

THE DANISH GIRL

Screenplay
by
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Based on the novel by
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THE DANISH GIRL

EXT. KATTEGAT SEA, JUTLAND, DENMARK, 1920'S, DAY

FADE IN:

A rectangle of ferociously stormy sea viewed from battered cliffs. Silver waves are whipped by a wind that flies at us, stinging, relentless. Somewhere, unseen in the barren landscape, something is at its mercy - we hear the RUSTLE and PUNCH of the weather going at it...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. WOMAN'S EYE

The same scene reflected across the surface of a woman's brown eye, intense with emotion, curiosity. Gradually, the WEATHER SOUNDS are overtaken by VOICES coming up. At first the SOCIAL CHATTER is PERIPHERAL, then the VOICES grow more STRIDENT, OPPRESSIVE. The eye blinks.

INT. GALLERY, COPENHAGEN, DENMARK, EVENING

A painting of the same sea, captured with remarkable accuracy of feeling. A HUBBUB OF GABBLING VOICES. Too many people in a low-ceilinged room. One voice dominates now -

OLDER WOMAN (O.S.)

Don't you wish you could paint like that?

We pull out to see GERDA WEGENER'S brown eyes shift from deep scrutiny of the painting to polite social focus as she takes in an excited OLDER WOMAN. *

GERDA

I'm sorry...?

OLDER WOMAN

I said, don't you wish you could paint like your husband? Really - you must be so proud...

The woman smiles and heads into the crowd, leaving Gerda to consider... Gerda's gaze travels across the well-dressed gathering. Far off in a corner, there's an inner circle where her handsome husband EINAR WEGENER is being showered with praise. A portly goateed man dominates the scene - RASMUSSEN, Einar's dealer.

RASMUSSEN

They're all Veijle, where he grew up.

CONTINUED:

Gerda begins walking toward them through the throng...

RASMUSSEN (cont'd)
 And I don't say my client is
 the best landscape artist in
 Denmark... but, he is in the top
 one!

Einar cringes as the crowd laughs, delighted. An exotic-looking woman with mischief playing on her full lips approaches Gerda. This is ULLA FONSMARCK. They're friends.

ULLA
 (a stage whisper)
 It's going very well.

GERDA
 Oh yes. He'll be impossible.

The women LAUGH. As Gerda looks up, Einar looks across, smiles, trapped in his corner. Gerda nods back, reassuring, conspiratorial. Then Einar's pulled back into the select circle and Rasmussen emits a ridiculous barking LAUGH.

EXT. COPENHAGEN STREET, NIGHT

Gerda and Einar, arm in arm, LAUGHING. Gerda wears a distinctively embroidered fine wool wrap. Their FOOTSTEPS ring down the empty street. A patina of crystallised brine coats doorways, windows, scintillating in the moonlight.

GERDA
 And Rasmussen...

EINAR
 Oh, come on. Be kind.
 At least he agreed to see your work.

GERDA
 Only because he was drunk!

EINAR
 I know.

GERDA
 You were loving it!

EINAR
 I was not.

She mimics Rasmussen, his ludicrous excitement:

GERDA
 "I don't say my client is the best
 landscape artist in Denmark..."

CONTINUED:

EINAR

"But..."

GERDA

"He is in the top one!"

They LAUGH hard. Someone calls from an upstairs window:

MAN AT WINDOW

Hey - people are sleeping!

The window SLAMS. Gerda and Einar struggle to quieten down, head for the dancing harbour lights - partners in crime.

EXT. HARBOUR, NEXT MORNING

- MAIN TITLES BEGIN -

Fishermen selling straight off the boats to early-rising customers. Prices are loudly negotiated as the silver catch still writhes and flaps. A city coming to life.

INT. THE WIDOW HOUSE, BEDROOM, MORNING

Gerda carries in a breakfast tray. Einar sleeps. She observes his face: long eyelashes, cheeks hollow in repose, delicate lips. A little dog, HVAPPE, trots beside her. She puts down the tray and throws back the bedcover. Einar blinks in the light, surprised. He stretches, takes in the silhouetted outline of his wife: tall, purposeful Gerda.

GERDA

Do you know what time it is?

He smiles, sweetly suggestive of pleasure to come...

EINAR

Time you came back to bed?

GERDA

No - I'm ready to start work.

EINAR

Draw down the blinds.

She holds back, teases a little.

GERDA

I told you, I...

EINAR

Gerda...

GERDA

What?

CONTINUED:

She takes him in, smiling up at her. Shakes her head.

GERDA (cont'd)
Your face... You think I can't resist
you...

EINAR
Do you want to resist me?

She approaches the edge of the bed, smiling herself now.

GERDA
No. But I'd like you to ask nicely
so I don't feel such a pushover...

Einar reaches towards her.

EINAR
Gerda Wegener - my life, my wife...

He pulls her into bed... A skittish piano comes up as they
laugh, begin to make love. Continues over:

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE COPENHAGEN OPERA HOUSE

Einar crosses the road, heads for the Opera House.

INT. OPERA HOUSE, STAGE DOOR

Einar greets the doorman, THORBJORN.

EINAR
Thorbjorn.

STAGE DOORMAN
Mr Wegener.

INT. OPERA HOUSE, COSTUME SHOP, ONE MONTH LATER, DAY

Einar walks between racks of clothes that hang in two tiers
so the ruffled and feathered hems of jewel-coloured gowns
brush his cheeks. An explicit sensual pleasure, which Einar
is conscious of but feels no need to investigate. He pauses.
The ARIA ceases, he hears women CHATTING, sometimes DROPPING
THEIR VOICES, emitting DIRTY LAUGHS, which make him smile and
wonder. A stolen intimacy. Einar spies on Ulla, below -

ULLA (O.S.)
Tighter!

Ulla is being pulled into a corset by a DRESSER. Einar leans
forward for a better view... She spots him - is delighted,
breaks free for a moment.

CONTINUED:

ULLA (cont'd)
Einar Wegener!

The DRESSER hands Ulla a robe to cover up, but:

ULLA (cont'd)
Oh don't worry about him - he's only ever
had eyes for one woman.

EINAR
My guilty secret's out.

He smiles at her, indulgent. She calls up to him -

ULLA
So - when are you two going to breed me a
godchild?

EINAR
You're an atheist.

ULLA
I'll reconsider.

EINAR
We're trying.

ULLA
Try harder. I've been waiting an eternity.
Have you tried drinking raw eggs?

EINAR
No.

ULLA
Do it. For my sake.

Einar shakes his head. She's impossible and he adores her.

ULLA (cont'd)
Anyway what are you doing in today? I
thought you finished last week?

EINAR
I wanted to check on the scrim for the
storm scene. And give Gerda some space.

ULLA
Ah - she's got a shy one.

Einar nods, smiles. Ulla prepares to resume her fitting.

ULLA (cont'd)
You know I'm next?

EINAR
So I heard.

CONTINUED:

ULLA
I won't be shy.

EINAR
I should imagine not.

ULLA
Good God, she'll need all her colours for me!

They LAUGH and Ulla signals to the dresser to pull at the corset once more, smiles in delighted anticipation of the discomfort to come.

INT. WIDOW HOUSE, STUDIO, DAY

MR FONNESBECH in a chair on a slightly raised dais. He is formally dressed, somewhat stiff. The room is oppressively still. Gerda looks up from her canvas, goes to adjust Fannesbech's arm. He is clearly affected by being touched, embarrassed. She returns to the canvas. After an uncomfortable couple of moments:

FONNESBECH
I wanted to say... I appreciate our being alone today. I hope your husband doesn't mind.

GERDA
Not at all. I could see his being here made you uncomfortable.

FONNESBECH
It wasn't personal.

Gerda smiles. Shakes her head - he shouldn't worry:

GERDA
It's not uncommon.

FONNESBECH
Ah.

Fannesbech's relieved. Though he's left with questions.

GERDA
It's hard for a man to be looked at by a woman. Women are used to it, of course, but for a man...

Mr Fannesbech begins to look wildly vulnerable.

GERDA (cont'd)
To... submit to a woman's gaze. It's unsettling...

Fannesbech nods, relieved - that's exactly it.

CONTINUED:

GERDA (cont'd)
 Although I believe there's some pleasure to
 be had from it, once you...

She smiles mischievously.

GERDA (cont'd)
 ...yield.

Fonnesbech swallows, cheeks pinking. Suddenly:

GERDA (cont'd)
 Sit!

Fonnesbech flinches. The dog settles. Fonnesbech exhales.

GERDA (cont'd)
 Good girl.

Gerda returns to work, eyes glinting at what she's revealed
 in her sitter: finally getting somewhere.

EXT. WIDOW HOUSE, MONTHS LATER

A CHINESE LAUNDRESS with a large wheeled cart makes her way
 along the street, RINGING a pair of little BELLS as she goes.

INT. WIDOW HOUSE, MORNING

Einar quickly but carefully folds Gerda's chemise and puts it
 in a bag of laundry, hurries to open the door...

INT/EXT. WIDOW HOUSE, EARLY MORNING, A MONTH LATER

Einar hands the bag to the laundress as she passes.

INT. WIDOW HOUSE, BEDROOM, MORNING

Gerda at the mirror, putting on her lipstick. Einar comes
 in, reacts, seeing her dressed up. She's self-conscious.

GERDA
 Well?

Einar can't help smiling at her implied self-criticism.

EINAR
 Perfect. Almost.

He approaches, uses his thumb to gently blend away a smudge
 of lipstick from her bottom lip. He nods. Perfect now.

EINAR (cont'd)
 Good luck...

EXT. BUSY COPENHAGEN STREET, DAY

Gerda carries her heavy portfolio, optimistic, brisk.

INT. ART DEALER'S OFFICE, DAY

Rasmussen's face - a look of slight distaste. A sea of Gerda's work, on the desk, the floor - competent but uninspiring naturalistic depictions of society figures.

RASMUSSEN
All portraits...

Gerda hesitates a beat, the fact being so self-evident.

GERDA
Is that bad?

RASMUSSEN
Not *per se*, but... this kind of work is not really my...

He winces a little. He has to end this:

RASMUSSEN (cont'd)
Gerda... I don't think it would benefit either of us to show these.

A vein begins to throb in Gerda's neck.

RASMUSSEN (cont'd)
It's not a judgement on your abilities - I agree with Einar: you could be a first class painter if you found the right subject matter.

It's the first time Gerda's heard this. Her eyes shine, stung, betrayed.

INT. WIDOW HOUSE, STUDIO, DAY

Einar works, hears the door. Gerda brings in the portfolio, sets it down, starts taking off her coat. Einar's tentative:

EINAR
How was it?

GERDA
Fine.

He waits for more, but nothing comes.

EINAR
I finally mixed the right colour for the snow.

CONTINUED:

Gerda glances at the canvas, hostile.

GERDA

Another view of Vejle. I don't know how
you can paint the same thing over and over.

Einar misses a beat.

EINAR

I suppose I just haven't finished with it
yet.

Gerda heads towards the door.

EINAR (cont'd)

Gerda..?

GERDA

Could you please not speak to Rasmussen
about me again... My work is my business.
Stay out of it.

But she disappears into the bedroom, the door slamming
emphatically behind her. Einar's left bewildered.

INT. BEDROOM, DAY

Gerda's already regretting the exchange with Einar. She
unfastens her dress, pulls it off. There's a bloodstain in
her underwear. Damn! She breathes.

INT. STUDIO, DAY

Einar working as Gerda reappears. She's composed now,
refocused, approaches her easel, organises her paints. Einar
steals a look at her, but says nothing. Works on.
Eventually:

GERDA

I have my period.

EINAR (O.S.)

I'm sorry.

GERDA

Are you?

She turns to find him approaching.

EINAR

Of course I am... You know I am.

A moment of quiet intimacy between them. Gerda shies away,
returns to present concerns... her work...

CONTINUED:

GERDA
 Could you help me with something?

Einar's relieved to be able to help.

EINAR
 Anything.

GERDA
 Ulla has an extra rehearsal. She cancelled again. Would you try on her stockings and shoes?

Einar's discomfort erupts in a laugh. Is she serious?

GERDA (cont'd)
 I'm just so behind. I don't know how I'll be finished in time for her opening...

But he cuts her off:

EINAR
 I'll do it. It's fine.

Gerda sets a shoebox and the stocking on the sitter's chair, goes into the kitchen. Einar moves the box and stockings, sits in the chair on the dais. The dog leaps up -

EINAR (cont'd)
 No... no, not now Hvappe...

He pushes Hvappe down, tests the mesh of the stockings between his fingers. He rolls up his trousers.

EINAR (cont'd)
 He almost snagged this...

Gerda marvels at his delicacy. Scolds the dog:

GERDA
 Hvappe...

Gerda mixes paints. Einar battles with the stockings.

GERDA (cont'd)
 That's backwards...

He fiddles with the second stocking now, a light sweat dewing his forehead by the time he's rolled both to the knee. He opens a shoebox: - the yellow pair from the shop window.

EINAR
 I saw these in the window of Fønnesbech's...

GERDA
 Smart aren't they?

CONTINUED:

EINAR

I don't think they'll fit...

GERDA

Well just do what you can.

He takes them out... Something catches in Einar's throat as he pushes his toes into the shoe. Gerda's eyes are narrow as she starts work. Einar looks down at his feet, partly contained in the yellow suede, the disjuncture between the body above and below the knee... he breathes... can't keep his hands steady. Then:

GERDA (cont'd)

No. I need the dress.

They both look over to where Ulla's dress hangs. It is white, weighted with beads at the hem and cuff. Beautiful.

EINAR

Gerda, I'm not putting it on.

GERDA

I haven't asked you to.

