

# DEATH AND A MAIDEN

- FIRST TIME -

scenes for  
an original screenplay  
by

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based on the book of  
historical non-fiction

by

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A TITLE CARD READS '15 MONTHS EARLIER'

The camera is in extreme close-up on Grethe, who appears visibly much younger, almost adolescent, as opposed to the fully-developed young woman we saw in the first scenes.

Her face is a little flushed. Her eyes dart around nervously, but she also seems tired. And confused.

A MALE VOICE speaks, but sounds eerily muffled and far away.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)  
They say, a woman's first time -  
she never forgets it.

A nondescript environment of light and shadows; only in brief and truncated glimpses is the scene revealed as a sun-flooded bedroom.

Occasionally, a MALE FORM brushes the frame.

MALE VOICE (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Never, Grethe! Imagine. When I'm  
long dead, you'll still think of  
me. Your first man. Naturally, one  
has hopes this will be a fond  
memory.

Grethe does not know where to look. She bites her lips. The camera tracks in on her.

MALE VOICE (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Why are you looking at me like  
that? You liked it, no...?  
(Grethe nods,  
unconvincingly)  
If it feels good, it can't be sin.  
I don't care what all the prudes  
say.

The Male comes into the shot. He is ANDREAS MÖLLER, about 40 y.o., a slightly overweight man, a few remaining strains of hair, semi-agreeable looking. He's adjusting his shirt.

ANDREAS MÖLLER  
And it gets better every time,  
Grethe. I'd prove it to you, but  
not now. I'm not twenty anymore.

The scene widens to give us a better view of...

INT. HAFFERLAND HOUSEHOLD. BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

Grethe on a disheveled bed, half-undressed and uneasily covering herself with sheets. Her eyes look for her clothes, praying that MÖLLER will leave so she can get dressed.

Instead, he sits down on the edge of the bed.

ANDREAS MÖLLER

Look at all that blood on the sheets. How sweet.

(suddenly realizing something)

Oh! You better wash that blood out, Grethe. Lest the dowager finds out and raises a stink. That pitiful dry prune would not understand what joy a man can have with a woman...

GRETHE

(quietly)

Herr Möller...

ANDREAS MÖLLER

(caresses Grethe's cheek)

Yes, sweet one.

(Grethe recoils)

You fear the dowager, don't you? You'll be fine. The old hag is a devil without teeth. If I cut off her allowance she'll be in the poorhouse. And she knows it. Now get your splendid buttocks out of my bed and go back to your room.

GRETHE

(even more quietly)

Herr Möller...

ANDREAS MÖLLER

I know, you want it again, you, you...!

(he can't quite come up with the word)

That makes a man happy. Tomorrow, I promise.

GRETHE

(hardly audible)

Herr Möller... it's not that.

ANDREAS MÖLLER

*Herr Möller, Herr Möller. It's not that.* Well, speak then, for heaven's sake.

GRETHE

(not looking at him)

We don't do laundry here at the house. Gnädige Frau sends it to the Neustadt every Wednesday.

ANDREAS MÖLLER

Oh! Oh. Well. Then ... be a good girl and hide the sheets. Or better yet ... burn them by the river. But make sure nobody sees you.

Grethe nods ever so slightly.

EXT. BRUNSWICK. BANKS OF THE OKER RIVER - DAY

Grethe walks along the river, carrying the bundled-up sheets in one hand and some tools in the other. Her eyes scan the river banks.

She comes to a bend, where bushes hide the river from the footpath. She pushes through the bushes down to the water and puts the bundle down.

She steps into the shallows, lifts her dress and stares down.

She tries to catch a reflection of her privates in the water, but sees nothing.

She touches herself and recoils from the pain.

She squats down, and with considerable pain, washes her privates.

MOMENTS LATER

Grethe has stacked tinder into a pile. She rubs a saltpeter mix with sticks and creates a spark.

With the ignited twigs she start a small fire. She rips the bed sheet into stripes and places one on the fire. Just when the cloth begins to burn she hears ...

THE SOUND OF HORSES APPROACHING.

Grethe stomps out the fire, drops down and presses herself to the ground.

TWO SOLDIERS pass at medium speed, without paying attention at all.

Once they have passed she quickly tries to resurrect the fire. But it's too late. And no more saltpeter.

Frustrated, she ties the sheets with two knots to make a pouch, places two heavy stones inside, ties a third knot and throws the whole bundle into the river.

She climbs back up the river dam. Just as she is about to reach the top, she pulls back startled.

A VERY OLD WOMAN, covered in several layers of clothing, stands staring at Grethe. The woman has watched her all along. We will get to know her as The Fränkische Woman, or just Fränkische.

FRÄNKISCHE

Blood cannot be washed out of a river, child. And we cannot undo the crimes of others.

Grethe does not look at the Fränkische.

FRÄNKISCHE (CONT'D)  
 You have sorrows, child? Someone  
 wronged you? A man, maybe?

Grethe shakes her head.

FRÄNKISCHE (CONT'D)  
 Walk with me for a moment.

GRETHE  
 My Gnädige Frau is expecting me.

FRÄNKISCHE  
 You'll have all the time in the  
 world with her. Take this...

She hands Grethe a straw-doll.

GRETHE  
 What is this...?

FRÄNKISCHE  
 A highborn man will not love or  
 care for a low born maid. But he  
 will lust for her. And maybe plant  
 a child in her. If it's so, he must  
 care for the child. He must. That  
 is the Lord's command.

GRETHE  
 I must go. Good day, dear woman.

Grethe pushes past the Old Woman and heads back towards  
 Breite Strasse.

FRÄNKISCHE  
 (calling after her)  
 Many a good young woman is made to  
 suffer. For she has no friends.  
 Knowledgable friends.

GRETHE  
 I have friends, thank you.

FRÄNKISCHE  
 But if you find out you don't, ask  
 at the market for The Fränkische  
 Woman.

Grethe nods and quickly walks away.

EXT. HAFFERLAND HOUSEHOLD - DAY

As Grethe approaches the Hafferland House she hears LOUD  
 VOICES. Möller and WITWE HAFFERLAND, Möller's stepmother,  
 arguing fiercely.

MÖLLER (O.S.)  
 (bits and pieces)  
 I can leave you penniless, if I  
 wish. You are not my mother! My  
 father was a fool, but I'm not.

A SLAMMING DOOR and HEAVY FOOTSTEPS suggest that Möller has left.

Grethe does not know if she should enter now or wait. Before she can decide, the servant's entrance door flies open.

Hafferland stands, still shaking and eyes red, but trying to project a strong facade.

WITWE HAFFERLAND  
 Who were you talking to behind the  
 house, Grethe?

GRETHE  
 Gnädige Frau?

WITWE HAFFERLAND  
 You met someone behind the house.

GRETHE  
 (quickly improvising)  
 Yes, Gnädige Frau. It was my aunt.  
 My mothers sister. She inquired  
 about a visit in Gross-Schwülper.  
 My mother misses me very much.

WITWE HAFFERLAND  
 Is that so?

GRETHE  
 Yes, it is so! Why would it not be  
 so?

Hafferland looks at Grethe with displeasure.

WITWE HAFFERLAND  
 You're never here when needed. Go  
 upstairs. Herr Möller needs help.

GRETHE  
 Herr Möller?

WITWE HAFFERLAND  
 Yes. Packing up his affairs. He's  
 off to Holland in two days. What  
 are you, deaf? Get a move on!