir? Then what is it you want? What is the answer?

Soren puts his hand to his heart.

SOREN

The answer lies here, Mister Hertz. In the individual. In one's inner passion.

The restaurant owner LARS MATHIESEN, 50, appears, to stand between the two tables.

MATHIESEN

Gentlemen, please, that's enough.

SOREN

(to all in the room)

I am starting a weekly publication on the state church of Denmark. You are the first to hear the news.
(to Mathiesen)
My compliments to the chef. How much do I owe you?

INT. SCHLEGEL HOME IN INDIES - DINING ROOM - DAY

Regine and Schlegel, now 44, are about to have lunch, the black maid attending.

Schlegel, upset, has in hand a copy of "The Moment" pamphlet. He also has a letter that came with it.

SCHLEGEL

Listen to this. This just came in the packet today -- a new issue of this Kierkegaard bilge called "The Moment." Here's what he says:
(reads from pamphlet)
"I am by nature argumentative, and I really feel in my element when I am surrounded by human mediocrity."

Regine laughs, which seems to upset Schlegel more.

SCHLEGEL

Then he spews forth another attack
on the church.

He gestures with the letter.

SCHLEGEL

And some young people, they say,
university students, are eating
this up, these venomous assaults
on the clergy. It's the raving
of a madman. What does he expect
the church to do? Abolish itself?
What does he want to replace it
with? Does he say? It's
disgusting to read this stuff. Or
to see you reading one of his
morbid books.

REGINE

They aren't really morbid. They're
religious.

SCHLEGEL

Really! Well such joyful titles.
"Fear and Trembling." "Sickness unto
Death." "The Concept of Dread."
What would be wrong with "Heavenly
Glory," or "Praise to God in the
Highest," or something like that?

REGINE

Well, there is "Works of Love."
The subject isn't morbid at all.

SCHLEGEL

Well he could show a little love
for the church.

Schlegel tries to calm down.

SCHLEGEL

I'm sorry, Regine. Am I sounding
jealous again? I knew when I
married you that you would always
love him.

REGINE

I know, dear. I believe you told
me.

SCHLEGEL

And I told you that it wouldn't matter. That it wouldn't matter as long as you loved me too.

REGINE

I do love you, Fritz. You as much as saved my life. I could have died, had there not been someone there. I am glad it was you.

INT. SOREN'S DYRKOB APARTMENT (COPENHAGEN) - DAY

Soren is at his stand-up desk in a smaller, plainer, first-floor apartment, which seems almost filled with his library.

Soren looks run-down, he moves without vigor. His hair is a bit unruly.

An assistant named JACOB, 22, hands him the rough copy for a new issue of "The Moment."

JACOB

No mistakes, sir.

SOREN

Well then, it's off to the printer.

As Soren turns from the desk, one of his knees buckles and he almost falls. Grabbing hold of him, Jacob helps him stand up straight again.

JACOB

Are you all right, sir?

SOREN

My legs feel a bit funny.

Jacob watches Soren walk over to get one of his canes. Jacob then glances at manuscript pages on the table, far fewer than have been there before.

JACOB

Would you like me to proof something else, Mister Kierkegaard?

SOREN

No, not today, Jacob.

JACOB

When shall I come back, sir?

SOREN
Actually, I'm not going to need you
anymore.

JACOB
Oh.

Soren hands him a rixdollar.

SOREN
It's nothing personal. As you see,
I have no book to be published
right away, and I have had to rent
this smaller apartment. The fact
is, I can't afford to pay help
anymore.

JACOB
I understand, sir. I'll walk with
you to the printer, if you like.

SOREN
That won't be necessary, Jacob.

Soren, with "The Moment" copy and his cane in one hand, picks
up his low, wide-brimmed hat with the other.

JACOB
Well, thank you, sir, for the
privilege of working for you.

Soren looks wistfully off at something.

SOREN
You're welcome.

JACOB
Goodbye, sir.

SOREN
Goodbye.

Jacob leaves.

Soren is gazing at the rosewood cupboard. He walks over
to it.

After a moment, he sadly look off at something else.

It's Regine, standing before him, her book in hand.

REGINE
Goodbye, my love.

Soren stands alone in the room.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Soren walks unsteadily with his cane. A strong breeze blows his wide hat brim and "The Moment" copy in his hand.

Passersby look at him with curiosity and concern.

Soren collapses on the cobblestones. He watches the copy being blown away across the pavement.

PASSERBY #2 leans over him, as others hurry over.

PASSERBY #2

What's wrong, Mister Kierkegaard?

SOREN

My legs. They've quit working.

