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# Viskningar Och Rop (Cries and Whispers)

By Unknown

It is early Monday morning...  
and I am in pain.  
My sisters...  
and Anna...  
are taking turns  
staying up.  
Good morning.  
- Did anything happen?  
- No, she's been very quiet.  
- Thank you.  
- I fell asleep.  
Anna, see to the fire.  
I thank Thee, dear Lord  
for allowing me...  
to awaken well and cheerful  
this morning...  
after a good sleep  
under Thy protection...  
and for the enjoyment  
of a restful night.  
I beseech Thee also  
today and each day...  
to let the angels watch over  
and protect my little girl...  
whom Thou in Thy unfathomable  
wisdom tookest unto Thyself...  
in Thy homeland.  
Amen.  
Mother is in my thoughts  
nearly every day...  
although she's been dead  
for over 20 years.  
I remember  
she would often seek...  
the solitude and peace  
of the grounds.  
I also remember that I would  
follow her at a distance...  
and spy on her  
without really meaning to...  
because I loved her  
to such a jealous extreme.  
I loved her because  
she was so gentle...

and beautiful and alive...  
and so all-pervadingly  
present.  
But she could also be cold,  
playfully cruel...  
and rebuff me.  
Yet I could not help  
feeling sorry for her...  
and now that I'm older,  
I understand her much better.  
I wish I could  
see her again...  
to tell her  
what I understand...  
of her boredom,  
her impatience...  
her longing  
and her loneliness.  
And when the wicked witch  
at last realized...  
that little Gretel  
had tricked her...  
her nose started  
to grow and grow.  
At Twelfth Night  
Mother always gave a party...  
and Aunt Olga would come  
with her magic lantern...  
and her fairy tales.  
I always felt frightened  
and left out.  
When Mother spoke to me  
in her hurried way...  
I could hardly understand  
what she wanted of me.  
Mother and Maria always had  
many things to whisper about...  
but then they were so alike.  
Jealously I used to wonder what  
they were laughing at together.  
Everyone was in gay spirits.  
I was the only one who couldn't  
join in the merriment.  
Another time,

I remember it was autumn...  
I hid behind the curtain...  
and in secret watched her.  
She was in the red drawing room  
wearing her white dress...  
sitting quite still  
with her head bent...  
and her hands resting  
on the table.  
Suddenly she saw me...  
and in a gentle voice  
called me.  
- Come.  
- Uncertain, I went up to her...  
thinking that, as usual,  
she was going to scold me.  
But instead she gave me  
a look so full of sorrow...  
that I nearly  
burst into tears.  
I raised my hand  
and put it against her cheek...  
and for that moment  
we were very close.  
There's someone out there.  
Anna.  
There's someone out there.  
Good morning, Agnes.  
Good morning, Doctor.  
She is very tired now.  
I don't think it will be long.  
Thank you.  
I know the way.  
David!  
It's been so long.  
When can I see you again?  
No!  
Some years earlier...  
when Agnes had gone to Italy  
for her health...  
Maria and her husband, Joakim,  
were staying at the manor.  
One evening, Anna's  
little daughter was taken ill...

and Maria sent  
for the family doctor...  
who lived in the nearby  
country town.

- Now say "ah."

- Ah.

- Once again.

- Ah.

That hurt a little?

I can see that.

What a good girl.

That wasn't too bad, eh?

Off to bed with you now.

You'll feel better  
after a good night's sleep.

- Thank you.

- Doctor, are you hungry?

If you'd like a little supper  
the table's being prepared.

Oh yes, that would be nice.

Thank you.

Agnes and Karin are still  
traveling in Italy.

I received a letter  
from them last week.

Agnes is much better.

- Her cough is entirely gone.

- Mm-hmm.

And she's picked up  
her painting again.

Karin's husband decided  
to join them at Easter.

They've been having  
good weather.

It's like summer, even though  
the nights are chilly.

Your husband, he's well?

Joakim, he had some business  
in town this evening...

and won't be back

'til tomorrow.

I told him I would ask you  
to come here to look in...

on Anna's little girl.

- He sends his best regards.

- Thank you.

Anna's been told

to get the guest room ready.

The weather's so awful.

I don't think you ought

to go home on such a night.