She get sit... lays it across him.

GERDA (cont'd)

Would you just relax...? The sooner I start, the sooner I finish.

Einar yields reluctantly, as Gerda runs her fingers gently down his face. Satisfied, Gerda returns to work.

Einar's breathing feels slightly laboured now. The dress weighs heavily. His head moves slightly, feeling it brush at his neck. His fingers curl involuntarily around the beaded cuff. The SOUNDSCAPE becomes heightened: the creak of Gerda's easel, the jangling of her bracelets, the sound of the harbour, the wind in the ships' riggings. These combine, fill his head... until:

ULLA (O.S.)

Well hello, there!

Einar starts... Ulla's in the doorway, delighted, with a huge bunch of lilies. She starts to LAUGH, and because it's Ulla, Gerda LAUGHS also. The dog YAPS, excited, confused. Einar's disoriented. Gerda sees this, stops laughing, but...

ULLA (cont'd)

Oh, don't worry my darling...

She hands the flowers to him, kisses him:

ULLA (cont'd)

We're going to call you Lili...

CONTINUED:

Einar manages to laugh now as the dog runs BARKING in circles, Ulla's delight banishing the day's frustrations.

EXT. HARBOUR, NIGHT

There are lights on in the Widow House.

INT. WIDOW HOUSE, STUDIO, NIGHT

Gerda closes the book she's been reading, looks up to see Einar, working, engrossed. An almost trance-like state. She watches him a while, then approaches, rests her head against his back. He's comfortable with this, but works on.

GERDA

Such concentration. Sometimes when you're working, I think you're going to slip through the surface of the painting and vanish.

He smiles a little.

GERDA (cont'd)

Sink into the bog. Like your friend's kite when you were a boy.

EINAR

Hans. It was Hans' kite I crashed.

Einar enjoys the memory for a moment.

EINAR (cont'd)

Poor Hans. He was so proud of it... I couldn't believe he even let me have a turn...

GERDA

He's probably still sitting on a rock, sobbing his heart out.

Einar sets down his brush, turns toward her, away from his work, smiles.

EINAR

He's a dealer in Paris, peddling Old Masters to rich Americans.

GERDA

Oh. So we don't need to worry about Hans.

EINAR

No we don't.

He takes her in.

CONTINUED:

GERDA
I didn't mean to disturb you.

EINAR
That's okay. I've finished.

He kisses her.

EINAR (cont'd)
And don't worry, I won't disappear into the bog.

He widens his eyes, surprised at his own realisation:

EINAR (cont'd)
The bog is in me, silly.

She pushes him off, LAUGHING.

INT. WIDOW HOUSE, BEDROOM, LATER THAT NIGHT

Einar's in bed. Gerda pulls off her dress, looks round to see him watching her as she lays her stockings over the chair beside her dressing table.

GERDA
What?

EINAR
Can't a man watch his wife get undressed?

She goes to take off her lace-edged slip, self-conscious now.

EINAR (cont'd)
That slip is new...

GERDA
You're very observant.

EINAR
Leave it on...

She hesitates, but Einar pulls back the sheet... Gerda keeps the slip on, climbs in beside him. He strokes her body through the silk...

EINAR (cont'd)
It's very pretty...

GERDA
I might let you borrow it.

Einar shrugs, rising flirtatiously to the challenge.

EINAR
I might enjoy that.

CONTINUED:

Gerda LAUGHS, and Einar kisses her. She teases:

GERDA

Oh really...? Is there something you'd like to tell me?

EINAR

Why...? Is there something you'd like to know...?

His fingers trace, quivering, over her...

GERDA

No... I'm your wife. I know everything.

Einar thrills, pulls her on top of him, a fresh passion, fresh risk about their union.

INT. COSTUME SHOP, LATER THAT NIGHT

A champagne cork POPS. Ulla's triumphant first night. She's on magnificent form, working the room. Gerda's portrait hangs in pride of place. Gerda and Einar chat with a group that includes their friends NIELS and ELSA. Ulla swoops in, WHISPERS something in Gerda's ear. Gerda's eyes register delight as she looks across at two young men on the other side of the room.

GERDA

Both of them...?

ULLA

And at the same time!

Einar laughs. Gerda shakes her head.

ULLA (cont'd)

Married people are so delightfully easy to shock.

EINAR

We just pretend to be shocked because it encourages you.

ULLA

I know. That's why you're the only couple in my party for the Artists Ball...

EINAR

Out of the question.

ULLA

Oh, I know Einar hates it, but he'll have to bear with us.

CONTINUED:

EINAR
She can go without me.

ULLA
Gerda without an escort? It would be a scandal.

EINAR
Gerda loves a scandal.

GERDA
You've had too much champagne.

Niels and Elsa hear this, tune in...

EINAR
Look at the way she dresses, flaunting her ankles. An invitation to corruption.

GERDA
I don't think anyone is likely to be corrupted by seeing my ankles.

EINAR
I was.

The group laughs delighted by Einar's buoyant mood.

EINAR (CONT'D) (cont'd)
The first time we met, I was leaving the Academy, and she was on the steps, flaunting said ankles... And she propositioned me!

ELSA
Is that true?!

GERDA
It was a dare. But when I said hello to him, he actually blushed! He was so shy! So I asked him out.

ULLA
And you said yes -

Einar scrutinises Gerda.

EINAR
She made me. She seemed so sure.

GERDA
I was sure. I still am.

NIELS
Oh please - enough!

Elsa elbows him, turns to Gerda.

CONTINUED:

ELSA

No - what was it about him?

Gerda looks at Einar.

GERDA

I don't know...

She remembers, drawing Einar into the recollection.

GERDA (cont'd)

But we went for coffee, and after, I kissed him... and it was the strangest thing... it was like kissing myself.

A look between Einar and Gerda, a connection crackling.

ULLA

Well these two won't be staying much longer...

EINAR

Unmarried people are so delightfully easy to shock.

She and Einar smile, make their way towards the door.

INT. BEDROOM, NIGHT

Einar comes in, Gerda's already in bed. He starts to undress, turns out the light.

GERDA

Turn it back on.

He looks at her. She shrugs, smiles - it's her turn, after all... He turns it back on, a little awkward now, undressing in front of her. She sees this, toughs it out, watching him anyway.

GERDA (cont'd)

Were you really corrupted by my ankles?

Einar wears just his shirt now, begins to unbutton.

EINAR

You were shameless.

GERDA

I still am.

Einar peels off his shirt. Underneath, he wears Gerda's lace-edged slip. Gerda GASPS slightly... Einar has outdone her with this imaginative twist. But she rises to the occasion. Feels the fabric against his body.

CONTINUED:

EINAR
Beautiful shameless Gerda...

She traces her fingers across his chest, challenged, aroused.

INT. WIDOW HOUSE, BEDROOM, MORNING

Einar asleep, a SCRATCHING sound in the background. We see quick charcoal strokes on paper, Gerda wrapped in Einar's dressing gown, at the side of the bed. She's fascinated, suddenly able to see the femininity of his features, plays with it, creating a revised Einar... His eyes open...

GERDA
Did I wake you?

He raises his eyebrows, entertained. What does she think? She smiles, carries on working.

GERDA (cont'd)
Sorry... I couldn't sleep.

EINAR
Why?

GERDA
Wondering about things.

EINAR
What things?

GERDA
Wondering if we made a baby last night.

Einar smiles, surprised.

EINAR
What d'you think?

Gerda shrugs, keeps sketching.

GERDA
Wondering when you got so pretty.

EINAR
Oh, I was always pretty, you just never noticed.

Gerda LAUGHS, keeps working.

INT. WIDOW HOUSE, STUDIO, A WEEK LATER

In the studio, Einar looks at the sketches Gerda has made of him, darkly fascinated. He hears Gerda come in.

CONTINUED:

GERDA (O.S.)
Hello...?

EINAR
In here...

Gerda comes in, puts down her workbag, takes off her coat. Einar's still looking at the sketches. Gerda's a little self-conscious...

EINAR (cont'd)
These are good.

GERDA
Do you think?

He nods, absolutely serious. Gerda absorbs this, gratified.

GERDA (cont'd)
Well thank you. Thank you.

Gerda goes out to hang up her coat, calls -

GERDA (cont'd)
I had coffee with Ulla. She asked
about the Artists' Ball.

Einar draws breath to protest, but:

GERDA (cont'd)
Don't worry - I told her no.

EINAR
You should go, you enjoy it.

GERDA
With you I enjoy it.

Einar feels guilty.

EINAR
Look - it's good to be seen at those
things. I understand that.

GERDA
And that's why you hate them.

Gerda shrugs - she gets it. He smiles.

EINAR
I feel as though I'm performing myself.

GERDA
Giving them your Einar Wegener.

Exactly. Gerda looks at him a moment.

CONTINUED:

GERDA (cont'd)
 Why not give them something different, go
 as someone else?

She tilts her head. A look between them... this is a
 departure... Einar hesitates a moment...

EINAR
 Did you have someone in particular in mind?

A mischievous smile spreads across Gerda's face... she starts
 to laugh, Einar begins to understand... laughs along...

EINAR (cont'd)
 No - that's outrageous!

GERDA
 You'd be very convincing... You might even
 enjoy it...

Einar marvels at her... she's only half-joking.

INT. WIDOW HOUSE, BEDROOM, EVENING

Gerda sweeps a layer of foundation over Einar's face. When
 she's done, he opens his eyes. Gerda's taken aback.

GERDA
 You'll have to shave closer.

Einar takes in his blanked-out face in the shaving mirror.
 Gerda goes to apply eyeliner...

GERDA (cont'd)
 Close your eyes... This is hard on someone
 else...

EINAR
 Here...

Einar takes the crayon, draws a couple of pretty good lines.

EINAR (cont'd)
 How's that?

She marvels at his reflection. It's bizarrely compelling.

GERDA
 Better than I ever manage.

His reflection looks back. Gerda's energy is up... She
 drapes her scarf around his neck...

GERDA (cont'd)
 Oh, Lili! I want to sketch you...

CONTINUED:

She hurries him through to the studio... arranges cushions on the chaise.

GERDA (cont'd)

Sit!

Einar sits - a distinctive pose.

EINAR

Come on, Hvap!

Hvappe jumps onto his lap. Gerda sketches quickly, absorbed, excited. She rearranges him, 'feminising' his poses.

GERDA

Knee over... head up.. Look at those hands... relax...

We see Einar at a series of angles... but his movements are more and more parodically feminine for Gerda's entertainment. The more he acts it, the more fun it is, until finally Gerda scolds, still laughing:

GERDA (cont'd)

No, don't make her a slut!

EINAR

It's your fault, you excite her.

Gerda gets close to pin him still. His face closes on hers.

GERDA

Why, Miss Lili, you are forward...

EINAR

You have no idea...

He falls on her, laughing, passionate... Gerda responds, but grabs a cloth and wipes his made-up face as he kisses her.

MONTAGE BEGINS -

INT. WIDOW HOUSE, BEDROOM

We see Gerda's work around the room, now, depicting 'Lili's' progress. Einar, at the mirror, plucks his eyebrows to better resemble the glamorous arch in Gerda's sketches.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE WIDOW HOUSE

Einar and Gerda walk, a little way apart. He feels his way into her gait, she checks back on his progress.

EXT. HARBOUR, FISH STALL, DAY

As Gerda buys fish, Einar is distracted, observing and copying the movements of the female customer beside him...

INT. OPERA HOUSE, STAGE DOOR

Gerda and Einar arrive. The stage doorman nods.

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EINAR
Morning, Thorbjorn...

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STAGE DOORMAN
Good morning.

INT. OPERA HOUSE, COSTUME SHOP, DAY

Gerda and Einar try on wigs, surreptitious, excited, adjust one another's choices. Then, a long line of almost identical shoes, beginning in tiny sizes but gradually getting bigger. Einar grabs the last - biggest - pair. When he looks up, Gerda's showing him a dress...

INT. OPERA HOUSE, STAGE DOOR, DAY

Einar and Gerda head out past the stage doorman, very pleased with themselves. Gerda is several sizes fatter and taller - she wears a wig with a hat on top. Hands stuffed into coat pockets hide bulky shoes. Thorbjorn looks up briefly from his newspaper. Then as the door closes behind Einar and Gerda, he looks up again - ?

- MONTAGE ENDS -

INT. WIDOW HOUSE, EVENING

The Lili sketches depict a gamut of moods, face and posture already becoming iconic. Einar in the slip and the new shoes, practising his walk to settle his nerves. Hears the front door open - quickly calls:

EINAR
I wondered where you were, it's getting late.

Gerda comes in...

GERDA
We have plenty of time. I bought these...

Einar takes the stockings with interest. Gerda watches, entertained at his enthusiasm, but a little apprehensive..

CONTINUED:

GERDA (cont'd)

Einar, are you sure about tonight?

Einar looks up, surprised. Nods, without hesitation. Gerda's a little taken aback at his enthusiasm.

EXT. STREET NEAR CANAL, NEAR ROYAL ACADEMY OF ARTS, NIGHT

Dancing light and sound - up ahead, we see a glamorous, eclectic gathering: the fun-loving, the arrogant, the eccentric, the bourgeois - all rubbing shoulders on their way to the Royal Academy.

Two pairs of women's feet in step: Gerda and Einar, approach the melee. Then Gerda realises Einar has slowed, dropped back behind her. She turns to see him transformed in a chiffon dress with a linen sailor's collar and cuffs...

GERDA

What is it...?

Einar's eyes shine animated. He cuts an ungainly figure, but the impression is more confusing than jarring.

EINAR

Am I pretty enough?

Gerda's surprised by the sincerity of the question.

GERDA

Of course you are...

