Document Citation

Title	**Fanny & Alexander**
Author(s)	Ingmar Bergman Ewa Fröling
Source	*Embassy Pictures*
Date	
Type	press kit
Language	English
Pagination	
No. of Pages	42
Subjects	Josephson, Erland (1923), Stockholm, Sweden Fröling, Ewa (1952), Stocksund, Stockholm, Sweden Wallgren, Gunn (1913-1983), Gothenburg, Sweden Ahlstedt, Börje (1939), Stockholm, Sweden Bergman, Ingmar (1918-2007), Uppsala, Uppland, Sweden Malmsjö, Jan (1932), Lund, Sweden Kulle, Jarl (1927-1997), Rebbelberga, Sweden Malm, Mona (1935), Stockholm, Sweden Andersson, Harriet (1932), Stockholm, Sweden Schollin, Christina (1937), Stockholm, Sweden Edwall, Allan (1924), Sweden Nykvist, Sven (1922), Moheda, Sweden

Film Subjects Fanny och Alexander (Fanny and Alexander), Bergman, Ingmar, 1982

FANNY & ALEXANDER

A FILM BY INGMAR BERGMAN

EMBASSY PICTURES

AN EMBASSY PICTURES

RELEASE

FANNY & ALEXANDER

A FILM BY

INGMAR BERGMAN

Starring:

EWA FROLING

ERLAND JOSEPHSON

and

introducing

PERNILLA ALLWIN

as FANNY

and

BERTIL GUVE

as

ALEXANDER

"FANNY AND ALEXANDER"

CAST

PERNILLA ALLWIN.....FANNY EKDAHL, 8 Years Old

BERTIL GUVE.....ALEXANDER EKDAHL, 10 Years Old

and (in alphabetical order)

BORJE AHLSTEDT.....CARL EKDAHL

HARRIET ANDERSSON.....JUSTINA, Kitchen Maid

MATS BERGMAN.....ARON

GUNNAR BJORNSTRAND.....FILIP LANDAHL

ALLAN EDWALL.....OSCAR EKDAHL

STINA EKBLAD.....ISMAEL

EWA FROLING.....EMILIE EKDAHL

ERLAND JOSEPHSON.....ISAK JACOBI

JARL KULLE.....GUSTAV ADOLF EKDAHL

KABI LARETEI.....AUNT EMMA

MONA MALM.....ALMA EKDAHL

JAN MALMSJO.....BISHOP EDVARD VERGERUS

CHRISTINA SCHOLLIN.....LYDIA EKDAHL

GUNN WALLGREN.....HELENA EKDAHL

"FANNY AND ALEXANDER"

CREDITS

Production Company.....Cinematograph AB for The Swedish Film Institute, The Swedish Television SVT 1, Sweden, Gaumont, France, Personafilm and Tobis Filmkunst, BRD

Executive Producer.....JORN DONNER

Production Manager.....KATINKA FARAGO

Unit Manager.....EVA IVARSSON, BRITA WERKMASTER

Production Secretary.....BENITA LUNDQVIST

Administration.....LARS-OWE CARLBERG, INGRID BERGMAN, FREDRIK von ROSEN

Accountant.....HELLEN IGLER

Unit Publicist.....BERIT GULLBERG

Sales.....The Swedish Film Institute, LENA ENQUIST

Length.....197 mins. (Eastmancolor, Screen ratio 1:1.66)

DIRECTION AND SCRIPT.....INGMAR BERGMAN

Assistant Director.....PETER SCHILDT

Cinematographer.....SVEN NYKVIST, A.S.C.

Camera Assistants.....LARS KARLSSON, DAN MYHRMAN

Second Unit Cameraman.....TONY FORSBERG

Stills.....ARNE CARLSSON

Continuity.....KERSTIN ERIKSDOTTER

Editor.....SYLVIA INGEMARSSON

Sound and Mixing.....OWE SVENSSON, BO PERSSON, BJORN GUNNARSSON, LARS LILJEHOLM

-more-

Music.....DANIEL BELL
BENJAMIN BRITTEN: Suites for cello Op. 72,80,87-
FRANS HELMERSON
ROBERT SCHUMANN: Piano quintet in F major-
MARIANNE JACOBS with the Fresk Quartet
Military band in Stockholm conducted by PER LYNG

Art Director.....ANNA ASP

Technical Manager of the Set.....KAJ LARSEN

Assistants.....ULRIKA RINDEGARD, ANNMARGRET FYREGARD

Props.....JAN ANDERSSON, GUNILLA ALLARD, CHRISTER EKELUND, JOHAN HUSBERG

Set Decorator.....SUSANNE LINGHEIM

Construction Designer.....JACOB TIGERSKIOLD

Special Effects.....BENGT LUNDGREN

Laterna Magica.....CHRISTIAN WIRSEN

Puppets.....ARNE HOGSANDER

Stunt.....JOHAN TOREN

Costume Designer.....MARIK VOS

Wardrobe.....KRISTINA MAKROFF, ELSIE-BRITT LINDSTROM, ROBERT NORDLUND, KJELL SUNDQVIST

Assistants.....LENAMARIE WALLSTROM, INGABRITT ADRIANSSON, ANNE MARIE BROMS, MARIA LINDMARK, ANNCHRISTIN LOBRATEN-HJELM, GOREL ENGSTRAND

Tailors.....WIVECA DAHLSTROM, ANN KATRIN EDMARK, SOLVEIG ERIKSSON, ROSEMARIE KARLSSON, LENA PERSSON, CAROLINE VON ROSEN, NICLAS SVARTENGREN

Make Up.....BARBRO H. HAUGEN, ANNA-LENA MELIN, LEIF QVISTROM

-more-

Wigs.....CECILIA DROTT, KJELL GUSTAVSSON, MARIANN VIRDESTAM

Gaffers.....ULF BJORCK, TORBJORN ANDERSSON, RAGNAR HANSSON, KENT HOGBERG, TED LINDAHL

Grips.....DANIEL BERGMAN, ULF PRAMFORS

Construction foreman.....PERCY NILSSON

Carpenters.....OLLE BERG, KENNETH BLOMQVIST, JAN ERIKSSON, NISSE JOHANSSON, BERT MARTINSSON, BERTIL SJOLUND, BJORN SINCLAIR, HANS STRANDBERG, ANDERS SODERLUND

Master painter.....ROLF PERSSON

Painters.....ANNE MARIE DAVIDSSON, TUA EKHOLM, KENT ERIKSSON, YLVA HAMMAR, TEDDY HOLM, CECILIA IVERSEN, DICK JACOBSSON, LISBETH JANSSON, ANDREW JONES, DONALD KARLSSON, BENGT LANDEGREN, ANNA SKAGERFORS, TOM STOCKLASSA, BENGT SVEDBERG, SIGRID WILLIAM-OLSSON

Teacher.....MARIE RECHLIN

Runner.....AKE DAHLBOM

Hostess.....MILDRED BRANDT

Laboratory.....Film Teknik/NILS MELANDER

FANNY AND ALEXANDER

Production Notes

"Fanny and Alexander is the sum total of my life as a filmmaker," says Ingmar Bergman, the Academy Award winning director of "Scenes from a Marriage" and "Cries and Whispers." It is part comedy, part ghost story, and it centers on a huge family in a 1907 Swedish provincial town, moving through the lives of everyone from grandmother Helena to grandchildren Fanny and Alexander. In between is an assortment of drunks, romantics, puritanical bishops, magicians, and illusionists.

