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Excerpts from a diary about Ingmar Bergman's filming of *Viskningar och rop* outside Stockholm 1971.

Viskningar och rop (*Whisperings and Cries*): To describe Ingmar Bergman's latest film as a mere tale is impossible. The story is perfectly clear, to be sure, but elusive nonetheless. Here is what Bergman himself wrote in a letter to his cast before shooting began:

"The period is the turn of the century. The women's dresses are opulent, lavish, concealing, and revealing. (We needn't commit ourselves to a precise year; this is not specifically a beginning century. It can be the 80s or 90s just as well. The important thing is that the dresses be in concert with our demands for sensual suggestion.) The same applies, to the nth degree, to the interiors, which must be so constructed as to afford opportunities to create the lighting conditions we want: dawns that don't look like dusks, soft hearthglow, the mysterious indirect light the day it snows, the mild radiance of the kerosene lamp. The torment of a clear, sunny, autumn day. A solitary light in the darkness of the night and all the fidgeting shadows when someone wrapped in a billowing nightgown hurries through the large rooms.

"At the same time, it is important that our décor never become obvious. It must be pliable, enclosing, elusive, and present — suggestive without being intrusive.

"There is one peculiar thing, however: all our interiors are in different shades of red. Don't ask me *why it's to be that way*, because I don't know. I've pondered the reason myself and found each explanation more comical

that the other. The bluntest but also most tenable is probably that the whole thing is something internal and that ever since childhood I have imagined the soul to be a damp membrane in varying shades of red.

Furniture, props, and other paraphernalia shall be extremely accurate, but we must be able to use them whimsically and in full accordance with our aims. But it must be beautiful and harmonious. It shall be as in a dream: something exists because we want it or need it, just for the moment.

"The leading characters in the drama are four in number. Four women. I shall provide a hasty rundown on them (without ranking them in the order listed).

"AGNES (Harriet Andersson) is the contemplated owner of the estate. She has remained there since her parents died. She has never got around to moving away: she has belonged there since birth and has allowed her life to flow along quietly and indiscernibly without meaning or misfortune. She has vague artistic ambitions: she paints a little; she plays the piano a little; it's all a bit touching. No man has made his appearance in her life. For her, love has been a shut-in and never-manifested secret. At the age of 37, she has developed cancer of the uterus and is now preparing to vanish from the world as quietly and submissively as she has lived in it. She spends most of the day in her bed, her big bed in her parents' lovely but overdecorated bedroom. But she can still get up now

and then, until the pains strike her to the ground. She doesn't complain much, and she doesn't think God is cruel. In her prayers, she turns to Christ in humble expectation. She is severely emaciated, but her abdomen has swelled up as though she were in an advanced state of pregnancy.

"KARIN (Ingrid Thulin), her 2-years-old sister, made a wealthy marriage and moved to another part of the country. She soon recognized that her marriage was a mistake. Her husband (Georg Årlin), who is 20 years older, is physically and psychologically repulsive to her. She is mother to five children, but nevertheless seems untouched by motherhood and marital boredom. She presents an impeccable façade and is regarded as haughty, distant. Her loyalty to her marriage is unshakable. Deep beneath a veneer of self-control, she conceals an impatient hatred of her husband and a continuing rage against life. Her anxiety and desperation never come forth except in her dreams, which every now and then torment her. In the midst of this tumult of bridled fury, she carries within herself a talent for dedication and intimacy and a longing for closeness. This enormous resource lies immovably enclosed and unused.

"MARIA (Liv Ullmann) is the youngest sister; she too has a wealthy and stable marriage, to a handsome and successful man (Henning Moritzen) of suitable social standing. She has a 5-year-old daughter and is herself like a spoiled child: gentle, playful,

smiling, with a constantly active curiosity and love of pleasure. She is very fixed upon her own beauty and her body's possibilities for enjoyment. She lacks all conception of the world she lives in; she is sufficient unto herself and is never tormented by her own or others' establishment of moral limits. Her only law is to be attractive. "ANNA (Kari Sylwan) is the servant in the house. She is about 30 years old. As a young girl, she gave birth to a daughter, and Agnes took care of her and the child. This resulted in Anna's tying herself to Agnes. A tacit, never-expressed friendship was established between the two lonely women. The child died at the age of 3, but the relationship between Anna and Agnes continued. Anna is very quiet, very timid, inaccessible. But she is ever-present; she sees, searches, and listens. Everything about Anna bespeaks weight: her body, her face, her mouth, her look. She doesn't speak. Perhaps she doesn't think, either.

"The basic situation when the film begins is this: Agnes' illness has suddenly worsened, and according to the doctor (Erland Josephson), she cannot live much longer. Her two sisters (her only relatives) have come to her deathbed."

BERGMAN, Ingmar, author, director, was presented in *Film in Sweden*, No. 2, 1971. Since then he has made *Viskningar och rop*.

These are excerpts from a diary about Ingmar Bergman's filming of *Viskningar och rop*. It was written by the editor of *Film in Sweden*, who followed the production as contact man for the Swedish press.

What is depicted can be regarded as material or immaterial. Bergman is characterized not by his shooting sessions but by his works. But even the surface exhibited by the shooting sessions can perhaps have its significance.