He takes Gerda's hand and she pulls closer.

EINAR

I'll never be as pretty as you.

Gerda studies the features, the fire behind the eyes. An intensity she had not been expecting... something new... A charged moment... Gerda's genuinely moved... but then Einar/Lili laughs, breaks away... leaving Gerda with a beat of emotion that doesn't belong anywhere.

INT. ROYAL ACADEMY OF ARTS, STAIRCASE, NIGHT

Gerda and 'Lili' mingle with the crowd. A VOICE rings out:

ULLA

My darling!

A flicker of fear in Lili... until Gerda interposes herself:

GERDA

Ulla, let me introduce...

CONTINUED:

Ulla's eyes snag for a moment as they search the familiar face and realisation dawns. Delight floods her face. Then:

ULLA
It's Lili...!

GERDA
That's right. Einar's cousin from Vejle...

ULLA
My dear, you're exquisite...

She LAUGHS, thrilled, exchanges a look with Gerda. Lili's eyelashes flutter, a picture of shyness as Ulla summons the rest of her party - revelling in their shared secret...

ULLA (CONT'D) (cont'd)
In - let's go in...

Gerda and Lili - holding hands - join the crush:

EINAR/LILI
You won't leave me, will you...?

Gerda looks down at Einar/Lili's grip on her hand.

GERDA
(sincerely)
No. No, never.

She squeezes the hand and they press forward together.

INT. ROYAL ACADEMY OF ARTS, GREAT HALL, NIGHT

A spectacular event. An orchestra plays and people dance. Ulla's party drink and laugh. Gerda and Lili hang back a little, observing. There's a circle of men in tuxedos nearby. One glances across at Lili. Lili looks away, blushing.

EINAR/LILI
People are looking.

GERDA
Well you're a pretty girl, you'll have to get used to that.

But she sees Lili's really uncomfortable.

GERDA (CONT'D) (cont'd)
It's fine. You're just feeling self-conscious.

ELSA (O.S.)
Gerda - !

They spot Elsa across the crowd... Lili shrinks.

CONTINUED:

EINAR/LILI
Go and talk to her...

GERDA
No, I'll stay with you...

EINAR/LILI
Go. I'll be fine. Go before she
comes over here...

Gerda reluctantly crosses the room and greets Elsa warmly. But by the time she glances back, Lili has gone.

Lili sits at the edge of the dancefloor on a bench carved with mermaids, a nerve fluttering in her cheek. We see a young man, HENRIK SANDAHL, study her closely - closely enough to see she is not everything she appears, but this only seems to intrigue him. He sits beside her. Lili self-consciously takes a notebook from her bag, begins to jot things down. Henrik leans in, his raven hair in Lili's peripheral vision, leans forward until Lili's refusal to engage becomes comical.

HENRIK
Are you a reporter?

Lili looks up.

EINAR/LILI
(flatly)
No.

HENRIK
A poetess...?

Lili packs up the notebook and hurries away... Finds a corridor, leading off the hall - quieter, darker...

Lili feels her way along the wall, relieved to be in the cooler air, away from the party. As her eyes adjust to the darkness, she sees a couple kissing in an alcove. A flash of the woman's white thigh, as the man pushes up her dress. Lili turns away, discomfited, walks straight back into Henrik.

HENRIK (CONT'D) (cont'd)
Do you know the story of this oak
tree?

EINAR/LILI
Mm...?

Henrik indicates a tree outside, behind Lili...

HENRIK
They say if you eat its acorns you
can make a wish and become anyone
you want for a day.

CONTINUED:

Einar's reaction flashes through Lili's facade.

EINAR/LILI
Why would they say that...?

Henrik bows, entertained by the effect he's had...

HENRIK
Henrik Sandahl. At your disposal.

A moment's hesitation, then:

EINAR/LILI
Lili...

HENRIK
Are you here with someone, Lili?

EINAR/LILI
Yes - my cousin's wife.

HENRIK
Who's your cousin?

Lili hesitates, turns back:

EINAR/LILI
Einar Wegener. He's a painter.

HENRIK
Rather a good one. Better than most people think.

EINAR/LILI
Is that right?

HENRIK
Most people our age at any rate.

EINAR/LILI
Well....

She makes to leave again, but:

HENRIK
Don't go back in. It's cooler here. Besides, I'm a romantic.

EINAR/LILI
Oh really...

HENRIK
I prefer the shadows and...

Lili steals a look at him. He lowers his voice... sincere...

CONTINUED:

HENRIK (CONT'D) (cont'd)
I don't mean to presume, but I've
been watching you.

A tremor of panic runs through Lili...

HENRIK (CONT'D) (cont'd)
I think you might be the same.

Henrik holds out his hand. Lili looks at it, a sense of connection she can't understand, previously unimaginable... Then, trembling, Lili reaches out and rests her delicate, manicured hand in Henrik's... and suddenly her nerves are completely steady. Henrik leads Lili along the corridor, away from the hall...

INT. ROYAL ACADEMY OF ARTS, GREAT HALL, NIGHT

Noisier and smokier now, too much aquavit drunk, the guests a little out of focus. Gerda scans the dishevelled crowds, concerned - no sign of Lili. Suddenly, Ulla's at her side.

GERDA
Have you seen Einar? I can't find
him.

ULLA
Of course you can't, he isn't here!

Ulla and Gerda laugh... Ulla raises her glass... more fun! But Gerda excuses herself, and continues looking...

EXT. ROYAL ACADEMY OF ARTS, LIFE-DRAWING ROOM, NIGHT

Lili and Henrik sit on a bench in the lee of a sculpted classical nude. Lili's cheeks burn. Henrik is clearly fascinated. The slight sense of playacting between them only heightens their excitement.

HENRIK
You're different from other girls.

Lili scoffs gently.

EINAR/LILI
That's not a very original line.

HENRIK
It's true. You're old fashioned.

Lili takes Henrik in, decides to continue...

EINAR/LILI
Provincial. I'm new to the city.

CONTINUED:

HENRIK

No, it's more than that. I feel
I'd need to ask permission before I
kissed you.

A bolt of something goes through Lili. Her eyes sink, drawn
and repulsed, to Henrik's lips. She can hardly breathe...

EINAR/LILI

I probably ought to find Gerda.

She heads back toward the corridor... Henrik grabs her hand.

HENRIK

Why don't you tell her I'll walk
you home...?

EINAR/LILI

She wouldn't like that...

He advances, his body pressing against her, commanding,
holding her fixed in the doorway...

HENRIK

Lili...

Lili pulls away, flustered, aroused...

EINAR/LILI

Einar might be waiting up... he
wouldn't like this...

HENRIK

Wouldn't he...?

EINAR/LILI

No...

HENRIK

Lili...

He steadies her... repeating her name...

HENRIK (CONT'D) (cont'd)

Lili... Lili.

Three times a charm... We see something shift in Lili...
Henrik senses it... He kisses her. When he releases her she
gasps, and he kisses her again, finds his passion returned
this time... When she finally catches her breath she can't
look at him...

EINAR/LILI

You didn't ask permission...

HENRIK

I couldn't risk you saying no.

CONTINUED:

Standing in the corridor, by the oak, Gerda watches, stunned, as Lili clutches Henrik's arm, looks suddenly faint, upset... Lili looks down, confused and then panicked. Blood pours from her nose, down the front of her dress... she's appalled.

HENRIK (CONT'D) (cont'd)
What's happened..? Let me...

Henrik tries to find a handkerchief... Then sees Gerda approaching... He pulls away from Lili...

HENRIK (CONT'D) (cont'd)
I'm sorry I don't know what...

Lili holds out her arms to Gerda. Henrik steps back... Gerda reaches Lili, quickly takes her weight... Gerda wraps her scarf around 'Lili', who now looks like Einar in grotesque drag, smeared with make-up and blood.

GERDA
Quickly, lean on me...

Henrik watches, and onlookers stare as Gerda supports Einar out of the ball... They stumble, clinging together, ashamed.

INT. WIDOW HOUSE, NEXT MORNING

Einar paints. In a smart male suit. He is stiffly composed.

Gerda comes into the studio, in her nightclothes. Finds Einar deeply immersed. No trace of the night's upset.

GERDA
How are you...?

EINAR
You were late home last night, I thought I'd let you sleep. How was it? Did Lili have fun?

Gerda's stunned. Goes to the kitchen, upset.

In the kitchen, Lili's bloodied clothes are soaking in a bucket. Gerda struggles with the sight. Begins to make coffee, then...

Gerda returns to the studio, watches Einar, anger building. He allows it a while, then turns, braced to face her:

GERDA
I think it would be better if Lili didn't come here again.

EINAR
Fine. I understand.

CONTINUED:

GERDA
You know what I would like to
understand?

Einar takes Gerda in... how furious, how shaken she looks.

GERDA (CONT'D) (cont'd)
Exactly what happened between you
and Sandahl last night?

EINAR
(quickly)
Nothing.

Gerda HUFFS, disbelieving. Einar repeats himself, angrily:

EINAR (CONT'D) (cont'd)
It was nothing.

GERDA
Did he know it was you?

Einar blushes, shies away.

EINAR
It wasn't as simple as that. It's
hard to explain...

Gerda loses control, shouts at him:

GERDA
I watched him kiss you, Einar, so
could you please make an effort?!

Einar's shocked, ashamed. He takes stock, then quietly:

EINAR
He may have known who I was. But I
wasn't always... me. There was a
moment when I was... just Lili.
And I think he could see that. Do
you see?

Gerda struggles to comprehend this shift in the landscape.

GERDA
But Lili doesn't exist. We made
her up.

EINAR
I know...

GERDA
We were playing a game!

EINAR
I know we were... but then it
changed...

CONTINUED:

Gerda's mind reels, panic rises...

GERDA

This is absurd. We need to stop.
Make it stop Einar.

With genuine anxiety:

EINAR

I'm going to try...

She goes, still distressed, leaving Einar alone.

EXT. WIDOW HOUSE, EARLY MORNING, TWO WEEKS LATER

The Chinese Laundress RINGS her tiny BELLS along the street.

INT. WIDOW HOUSE, MORNING

The Lili portraits are gone. Einar regards a canvas. Failing to paint. In the kitchen, Gerda chops vegetables, throws them in a pan. She hovers in the doorway to the studio.

GERDA

Another headache?

EINAR

It's nothing...

She goes back into the kitchen again...

GERDA

Can I get you something?

EINAR

I'm fine.

Gerda returns to chopping.

GERDA

Maybe you should see a doctor.

Einar grows agitated.

EINAR

Gerda... I'm fine.

Gerda looks round to see Einar now in his coat. He quickly collects a small suitcase, goes out, leaving Gerda to fret.

EXT. OPERA HOUSE, DAY

No lights on, no signs of life.

INT. OPERA HOUSE, STAGE DOOR, DAY

Einar passes through, nods amiably to the familiar doorman.

INT. COSTUME SHOP, DAY

Einar turns on the lights, quickly pulls off his coat. He leans forward, bracing against the bench, looks in the mirror. There's a desperation about him. But now he sees: the front of his shirt gapes - reveals a cleavage, formed by his rounded shoulders. Einar is compelled... nervously unbuttons his shirt to the waist and leans forward again. The effect is startling. He traces the shape of his 'breasts' with trembling hands.

With a new urgency, he quickly strips off shirt, trousers, terrified that someone might catch him, yet driven to press on. He pulls off his underwear, returns to the mirror, pushes his cock back between his legs, squeezing his thighs tight until he has an approximation of a vagina. He rounds his shoulders, takes in the arresting transformation, breathless with excitement, terror. A sense of impending inevitable transgression.

He opens his case. A carefully folded silk package unfurls into a dress, brushes against his skin.

INT. STUDIO, DAY

Gerda sits in the chair looking out of the window, face set against terror, her sketchbook closed in her lap, brooding, pressure building. She opens the sketchbook: Lili...

INT CAFE ON CANAL, DAY

Einar/Lili arrives inside a cafe, pushes back a headscarf. We see Henrik waiting at a table. He quickly stands when he spots Lili - who is consumed with shyness, real fear.

HENRIK

I didn't think you'd come.

Lili settles in her seat.

EINAR/LILI

No. Nor did I.

INT. WIDOW HOUSE, STUDIO, LATER

Gerda begins to sketch, almost afraid to begin. But her energy gathers and there is soon anger and desire in the work as she conjures a Lili with dark erotic potential, a frenzied relationship with the subject developing...

INT. WIDOW HOUSE, STUDIO, EVENING

Gerda lies on the chaise, exhausted. Hears the door, doesn't move. Einar appears, in his overcoat. After a moment:

GERDA
I thought you might not come back.

EINAR
That's absurd...

GERDA
Is it?

Einar can hardly bear the question... feels terrible, wraps his arms around her. Then sees, at an angle, in the half-light, the new Lili picture. A nude with female hips and breasts. A slash of red mouth. A cigarette.

INT. ART DEALER'S OFFICE, A MONTH LATER, DAY

A door opens and Gerda sits up - a THIN YOUNG MAN appears.

THIN YOUNG MAN
He won't be much longer.

Gerda sits back, too pessimistic to feel nervous.

INT. ART DEALER'S OFFICE, HALF AN HOUR LATER

Rasmussen studies a series of Gerda's portraits, his mouth puckered with poorly disguised distaste. Gerda steels herself to withstand the humiliation.

RASMUSSEN
I just... I don't know...

And then he sees the Lili nude. He's suddenly intrigued...

RASMUSSEN (cont'd)
The model...?

GERDA
Einar's cousin.

RASMUSSEN
Yes, the resemblance is...

Rasmussen's mind races.

RASMUSSEN (cont'd)
Are there others...?

GERDA
A series back at the studio.