Bergman took two years to write the screenplay and once again the internationally acclaimed director has assembled a cast drawn from the best of the Swedish theatre, starring Pernilla Allwin as Fanny and Bertil Guve as Alexander, and co-starring Borje Ahlstedt, Harriet Andersson, Allan Edwall, Ewa Froling, Erland Josephson, Jarl Kulle,

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Mona Malm, Jan Malmsjo, Christina Schollin, and Gunn Wallgren. The Embassy Pictures release was produced by Cinematograph for The Swedish Film Institute, SVT/1, Gaumont, Personafilm, and Tobis Filmindkunst, with Jorn Donner as executive producer and Bergman's long time associate Sven Nykvist serving as cinematographer.

When "Fanny and Alexander" premiered in Sweden, it received a fantastic reception at the box-office and magnificent reviews in newspapers across the country. "It is impossible not to be seduced, not to laugh at Bergman's unabashed delight in telling an optimistic, life affirming story," wrote Monika Tunback-Hanson in the Goteborgs-Posten, and Bergman himself admits that the film is "a declaration of love for life," made in response to a friend who one day asked, "You who find life so wonderfully rich and entertaining, why do you make such serious, depressing, black films?" "Fanny and Alexander" is Bergman's joyful reply.

The film opens with the Christmas celebrations at the Ekdahl mansion and covers one year in the family's life. During the lavish holiday get-together we come to know the family members and their servants. Helena Ekdahl is a widow, comfortable in her role as head of the noisy group. A former actress, she has handed the management of the

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family-owned theatre to her eldest son, Oscar, and his wife, Emilie.

Oscar is a good man, well liked, an excellent theatre manager, and a very bad actor. His wife, Emilie, is a gifted actress and a beautiful and energetic woman. Fanny and Alexander are their two children.

Helena's second son is Professor Carl Ekdahl, a loud, good natured man who is also a steady drinker and perpetually short of money. His wife Lydia is a big-bosomed German woman who despite her twenty years in the country has yet to learn the language.

Helena's third son, Gustav Adolf Ekdahl, is a restaurant manager and businessman. He is spontaneous, uninhibited, and has an avid interest in young women. No one takes offense at his kindly, delightful hedonism - not even his plump, warm spirited wife, Alma. The only one who is slightly disturbed by his sexual escapade with the nursemaid, Maj, is the couple's 18-year-old daughter, Petra.

As the Christmas celebrations come to a close, Helena lingers into the night with a family friend and old lover, Isak Jacobi, who is a Jewish antique dealer, banker, and part-time illusionist.

In order to convey the beauty of a snow-filled Swedish winter at the turn of the century, Bergman traveled to

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his native town of Uppsala and asked Marik Vos to design the costumes. She had created the graceful white gowns that flowed against the scarlet backgrounds in "Cries and Whispers," and for "Fanny and Alexander" she supervised a team of 17 designers and seamstresses to produce 260 period costumes. Production manager Katinka Farago attended to the meticulous detail that went into setting the stages at the Stockholm studios, where the majority of filming took place.

Bergman and his crew managed to vividly convey the playfulness and vitality of the Ekdahl family. Then the director shatters the image when Oscar Ekdahl dies of a stroke while playing the Ghost during a rehearsal of "Hamlet." "The film has its sombre moments," Bergman explains, "but if you have no dark passages, you cannot see the lighter side."

Oscar's funeral is officiated by Bishop Edvard Vergerus, a stern, handsome man with a harsh, puritanical notion of religion. He comforts Emilie and eventually the two are married. But he insists that his new wife and her two children enter his house without possessions. They are to leave their old lives completely behind them, and within months the Bishop's love turns tyrannical.

Alexander is openly rebellious and Fanny is despondent. The Bishop tries to force the family into total submission,

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taking a whip to Alexander and locking Emilie in a special room to break her spirit. Emilie dare not escape because without the Bishop's consent to a divorce, the courts would find her guilty of desertion and grant him custody of Fanny and Alexander.

Isak Jacobi now shows that he is a true and reliable friend. With the aid of a huge wooden chest and almost supernatural cunning he succeeds in abducting the children from the Bishop's palace, hiding them in a secret room in his mysterious apartment. Meanwhile, Emilie puts strong sleeping pills into the Bishop's soup and leaves the palace for good while her husband cries out helplessly, pleading for her to stay. Then, while secure behind the walls of Isak Jacobi's strange apartment, Alexander meets up with the old man's nephew, Ismael. Through a magical process Ismael is able to put Alexander's thoughts into words despite the young boy's protests and a remarkable series of events begin to unfold at the Bishop's palace. The Bishop's sickly aunt accidentally knocks over an oil lamp, setting fire to her nightgown. Blazing like a torch she goes screaming into the Bishop's bedroom. The next day they are found dead, the flames having consumed them both.

Emilie and the children return to the Ekdahl mansion, happily welcomed by Helena and the rest of the family. The

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film ends in joy, as it began. It is a summing-up of all the tragic, mystical, and comic elements in Bergman's work, inspired by many of the experiences of his own childhood. It is a celebration of people and the changes they must face, and Bergman takes his leave by showing us Helena sitting comfortably alone at the end of the film reading lines from a play by Strindberg:

> Anything can happen, anything is possible and likely. Time and space do not exist.
>
> On a flimsy ground of reality imagination spins out and weaves new patterns . . .

INGMAR BERGMAN

Biography

Ingmar Bergman was born on July 14 in Uppsala, Sweden. His father was a clergyman and later moved the family to Stockholm. Religion and reflections on ethical problems have been the main subjects of many of his earlier films and his treatment of the priesthood has changed with the years, as can be seen from "Fanny and Alexander."

Bergman started working with student theatre groups in the late 30's. In 1942 he was employed as a scriptwriter at Svensk Filmindustri, the country's leading production company, where he polished scripts and wrote the screenplay for "Frenzy," which was directed by Alf Sjoberg. In 1944 Bergman was appointed director of the Municipal Theatre in Helsingborg and later worked in Goteborg and Malmo. His first film as a director, "Crisis," was made in 1945.

In 1962 Bergman was appointed director of the Royal Dramatic Theatre in Stockholm and has continued to produce plays for them ever since. During the 40's and 50's he continued sharing his time between films and stage. His first commercial success abroad was "Smiles of a Summer Night," which gained a prize at the Cannes Film Festival and was immensely successful in France and the United

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States, the two countries that have contributed more than any others to Bergman's fame.

For many years Bergman declined to make films abroad. However, in 1976, upset by conflicts with the Swedish tax authorities, he moved to Munich and was engaged as director at the Residenz Theater. Since then Bergman has produced all of his dramatic films abroad, with the exception of "Fanny and Alexander," which marks a sort of homecoming.

