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INGMAR BERGMAN'S

# BRINK OF LIFE

BRINK OF LIFE studies the grief of two women who have been denied the birth of their babies — one by miscarriage and the other in sacrifice for the mother's life. A third woman, not wanting her illegitimate child, witnesses their suffering and is moved to reconcile a commitment to her birth. Bergman is severely simple in his analysis of the irony of circumstances and human tribulations.

*"A remarkable expression of the affirmation of life"*  
HERALD-TRIBUNE

*"Rings clear and true"*  
NEW YORK TIMES

*"The stroke of a master."*  
NEWSWEEK

## STORY

The film takes place in a maternity ward, within the space of twenty-four hours. Caecilia, married and by profession a secretary of the board of education, is three months pregnant when she is brought to the hospital. She has a miscarriage. A later talk with her husband, Anders, confirms her suspicion that he never wanted the child. He is an intellectual who has built up an armor against the world and against emotion. Caecilia, meanwhile, becomes moody and introspective.

Also in the ward is Stina, a very happily married and healthy woman, looking forward to the experience of having a child. She is visited by her simple but kind husband, who gives her flowers as a gesture of his love. Only once does she feel fear — in the midst of a joyful conversation with the comforting Sister Brita — when she quotes from the Bible, “Yea, a sword shall pierce thy soul . . .”

The third woman in the ward is Hjordis, who is young and unmarried. Realizing that the father of the baby is indifferent to her fate, Hjordis tells a friend that she really wants an abortion.

Only after a talk with a welfare director, who is herself sterile, does Hjordis decide to have the child.

Ultimately and inexplicably, Stina’s baby dies immediately after birth while Hjordis’ delivery is completely successful. Caecilia is purged by the suffering of Stina and at last decides to return to her husband. Stina is, in turn, comforted by Hjordis; whose obstinacy and independence have vanished because of her confrontation with the two other women. She will not give up the illegitimate child, but rather raise it as her own.

## CAST

Caecilia	Ingrid Thulin
Stina	Eva Dahlbeck
Hjordis	Bibi Anderson
Sister Brita	Barbro Hiort af Ornas
Harry Andersson	Max Von Sydow
Anders Ellis	Erland Josephson
Gerta Ellius	Inga Landgre

## CREDITS

Direction	Ingmar Bergman
Script	Ingmar Bergman, Ulla Isaksson
Based on	“The Friendly, The Dignified” by Ulla Isaksson
Photography	Max Willen
Sets	Bibi Linstrom
Editor	Carl-Olof Skeppstedt

## AWARDS

CANNES FILM FESTIVAL  
Best Director

CANNES FILM FESTIVAL  
Best Actress

## COMMENT

“One of the most satisfying of Bergman’s works. As a piece of craftsmanship it stands at a very high level.”  
**Peter Cowie, INGMAR BERGMAN**

“The picture is marked by far-reaching visual asceticism. BRINK OF LIFE might be called an object lesson in perfect technique.”  
**Jorn Donner, PERSONAL VISION OF INGMAR BERGMAN**

“The superiority of this film in relation to most other ‘realist’ works made in other countries is, to tell the truth, its audacity. The film helps us to perceive an efficacy which is serene freshness, exempt from all desire to provoke.”  
**Cahiers Du Cinema**

# BRINK OF LIFE

100 Minutes. Black and White. Sweden, 1957. Subtitled.