CONTINUED:

Rasmussen licks his lips, excited but uncertain...

RASMUSSEN

These are different... For these, I don't know... there may be a market.

Gerda has to confirm what she's heard:

GERDA

You're taking them.

RASMUSSEN

Well, yes...

He's surprised as she is.

EXT. HENRIK'S HOUSE, DAY

Lili hurries past the endless orange facades of a long row of terraced houses, Gerda's embroidered wrap flying in the wind behind her. Knocks at a door, breathless...

INT. HENRIK'S HOUSE, DAY

Henrik welcomes Lili at the open door...

HENRIK

Come in...

He closes the door against the world. Lili takes in the space. She's delighted by it -

LILI

I don't have long... Gerda's seeing Rasmussen.

Henrik gestures for Lili to sit. She settles on the couch.

HENRIK

I don't like all these lies.

LILI

She's very protective.

HENRIK

Why don't you just tell her about us?

LILI

I couldn't do that...

Lili seems a little panicked...

HENRIK

Sorry - I don't want to upset you.

CONTINUED:

He sits beside her, settles her...

HENRIK (cont'd)
Come here...

Lili lets herself be drawn closer to him... He strokes her face. Lili smiles, adoring. Henrik kisses her and she responds eagerly. His hand works its way down her body, between her legs. Lili squirms, uncomfortable. He persists... Lili bears it as long as she can, then gently:

LILI
No... Henrik...

HENRIK
Yes...

LILI
No...

Still in the moment of passion...

HENRIK
Einar...

Lili recoils, stunned... astonished...

LILI
What...?

HENRIK
(sweetly)
Come on... it's alright...

But Lili pushes him away, upset, bewildered...

LILI
I'm sorry, I don't understand...

Henrik's frustrated.

HENRIK
Einar... please...

Lili panics, grabs her things to leave, horribly exposed...

LILI
I don't know what you mean... I don't know what you want...

HENRIK
I want you!

LILI
No...

CONTINUED:

HENRIK

Yes... wait... Wait! Lili... Lili, come back...

But Lili bolts, away and out through the front door, leaving Henrik powerless, bereft.

EXT. HENRIK'S HOUSE, DAY

Lili rushes away, disorientated, along the row of garish facades, their orange now seeming grotesque...

INT. WIDOW HOUSE, DAY

Gerda struggles in with her portfolio. Heads for the kitchen, preoccupied by her experience with Rasmussen, is taken aback to see Lili at the table, Gerda's embroidered wrap pulled tight about her. Then Lili looks round - her face swollen and streaked with tears.

GERDA

(concerned)

Are you alright...?

Lili reaches out her hand and Gerda takes it...

EINAR/LILI

No...

She holds Gerda at arms length. Takes a deep breath.

EINAR/LILI (cont'd)

I've been seeing Henrik Sandahl.

Gerda reels, speechless as Lili clatters out, stumbling to the bedroom. Closes the bedroom door.

INT. WIDOW HOUSE, KITCHEN, 20 MINUTES LATER

Gerda sits - waiting. Finally, Einar comes back, in male clothing. Looks devastated.

EINAR

I thought perhaps you knew.

GERDA

(barely audible)

No.

EINAR

You always seemed to know everything.

GERDA

Not this.

CONTINUED:

He nods. Gerda's desperate confusion surfaces:

GERDA (cont'd)
So... are you in love with Sandahl?

Einar's appalled:

EINAR
No - I love you, Gerda, only you. But
Lili...

Angry tears well in Gerda's eyes.

GERDA
Why can't you just be honest about this!

But Einar's angry too...

EINAR
I'm trying! Gerda... please... I
need you to believe me. You of all
people to understand.

Gerda shakes her head, unable to take this in... He looks at
her, desperate imploring... Gerda struggles:

GERDA
Okay, I need you to tell me... when Henrik
and 'Lili' are together, they what...? They
kiss - we know that...

Einar nods, awkward. Gerda steels herself:

GERDA (cont'd)
Has it gone beyond that?

EINAR
No... No, Lili's never gone further than
that with a man. She... she wouldn't...

Gerda hears the implication... a bodyblow for her:

GERDA
There have been other men?

Einar sits on the bed, bites down on something difficult:

EINAR
There was another, but it was a long time
ago.

A chill runs through Gerda... Einar gathers his courage.

EINAR (cont'd)
That boy Hans... back in Vejle.

Gerda rubs her brow... everything's happening too fast...

CONTINUED:

EINAR (cont'd)
Lili fell for him. And he kissed her. Just once.

Einar darkens at the memory:

EINAR (cont'd)
But my father came in and he caught them...
He knocked Hans down - he was so angry...

Einar shakes his head... Gerda absorbs this. She looks up -
Einar looks pale, dark circles under his eyes.

GERDA
I don't know what to say.

He breathes suddenly, against pain...

GERDA (cont'd)
What...?

His eyes close, sweat forming on his brow.

EINAR
I'm so sorry...

He doubles over, clutching his stomach... moans horribly...

EINAR (cont'd)
I'm so sorry... I'm not feeling well.

He tries to get up from the table, struggles...

GERDA
Einar... what is this? What's happening...

She rushes to catch him as his legs give out under him...

GERDA (cont'd)
Einar... Einar...?

INT. RADIUM INSTITUTE, DAY

DR HEXLER closes the door firmly on Gerda, leaving her to fret in the waiting room. She settles for a long wait.

INT. RADIUM INSTITUTE, HEXLER'S CONSULTING ROOM, DAY

Hexler sits behind a desk. He's brisk but kind.

HEXLER
So, you saw Dr Andersen after a bout of severe nosebleeds, which you have come to believe coincide
(MORE)

CONTINUED:

HEXLER (cont'd)
with your stomach cramps, and on a
monthly basis.

Einar nods as he undresses.

HEXLER (cont'd)
How long have you been married?

EINAR
Six years.

Hexler takes notes as Einar continues stripping.

HEXLER
Children?

EINAR
No.

HEXLER
Is there regular copulation?

EINAR
Yes. Perhaps less now than...

HEXLER
Than before you started to dress as a
woman?

Einar's shocked to hear this out loud.

HEXLER (cont'd)
Mr Wegener I'm a specialist. You
may be embarrassed - I am not.

HEXLER (CONT'D) (cont'd)
So. Tell me about Lili. Where
does she come from?

Einar considers...

EINAR
Inside me.

Hexler seeks to inject a rational note...

HEXLER
You know the most likely
explanation for all this is a
chemical imbalance?

EINAR
Really...?

HEXLER
Onto the bed.

Einar climbs onto a raised doctor's couch.

CONTINUED:

HEXLER (CONT'D) (cont'd)
That would explain the pain, the
confused state of masculinity and
the infertility. Let's hope it is
that, because that we can cure.

He switches on the bright examination lamp, places his palm
against Einar's lower abdomen.

INT. RADIUM INSTITUTE, X-RAY ROOM, DAY

Einar is strapped to a hospital trolley by a couple of
nurses. Hexler watches through a window onto the room.
Einar grasps Gerda's hand, anxious, bewildered:

EINAR
I don't need to do this... There's
nothing wrong with me..

GERDA
Einar, that's not true.

The nurses nod to Gerda to leave.

EINAR
This can't be right...

The nurses wait...

HEXLER
(over tannoy)
Radiation is a miracle, Mr Wegener:
it destroys the bad and saves the
good.

GERDA
He says it will be over very
quickly...

The nurses lead Gerda out... Einar takes in the alien
machinery of the room. She watches helplessly through a
tinted window as the X-ray machine begins to WHIRR. Hexler
speaks into a funnel:

HEXLER (CONT'D)
Lie still, Mr Wegener...

The JUDDERING of the machine fills Einar's head... an
overwhelming assault on the senses... He closes his eyes,
vanishes into himself.

INT. RADIUM INSTITUTE, RECOVERY ROOM, NEXT DAY

Einar drowns.

CONTINUED:

HEXLER (O.S.)
Mr Wegener...?

Einar's eyes blink open. They are dark, unreadable.

HEXLER (cont'd)
How are you feeling this morning?

Einar considers the question for a moment, then -

EINAR
You've hurt Lili...

Hexler reads the distress in Einar's features. Einar closes his eyes again against the thought.

INT. RADIUM INSTITUTE, CORRIDOR, DAY

Hexler speaks to Gerda with new gravity.

HEXLER
I'm afraid your husband's aberrant thinking persists. Do you keep a lock on your wardrobe?

GERDA
Of course not.

Hexler is nervous, but his tone is threatening.

HEXLER
Mrs Wegener, you haven't been encouraging this delusion? You do understand that your husband's insane?

GERDA
No, that's not true...

Hexler turns, walks away. Gerda's furious...

GERDA (cont'd)
We trusted you, we came to you for help...

But Hexler keeps walking without a backward glance.

EXT. HARBOUR, MORNING, TWO WEEKS LATER

The early sun glances off the windows of the Widow House.

INT. WIDOW HOUSE, BEDROOM, MORNING

The dog looks up from the bed. Runs over to greet Gerda who has just come in from the studio. We see now the dog is keeping Einar company. Gerda speaks in a hushed voice.

CONTINUED:

GERDA
I won't be long.

EINAR
Don't worry about me, I'm fine.

Einar is ashen, eyes glazed, surrounded by two dark circles.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE RASMUSSEN'S GALLERY, DAY

Gerda hurries past the window. Inside we can make out a blur of Lili portraits on show.

INT. ART DEALER'S OFFICE, COPENHAGEN, DAY

Gerda in Rasmussen's office. He's unusually excited.

RASMUSSEN
Gerda! Where have you been?

GERDA
Away. Why, what's wrong?

RASMUSSEN
I sold the Lili portraits!

Gerda is astonished...

RASMUSSEN (cont'd)
I have enough interest to mount a full show.

Gerda's amazed.

GERDA
Well that's wonderful...

RASMUSSEN
And there's more - I had a call from the Etienne Dufour Gallery - they would like to represent you in Paris.

GERDA
In Paris...?

RASMUSSEN
You should go and see them.

Gerda's mind races...

GERDA
Oh - I can't travel just now...

RASMUSSEN
(firmly)
Gerda, this is your moment. You've waited
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
26/11/15

CONTINUED:

RASMUSSEN (cont'd)
 long enough... And these dealers can be
 fickle.

Rasmussen tuts, disapproving.

INT. WIDOW HOUSE, STAIRS LEADING UP, DAY

Gerda, in a hurry, stops to collect the mail from the foot of the stairs. There's an art magazine, a personal letter, then, underneath an envelope from The Radium Institute... Hexler's name on the back. Gerda freezes, then quickly opens it, reads: "*no choice... treated for perversion...*". She struggles for a moment, panic rising, then folds the letter, stuffs it in her jacket. A dark decision resolves itself in Gerda's face...

INT. WIDOW HOUSE, BEDROOM, DAY

Einar's asleep. Gerda packs, driven - sees Einar sit up.

EINAR
 What are you doing?

Gerda gathers her courage.

GERDA
 I've been asked to exhibit in Paris...

EINAR
 That's wonderful...

GERDA
 Yes. We have to go. Rasmussen said it
 would make all the difference...

Einar's incredulous...

EINAR
 I'm not sure I can do that...

GERDA
 You can. I'll take care of you...

EINAR
 But surely there's no rush...

GERDA
 (furious)
 Can't you just do this one thing for me?

But by the time her outburst is over, she's shaking...

EINAR
 Gerda, what's happening?

Gerda looks at him. He's waiting for the truth.

CONTINUED:

GERDA
I had a letter from Hexler...

EINAR
He wants to lock me up.

Gerda holds his hands, utterly determined:

GERDA
But he won't. Everything will work out for us. Really - I know it. You just have to trust me...

EINAR
I do...

Gerda steels herself:

GERDA
So. Is there anything to take care of before we go? Anyone you need to tell?

Einar considers a moment, then:

EINAR
No.

Gerda nods, relieved. She kisses his cheek, resumes packing. Einar concentrates on keeping breathing.

EXT. PARIS BY NIGHT

A dazzling archetypal view of the Seine and its light-studded bridges, the Cathedral of Notre Dame a bold silhouette in the background. VOICES come up, an EXCITED SOCIAL SOUND.

INT. ETIENNE DUFOUR GALLERY, NIGHT, 6 MONTHS LATER

An emphatically chic Parisian crowd admires a triumphant series of Lili portraits - a couple that we saw at Rasmussen's, and then several nudes, Lili imagined as an anatomically correct woman. A small group gathers round Gerda, their new star, and a still pale Einar.

GERDA
Einar's a painter too...

MAN IN GROUP
Oh? Do you exhibit in Paris?

EINAR
I think my work is a little...
introspective for French taste.

An ENTHUSIASTIC AMERICAN WOMAN interrupts...

CONTINUED:

ENTHUSIASTIC AMERICAN WOMAN
Excuse me - is the model here?

Einar rides it out. Gerda doesn't miss a beat.

GERDA
No, she stayed behind in Denmark.

ENTHUSIASTIC AMERICAN WOMAN
Oh, I was so hoping to meet her.

Einar looks down, away, affected... Gerda's swept off by the gallery owner, leaving Einar in the company of the paintings of his own banished self.

INT. PARIS APARTMENT, BEDROOM, NIGHT

Gerda and Einar in bed, close, tenderness on both sides. Gerda gently kisses Einar, then begins to work her way down his torso. He closes his eyes, wills himself to let this happen... Gerda begins to fellate him... He struggles with his breathing, intensely challenged

EINAR
Gerda... please... I can't.

She continues... He's overwhelmed with panic, pushes her off.

EINAR (cont'd)
No...