Bergman has scripted and directed about 50 feature films, as well as a documentary about the island of Faro where he owns a house and has shot quite a number of his films. Since 1963 Bergman has been working with the same cameraman, Sven Nykvist, who received an Academy Award for his work in "Cries and Whispers." Many of the same actors have been used in his films and most of them have gained their international recognition through him, notably Liv Ullmann, Max von Sydow, Ingrid Thulin, Bibi Andersson, and Harriet Andersson. Ingrid Bergman probably gave the most memorable performance of her career in Bergman's "Autumn Sonata."

Bergman wants to continue working for the stage, for television and opera, but considers "Fanny and Alexander" the end of his career as a director of theatrical motion pictures. Bergman is married to Ingrid Karlebo and two of his children from previous marriages appear in "Fanny and Alexander."

EWA FROLING

Biography

Ewa Froling (Emilie Ekdahl) was born in 1952 and grew up in a middle-class family in Stocksund outside of Stockholm. As a child she went to ballet classes and though acting was not at all part of the plan, her interest in the stage gradually blossomed. After studying theatre in Stockholm Ewa was admitted, at the age of 17, to the drama school of Malmo. Following three years training in Malmo, Ewa returned to Stockholm to work at The Stock-holm Municipal Theatre and Klara Theatre. She also appeared in several television productions and in 1976 she made her film debut in "The American Dream." Since then she has starred in Jan Halldoff's "Chez Nous" (1978) and Gunnel Lindblom's "Sally and Freedom" (1981), and she is currently a member of The Royal Dramatic Theatre.

ERLAND JOSEPHSON

Biography

Erland Josephson (Isak Jacobi) was born in Stockholm in 1923 into a well-known intellectual family. Today he is one of Sweden's foremost actors, directors, authors, and scriptwriters. In 1945 he made his debut as an actor at the Helsingborg Municipal Theatre, where Ingmar Bergman was theatre head and stage director. In 1946 he published a collection of poems entitled "Circle," and the same year wrote a book of short stories under the title "The Mirror and the Concierge." Over the years he has written a considerable number of poems, short stories, novels, and plays and several important scripts for television.

In 1956 he joined The Royal Dramatic Theatre in Stockholm and replaced Ingmar Bergman as its head some ten years later. Josephson's success has not been confined to his native Sweden. Following his performance in Bergman's "Face to Face," he played a variety of prestigious roles in a succession of reputable international pictures, including Liliana Cavani's "Beyond Good and Evil," in which he played Nietzsche, Damiano Damiani's "I'm Afraid," Dusan Makavejev's "Montenegro," and Brusati's "To Forget Venice." At home, he has written and directed a number of

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productions for Swedish television, his works often being characterized by an intelligent, dry humor. Most recently Josephson made a film of his own - a sophisticated comedy entitled "The Marmalade Revolution." He now divides his time and talents between acting, writing, and directing.

GUNN WALLGREN

Biography

Gunn Wallgren (Helena Ekdahl) was born in Gothenburg in 1913 and entered the Training School of the Royal Dramatic Theatre in Stockholm in 1934. Her first husband, screen director Hampe Faustman, utilized her enormous capacity in some of his best films, and in 1961 she married stage director Per-Axel Branner and became a a great star of the theatre as well. Gunn Wallgren's screen appearances have been comparatively rare but have always attracted attention. In 1981 she received The Golden Bug, Sweden's highest film award, for her performance in Gunnel Lindblom's "Sally and Freedom." She is today probably the most distinguished actress on the Swedish stage and in private life probably the most reticent.

BORJE AHLSTEDT

Biography

Borje Ahlstedt (Carl Ekdahl) was born in Stockholm in 1939. He made his first stage appearance at the age of nine as the prince in Cinderella. After leaving school he worked as a driver and office caretaker, but soon discovered that he rarely spoke of what he saw and experienced, but rather what he thought he saw and experienced. The stage was his salvation, and Ahlstedt is now one of the leading performers at The Royal Dramatic Theatre. His film breakthrough came in 1968 via Vilgot Sjoman's "I am Curious Yellow/Blue." Ahlstedt is also an active stage and television director.

JAN MALMSJO

Biography

Jan Malmsjo (Bishop Edvard Vergerus) was born in Lund in 1932, the son of a variety-artist couple. As a seven-year-old he played the boy in an operetta by Peter Kreuder. In 1950, aged 18, he was admitted to the Training School of Stockholm's Royal Dramatic Theatre where he began to attract favorable notices. His breakthrough came in Musset's "Le Chadelier" on the stage of the Gothenburg Municipal Theatre. It later came to light that he was also a talented singer with a personal style. He sang in various entertainment programs on radio and television, did likewise on the stage, cut records and even composed his own music and lyrics. He has played leading roles in most of the Swedish productions of American musicals, including "Cabaret."

Hailed as Sweden's best musical artist by public and press alike, Jan Malmsjo was able at the age of 40 to demonstrate his considerable talents in serious drama as well. Since the early 1970's Jan Malmsjo has been a regular performer on Sweden's foremost stage, The Royal Dramatic Theatre in Stockholm. He also directs light theatrical works and remains a much loved television entertainer.

JARL KULLE

Biography

Jarl Kulle (Gustav Adolf Ekdahl) was born in 1927 and his initial stage experience was at The Royal Dramatic Theatre's training school between 1946 and 1949. His first appearance on the screen was in "Youth on the Slide" in 1947. More often than not Kulle has impersonated a wicked seducer of persuasion and charm. At The Royal Dramatic Theatre in 1953 he played the title role in Moliere's "Don Juan" and Romeo in Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet," delighting audiences and critics alike with his portrayals of different romantic characters and his swashbuckling grandeur. He has also appeared in classical roles from Strindberg, Pirandello, and O'Neill.

Jarl Kulle made his break into films in Bergman's "Smiles of a Summer Night" in 1955. He then created various roles, one of them in Sweden's biggest comedy hit of all time, "Do You Believe in Angels?," made in 1960 with Kulle as the male lead. In 1959 Kulle was asked to play Higgins in "My Fair Lady" and the musical ran successfully for several years. He has appeared in many Bergman pictures and has also directed and acted in two of his own films. He is now a member of The Royal Dramatic Theatre.

ALLAN EDWALL

Biography

Allan Edwall (Oscar Ekdahl) was born in 1924 in Krokom, a village in northern Sweden. In 1949 he moved to Stockholm and planned to become a writer. While supporting himself with various office jobs he studied at an adult evening school. Then he joined the training school of Stockholm's Royal Dramatic Theatre and from 1952 to 1955 he was a member of its repertory company. For the ensuing three years Edwall free-lanced for The Swedish National Theatre and The Malmo Municipal Theatre, where his collaboration with Ingmar Bergman began. Allan Edwall returned to The Royal Dramatic Theatre in 1958 and remained there for five years. He then served for several seasons as artistic director for The Scala Theatre in Stockholm.