- You've changed a lot.

- Really? Oh.

Is there anyone else?

Isn't there always?

I never would have thought

the problem could interest you.

Nor does it.

Hmm?

Do you wear spectacles

all the time now?

- Am I bothering you?

- No, it's all right.

Why are you so formal?

Couldn't you let the past

be forgotten?

Come here, Marie.

Come.

Look at yourself

in the mirror.

You're beautiful.

You are probably

more beautiful now than before.

But you have changed

a lot too.

I want you to see

how you've changed.

Now your eyes cast quick,

calculating side glances.

You used to look ahead

straightforwardly...

openly, unmasked.

Your mouth has taken on

an expression of discontent...

and hunger.

It used to be so soft.

Your complexion is pale now.

You use makeup.

Your fine, broad forehead...  
now has four wrinkles  
above each brow.  
No, you can't see it  
in this light...  
but you can  
in broad daylight.  
Do you know what  
caused those wrinkles?  
- No.  
- Indifference, Marie.  
And this fine line  
that runs from ear to chin...  
is not as obvious any more...  
but it is etched there by  
your easygoing, indolent ways.  
And there,  
by the bridge of your nose.  
Why do you sneer  
so often, Marie?  
You see it?  
You sneer too often.  
See, Marie?  
And look under your eyes.  
The sharp,  
scarcely noticeable lines...  
of your impatience  
and your ennui.  
Can you actually see  
all of that in my face?  
No, but I feel it  
when you kiss me.  
I think  
you're joking with me.  
It's evident  
where you see it.  
- Really? Where?  
- You see it in yourself.  
Because we're so alike,  
you and I.  
You mean the selfishness?  
Coldness? Unconcern?  
I usually find  
your arguments boring.

Is there no absolution  
for such as you and I?  
I haven't any need  
of being pardoned.  
Good morning, sir.  
Good morning.  
Thank you.  
Good morning, Joakim.  
- Welcome home.  
- Good morning, Maria.  
Anna's little girl  
is quite ill, you know.  
The doctor  
was here last night.  
He sends you his regards...  
and hopes you can get together  
to play chess again.  
The weather was so bad  
I asked him to stay overnight.  
He left early this morning  
before we were up.  
Did you enjoy yourself in town  
or was there too much work?  
We have an invitation  
from the Egermans.  
They'd be delighted if we  
stayed with them at Easter.  
I think I would enjoy that.  
It would make for a change.  
What do you think about it?  
Well, we'll see.  
Run along and play.  
Joakim.  
Joakim.  
Help me.  
Help me, please.  
No.  
Anna.  
Do you hear?  
I only hear the wind  
and the clocks ticking.  
No, it's something else.  
I don't hear anything else.  
I'm freezing.



Good night.

Anna.

Come here.

Anna.

Come to me.

You're so far away.

Come here.

Close to me.

Do I smell very bad?

- It hurts so much, Anna.

- I know, Agnes.

I'm going to stay with you.

- It will all be all right.

- It hurts so badly.

You don't have to worry  
when I'm here.

You know that.

The pillow's so warm.

We can take the other one.

Come. Let's see.

Can you lift yourself up  
a little?

Can you slide down now?

Is it better so?

Is it better?

You are so good to me.

Yes?

What's the matter?

Agnes is worse.

I don't think she's conscious.

She's breathing very strangely.

I'll get my shawl.

Karin!

- Karin!

- What is it?

- Agnes is worse.

- I'm coming.

- I'll go for the doctor.

- I'll go with you.

Anna! Anna! Anna!

- Where's the doctor?

- He wasn't home.

All right, Anna.

You had better get dressed.

I'll stay with her.

Anna!

I'm much better now.

Only rather warm.

Would you like

to have a wash now?

- And put on a clean gown?

- Yes, thank you.

- I'm a little thirsty.

- Yes, of course.

- Shall I read a little?

- Oh, I'd love it.

"Chapter 34, in which

Mr. Pickwick thinks...

"he had better go to Bath,  
and goes accordingly.

"'But surely, my dear sir,'  
said little Perker...

"as he stood  
in Mr. Pickwick's apartment...

"on the morning  
after the trial.

"'Surely you don't really mean,  
really and seriously now...