The attempt at intimacy is over, failed. Einar's full of guilt, distress. Gerda's hurt, lost. Neither moves - emotional paralysis.

INT. PARIS APARTMENT, STUDIO, - NEXT DAY

Gerda works on a self-portrait. Einar appears. Gerda hurries, to greet him, summons a playful mood, born of desperation.

GERDA
Will you sit for me? Just as you are. We haven't done that since art school. You enjoyed it then...

He smiles. She strokes his face, encouraged.

GERDA (cont'd)
The teacher suddenly at the mercy of the student. You found it exciting.

Gerda curls in to him. He gently extricates himself.

EINAR
I... I can't just now. I'm sorry.

(CONTINUED)
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CONTINUED:

Gerda feels ashamed, can't help herself:

GERDA

I miss you. I miss you working beside me.

Einar hesitates, then admits:

EINAR

I can't remember the landscape any more. I can't remember Vejle.

Gerda struggles to adjust to this, then:

GERDA

Well you could help me with this background. What does it need...?

Einar looks at the painting, can hardly pull it into focus...

GERDA (cont'd)

An kettlehole lake? A farmhouse, far off? *

He gently stops her -

EINAR

Gerda...

He's not going to do it. Turns away, goes out.

INT/EXT. PARIS APARTMENT

Gerda watches from the window: Einar in the street below, on through the crowds until he's out of sight.

EXT. RUE DE NUIT, DAY

Different part of town, different atmosphere. Prostitutes on the corner CLUCK indulgent as Einar passes. He looks self-consciously about, enters a dingy house as another man comes out. They barely acknowledge one another.

INT. 22 RUE DE NUIT, 1ST FLOOR LANDING, DAY

A hatch in a door slides open, and MADAME CARTON's eyes flash greedily from behind an iron grille.

INT. 22 RUE DE NUIT, ROOM NO. 3, DAY

The tiny room contains a chair and a bin. We hear GROANS from an adjoining room. There are two small windows with black shades drawn. Einar settles, slowly lifts one of the shades. Behind smudged glass, a worn-out girl in a corset and stockings grinds against a chair, sullen. Beyond her, we see

CONTINUED:

another dark window, another man with his nose pressed against it.

Einar studies the girl and gradually his body begins to mirror hers, a parody of female abandon. We see his reflection in the glass now, gradually eclipsing her... He breathes, an almost orgasmic GASPING breath of relief.

INT. HANS OFFICE, QUAI D'ORSAY, PARIS, A WEEK LATER, DAY

HANS AXGIL on the telephone. An impressively upholstered man, quixotic, appealing. The emphatically masculine room - dark wood infused with Hans' cigar smoke - overlooks a breathtaking view of the Seine. A sense of space, freedom.

HANS

Hey, he's playing with us! He knows the price...

Hans laughs, shakes his head. A quiet KNOCK and a secretary pulls a face around the door. Hans waves her away, impatient.

HANS (cont'd)

Look, I have to go. I have some Danish girl waiting to see me. But tell him we'll find another buyer, no problem. He's always the same!

INT. HANS AXGIL'S OFFICE, RECEPTION, DAY

Gerda's immediately on her feet, her strong right hand stretched towards Hans, unavoidable. She's no girl.

HANS

Hans Axcil..

He shakes her hand, intrigued. Gerda's a little over-eager.

GERDA

Thank you so much for...

HANS

Don't thank me yet - I can't represent you. I don't handle any contemp...

GERDA

Of course, no, I know that...

HANS

The reviews for your show were terrific, but your work is way out of my...

GERDA

Perhaps if you let me speak, things would be clearer...?

CONTINUED:

Hans stops, surprised. His secretary suppresses a smile.

HANS
Let you speak?

Hans takes her in, the tough fragility of her. Smiles.

HANS (cont'd)
I'm a much better listener when I'm eating.
He nods goodbye to his secretary, shows Gerda the door.

EXT. STREET NEAR HANS' OFFICE

They hurry along the street, approach the restaurant...

HANS
Well, I don't know why Rasmussen
gave you my number, but I'm happy
he did...

GERDA
I asked him, I wanted to meet you,
put a face to a name...

Hans smiles, encouraged. He holds open the door to a smart
brasserie. Gerda goes through ahead of him. As she does:

GERDA (cont'd)
I believe you were a childhood
friend of my husband.

Hans is left holding the door, alone.

HANS
(crestfallen)
You have a husband?

INT. SMART BRASSERIE, DAY

Gerda and Hans settle at a table. He nods to the sommelier.

HANS
A bottle of the Mersault...

The sommelier hurries away. Hans studies Gerda. Who is she?

GERDA
I'm married to Einar Wegener.

Hans is amazed.

HANS
To Einar?

CONTINUED:

GERDA
You remember him?

HANS
Of course I remember him. My God - we were
such friends. How is he?

Hans is excited, a boy again. Gerda can't help it, blurts:

GERDA
He told me that you kissed him once.

Hans is taken aback...

HANS
I what...??

But his amazement shifts as it comes back to him...

HANS (cont'd)
Oh no! You're right... We were fooling
in the kitchen. Einar was wearing his
grandmother's apron...

Hans laughs, amazed at his younger self:

HANS (cont'd)
We were just little boys, you know,
playing around? Anyway, Einar just
looked so pretty in that apron - I
kissed him! Next thing I know, his
father's chasing me out.

Hans shakes his head...

HANS (cont'd)
God - Einar. Hey - why didn't he come
today?

GERDA
He doesn't know I'm here. I don't think
he'd like me asking for help.

Hans' eyes flash, focused. This is what she's come for, then:

GERDA (cont'd)
We don't really know people here. And
Einar's... he's lost his way. He's not
working. He needs someone to represent
him - someone who knows, him. He needs a
friend.

Hans scrutinises Gerda, her pride at odds with her need. And
for the first time in her life, Gerda looks away, unable to
hold someone's gaze.

INT. PARIS APARTMENT, KITCHEN, DAY

Gerda on her way out, a little anxious. Hears the racket of Einar hammering at a frame.

GERDA
Einar...?

She finds him stretching a fresh canvas. He scarcely pauses.

GERDA (cont'd)
I've a new dealer coming over later. I'd like you to meet him.

EINAR
I don't want a new dealer. It doesn't make sense for me. I'm hardly working anyway.

GERDA
That might change.

EINAR
I don't think so. I'm happy helping you.

She goes to contradict, but he cuts her off:

EINAR (cont'd)
No dealer. Thank you.

GERDA
It's Hans Axgil.

Einar stops, astonished.

GERDA (cont'd)
Dinner at La Dauphine at eight, then back here to see the paintings.

Gerda's out of the door, leaving Einar alone with the news.

INT. LA DAUPHINE RESTAURANT, NIGHT

An intimate place by the Pont Neuf. An empty chair at the table. Gerda and Hans wait. Hans smokes.

GERDA
You know, Einar's still stricken with guilt about crashing your kite.

HANS
It was handmade, and I've had it since I was four! I'm glad you reminded me. I'll tease him about that.

CONTINUED:

GERDA
No - it's too cruel.

HANS
If he ever gets here. Perhaps he
doesn't want to see me?

GERDA
No - no, it's not that. We should order
without him.

HANS
Does he abandon you often?

GERDA
Of course not!

Hans is surprised at her strength of reaction.

HANS
I was joking.

A waiter stands over them, amplifying the moment.

EXT. MARAIS STREET, NIGHT

Hans' car rolls down the street.

INT. PARIS APARTMENT, NIGHT

Gerda takes out keys to open the apartment door...

HANS
I can come back another time, if you think
Einar would prefer it...

GERDA
Really. He's expecting you... and it will
do him good...

But they're both a little apprehensive as they enter.

GERDA (O.S.) (cont'd)
Einar...?

Gerda noses into the living room, Hans following. He spots a
painting - his face brightens -

HANS
I know this... the fjord at
Vejle... not far from our houses!

GERDA
Yes, Einar painted it just before we
left...

CONTINUED:

She goes ahead of Hans, sees: Lili on the chaise, in imitation of a pose in a painting on the wall behind her... dangerously charged, her cheek flushed, eyes shining. A tray with crystal glasses.

GERDA (cont'd)

Lili...

Gerda reorientates herself in the proceedings, turns to Hans who stands struggling to make sense of the scene before him:

GERDA (CONT'D) (cont'd)

Hans, may I introduce Lili Wegener - Einar's cousin from home.

Now Lili's up, her hand held out. Hans takes it...

LILI

You can't imagine how happy I am.

He holds on to her hand, instinctively kind...

LILI (cont'd)

We met before in Vejle, but you probably don't remember...

Hans is utterly wrongfooted...

GERDA

Can I take your coat Hans?

HANS

Of course...

He comes to, allows Gerda to relieve him of it. She takes it away. Lili continues, frighteningly animated...

LILI

A *digestif*, Hans? It's so chilly all of a sudden. I feel the cold these days. I don't know why...

HANS

Thank you.

Hans sits, but his eyes wander to the portraits that are now ranged around the room. A kaleidoscope of Lili.

LILI

I'm so sorry Einar couldn't be here. He told me: in Vejle you were his great friend. Both always plotting to getting away!

HANS

That's true...

CONTINUED:

LILI

Such a tedious place! He said you'd sit and look out together, beyond the fjord.. to the sea... to the future.

HANS

Oh, we had big dreams...

LILI

And you were the only one who let him paint in peace, who told him it was alright to be a painter.

Gerda returns to the room. Hans searches Lili's face for the remains of his old friend Einar.

HANS

He... used to sketch my portrait. Take a stone and draw me on the rocks at the side of the road.

GERDA

I didn't know that.

LILI

Oh yes.

Gerda turns to Hans:

GERDA

Would you like to see more of Einar's work...?

LILI

Do we have any?

Gerda's surprised, unsettled by the question.

GERDA

Yes, of course, Lili...

LILI

Oh, but couldn't we see it another time? I so want to hear more from Hans... Hans, are you married?

HANS

No...

LILI

Why not?

Gerda flinches, but:

LILI (cont'd)

He doesn't mind, do you...?

Gerda looks helpless. Hans takes over:

CONTINUED:

HANS

I've... been on my own a long time now.
I'm too set in my ways.

LILI

I think marriage is the single thing we
should all hope for in life.

HANS

Really?

Lili looks utterly buoyant...

LILI

It creates someone else, more than just the
two of you. It would be terrible never to
know that...

Her expression crumbles... Hans looks to Gerda...

GERDA

Lili...

Lili's dissolving...

LILI

Excuse me.

She hurries out towards the bedroom, clearly in distress.
Hans struggles to comprehend the situation...

GERDA

You... you ought to go...

HANS

No - let me help...

She turns, holds Hans' hands... the intimacy, intensity of
connection surprises him:

GERDA

Please - please - I'm sorry...

He resigns himself to leaving... as he reaches the door:

HANS

Goodnight Lili...

LILI (O.S.)

Goodnight...

Hans lets himself out.

In the bedroom, Gerda, still shocked, looks at Lili -
bewildered, afraid, head hanging.

LILI (cont'd)

I don't think he noticed anything, do you?

CONTINUED:

GERDA
I don't know...

LILI
No, I think I got out just in time.

GERDA
Sleep now. We'll talk more tomorrow.

LILI
Can I borrow a nightdress?

Gerda's shocked.

GERDA
No... we've never done that. Lili's never spent the night...

Einar confesses:

LILI
It doesn't matter what I wear. When I dream, they're Lili's dreams...

Gerda struggles to accommodate this, very reluctant... but she gives in, nods. What else can she do?

INT. PARIS APARTMENT, BEDROOM, LATER

Gerda in bed. Lili's sleeping head on the pillow next to her, where Einar's once was. Gerda turns out the light.

INT. PARIS APARTMENT, BEDROOM, DAY

Gerda arrives to find Lili in a bright dress with matching scarf. Shopping bags everywhere. Slight tension in the air.

GERDA
A new dress...

LILI
And this. Do you like it?

She hands Gerda a bright scarf...

GERDA
Yes. It's perfect for you...

Gerda hands it back.

GERDA (cont'd)
We're actually a little short of money at the moment.

Lili hangs the scarf back round Gerda's neck, hardly misses a beat:

CONTINUED:

LILI

I know, but now I'm back, I can sit for you again, can't I...? That worked well before, Gerda, didn't it...?

Lili and Gerda take each other in, on a new footing...

INT. PARIS APARTMENT, STUDIO, DAY - MONTAGE

Gerda paints Lili who has found a new stillness. A more serious spirit beneath the translucent skin. A sense of her growing into herself.

We see on the wall now a number of double portraits, telling the story of a developing negotiation - Gerda and Lili depicted together, with a sense of close friendship or a wistful attempt at coupledness.

Now Gerda paints with Lili advising... The two collaborating, a sense of shared vision.

And throughout, we see Lili fully imagined as a woman, and an increasingly idealised one - unrealistically lovely...

INT. ETIENNE DUFOUR GALLERY, RAINY NIGHT, ONE MONTH LATER

Another show of 'Lili' paintings. A lot of the paintings of the two as a couple, but Gerda is here alone. She feels it. She works the room, determined, then sees Hans, across the crowd. Misses a beat. They make their way toward one another. An awkward social kiss. Gerda's unusually brittle.

HANS

It's a good crowd.

GERDA

She's a popular girl. Thank you for coming.

HANS

Thank you for asking me. I thought you'd forgotten all about me.

GERDA

We've been busy.

HANS

Is Einar here?

GERDA

Einar hates this kind of thing.

HANS

That's a shame. For you, I mean.

CONTINUED:

GERDA
I don't mind.

Hans wonders about this... lets it go.

HANS
Is he well...?