Originally known as Sweden's leading comedian, Edwall has become more and more versatile over the years, winning acclaim for his performances in works by writers such as Tolstoy, Ionesco, Frisch, and Strindberg. His popularity has continued to grow, enhanced by several television series, and in the 60's and 70's he was named "Actor of the Year" and "T.V. Personality of the Year" on more than one occasion. He is also a director and writer and is now increasingly active in Swedish radio, television drama, and film.

MONA MALM

Biography

Mona Malm (Alma Ekdahl) was born in Stockholm in 1935. She made her first appearance in a Swedish Film as a ten-year-old and continued as a "Shirley Temple actor" for some years. She left school at eighteen and attended a private drama school. She was appearing in revue when she was accepted at The Royal Dramatic Theatre in Stockholm. Since then she has appeared in one success after another. She has also acted successfully in television plays and has had short, intensive periods making films, including Bergman's "All About These Women."

HARRIET ANDERSSON

Biography

Harriet Andersson(Justina) was born in Stockholm in 1932. She started her career in revue and theatre before joining the Municipal Theatre in Malmo in 1953 where Ingmar Bergman was chief director. She sprang to international film fame in Bergman's "A Summer With Monika" in 1952. Since then Harriet Andersson has added depth and variety to her performances and achieved stardom in many Bergman pictures such as "Smiles of a Summer Night" and "Through a Glass Darkly." She is one of Sweden's leading stage actresses and has also appeared in a number of international features.

CHRISTINA SCHOLLIN

Biography

Christina Schollin (Lydia Ekdahl) was born in Stockholm in 1937. She played a small part in a film in 1956 and two years later entered the Training School of The Royal Dramatic Theatre, where she scored a resounding success as Ophelia in "Hamlet" and as Nina in "The Seagull." After graduation she joined the theatre's professional company and played leading roles in works ranging from Shakespeare to Wesker. As a free-lance actress she appeared in "Sunday in New York," "Cactus Flower," and "Black Comedy." Along with her stage career, Ms. Schollin has starred in some 20 pictures, directed by most of Sweden's top directors. She has been singing since she was a little girl and between the ages of 11 and 15 performed regularly in a chorus on Swedish Radio. She has acted in countless television plays of all styles and has made numerous appearances in variety programs. Although perhaps best known for her screen portrayal in "Dear John," she gained an international reputation for her performance in "Do You Believe in Angels?"

SVEN NYKVIST

Biography

Sven Nykvist was born in Moheda, Southern Sweden in 1924. His parents were Lutheran missionaries who spent most of their lives in Africa. During his childhood, Nykvist boarded with relatives near Stockholm. After finishing high school, he studied at the Stockholm Municipal School for Photographers, worked for a while as Assistant Cameraman at the Sandrew Studios, and for nine months practiced as cameraman at Cinecitta in Rome. Nykvist got the chance to be Director of Photography at the age of 21. He photographed almost 40 films before beginning his collaboration with Bergman on "The Naked Night" in 1953. They have worked together ever since.

In between shooting for Bergman, Nykvist has collaborated with several directors including Louis Malle, John Huston, Roman Polanski, Bob Fosse, Paul Mazursky and others. He has also worked on television productions, written several books, and directed three films in Africa, all related to his parents' experiences. Sven Nykvist is a member of the American Society of Cinematographers and he received an Academy Award for his work in Bergman's "Cries and Whispers."

Ewa Froling:

A Delightful Journey Across Ingmar Bergman's Tapestry

"In my life I feel a constant need for the sea.
For solitude.
A veranda in the gentle autumn rain.
An open book.
A glimpse of the distant horizon.
My child..."

In my life I feel a constant need to fulfill myself as an actress. A job filled with sensuality, sensitivity, humility, playfulness, gravity, pain, audacity, imagination. Reality translated into pleasure.

A working process that seems to be a child of contradictions. An embryo in the script who, when she steps out to face her audience, leaves her protective womb. A job that demands strength both of body and mind and well-fitting shoes on feet that are planted firmly on the ground, in no danger of floating off into a vacuum.

He wove a tapestry, the good and gracious Ingmar Bergman. In pale green and icy blue on a red background streaked with black. Wreathed into that tapestry was my Emilie. The pure-bred filly I came to know, understand and accept over seven months.

Accompanied by Ingmar Bergman, I went on a journey, a delightful journey that made me believe I was invaluable as a companion. Beauty, talent and intelligence he had packed into my luggage. With a feeling of being absolutely indispensable, I made my entrance as Emilie.

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She gave me her life in the Ekdahl family, as actress, mother to Fanny and Alexander and wife to Oscar, who adored her above anything on earth. Upheld and loved. A life of security and serenity. A world that was smashed to smithereens when her beloved Oscar dies and she is left with sole responsibility. A solitude that demands a stocktaking of priorities. She seeks the truth. The bishop of the town enters her life as the Apostle of Truth. Settlement piles upon settlement. Family, theatre, friends, bibelots are discarded at the bishop's slightest whim. Together with her children she organizes a new life for herself. With this man of burning spirit she embarks upon a painful voyage filled with disastrous consequences.

A tapestry that has so many Bergmanish features. A job to be done -- intense concentration. A world between four eyes only, a haven of trust and understanding. An atmosphere of creativity. Silence! Camera! Instant concentration in time and space. Minds that are mobilized. A sidelong glance at reality.

Thank you! (Bergman says this at the end of each take.) A sigh of satisfaction. Or a fresh deep breath for another take.

To film is to piece together a mosaic with millimeter precision from material that is always full of surprises. To film is to be in constant search of the silver coin in the Christmas pudding. Because when you're on your way home after a long day at the studios you know that the result is irrevocable. A feeling of touch, an expression, celluloid on a reel which a year later is exposed to the public. A product light years away from the

legitimate stage. Theatre is a will-o'-the-wisp that disappears when the play is ended and the curtain comes down.

My relationship to Emilie is not yet born. It will be delivered when she confronts her audience. A moment that will leave a sad after-taste. But time heals all and my void will be filled with a forward look to a new unknown. So I hope that Fanny and Alexander will be an uncommonly beautiful Christmas present wrapped in red-based, pale green, icy blue paper streaked with black and topped with a giant golden bow.

*

Ewa Froling grew up in Stocksund on the outskirts of Stockholm in a "madhouse" surrounded by apple trees and bushes heavy with raspberries and gooseberries. A garden that stimulated imagination, a rich world full of trust and life. An only child, a day-care center child, because both her parents worked full-time. "I learned to look after myself at an early age. A step towards independence. I danced, climbed trees and scratched my knees. A child full of fantasy and forever climbing."

After she left school she continued to dance. Applied for entrance to stage training school. Was taken on. Applied to the Royal Dramatic Theatre training school. Entered. Applied to the Stockholm Municipal Theatre and was given a part. Worked at Klara Theatre. Applied for work at the Royal Dramatic Theatre and remained there.