"'and irritation apart...

"'that you won't pay  
these costs and damages? '

"'Not one halfpenny,'  
said Mr. Pickwick firmly.

"'Not one halfpenny.'

"'Hooray for the principle,  
as the moneylender said...

"'when he wouldn't  
renew the bill'...

"observed Mr. Weller, who  
was clearing away breakfast.

"'Sam,' said Mr. Pickwick...

"'have the goodness  
to step downstairs.'

"'Certainly, sir,'  
replied Mr. Weller...

"and acting on Mr. Pickwick's  
gentle hint, Sam retired."

Anna!

Can't anyone...  
Can't anyone help me?  
I can't!  
Help me!  
I can't.  
God, our Father,  
in His infinite wisdom...  
has called you home to Him...  
still in the bloom  
of your youth.  
In your life  
He found you worthy...  
of bearing a long  
and torturous agony.  
You submitted to it patiently  
and without complaint...  
in the certain knowledge that  
your sins would be forgiven...  
through the death on the cross  
of your Lord, Jesus Christ.  
May your Father in Heaven...  
when you step  
into His presence...  
have mercy on your soul.  
May He let His angels  
remove from you the memory...  
of your earthly pain.  
Should it be...  
that you gathered up  
our suffering in agony...  
into your body.  
Should it be  
you bore with you...  
this hardship  
through death.  
Should it be  
that you meet with God...  
as you come to that  
other land.  
Should it be that  
you find his countenance...  
turned toward you then.  
Should it be that you know  
the language to speak...

so this God may hear  
and understand.  
Should it be that you then  
talk with this God...  
and he hear you out.  
Should it be so...  
pray for us.  
Agnes, dear child,  
please listen.  
Listen to what  
I have to tell you now.  
Pray for us who  
have been left in darkness...  
left behind  
on this miserable Earth...  
with the sky above us,  
grim and empty.  
Lay your burden  
at God's feet...  
the whole  
of all your suffering...  
and plead with Him  
to pardon us.  
Plead with Him  
that He may free us...  
of our anxiety  
and of our weariness...  
of our misgivings  
and fears.  
Plead with Him  
that He may make...  
sense and meaning  
of our lives.  
Agnes, you who have borne...  
your anguish and suffering  
so long...  
are most surely worthy...  
of advocating our cause.  
She was my confirmation child.  
We often had talks together  
through the many years.  
Her faith was stronger  
than mine.  
If you don't mind,

I could see you tomorrow...  
and we can discuss  
the formalities of the funeral.  
Thank you.  
Some years earlier, Karin  
and her husband Fredrik...  
were pursuing  
a diplomatic career.  
During a visit  
to their native land...  
they stayed for some months  
at the manor.  
Please, Anna, may I have  
a little more fish?  
- Won't you keep me company?  
- No, thank you.  
- What are you smiling about?  
- I'm not smiling.  
Do you want coffee or are we  
going to retire immediately?  
I don't want coffee.  
Thank you.  
It's late.  
I suggest we retire now.  
It's but a tissue of lies.  
All of it.  
Don't look at me!  
Don't look at me  
like that, I say!  
Sorry.  
Forgive me.  
Help me to undress.  
You may go.  
It's but a tissue of lies.  
It's a monumental  
tissue of lies.  
Tissue of lies.  
- What are you doing?  
- Going through documents...  
books and papers  
concerning the estate.  
Karin, I want us  
to be friends.  
I want us to talk

to each other.  
After all, we're sisters.  
We have so many  
of the same memories.  
Karin, it's so strange how  
we don't reach one another...  
how we only make small talk.  
Karin, why won't you  
be my friend?  
We've both been  
happy and unhappy.  
We could laugh and cry  
together.  
We could talk together  
for days and nights on end.  
We could put our arms  
around each other.  
Karin?  
I wander through  
our childhood home sometimes...  
where all is at once  
strange but familiar...  
and it seems  
I am in a dream...  
and an event of great importance  
is in store for us.  
Yes, I know I am childish.  
You read much more than I do,  
think much more than I do.  
Your experience is far greater.  
Karin, couldn't we devote  
these days...  
to getting to know  
each other finally?  
To coming closer together?  
I can't stand to be silent  
and distant, Karin.  
Karin, have I said something  
to hurt you?  
It's easy to do, but I didn't  
mean to hurt your feelings.  
Karin!  
What are you reading?  
- I'm reading Agnes' diary.