GERDA
He's excited. We have an old friend coming to town: Ulla Fonsmarck, the dancer. Do you know her?

HANS
I don't think so. Could I take you to dinner? To celebrate? Someone ought to.

GERDA
No. Thank you.

Hans absorbs this, regroupes.

HANS
Gerda, have I offended you?

GERDA
No.

HANS
Gerda...

He rests his hand on her arm, pressing for some honesty... Gerda's cornered, the heat of the room, the nearness of Hans.

GERDA
I am still Einar's wife.

She brushes past him, into the crowd. A MAN'S VOICE calls:

MAN
Hans!

Hans' social mask slips quickly back into place.

Later: CLOSE ANGLE on Gerda, watching as a flirtatious woman WHISPERS something in Hans' ear. His eyes widen, he LAUGHS. Gerda looks away. Quickly sets down her drink and moves through the crowd toward the door...

A GALLERY EMPLOYEE frets as Gerda pulls on her coat.

GALLERY EMPLOYEE
At least take an umbrella...

GERDA
I'm fine, honestly...

CONTINUED:

GALLERY EMPLOYEE

If you just wait a minute someone will
drive you...

But Gerda's out in the rain, the party still in full swing.

INT. PARIS APARTMENT, KITCHEN, NIGHT

Gerda lets herself in, breathless. Lili's just arranging a
supper table, is surprised to see Gerda home so early...

LILI

Gerda...? Oh - you're wet through.

Gerda seems angry. Lili tries to stay buoyant...

LILI (cont'd)

Did it go well...? Tell me - how
was it?

GERDA

You'd know if you'd been there.

Lili falters, then points to the table... set with flowers...

LILI

I've made us a supper...

GERDA

You should have come.

LILI

A little sort of celebration...

GERDA

This is not how it goes! We do
these things together!

LILI

That's you and Einar.

Gerda's pent-up frustration begins to boil over...

GERDA

Stop playing that stupid, stupid
game!

LILI

Don't you say this is a game!

GERDA

You should have been there!

LILI

How could I be? Look at me!

This further enrages Gerda -

CONTINUED:

GERDA
Not everything's about you!

Gerda is suddenly overwhelmed with emotion -

GERDA (cont'd)
I need to see Einar.

Lili flinches, shakes her head, touches Gerda, tender.

LILI
Let me help...

Gerda cuts her off sharply, desperation building:

GERDA
I need my husband. Just get him!

LILI
I can't...

Lili's eyes cloud. Gerda moderates, already losing hope...

GERDA
I want to talk to my husband. I want to
hold my husband. I need him. Can you get
him? Can you at least try?

Lili's pained by the request. Her eyes plead, but Gerda's desperate, won't give up. Finally Lili shakes her head, desperately sorry. Gerda turns on her heel. The front door BANGS as she heads off into the night, leaving Lili alone and deeply sad.

EXT. JARDINS DE LUXEMBOURG

Gerda sits in the dark, watching the rain on the pond.

EXT. HANS AXGIL'S APARTMENT, NIGHT

Hans heads for his building, is amazed to see Gerda on the front step...

HANS
Gerda... what is it?

She gets to her feet...

HANS (cont'd)
You're soaked...

He goes to comfort her, and she embraces him... initiates a desperate snatched kiss before breaking away, upset. Hans pursues her...

CONTINUED:

HANS (cont'd)
Gerda... wait...

GERDA
I can't...

HANS
Wait...

He hurries to catch up.

INT. PARIS APARTMENT, BEDROOM, NIGHT

Lili transitioning to Einar. It happens awkwardly, and when Einar looks in the mirror, he's baffled by his reflection.

I/E. HANS' CAR/RAINY STREETS, NIGHT

Hans drives an exhausted Gerda, pulls up outside their building.

HANS
Will you be alright?

GERDA
I'm always alright.

He reaches for her hand. Gerda stiffens.

HANS
For God's sake. Take some kindness where you can.

He keeps hold of her hand. Gerda feels the warmth of him. Her eyes fill.

GERDA
Einar always comes back in the end. He always has...

HANS
Maybe this time... he just can't.

GERDA
I'm sorry.

Gerda shakes her head, gently rejecting Hans.

GERDA (cont'd)
I've never not finished a painting, I don't know how to give up.

Hans smiles, rueful. Finally lets Gerda take back her hand.

INT. PARIS APARTMENT, BEDROOM, NIGHT

Gerda appears in the doorway. Sees Einar sitting in the chair by the bed. She's struck by how vulnerable he looks. He looks up, and with genuine regret:

EINAR/LILI

I don't think I can give you what you want...

He looks away, ashamed. It's unbearable. Gerda approaches him. He looks like Lili dressed as Einar.

EINAR/LILI (cont'd)

I don't know how long we can go on like this.

GERDA

No.

She pushes in beside him. Einar/Lili lies in Gerda's lap. They hold each other into the night.

EXT. OPERA GARNIER, PARIS, TWO WEEKS LATER, NIGHT

Establishing shot.

INT. OPERA GARNIER, STAGE, NEXT DAY

Einar watches a group of dancers rehearse on stage. Sitting in the stalls, Gerda and Ulla are talking, as Ulla unbinds her feet. We see callouses over the knuckles of her toes, toenails broken and sore. She's used to this.

ULLA

He needs to see someone.

Gerda checks Einar's well out of earshot.

GERDA

You know what happened with Hexler.

ULLA

But he's so thin, Gerda...? There's something wrong with him.

Gerda looks across at Einar.

GERDA

Lili watches her figure...

Ulla lowers her voice -

ULLA

Look, there's a doctor - he runs the Women's Clinic in Dresden.

CONTINUED:

Gerda's face changes as she hears what Ulla's telling her.

ULLA (cont'd)
He's interested in men like Einar. Men who
are... different. Who are... confused.

Gerda's surprised.

ULLA (cont'd)
He's often in Paris.

Before Gerda can reply, Ulla is writing a name on a card -

ULLA (cont'd)
Just talk to him? It couldn't hurt, could
it?

- "Prof. Kurt Warnekros". She gives the card to Gerda. Gerda *
looks up at Einar. Finds him looking back, plainly exhausted.

INT. PARIS APARTMENT, MORNING

Gerda has made coffee. Einar comes in, dressed and with some
energy.

GERDA
Oh good... you're awake... how do
you feel?

Einar nods - pretty good. She pours him coffee.

GERDA (cont'd)
Come.

EINAR
I can't - I have somewhere to go...

He pulls on a jacket.

GERDA
Where?

He recoils from the question. Gerda gives up -

GERDA (cont'd)
I'm sorry - I don't know how to hold on to
you any longer.

EINAR
I know. But I love you and I'm
going to find an answer.

INT. BIBLIOTHEQUE NATIONALE, DAY

Einar at a desk piled high with books. He reads, driven, fascinated. We see the books: *The Normal and Abnormal Man, A Scientific Study of Sexual Immorality...*

EXT. PARK, LATER

Einar makes his way through the park. He looks bizarre in daylight, like a woman dressed as a man. He passes a couple of rough-looking younger men. One HISSES under his breath:

YOUNGER MAN

Lesbian...

Einar looks round, amazed, almost amused at the mistake... when the men recognise that Einar is - in fact - a man, they LAUGH, shocked. Einar keeps walking, conscious of the men shadowing him, making silly obscene noises and comments.

Einar presses on, anger and anxiety building as the men pursue. Now the men pull level with him, jostle, one moving ahead and rubbing his crotch.

YOUNGER MAN (cont'd)

You speak English? Are you a boy...

YOUNGER MAN 2

Or a girl...?

The first Young Man leers and LAUGHS and then we suddenly see his nose burst with blood as Einar's fist connects. The two men are caught by surprise as he lashes out with terrific energy, but they regroup and then Einar's down, fists and feet flying, the men beating him furiously, until they finally run away.

INT. HANS AXGIL'S OFFICE, QUAI D'ORSAY, PARIS DAY

Animated discussion between Hans and another man.

HANS

But I'm worried that will be too late. I can't hold the buyers much longer...

Hans' secretary puts her head around the door. He glances up, annoyed, but something in her face gives him pause. Behind her, a man appears... A beat before Hans recognises the badly swollen face.

HANS (cont'd)

Einar...

INT. HANS AXGIL'S OFFICE, BATHROOM

Hans tenderly cleans Einar's face with iodine.

EINAR
You're good at this.

HANS
I boxed for a while.

EINAR
Shame you weren't with me earlier.

Einar smiles at his own humour, but it hurts too much.

EINAR (cont'd)
Sorry I've never been to see you before.

HANS
That's alright. You're here now.

EINAR
I couldn't let Gerda see me this way. She has enough to put up with.

Hans acknowledges the truth of this, carries on.

HANS
Let me know if you feel light-headed.

EINAR
I'm permanently light-headed.

HANS
God, Einar, what's happened to you? I don't understand...

EINAR
Ha - nor do I. But I don't think it's anything new... Even in Vejle...

HANS
What?

EINAR
Well I was different.

HANS
It didn't take much to be different in Vejle! Surely, that's why we became friends?

Einar nods, accepts Hans' generosity. They take each other in, the absurdity of their situation settling between them.

EINAR
I wanted to thank you for looking after Gerda.

CONTINUED:

Hans is slightly uneasy.

HANS
It's no great hardship.

EINAR
I've let her down.

HANS
She doesn't think that.

Einar struggles a moment, then:

EINAR
Every morning I promise myself I'll spend the whole day as Einar. But there's so little Einar left.

HANS
You need building up...

EINAR
No. I think Lili's thoughts. All the time. Even here, now, I'm having to work so hard just to... to be me. To be this.

He gestures, hopeless. But Hans won't be defeated.

HANS
You think these things because you're exhausted...

Einar confesses.

EINAR
I think sometimes about killing Einar. It's only the thought that I'd be killing Lili too that stops me.

Hans is appalled, struggles for words.

HANS
You need to see someone. A doctor.

EINAR
No doctors.

Hans lays his big hand heavily on his friend's shoulder.

130 HANS
Yes, Einar. You have to try.

130

INT. DR BUSON'S CLINIC, ONE WEEK LATER, DAY

Einar in a reclining chair, beside a pull-down chart of the human brain. He's focused, engaged. BUSON seems excited.

CONTINUED:

BUSON

A confused state of identity.

He snaps down a diagram of the frontal lobe.

BUSON (cont'd)

I drill small holes - here, here and here...

He touches Einar's forehead... Einar blanches, surprised.

INT. DR MCBRIDE'S ROOMS, ONE WEEK LATER

A CLOCK TICKS in the self-conscious reconstruction of Freud's consulting room. MCBRIDE adjusts his pince-nez.

MCBRIDE

I've listened carefully and I'm afraid it's not good news.

From the couch, Einar waits for the diagnosis.

MCBRIDE (cont'd)

You're a homosexual.

Einar fails to stifle a bitter laugh.

INT. ETABLISSEMENT HYDROTHERAPIQUE, ONE WEEK LATER, DAY

Dr Mai observes Einar, fascinated, over tented fingers.

EINAR

Well, I don't really know what kind of help I need, but I can't go on living without knowing who I am.

DR MAI

Mm... very good...

Dr Mai nods vigorously, scribbles definitively onto a pad.

MAI

Please excuse me a moment...

He nods politely goes out, leaving Einar alone. Curiosity gets the better of Einar and he works his way to the desk, looks at the pad. As the sun falls across it, he can clearly see the imprint of a word: schizophrenic... Einar panics, grabs his coat...

INT. ETABLISSEMENT HYDROTHERAPIQUE, CORRIDOR, DAY

Dr Mai hurries down the corridor flanked by male nurses.

INT. ETABLISSEMENT HYDROTHERAPIQUE, DR MAI'S ROOM, DAY

Dr Mai and the men look on, impotent, as the lace curtain floats at the window onto the courtyard. Einar has gone.

INT. PARIS APARTMENT, STUDIO, NIGHT

Gerda comes home. The place is in darkness. She startles. Einar's been waiting for her. Gerda sits.

EINAR
Do you think I'm insane?

GERDA
Did a doctor say that?

EINAR
I'm sorry, I know we agreed no more... but look at me.

She does - carefully, seeing Lili, just below the surface.

GERDA
You're not insane.

Einar's grateful. Gerda fights emotion...

GERDA (cont'd)
Did I do this to you?

Einar doesn't understand...

EINAR
What...?

GERDA
Sometimes I think if it hadn't been for the paintings...

EINAR
Oh no... no, no. You helped bring Lili to life, but she was always... she was waiting...

GERDA
But now she's making you ill.

EINAR
I don't know what to do. The doctors can't help me.

Einar's at the end of the road. Gerda broaches the subject she most fears:

GERDA
Do you want to try one more...?

CONTINUED:

Einar is surprised. What does Gerda have in mind?

INT. RESTAURANT, DAY

Gerda and Einar sit, both nervous. Opposite, Warnekros observes Einar closely. A nervous tension in the air.

WARNEKROS

So what do you think would explain what you've been experiencing Mr Wegener?

EINAR

Professor Warnekros... the fact is... I believe I am a woman inside. *

GERDA

And I believe it too.

Einar looks to Gerda, grateful to hear her say this out loud.

EINAR

You probably think I'm insane. That we both are...

Warnekros smiles. He lights a cigarette, taking his time.

WARNEKROS

Well, there are people who think that I'm insane. But I think you're probably right.

Einar's amazed. Warnekros breathes, begins:

WARNEKROS (cont'd)

I've met another man like you.

Einar grasps Gerda's hand, filled with hope...

WARNEKROS (cont'd)

I pursued his case - against the wishes of my colleagues, of course.

Warnekros considers a moment, then:

WARNEKROS (cont'd)

I told him I could operate. To make him fully a woman. *

EINAR

Is that really possible?