"I have been privileged. Before the age of 30 I had played three of the most desirable roles in the world of literature:

Celimene in "The Misanthropist," Isabella in "Measure for Measure" and Joan in "Saint Joan of the Stock Yards," the part with probably the greatest range of all. I have had the pleasure of working with Alf Sjoberg, Benno Besson and Ingmar Bergman.

Most of the characters I've portrayed have had a special profile: reliant, straightforward, independent and forceful women."

Among earlier screen performances: Jan Halldoff's Chez Nous and Gunnel Lindblom's Sally and Freedom.

FANNY AND ALEXANDER

I—Prologue

A river with a fairly swift current and several small cataracts and waterfalls flows through the town. On a steep eminence lies the castle, a large medieval pile, the residence of the governor. In the midst of a meekly monotonous cluster of houses stands the cathedral, a monument to the piety of a bygone age—there the bishop fulminates. The town also boasts a university heavy with tradition and a theater, where plays are performed every day of the week. Other amenities include a newly erected hotel, showy rather than handsome, two small, industrious horse-drawn trams that crisscross the town, an unpretentious railway station, a district with stone houses for the well-to-do and the professors, and one with ramshackle dwellings for artisans, students, and day laborers. Shipping on a modest scale plies the river, while industry comprises a couple of good-sized mills that grind the corn from the fertile plain. There is also a smelly tannery with a shoe factory attached to it. A shady park and a famous botanical garden complete the picture of unassuming prosperity, solid self-esteem, and rather sleepy cultural and scientific activity. It is a world unto itself, worrying very little about the storms and portents of the times. The new dogmas and the revolutionary ideas are heatedly discussed in drafty student lodgings reeking of paraffin. Otherwise the town lives

untroubled by the world. The local newspaper keeps an eye on law and order, considering it an obvious duty not to alarm the six thousand loyal subscribers.

Life follows a definite rhythm. In winter the town lives normally, in spring it is seized by a strange excitement, in summer it sleeps peacefully, to be awakened in September by the autumn rains sweeping over the plain and by the students' noisy entry into lecture rooms, lodgings, and eating places. The theater opens its season and the academic orchestra tunes its instruments, the students in the choir clear their throats with pea soup and hot punch, the schoolchildren make their way in misty morning hours through the wet streets strewn with leaves, the professors mount their desks, and the town's own extremely respectable brothel is once again visited by the officers of the nearby garrison. Then comes the winter. In November the first snow falls, a bitter wind blows from the north, the town's aging widows catch cold and die of pneumonia. On Sundays the funeral bells toll under the iron gray sky. Like beetles sluggish with the cold, crapulous students crawl through the snowdrifts to the eating place to get a hair of the dog, and to warm themselves by the stove. Now and then a sleigh jingles with false gaiety through the streets. There is a dull roar from the cataracts, and the black water swirls along between the edges of the ice; it is the hour for life-weary suicides. At the theater the great tragedies are performed and smoke from the wooden stoves hangs like a mist above the roofs weighted with snow. Suddenly one day it is spring; there it is, swathed in its chill white light, invincible. The town lives in a fever of activity. The students go up for their exams and defend their doctor's theses, one ball succeeds the other in a whirl of festivity. The pawnbrokers are kept busy: The winter coats are put away and the tailcoats are taken out. The little old ladies who have survived the winter adorn the cemetery or the park; it is time for weddings and boundless expectations. The gardens are a

froth of fruit blossom and lilac, the girl students v
light dresses, the brass band from the garrison giv
concert nearly every evening, and the inevitable Eng
drawing room comedy is given at the theater.

Then one day the town falls asleep. All is quiet; t
the roar of the cataracts sinks to a murmur. The days
long, the evenings still. The students are on sum
vacation; the well-to-do hang sheets at the windows
spread dustcovers over the furniture, wrap the cha
liers in tulle, and roll up the carpets. They go to t
summer cottages by the sea. The less well-to-do move
to their small gardens on the plain or to rich relation
the big estates. The great bell of the cathedral meas
the quarters and the hours; the sunlight blazes dow
empty streets. On the white benches in the esplanad
those who are left behind, the lonely ones. The t
sleeps without stirring in the white heat over the p

This is the town's rhythm and breathing; mo
those who live in it think it is a good town, the
imaginable. They are not worried about the future
have no reason to be ashamed of the past. The ge
opinion is that the authorities rule with wisdom.
king protects the authorities' decisions and watches
the citizens' safety. God, finally, holds his hand ove
king, and the waltz from *The Merry Widow* is play
a duet in almost every family that owns a piano.

II

The theater was built at the beginning of the ninet
century and will soon be a hundred years old. S

wealthy townsmen who had a passion for forest walks, cold baths, and culture clubbed together and defrayed the cost of the temple. Splendor and dilapidation succeeded each other. Early in the 1860s the place was bought by a prosperous businessman, Oscar Ekdahl, who had just married a prominent young actress from the capital. He was a wise and broad-minded man and let his wife take over the running of the theater, on condition that she herself did not perform. A son was born who was also given the name of Oscar. Unlike his mother he became a rather mediocre actor. When he married a drama student in 1889, his mother retired and handed over the management to the young couple. She was left a widow a year later and divided the large handsome apartment in the square by putting up a wall in the middle of the dining room. The young couple moved into the sunnier part of the house. The wife made rapid progress in her profession, in a few years becoming a famous actress. Her husband managed the theater with competence and care. A small but good company was engaged. Their activities flourished and were even spoken of in the capital. Oscar and Emilie enjoyed a modest happiness, their only sorrow being that the marriage was childless for more than ten years. Then three children were born in quick succession: Amanda, Alexander, and Fanny. Of this and much else I shall speak later.

At the time of our film the theater is well run but rather old-fashioned. True, electric lighting has been installed on the stage and in the auditorium, but that is all. Newfangled things like spotlights and rheostats are unknown aids. The old stage lighting is quite sufficient: floats and battens with small sleepy bulbs in different colors. The stage still consists of broad knotty planks with a steep rake from the back wall to the prompter's box. Up in the dark flies hang aged forests, stormy seas,

low farmhouses, stately banqueting halls, and one or two terrifying dragons that no one has the heart to get rid of. The actors' dressing rooms are on two levels next to the stage, the women's to the right and the men's to the left. The managerial offices are squashed into three small rooms just inside the stage door. Oscar Ekdahl prefers to receive his guests in his private dressing room, the only one with running water and tolerably comfortable furniture. Under the sloping stage are two cellars, one on top of the other. They contain antiquated and now discarded wooden machinery for scene changes, trapdoors, and other mysterious things. In the upper cellar, on endless shelves, the properties are kept. The furniture is stored in the lower cellar and is shifted by means of a quaint old lift that is worked by hand. In one corner of the bottom cellar is a heavy iron grating, under which is a stream of swirling black water, apparently bottomless. A horrible crime is connected with this water and this grating, possibly also a ghost. In the back wall are two high, narrow windows; sometimes in the afternoons, when rehearsals are over, the caretaker opens the shutters. The sunlight strikes in with long, slender, sharply defined rays and the fine stage dust spins in the draft. All is quiet, as the back of the theater opens onto a yard with a few shady trees. Now and then a bird flies in by mistake. Flapping in fright and cheeping incessantly it rises into the dark toward the catwalk and the blackened rafters. When the bird is silent the stillness becomes magic: Voices then silenced can now be heard; beingless shadows and the imprints of fierce passions can be glimpsed. The dusty air, cut through by the sword blades of sunlight, grows thick with voices long since mute and movements that have ceased.