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

A sign identifies "Royal Frederik's Hospital."

INT. HOSPITAL OFFICE - DAY

Peter, now 48, sits alone waiting. He rises as a doctor comes in -- the ADULT HENRIK LUND, 25, wearing a white coat.

HENRIK

Uncle Peter, I'm sorry to keep you waiting.

PETER

How is he, Henrik?

HENRIK

He's grown weaker the few days he's been here, and, well, he's going downhill.

PETER

He's worked himself to death with his writing.

HENRIK

Well it's more than that. He has some form of progressive spinal paralysis. We can't be sure, but it could be spinal tuberculosis. He may have had it for years.

PETER

Could epilepsy cause paralysis?

Henrik looks at Peter curiously.

HENRIK
Not to my knowledge. Does Uncle
Soren have epilepsy?

PETER
(evasively)
I was just wondering. May I see
him now?

HENRIK
I'm sorry. He specifically asked
that you not be allowed in. So it
wouldn't be good for him. I wish
that --

PETER
I'm his brother.

HENRIK
I know, Uncle Peter. I think it's
the fact that you're also a pastor.
No clergy allowed. You know all
the things he's been saying.

PETER
What madness. How can one so love
God, and so hate him too?

Peter moves to the door, Henrik following.

HENRIK
Oh, Uncle Soren doesn't hate God.
Far from it. He's just a different
sort of Christian.

PETER
He reminds me of my father on the
Jutland moor.

Peter leaves. Henrik seems to wonder what he meant.

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Emil, 40, arrives in a carriage on a cold gray day. Getting
out, he speaks to the coachman, who will wait.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - DAY

Emil stands waiting.

Down the corridor, Christian and Anna Lund come out of
Soren's room with Henrik.

The Lunds speak together for a moment, then Henrik goes back in the room while Christian and Anna head Emil's way to leave.

Emil and the Lunds nod to each other as the Lunds go by.

Henrik comes out of the room and walks over to Emil.

HENRIK

Uncle Soren said he will see you.
But please don't stay long.

INT. SOREN'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Emil enters.

EMIL

Hello, Soren.

Soren, wearing a robe, sits in a reclining chair, looking too weak to move, his head tilted back on the headrest. His hands tremble, and he coughs intermittently.

SOREN

Emil, thank you for coming. How are you?

EMIL

I am more concerned about you.

SOREN

I am making an exception, you know. You being a custodian of official Christianity.

EMIL

You may call me all the names that you wish.

SOREN

(tries to laugh)
I don't have the strength. I can't walk. I keep getting weaker. I can barely swallow. I can't sleep. I have this cough. I am in a sorry state.

EMIL

What can I do for you?

SOREN

Oh, my nephew Henrik is a doctor here -- lucky me -- and will do all the necessary.

EMIL

(pause)

Is there anything you'd like to talk about, Soren?

SOREN

In the short time I've had, I think I've said all I had to say. When it's too late, of course, I'm sure I'll think of something.

EMIL

You once told me something about a thorn in the flesh.

SOREN

Is that what I called it?

EMIL

Yes.

Soren lifts his head from the headrest. His head tilts to the side.

SOREN

You know, I have about three hundred rixdollars left to my name. I run out of money at the same time I run out of time. It's amazing how some things turn out to be just enough.

EMIL

How did you spend all that money?

SOREN

Too much good food and wine. Too many apartments. Too many carriage rides. Too much of the aesthetic life, I'm afraid.

EMIL

I think you owed yourself that.

SOREN

And too many books that few people want to buy.

EMIL

Well, you didn't write them for the money, did you?

SOREN

No. Certainly not.

EMIL

Don't worry about your books. They will always have buyers. Generations to come will be reading them.

SOREN

Do you really think so, Emil?

EMIL

Yes.

SOREN

(after a moment)
Something to live and die for. Then was it all worth it?

EMIL

Only you can answer that, Soren. You said books were your calling.

SOREN

Yes, so I did.

Soren manages to return his head to the headrest.

SOREN

One thing is for sure. I gave up enough to write them. But we don't always make the right choice.

Henrik and a nurse come in. They wait near the door.

EMIL

I think they want me to go now, Soren. I'll come back tomorrow.

SOREN

I don't want to go on, Emil. Pray for me. Pray that it will soon be over.

EMIL

I will pray for you. You rest now, Soren. I'll see you tomorrow.

SOREN

Thank you, Emil.

Emil turns to go.

SOREN

Emil...

Emil stops and turns.

SOREN

If you ever see Regine, please tell her I was thinking of her. As always.

EMIL

I will.

Soren looks fondly at him.