Einar and Gerda struggle to take in the idea.

GERDA

What happened to the man? Was the operation successful?

CONTINUED:

WARNEKROS

It never took place. On the morning of the first operation, he ran away. He was too frightened.

EINAR

I wouldn't do that.

Warnekros manages a grim laugh. Sounds a warning -

WARNEKROS

Perhaps he was the smart one. The surgery has never been attempted before.

Gerda tries to get a grip on things:

GERDA

Professor Warnekros, what is this surgery...?

WARNEKROS

Two operations... The first to remove the male parts entirely. The second - once you were strong again - to construct a vagina.

Gerda looks to Einar - Einar's rapt.

WARNEKROS (cont'd)

An irreversible change, and a high risk of failure, of infection, complications.

Warnekros's hand waves through the air, suggesting the worst...

GERDA

It's too dangerous...

EINAR

It's my only hope.

Gerda and Einar exchange a look. Warnekros observes.

WARNEKROS

I leave for Dresden at lunchtime tomorrow.

He warns them, an unmistakably serious tone:

WARNEKROS (cont'd)

Mrs Wegener, I do believe I can help your husband. But he won't be your husband when I've finished.

EXT. TRAIN STATION, MORNING

A NOISY bustling platform. People rushing in all directions. Einar checks his ticket, about to board the train. Hans and Gerda are with him, almost swept away by the tide of people. Hans carries his case. They find a space in the crowd. Einar strains at his starched collar - his suit is emphatically masculine.

EINAR

I feel strange going dressed like this.

GERDA

It's important. Hans says the Germans will check your papers.

HANS

Don't take any chances. You're nearly there.

Hans and Einar embrace, then Hans holds him at arms length.

EINAR

I won't be seeing you again.

HANS

You know, I've only really liked a handful of people in my life and you've been two of them.

Einar half-laughs. Hans twinkles.

HANS (cont'd)

Take care. Take care. *

The men part. Hans withdraws. Einar turns to Gerda. What can he say? They hold one another close, intensely private.

GERDA

I wish you'd let me come with you.

EINAR

I can't. You love Einar. And I have to let him go.

They kiss, an emotional parting. She removes her bright scarf.

GERDA

Here, take this...

He takes it, smiles, and boards the train - just in time. The air fills with steam and NOISE. Gerda raises her hand to wave as the train pulls out, carrying Einar away. Einar fights tears as he moves off... Gerda runs alongside a little way, the gap that's opening between them suddenly unbearable. And then... the train has gone. Gerda turns to leave, finds Hans waiting. She walks past him, bereft.

(CONTINUED)
26/11/15

CONTINUED:

HANS

Gerda...? Let me give you a lift.

She barely turns, hands stuffed firmly in her pockets.

GERDA

I'm going to walk.

She strides down the platform, trying to outpace the pain, face set, body strong. She could walk like this forever.

INT. TRAIN COMPARTMENT, DAY

Einar watches the scenery fly by outside.

INT. PARIS APARTMENT, STUDIO, EVENING

Gerda prepares a fresh canvas.

INT. TINY BATHROOM ON TRAIN.

Einar opens a document - his passport. Takes a long look -

GUARD (O.S.)

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Next stop, Dresden. Dresden is the
next stop...

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INT. PARIS APARTMENT, STUDIO, DAY

Gerda, charcoal in hand, the canvas before her, waits to begin. Then there's a swift line on the canvas - the curve of a flank - conjures a nude Einar or Lili... Whatever name is attached to it now. She sketches the form of a body she loves. Strong magic to keep it from harm.

EXT. STREET, DRESDEN, AFTERNOON

Lili walks into town, a high road that gives her a panoramic view of the river.

INT. WARNEKROS'S CLINIC, RECEPTION, EARLY EVENING

RECEPTIONIST

Hello...?

LILI

Yes, my name is Lili, I'm here to see
Professor Warnekros.

*

RECEPTIONIST

Lili what?

CONTINUED:

Lili wonders, surprised at the question...

LILI
Oh... Lili Elbe. Yes. Like the river.

The Receptionist nods. Writes it down.

RECEPTIONIST
Please take a seat...

Lili settles... looks around. A sanctuary. For women.

INT. WARNEKROS'S OFFICE, EVENING

Lili sits with Professor Warnekros. Behind him, anatomical models of women's reproductive parts, plastic fetuses.

LILI
Must I really wait?

WARNEKROS
It's only a week, We need you to rest and gain some weight. We can't risk an infection.

Professor Warnekros rises, rests his hands on Lili's shoulders, paternal. Lili pats his hand, tender, submissive.

WARNEKROS (cont'd)
For what I'm attempting, you'll need to be strong. *

LILI
This is not my body, Professor. *
Please take it away. *

EXT. WARNEKROS'S CLINIC, DRESDEN, GARDEN, DAY

Lili amidst other young women patients, many pregnant. She concentrates on balancing a teacup on her knee. A VOICE:

URSULA (O.S.)
Do you think Spring will come early?

Lili looks round. A delicate blonde, URSULA, sits nearby.

URSULA (cont'd)
I saw you looking at the crocuses.

LILI
Oh - yes. You're having a baby.

Ursula nods, cradles her round belly.

URSULA
And you?

CONTINUED:

LILI
No - I'm ill inside. But Professor
Warnekros's going to make me better. He's
operating tomorrow.

*

URSULA
Will you be able to have children after?

The question catches Lili by surprise, sets her thinking...

LILI
I don't know.

URSULA
I hope so.

Lili smiles, full of optimism.

INT. WARNEKROS'S CLINIC, DRESDEN, LILI'S ROOM, EVENING

A particularly solicitous NURSE gives Lili a white pill.

NURSE
To help you sleep tonight.

Later - Lili at the sink, wipes a washcloth over her face.
The water runs a peachy colour as powder and rouge rinse
away. Lili looks in the mirror at Einar for the last time.

INT. PARIS CAFE, EVENING

Hans smokes his cigar. Picks a speck of tobacco from his
tongue.

HANS
Rasmussen called. The Dufour people want
you in their group show. I like the idea.

Gerda looks across at him, hasn't heard anything.

GERDA
I'm sorry?

HANS
The Dufour Gallery?

But Gerda shakes her head. Hans SIGHS, considers, then:

HANS (cont'd)
Gerda, why don't you go...?

GERDA
He asked me not to.

CONTINUED:

HANS

He wanted to protect you. You should be there. I'll go with you.

Gerda turns on him:

GERDA

No. If I go, it'll be alone.

HANS

Now you're sounding like Einar.

GERDA

I am like Einar.

Hans seethes, frustrated.

HANS

What do you want me to do Gerda?

GERDA

I want you to go away.

Hans is surprised, hurt.

HANS

Really?

Gerda looks down, fixes her eyes on a burn mark on the tabletop. She senses movement as Hans chair is pushed aside.

GERDA

No, I'm sorry...

But it's too late. Hans is gone.

INT. WARNEKROS'S CLINIC, DRESDEN, NEXT DAY

Einar/Lili sleeps a deep sleep. We pull out to see the operating theatre around her, Warnekros prepped to begin.

INT. PROFESSOR WARNEKROS'S CLINIC, DRESDEN,
CORRIDOR/LILI'S ROOM

*
*

Warnekros escorts Gerda along the corridor.

WARNEKROS

She only regained consciousness very briefly. We're having to give her a great deal of morphine, of course, so that's to be expected.

*

As they reach Lili's room, a CRY fills Gerda with fear.

*

CONTINUED:

WARNEKROS (cont'd)
It's nothing, I assure you...

*
*

Gerda is stunned to see Lili held down by ropes weighted with sandbags. She looks terrible, grey-green, exhausted. A nurse administers morphine, another soothes. *

NURSE
You mustn't move Lili. It only makes it worse...

GERDA
(under her breath)
My God...

The nurse pushes a paralysed Gerda gently aside -

NURSE
Excuse me...

The nurse slips a mask over Lili's face. She sucks gratefully at the numbing gas. Gerda comes to, galvanises herself, moves the nurse aside, takes hold of the mask.

GERDA
I'll do that. I'm here now. Don't worry,
I'm here...

The nurse looks to Warnekros - he nods. She withdraws. Gerda smooths Lili's brow, determined, devoted. *

EXT. WARNEKROS'S CLINIC, GARDEN, TWO WEEKS LATER, DAY

Lili dozes in her wheelchair. Gerda sketches. Lili smiles a little but her eyes don't open. Gerda notices, stops.

LILI
I can feel I'm getting better when I listen
to your pencil.

She opens her eyes.

LILI (cont'd)
You've always sketched me better than I
was.

GERDA
Have I...?

LILI
What you draw, I become. You made me more
beautiful, now you're making me strong.
Such power in you.

Gerda smiles. Lili reaches out and touches her hands. Lili's eyes shine, full of anticipation.

CONTINUED:

LILI (cont'd)
 Shall we go back to Denmark then, Gerda?
 Shall we go home?

INT. WIDOW HOUSE, COPENHAGEN. STUDIO, 1 MONTH LATER, DAY

Gerda CRACKS the lock on the shutters, pushes them open, flooding the long-dark room with light. Outside, the bustling harbour -

166 GERDA Lili! Lili, you're late... 166

Lili appears. She's excited - dressed, made up... Gerda holds out a little pill-box.

GERDA (CONT'D) (cont'd)
 So, these...

LILI
 Every two hours. And I have to eat something first. I have a few macarons in my bag all ready.

GERDA
 And these, only if you need them.

Lili salutes like a girl guide. Gerda marvels at her... so alive.

GERDA (cont'd)
 Good luck.

Lili leaves. Gerda breathes again. A new beginning.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE THE WIDOW HOUSE, DAY

Lili makes her way down the street, her confidence slowly building. A man lifts his hat as she passes and she looks away, surprised and pleased.

INT. FONNESBECH'S DEPARTMENT STORE, DAY

Lili hangs on the glamorous Manageress's instructions. Fits perfectly with the other painted dolls behind the perfume counter.

MANAGERESS
 And remember, making a purchase at Fannesbech's is not merely shopping. It's an experience! You lived in Paris, yes?

LILI
 Oh yes...

CONTINUED:

MANAGERESS

Let everyone know! The store is a stage - we are here to perform.

Lili looks out over the cut-glass bottles and endlessly reflecting surfaces, thrilled ...

INT. FONNESBECH'S DEPARTMENT STORE, DAY

Lili at work. She explains to an older female customer:

LILI

And in Paris, a lady would never dream of spraying the scent directly onto herself.

The woman listens, entranced by Lili's animated lecture.

LILI (CONT'D) (cont'd)

No, you spray the air, see, and walk into it...

Lili skips into the mist of scent.

LILI (CONT'D) (cont'd)

Voila..!

Lili skips into the mist of scent.

LILI (cont'd)

You try...

The woman is shy, but Lili's enthusiasm is so infectious...

Later: Lili rearranges the perfume bottles on the counter until they are perfectly aligned... a real satisfaction in the aesthetic endeavour.

INT. FONNSBECH'S DEPARTMENT STORE

Lili and her colleagues pour out of the store, demob-happy. Lili offers them sweets from her handbag.

GIRL

It's so unfair - you've got the sweetest tooth and the narrowest hips in the whole store...

GIRL 2

How do you manage it, eating so much sugar?

LILI

Oh, the trick is to eat nothing else...

CONTINUED:

They all LAUGH. Lili moves to go...

GIRL
See you tomorrow!

The Girl hurries into the arms of her waiting boyfriend.
Lili watches, intrigued. Until -

GIRL 2
Lili - are you coming...

And Lili rejoins the throng.

EXT. STREET RUNNING PAST CANAL, DAY

Lili walks along the canals, savouring the journey. The sun sparkles on the water, and all around people are meeting and talking, a world of life that she finally feels part of...

INT. WIDOW HOUSE, GERDA'S SIDE OF THE ROOM, NIGHT

A quiet, dreamy atmosphere. Gerda lies awake, watches Lili's lamplit silhouette on the other side of the dividing sheet. Lili writes in her notebook. After a while:

GERDA
You know one night last week, I had the strangest dream.

LILI
What...?

GERDA
I dreamed you were getting married.

Lili's silhouette sits up...

LILI
Do you think I ever will...?

GERDA
Who knows? So many strange things have happened.

GERDA (cont'd)
It's not so long ago we were married... you and me.

Gerda waits in the silence for some response.

LILI
You and Einar.

GERDA
I know it was Einar. But really it was you and me.

CONTINUED:

They both absorb this idea...

Lili's silhouette waits a moment, then lies back down. Gerda curls into herself.

EXT. CAFE ON HARBOUR, DAY

Lili passes the cafe on the Harbour as usual, glances over... Her footsteps slow... Sitting alone at a table is a familiar face: Henrik looks up from his newspaper: Lili. He looks shocked... then delighted...

HENRIK
Is it really you...?

Lili smiles...

LILI
I believe so.

They begin to laugh, lit up with euphoria. Henrik hurries to pull out a chair for Lili to sit down...

LATER:

Lili and Henrik at a table together. Henrik is stunned.

HENRIK
So what you're suggesting is..

Lili tilts her head, waiting, pleased with herself...

HENRIK (cont'd)
That a doctor...

Henrik glances around, lowers his voice...

HENRIK (cont'd)
...intervened...

LILI
To correct a mistake in nature. I have a passport to prove it.

HENRIK
He made you a woman...?

Lili bridles slightly, corrects him kindly -

LILI
God made me a woman. The doctor cured the sickness that was my disguise.

Henrik pushes, still struggling. Lili's confidence ebbs...

CONTINUED:

HENRIK
A real woman?