The curtain is of canvas and made to look like material draped in huge folds and adorned with braids and gold tassels. The back of it is gray and patched, crossed with

narrow wooden slats. At eye level is a peephole so that the actors, themselves unseen, can watch and count their audience. To the left the stage manager has his little cubbyhole with bells and speaking tubes as well as two ropes, one for the howling of the wind, the other for the rumbling of the thunder. Wafting above the stage is an ineradicable smell of dust, smoking stoves, and dead mice.

The auditorium is intimate and shaped like a horseshoe; it contains stalls with sixteen rows of seats upholstered in shabby red plush, a dress circle, an upper circle, and a gallery. The dress circle is divided into boxes, each having six chairs and its own entrance. The upper circle has narrow wooden benches covered with red cloth. The gallery has standing room only, but it costs a mere trifle and you can bring your own chair if you like. To right and left of the proscenium are two elegant and spacious boxes. One is reserved for the theater's board of directors and the other for the governor and the mayor—or the king, if he should take it into his head to visit the town's playhouse, something that has never yet occurred.

On the ceiling of the auditorium are paintings by a famous son of the town. They show the Greek gods tumbling among the clouds, paying homage to a young Thalia, who bears the soft regular features of Helena Mandelbaum. This is the elder Oscar Ekdahl's tribute to his wife and it cost him several thousand riksdaler, a fact that he often pointed out with pride. Round the divine scene hang six chandeliers, which give the theater a mild and beautifying glow. The difference between the front of the house and backstage is marked. Out here everything is spic and span and well cared for. Behind the scenes it is dirty, dusty, and dilapidated.

Provision has also been made for bodily well-being. On a level with the dress circle and with a view over the

square is the restaurant, which is run by Oscar's younger brother, Gustav Adolf Ekdahl. Here the dishes are so appetizing, the drinks so exactly the right temperature, and the waiters so obliging that some theatergoers prefer Gustav Adolf's material edification to his brother's more intellectual one. At times the hilarity is so great that a drama student is sent as express messenger to request moderation of the mirth, which is seriously disturbing a famous soliloquy or a very moving scene. Otherwise the brothers are on most affectionate terms.

Finally a word about the audience. There is a performance every evening for eight months (the theater is closed on Christmas Day, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday). The program is changed every four weeks, and on the whole the same people come to see all nine plays. It is a faithful if conservative audience. Oscar Ekdahl is chary of making experiments. Strindberg and Ibsen are regarded with the utmost suspicion and are therefore seldom performed.

III

When the elder Oscar Ekdahl married Helena Mandelbaum, he bought not only the theater but also a handsome brick house on the other side of the square. The family moved into the top floor, which was furnished with every conceivable convenience. They kept open house, and Helena was always surrounded by a swarm of admirers. When Oscar died, his widow suggested that

the apartment should be divided into two halves. This was done by putting up a wall in the middle of the spacious dining room. In the wall was an almost invisible jib-door, shaded by a tall tiled stove on one side and a massive sideboard on the other. The door was never used by the grown-up members of the family.

So the younger Oscar Ekdahl and his pretty wife Emilie moved into the sunnier side of the apartment that looked out on the town park with its shady elms, lush lawns, flower beds, fountains, and statues.

Relations between the young family on one side of the door and the mother-in-law on the other side were at first polite but hardly cordial.

One of the reasons for the coolness was the big refurnishing. The newlyweds had spent their lengthy honeymoon traveling on the Continent, eagerly interested in all they saw. In this way they had discovered a new style of furniture, which they liked and wanted to bring home. Oscar, though an unassuming man and a poor actor, knew his own mind and had the faculty of realizing his ideas. To his mother's dismay the old furniture was relegated to the storeroom of the theater. Painters, upholsterers, plumbers, and electricians got busy. Bright-colored walls, light curtains in clear prints with floral patterns and simple drapings, a spacious bathroom with water heater and water closet were the result of their efforts. Linoleum in cheerful colors was tacked over the old scrubbed boards, and rugs in gay patterns were unrolled over dark and creaking parquet floors. To crown it all there was new furniture in pure art nouveau, designed by a specially engaged interior decorator. The light was given free play; there was space and air in the old apartment, which was changed beyond recognition.

Helena Ekdahl noted these alterations in polite silence, suspecting a belated rebellion against parental authority, which indeed it was. She blamed her daughter-

in-law for this, but never brought the matter up. Oscar also tried to persuade his mother to install central heating and dismantle the old-fashioned tiled stoves. Here, however, he failed. To his astonishment she burst into tears and said that he obviously no longer loved her. Oscar could see no connection between central heating and his love for his mother but let the matter drop. In due course a telephone was put in and the two families could, without meeting, inquire about each other's health and other topics. There was never any hostility except between the two cooks, who were outstanding artists and personalities to reckon with. Helena's cook was old. No one knew her exact age; she had been handed down in the Ekdahl family, burdened with knowledge and traditions. The other cook was a robust middle-aged woman with modern ideas about upbringing and food. So long as the young Ekdahls had no children, the two rivals maintained a dour, charitable neutrality. When the children began running to and fro between the kitchens, a bitter and long-suppressed enmity flared up, lasting until Alexander's twelfth birthday, when old Vega died all of a sudden, bent over the half-finished cake.

In the autumn of 1895, Emilie Ekdahl went to Helsinki to fulfill an engagement as guest artist. A year later, after ten years of childlessness, she was delivered of a daughter, who was christened Amanda.

A young and very talented actor with a romantic appearance joined the company. *The Lady of the Camellias* was to be given with Emilie as the unfortunate courtesan and Mr. Palmlund as the fiery Armand. It was one of the theater's biggest successes and ran for forty-six performances, which was unusual. The new actor received an engagement in the capital and word went round that Emilie had been seen with disheveled hair and eyes red with weeping. She gave birth to a son, who was called

Alexander. He was small and weakly and was hastily baptized at the hospital, but he gradually recovered under his mother's tender care.

A year later Fanny was born, healthy and plump and very like the archbishop, who had paid a visit to the diocese.

The rapid increase in the Ekdahl family gave rise to gossip in the town, while those immediately concerned appeared very happy. As both Oscar and Emilie were generally liked, tongues soon stopped wagging and the sight of the flourishing mother with her well-kept and merry children gave pleasure to all.