SOREN

We never know, Emil. It might be best if we say goodbye now. Thank you for being my friend.

EMIL

It's been an honor, Soren.

SOREN

Goodbye.

EMIL

Goodbye. But I'll be back tomorrow.

Emil leaves. Henrik and the nurse walk over to Soren.

SOREN

Henrik, I've changed my mind.

HENRIK

Yes, Uncle?

SOREN

Having agreed to see one country parson, I would like to see my brother.

EXT. SCHLEGEL HOME IN INDIES - DAY

Regine stands at the low wall of the porch. She gazes sadly off at the bay.

Schlegel moves to her side from the house.

SCHLEGEL

What is it, Regine?

She hands him a one-page letter.

REGINE

It's about Soren.

He reads the letter. He looks at her sympathetically. He puts an arm around her.

SCHLEGEL

I'm sorry. Would you like me to do anything?

REGINE

No, thank you, dear. There is nothing to be done.

SCHLEGEL

Well, he's at peace now.

REGINE

Yes.

SCHLEGEL

(looks again at letter)
Are you going to accept this rosewood cupboard he left you?

REGINE

I suppose I should, shouldn't I?

He looks a bit bothered. He returns the letter to her.

SCHLEGEL

Yes, I suppose so.

He regards her, then goes back inside. She bows her head, eyes closed.

EXT. COPENHAGEN - SCHLEGEL HOME - DAY

A bright afternoon. SUPERIMPOSE: "1897."

INT. SITTING ROOM - DAY

White-haired Regine, 76, in a black silk dress, is interviewed by journalist RAPHAEL MEYER, 29, who has pen and notes.

MEYER

Looking back, what do you appreciate most about Kierkegaard, Mrs. Schlegel?

REGINE

Oh, the fact that I was privileged to know him so well, for all the pain that went with it. And that he dedicated much of his writings to me.

(MORE)

REGINE (CONT'D)

He's famous now, so I guess it's true that he has taken me with him into history.

MEYER

Did you ever hear Soren make any kind of reference to epilepsy? I'm sure you've heard the speculation, from remarks that were made by his brother and by Emil Boesen.

REGINE

No, Mister Meyer, he said nothing to me.

MEYER

You never saw any sign?

A pause, Regine gazing off, seemingly reluctant to say.

REGINE

I may have, once, in hindsight. The last time I saw him. When he wanted me to go.

She glances at Meyer and blushes, as if that was too personal. She sighs.

REGINE

I knew, before that, there was something. If only he had told me, if that was the problem. Then I might have convinced him that it made no difference, and we might have been married.

LATER

Regine and Meyer stop by the rosewood cupboard, on a table, as Meyer is on his way out with his material.

REGINE

This is the cupboard he bequeathed me.

Meyer regards it.

MEYER

With his money gone, I guess it's one of the few things he had left of value. Do you know what he paid for it?

REGINE

No. I just know that it meant a great deal to him.

(looks wistfully at cupboard)

One day I realized that I may know why.

Meyer waits with interest, Regine's eyes on the cupboard, her mind seemingly far away.

She looks at Meyer and smiles apologetically.

REGINE

But it's only a guess. I would rather not say.

She moves off, Meyer following.

EXT. FRONT DOOR - DAY

Outside, Meyer turns to Regine, standing inside the open door.

MEYER

Well thank you again, Mrs. Schlegel. I'll be back next week, with this all written out, for your approval.

REGINE

I'll be here, Mister Meyer, if heaven is willing. I'll be happy to read what -- You know, that reminds me of something. Oh, I should have told you. You ought to include it.

MEYER

I will. What is it?

REGINE

Something Soren once told me.

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. COPENHAGEN HARBOR - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Soren approaches Regine and Schlegel by the quay.

REGINE

When my late husband and I were departing for the Indies, Soren came to the harbor to bid me farewell.

(MORE)

REGINE (CONT'D)

(pause)

He said, "Regine... "

Soren gazes lovingly at Regine as they stand alone.

SOREN

In heaven there is no marriage.
There we'll be happy together...

END INTERCUT

As Regine remembers,

REGINE

"You and I and Fritz Schlegel."

Regine and Meyer both smile.

REGINE

When I get there, I guess that will
be something.

MEYER

Yes, it will. I will certainly
include that. Thank you. Goodbye.

Meyer turns to go.

REGINE

I hope what he said is true.

He stops and looks back.

REGINE

Do you think it may be?

MEYER

Well, it should be, I suppose.

She smiles.

REGINE

Yes, it should. Goodbye.

Meyer leaves. Regine closes the door.

FADE OUT.

THE END