*
*

The question hangs between them.

INT. WIDOW HOUSE, STUDIO, NIGHT

*

Lili sits writing in her notebook, all seriousness. Gerda looks up from reading. Lili takes a pill, resumes writing.

GERDA
You're going to need a new notebook
if you carry on like this.

LILI
When Professor Warnekros suggested
I keep a diary... well, I thought
I'd never have anything to write.
But it helps, to make sense of
things.

*

GERDA
Perhaps I should try it.

Lili almost smiles.

*

GERDA (cont'd)
Do you never think of painting?

Lili's surprised.

GERDA (cont'd)
You might be good at it.

LILI
I want to be a woman, not a
painter.

GERDA
Well, people have been known to do
both. I'd be curious to see what
you painted, that's all. Sometimes
it's hard to know what's in your...

Lili takes a pill, testy. Gerda's can't help herself:

GERDA (CONT'D) (cont'd)
Didn't you just take one of those a
minute ago?

LILI
Gerda, I know what I'm doing.

Gerda backs off.

LILI (CONT'D) (cont'd)
I'm going to get some fresh air.

CONTINUED:

Lili gets her coat and Gerda's wool wrap. But as Lili heads for the door -

LILI (cont'd)

You know sometimes I wonder why you let me go through all this if you thought everything would be the same afterwards.

Gerda's wrongfooted...

GERDA

I didn't. But I promised Einar I'd take care of you.

LILI

For goodness' sake, Gerda - Einar is dead. We both have to accept that. You took care of me, now I have to take care of myself. I have to have a life of my own. And you need to do the same.

Lili calls the dog, heads for the door, and is gone. Gerda is left alone to process this exchange...

INT. WIDOW HOUSE, NEXT DAY

In the studio, Gerda reorganises, determined - paints, brushes, solvents everywhere. She has already taken down most of the sketches from her studio wall. It is blank - a clean sheet. She considers...

EXT. PHONE KIOSK ON HARBOUR, DAY

Gerda paces, exercised, all nervous indecision. Resolves to enter the booth... We hear a PHONE RINGING.

INT. HANS AXGIL'S OFFICE, PARIS, RECEPTION, DAY

The Receptionist at her desk, on the phone:

RECEPTIONIST

Yes, in London... Is it urgent?
Should I could ask him to..?

EXT. PHONE KIOSK ON HARBOUR, DAY

Gerda, on the phone, disappointed, wrong-footed.

GERDA

Oh, no that's fine. Just tell him... just say...

CONTINUED:

She struggles to compose a message.

GERDA (CONT'D) (cont'd)
It's a beautiful day in Copenhagen.

She hangs up, discomposed. Feeling like a stupid teenager.

EXT. HARBOUR

Gerda passes the fish stall, greets the female fishmongers - then sees Lili, up ahead, on Henrik's arm. Henrik sees Gerda... alerts Lili. Gerda nods politely and quickly heads in the opposite direction.

INT. WIDOW HOUSE, NIGHT

Food cooking on the stove. Gerda drinks a glass of wine, thoughtful. Lili arrives home, on eggshells... *

LILI
It's not what you think. Henrik is homosexual. There's nothing between us. But I should have told you I'd seen him. *

GERDA
No you shouldn't... *

LILI
He's just a friend, Gerda. Someone to talk to.

GERDA
(without rancour)
Because you can't talk to me. *

Gerda pours wine for Lili. She accepts the glass. *

LILI
About some things, no. *

Gerda lifts her glass, proposing a muted toast, but Lili has something more on her mind... *

LILI (cont'd)
I've made a decision. I'm going back to Dresden. For the second operation. *

Gerda's blood runs cold.

GERDA
It's too soon.

CONTINUED:

LILI
No, it's time. I need to finish
what I started.

GERDA
You're not strong enough...

LILI
Professor Warnekros thinks I am... *

GERDA
Warnekros...? He hasn't seen you.

LILI
I've made up my mind.

Gerda shakes her head, disbelief...

GERDA
It could kill you.

LILI (CONT'D)
I'm going on Friday. Will you come
with me?

Gerda's mind races to absorb the announcement...

GERDA
I won't help you to hurt yourself.

Lili bites down on it:

LILI
Gerda, will you come...?

INT. WARNEKROS'S CLINIC, LILI'S ROOM, RAINY NIGHT *

Lili's sitting up in bed, Gerda's bright scarf around her
shoulders. Warnekros holds Lili's wrist, checks the pulse. *

WARNEKROS
This will be harder than the last
operation? You understand that. *

LILI
Yes I do. *

A note of warning. *

WARNEKROS
It's complex surgery. *

LILI
And I'll sleep all the way through
it! *

CONTINUED:

WARNEKROS
Yes you will, but...

LILI
You'll be there when I wake up.

Lili half-jokes:

LILI (cont'd)
I want a husband who looks just
like you!

Then, more thoughtful:

LILI (CONT'D) (cont'd)
And maybe a child. Like a real
woman.

Warnekros nods, kindly, but...

WARNEKROS
One step at a time.

He gets up.

WARNEKROS (cont'd)
Get some rest, now. Goodnight.

He smiles, goes to the door. Gerda's waiting outside. They
cross in the doorway, polite but not warm.

Lili smiles, seeing Gerda. Gerda sits on the bed.

LILI
You're still angry with me.

GERDA
I'm not angry with you, I'm worried
about you.

Gerda lays her head in Lili's lap, tired with anxiety. Lili
strokes her hair. We feel the depth of love between them.

LILI (CONT'D)
You heard my wish Gerda. When no
one else could hear me, you did.

Gerda's eyes begin to fill. She collects herself.

GERDA
Come. We both need our rest. I
can sleep in the chair, there...

LILI
Off to your little hotel.

GERDA
I don't mind...

CONTINUED:

But Lili insists.

LILI
Are there chocolates on the pillow?

GERDA
Cigarette burns.

Lili laughs, kisses Gerda's cheek.

LILI
Take this... There's a chill in the
air.

Lili goes to hand over Gerda's scarf, but:

GERDA
You keep it. For now.

Lili smiles, a little mischievous. But then a look between
them. Gerda's afraid.

LILI
I'm going to be fine.

Gerda nods, determined to believe it.

GERDA
Yes.

LILI
Sleep well.

GERDA
Goodnight.

Lili is determinedly bright. Gerda takes her coat and bag.
The door closes behind her. A couple of moments pass and
then Lili begins to dissolve, releasing tears of overwhelming
fear and anticipation...

INT. DRESDEN HOTEL, RECEPTION, NIGHT

The CONCIERGE approaches, solicitous.

GERDA
Room 9.

The concierge turns to get Gerda's key. The sound of a
cocktail piano in an adjacent room serves to reinforce her
isolation. But then she sees reflected in the mirror - a
familiar face -

GERDA (CONT'D) (cont'd)
Hans...?

CONTINUED:

Gerda turns, barely holding herself together... he catches her in a heavy, passionate embrace. A huge sense of relief, reunion, trust.

HANS
It's alright.

Gerda nods, greatly comforted by his presence.

GERDA
Yes.

HANS
Everything will be alright.

Gerda hangs on to Hans, desperately wanting it to be true.

INT. WARNEKROS'S CLINIC, LILI'S ROOM, DAWN

A nurse helps a quietly determined Lili into a surgical gown.

INT. OPERATING THEATRE

Warnerkros, scrubbed in, serious, ready to begin.

WARNEKROS
Good luck, everybody.

Lili anaesthetised. We stay on her face, hear voices, the clank of instruments. Rain beginning... the sound of it increasingly intense as the wind comes up too...

INT. WARNEKROS'S CLINIC, RECEPTION, NEXT MORNING

Morning light streams in, harsh, unforgiving. Hans holds the door for Gerda. She's barely inside when the Receptionist jumps urgently to her feet.

RECEPTIONIST
Professor Warnekros would like a
word... *

Gerda's faces register anxiety. Hans gestures - he's backing off. He'll wait. Gerda hurries away.

INT. WARNEKROS'S CLINIC, DRESDEN, MORNING

Warnekros and Gerda walk purposefully along the corridor - *

WARNEKROS
She lost a lot of blood. Now we're
struggling to keep the fever down.
There's a chance it will burn
itself out, but...

CONTINUED:

They arrive at the doorway to Lili's room. Warnekros shows Gerda in. Lili sleeps fitfully, slick with sweat. Warnekros's clearly worried. Gerda's astonished at how ill she looks.

*
*

WARNEKROS (CONT'D) (cont'd)
(deeply regretful)
I'm sorry... I have to be honest.
The prognosis is not...

He can't finish, but Gerda barely hears him anyway...

GERDA
Go away... thank you. Leave us
alone.

*

Gerda hangs in the doorway, blocking it, until Warnekros is obliged to turn away. We follow him, walking back down the corridor, alone, excluded, burdened by failure.

*
*
*

INT. WARNEKROS'S CLINIC, DRESDEN, GARDEN, NIGHT

Heavy spots of rain begin to splash down. Most of the hospital in darkness. A light glowing in one room.

INT. WARNEKROS'S CLINIC, DRESDEN, LILI'S ROOM, NIGHT

Gerda in the chair at Lili's bedside, mopping her brow. The rainstorm beating outside. A nurse enters with a jug of water. Gerda nods, grateful.

INT. WARNEKROS'S CLINIC, DRESDEN, CORRIDOR, DAWN

A cleaner works her mop and bucket down the corridor. Hans sleeps in a chair up ahead.

INT. WARNEKROS'S CLINIC, DRESDEN, LILI'S ROOM

Lili sleeping, calmer now. Her face translucent in the morning light. Gerda sleeps in the chair beside her. Gerda wakes, disoriented for a moment, then looks at Lili, sleeping peacefully, clearly cooler now... Gerda feels her brow - no heat there any more... Gerda's relief is palpable. She smooths Lili's fringe, then gets up, opens the curtains - wide - the sun just starting to show in the rain-washed sky. She turns back to see Lili's eyes open.

GERDA
Lili...?

Lili struggles to speak.

CONTINUED:

GERDA (cont'd)
I'm here... just lie still... It's
alright...

Lili smiles through her medicated haze. She sees Hans hurry
in... thrilled to see her awake...

HANS
Oh, Lili. How are you?

Her voice is faint, cracked. She takes in Hans and Gerda:

LILI
I am... entirely myself.

Hans laughs gently.

HANS
I'll tell Warnekros she's awake.

Hans goes. Gerda sits back beside Lili, fixes her hair.

GERDA
You know you had us worried...

Lili's frail, otherworldly, but her eyes burn bright. She
looks to the window.

LILI
Can I go outside, Gerda? Into the
garden?

GERDA
I think you should rest...

But Lili takes Gerda's hand, a great sense of calm in her.
She looks at Gerda. Gerda still there, always there.

LILI
Please...

EXT. CLINIC GARDENS

Gerda wheels Lili out in a wheelchair, Hans holding the door
open for her to pass. A glance between him and Gerda, then
he leaves the women alone.

Gerda is settles herself in a chair beside Lili, rests her
hand on Lili's arm. The birch trees in Spring leaf. A light
breeze makes them quiver. Lili's breathing is shallow. We
feel the depth of love between the women, and the
precariousness of their situation.

LILI
You mustn't worry about me any
more, Gerda.

CONTINUED:

GERDA

It's an old habit. I'm slow to change.

LILI

How have I ever deserved such love?

Gerda struggles to remain composed.

LILI (cont'd)

I'm sorry you were frightened. There's nothing to be afraid of any more.

GERDA

No.

LILI

You know, last night, I had the most beautiful dream... I dreamed I was a baby in my mother's arms... and she looked down at me... and called me Lili...

Gerda is amazed, deeply moved...

GERDA

Lili...

Lili's features arrange themselves into an expression of perfect joy as she sinks back into something which Gerda gradually sees is deeper than sleep...

GERDA (cont'd)

Lili...

Gerda clutches the hand... No response... Smooths the brow... still nothing...

GERDA (CONT'D) (cont'd)

Lili...?

Gerda presses Lili's hand against her cheek, overwhelmed with grief. Lili looks blissfully happy. The dawn light grows stronger in the garden...

INT/EXT. JUTLAND, DAWN, TWO WEEKS LATER

Hans' car rolls into the bleak landscape. Hans and Gerda inside. Gerda looks out - at a landscape she knows with absolute intimacy, although she's never been here before. It's all here... the imagery from Einar's paintings, singing with life... A wild stretch of rocky green under soft northern light, a row of beautiful black-limbed trees, bent over, but not broken, by the wind...

EXT. CLIFFS OVERLOOKING KATTEGAT SEA, JUTLAND, MORNING

Hans tails Gerda. She battles the incredible gusts of salt air, the bright scarf flying like a flag at her throat. She pushes on, closer to the cliff edge... Finally she reaches an amazing vantage point, is stunned by the view: a rectangle of ferociously stormy sea, silver waves whipped by a wind that stings, relentless. We hear the RUSTLE and PUNCH of the weather going at her. Hans joins her. They stand there looking out until they can hardly breathe any more.

Hans takes her arm to steady her, but as she turns toward him the wind rips up under the bright scarf, snatches it into the air. Gerda GASPS - a moment of loss - but then, something else... As Hans hurries to try and catch it -

GERDA

No - leave it..! Leave it..

She pulls him back, watches it dance, tears of joy in her eyes...

GERDA (CONT'D)

Let it fly...

The scarf swoops up and dives down, curls and rolls, as free as child... a girl at play. Gerda clutches her coat at her breast, almost delirious at the beauty of it. Hans watches with her - the absurdly joyous spectacle of it, a stunning farewell. And as the scarf dances out from the cliff, out to sea... into eternity...

ENDS