The grandmother had noted Amanda's birth without any emotion to speak of. She took all the greater interest, however, in Alexander's critical beginnings. It was also Alexander who in a reckless moment ventured to open the door between the two apartments. An enticing and rather frightening world extended in front of him. True, he had often been to see his grandmother, but these visits had always been regulated by definite ritual behavior. Now, on this bright, quiet Sunday morning, he could explore. Grandmamma was at church with Vega and Ester. The apartment was empty. The parquet floor creaked under his cautious footsteps. The massive dining table towered over his head. He sat down, leaning against one of its bulbous legs. His brown pinafore with the red borders had a pocket, on which a cat was embroidered. He put both hands in the pocket. He felt safer like that. It was cold too.

The winter's day was sunny and frosty outside the double windows with their patterned screens and heavy draperies. The chairs round the table and walls were upholstered in dark gilt leather, which had a pungent smell. Behind him the sideboard rose up like a castle; glass carafes and crystal bowls gleamed in the space between the two towers. On the wall to the left hung a

picture showing white, red, and yellow houses above blue water; on the water strange boats were sailing. The grandfather clock, which reached almost to the ornamented ceiling, muttered crossly to itself.

From where he sat he could see into the gleaming green drawing room—green walls, carpets, furniture, curtains. There were also several palms growing in green urns. He glimpsed the naked white lady with the chopped-off arms. She stood leaning forward a little and regarding Alexander thoughtfully. He had seen her many times before but could never make up his mind if he was to think of her as a little bit alive and therefore frightening but at the same time attractive in some way. Now that he was alone here with her, the naked lady was very much alive—he could feel it in his tummy. On the curved bureau with the brass fittings and feet stood a heavy ormolu clock under its glass dome. A man playing the flute leaned against the dial and on a stone sat a lady in a low-cut bodice, large hat, and short, wide skirt; they too were of gilt. When the clock struck twelve, the man played his flute and the little lady danced. Grandmamma had often shown Alexander the mechanism, but alone here now it was all different. He felt sorry for the man and woman shut up under a glass dome.

Grandmamma has gotten up late this Sunday morning. The big bed with its tall ornamented ends is still unmade, and the pillows smell of Grandmamma's nice rose scent (it is called "glycerine and rose water" and can be bought quite simply at the pharmacy, but Alexander did not know that). The room is not particularly big. The furnishings have not been changed for over forty years; everything is much the same as it was on the wedding day in 1862, when Helena and Oscar Ekdahl climbed into the marital bed for the first time. In it they took their pleasure for more than twenty years; in it they wept, bickered, and held each other's hands, or perhaps talked

sensibly of the theater's repertoire, the children's future, the mother-in-law's temper, and their friends' misfortunes. The elder Oscar Ekdahl and his wife Helena, née Mandelbaum, lived in what they themselves considered a happy marriage, and their mutual loyalty was never shaken.

On the wall facing the bed, illumined by the winter light, hangs a painting of Helena as Iphigenia. A strange radiance emanates from it. Alexander imagines that his grandmother moves inside the picture; he can almost hear her speaking. His mother has played the part, and he knows the words by heart. He delights in her well-shaped hands; the soft lips; the heavy, firm breasts under the transparent dress; the grave, irregularly formed eyes; the broad, clear brow; and the curly black hair. Little else can be said of this room other than that it is cluttered with pictures, photographs, and treasured odds and ends. Grandmamma's bedroom is never really light and it is almost impossible to clean. Twice a year the furniture is taken out, carpets and draperies are beaten, the floor is scrubbed, and the bric-a-brac is polished, but after a few days everything is as dusty as before. The scent of rose water mixed with the smell of aging wood and decomposing velvet hangs heavily in the long dusky room. By the far wall stands a rounded sofa covered with dark red rather threadbare brocade. On it are a lot of variously shaped cushions, all soft and yielding. Helena Ekdahl likes to sit on this sofa with her grandson. There they sit, each clasping a cushion, talking of life and art but also of death and life after this.

A long dark passage with a lofty ceiling goes through the apartment. The insufficient light it gets comes from the rooms on either side and from fanlights above the doors to the kitchen and the servants' room. At the angle of the passage is a secret room. The door has five holes bored in it just above the floor and the walls are

covered with red material. On them hang some framed colored pictures representing knights' castles and beautiful damsels in billowing wimples. In the middle of the cramped square room stands a throne with arms and back; it too is covered with red material and has brass fittings on the corners and sides. The seat can be lifted, and under it is a black hole, a bottomless pit, Alexander thinks. Here Grandmamma sits for a long time, groaning and sighing. Alexander has once or twice offered to keep her company in order to divert her, but she has always declined. Alexander's father says Grandmamma suffers from constipation because she is stingy. Vega or Ester never sit for long on the throne. They scurry in, rustle their skirts, and are out again before you can count up to ten.

In the passage stands a large iron stove that gives out its special rather acrid smell of burning coal; the hot iron smells too. In the kitchen Vega is preparing dinner—good nourishing cabbage soup. Warm and unmistakable, the smell spreads through the whole apartment, mingling with the extremely physical odors from the secret room in the angle of the passage. For a small person like Alexander, whose nose is so near the floor, the carpets smell strongly of naphthalene, which soaks into them as they lie rolled up during the summer months. Every Friday, Ester and Vega clean the old parquet with floor polish and turpentine; the reek is overpowering. The knotty floorboards smell of soft soap. The linoleum is cleaned with an ill-smelling mixture of sour skimmed milk and water.

People smell in different ways. Their clothes smell not only of material but of cooking, sweat, tobacco, and perfume. Their shoes smell of leather, boot polish, and foot sweat. People go around as a whole symphony of odors: powder, tar soap, urine, sex, dirt, pomade. Some smell of human being in general, some smell safe, and others

smell menacing. Ester, the housemaid, wears a wig, which she sticks on to her bare scalp with a special kind of glue. Ester smells of glue all over. Grandmamma smells of withering roses. Alexander's mother smells as sweet as vanilla; but when she is angry, the down on her upper lip grows moist and she exudes a barely perceptible but pungent odor that tells of danger. A young, plump, red-haired servant girl called Maj, one of whose legs is shorter than the other, is Alexander's favorite smell. He likes nothing so much as to lie in her bed on her arm, his nose pressed to her coarse linen. She smells of sweat and other nice things. Both are aware that such a thing is probably forbidden, but no one has discovered them and they can go on being together like two small, friendly animals. Alexander's elder sister smells of metal; it is odd, but she smells exactly like the pewter bowl on the smoking table in the library. Fanny smells of fresh cream and babies, although she has turned eight.

If you stand under the chandelier in the drawing room with your feet sunk in the endless leaf pattern of the carpet, if you stand quite still and hold your breath, you can hear the silence, which consists of many components: above all the singing of the blood in your eardrums, but also the clocks ticking everywhere, ticking and striking, all at once. Then the roar of the fire in the tiled stove and the faint rattle of the iron doors. Far away a piano can be heard—the girl next door is practicing scales. The sound is barely audible, yet it gives you a twinge of sadness; there is no telling *why*. At the writing table in the library Grandmamma sits bent over her accounts; the steel nib scratches against the paper. From the kitchen you can hear the clatter of dishes and Vega's voice. Then all is silent, except for the swash of the china and silver in the sink.

The winter's day is closing in. A sleigh drives past, bells jingling, horses' hooves clopping against the frozen

snow, runners hissing. The clock in the cathedral tower strikes four quarters and the hour of three. *Why am I so sad?* Alexander thinks, standing there on the drawing room carpet. *Why am I so sad? Is it Death, keeping so still out in the semidarkness of the hall? Can I hear his quick, hoarse breathing? Has he come to get Grandmamma as she sits in the library writing in her blue account book?* Alexander wants to run to her and cry in her lap, but he mustn't. If he moves, if he so much as lifts a finger, Death will streak in and get there ahead of him. It turns into a wearisome fight between Alexander and Death. Suddenly Ester starts tipping lumps of coal into the iron stove with a black shovel. The noise breaks the spell, and the grisly guest vanishes.

The dusk deepens and turns blue, filtered through the heavy folds of the curtains. Grandmamma gets up from the writing table and fetches the paraffin lamp. Her son has given her an electric table lamp of iron with a green china shade, but Grandmamma has put it away in the big cupboard and still uses the same paraffin lamp that shone over Oscar's desk at the theater. She lights the yellow flame, turns up the wick, and replaces the chimney and shade. There is a smell of paraffin. Grandmamma's shadow is outlined on the backs of the books. The carbon-filament lamps glow in the hall and the drawing room, leaving a lot of darkness for shadows. The twilight deepens still more. The lamplighter with his pole tramps cautiously along the icy pavement. Now he is lighting the gas lamps in the street. They cast shadows on the ceiling of the drawing room. Alexander can make out seas and mountains, heathens and monsters. Grandmamma turns her face toward him; he cannot see her eyes. She stretches out her hand and asks in a gentle voice if he would like to play cards for a while before dinner.

I must also say a few words about the yard behind

the Ekdahls' house. Opening onto the street at the front is an arched gateway, which at night is closed by heavy oak doors. The ground is paved with cobblestones, and the clatter of horses' hooves and carriages driving into the yard through the archway echoes through the house. There has long been talk of asphalting the entrance, but nothing is ever done. The yard is irregular and extensive, enclosed by a simple three-storied dwelling-house at right angles to the front building, a row of coach houses, stables, and washhouses, as well as a fireproof wall. The town park can be glimpsed through an opening. The ground is only partly paved. In the middle of the yard grows a tall chestnut tree. Two carpet-beating racks stick up like medieval instruments of torture. A covered-over well with a hand pump stands guard by the stables.

Helena Ekdahl keeps a saddle horse, a carriage horse, two gleaming black coupés, and a sleigh, together with a coachman in livery and a groom, who is the coachman's son. They live in two small rooms above the stables. In one of the coach houses stands Oscar's Daimler. It is used only in the summer; Oscar is an enthusiastic but uncertain automobile driver. In the two washhouses there is a constant to-ing and fro-ing of cross mothers and pale children. Steam comes out of the open doors and windows, and the loud voices never stop. A small firm of carriers has rented the rest of the yellow ramshackle row. Business is conducted by three middle-aged brothers and four lean mares. The brothers live with a swarthy housekeeper in the attic of the dwelling-house. The housekeeper has an interesting reputation and six children, all equally thin, pastyfaced, and sniffly with chronic colds.

On the ground floor, to the right of the entrance staircase, is a remarkable shop and a remarkable shopkeeper. He is a lanky man with a stooping gait and large pale

hands. He has a long beard, curls at his ears, black eyes, and a narrow white forehead. He wears a greasy hat with a curved brim. His name is Isak Jacobi, and he dines with Helena Ekdahl every Thursday. Ester says he is a dirty disgusting Jew, and she tells Alexander with relish that Isak Jacobi slaughters little children and drinks their blood. Alexander does not believe a word of it, but Ester's tales certainly add to the attraction of Isak's already mysterious person. The shop has a magic of its own. You enter through a door with glass panes and a little bell rings. Isak Jacobi sits by the counter in a black rocking chair, usually reading a book with unfamiliar letters. Fanny and Alexander like going to the Jew's shop. Amanda never goes; she says it smells nasty and that there is a rotting corpse in a back room. This is partly true. Isak Jacobi is the owner of a mummy, which rests in a glass case in the little inner room where he has collected his most precious possessions. Fanny and Alexander always want to see the mummy. It is horrible; the face has been freed from the gold mask and the bandages, and you can see the hair, the ears, the almost corroded lips, the smiling mouth, and the long, crumbling nose. The shop premises extend into the building; there are several rooms with dirty, partly boarded-up windows covered with dusty hangings. On long shelves, on big tables, on the floor, and dangling from the ceiling are thousands of objects of the most varied kinds. No one has ever heard of the Jew selling anything in his shop. Nor has anyone seen him buying anything. It is all a mystery.

The pattern in the yard is constantly changing as humans and animals come and go. The sparrows squabble in the chestnut tree or feast on the horse-droppings, innumerable fat cats live a comfortable vagabond life among rats and mice, children and dogs tumble on the gravel and the withered, ill-kept grass. The caretaker and the odd-job man booze behind the outside privy to the

accompaniment of sharp-tongued comments from the women in the brewhouse.

The Ekdahl children are forbidden to play in the yard. In the charge of the lame but cheerful Maj they must march off to the town park, where playmates and sandpits befitting their station are to be found.

I—Events of the Summer

(The EKDAHL *families spend the summer of 1909 at Eknäset just as they always have done. Everything is the same, yet not the same.* EMILIE *and her children are not there. The house is silent and dead.*

HELENA, *who is a lady, makes out that she never sleeps. At the moment, however, she is dozing. She is sitting in a comfortable basket chair on the glassed-in veranda, a rug over her knees. One foot is in plaster and is resting on a stool. Her book has fallen to the floor. She holds herself well even when asleep; her mouth is closed and her pale calm face leans against the cushion. Gentle but steady summer rain is falling on the thick greenery that encloses the house and almost blocks the view of the bay. Off and on the thunder mutters half-heartedly over the water. The rain trickles down the panes; there is a gurgling and splashing from the drainpipes and the water butts. The glass veranda is like a diving bell submerged in a green, translucent sea.* HELENA *has been lulled to sleep by the summer rain. The security of childhood, the days pass, suddenly you are old. The rain patters on the roof, the child slumbers. It is also the old woman's sleep. No time has passed. The grandfather clock ticks, clears its throat, and strikes—doing its duty although hours and minutes no longer exist. The house is empty, deserted. Deep in dreamless repose* HELENA *is enveloped by the summer veranda's scents of meadow flowers, aging basket chairs and sun-drenched floorboards. Through a half-open window wafts the smell of heavy, wet greenery, of the water in the bay, of the summer afternoon's transience.*

The telephone on the table beside HELENA*'s chair rings. The old lady wakens immediately [she hasn't been asleep at all of course, she has just rested with her eyes closed; besides the book was so wretchedly boring—one of those modern authors with their proletarian tone]. Wide awake at once,* HELENA *has her voice under complete control as she lifts the receiver and answers with a well-modulated hello)*

* * *

EMBASSY

PICTURES