- A diary?

"Thursday, September 30."

She's written, "I received  
the most wonderful gift...

"anyone can receive  
in this life.

"A gift that is called

**many things:**

"companionship, relatedness,  
affection.

"I think this is  
what is called 'grace.'"

No, don't touch me!

Don't come near me!

I can't stand  
anyone touching me.

I don't want you to do that.

I don't want it.

I don't want you  
to be kind to me.

I can't!

I can't stand it!

Constant torture.

It's like being  
in the greatest hell.

I can't breathe any longer.

All of that guilt.

No!

Leave me alone.

Leave me alone.

Don't touch me.

Don't touch me.

Don't touch me.

Don't touch me.

Don't touch me.

I am sorry I lost control  
of myself this morning.

I don't know what came over me.

I suppose it's all the emotion  
concerning Agnes' death.

We were so fond of her.

Now that the funeral is over...

I'll have our lawyer look after

all the legal formalities.  
The fruit please, Anna.  
It's best we sell  
the house and grounds.  
You and I can divide up  
all the rest of it.  
I mean, the furniture  
and other things...  
like china, silverware,  
books and pictures.  
All right, Anna,  
that will be all now.  
What shall we do about Anna?  
I suggest  
that we give her notice...  
and a few weeks extra pay.  
And also a little article  
of Agnes'.  
She was quite devoted.  
The fact of it is that  
they were very attached.  
Now she trails after us  
in much too familiar a manner.  
I don't think...  
It's true.  
I think...  
about suicide.  
I've often thought about it.  
It's...  
It's disgusting.  
It's very degrading...  
and everlastingly the same.  
Henrik's an excellent lawyer,  
I assure you.  
My husband says  
that I'm clumsy.  
He's right.  
I fumble.  
My hands are too large,  
you understand.  
Most disobedient.  
You look so disconcerted.  
You thought our talk  
would be different, didn't you?



Do you realize I hate you?  
And how foolish I find  
your insipid smiles...  
and your idiotic  
flirtatiousness.  
How have I managed  
to tolerate you so long...  
and not say anything?  
I know of what you're made...  
with your empty caresses  
and your false promises.  
Can you conceive how anybody  
can live with so much hate...  
as has been my burden?  
There's no relief,  
no charity, no help.  
There is nothing.  
You understand?  
Nothing can escape me...  
for I see it all.  
Now you hear how it sounds  
when Karin talks.  
You sit there grinning  
your cold little grin.  
What are you thinking?  
Would you care to tell me?  
May I have your opinion?  
No!  
That's just what I thought.  
You'd rather stay silent.  
And you are right, Maria!  
Maria! Forgive me.  
Maybe you mean well.  
Maybe you just  
want to know me better.  
Maria, dear, forgive me.  
I do run on and on.  
No.  
No, that's not true either.  
Maria, look at me.  
Maria, look at me.  
Don't you hear it?  
Don't you hear the crying?  
Don't you hear it?

Someone is crying endlessly.  
- Are you afraid of me now?  
- No, not in the least.  
I'm dead, you see.  
The trouble is  
I can't get to sleep.  
I can't leave you all.  
I'm so tired.  
Can't anyone help me?  
- It's but a dream, Agnes.  
- No, it's not a dream.  
Perhaps for you it's a dream...  
but not for me.  
I want Karin to come here.  
Agnes wants Karin  
to come to her.  
Can't you hold my hands  
and warm me?  
Stay with me  
until the horror is over.  
It's so empty all around me.  
Nobody would do what you ask.  
I'm still alive.  
I won't accept involvement  
with your death.  
Perchance, if I had loved you...  
but I do not love you.  
What you ask me to do  
is repulsive.  
I'm leaving you now.  
In a few hours I'll be gone.  
- Anna.  
- Yes.  
I want Maria to come.  
Agnes wants Maria to come in.  
Don't be afraid.  
Please touch me.  
Please talk with me.  
Hold my hands and warm me.  
You are my sister.  
I don't want you to be alone.  
Oh, how sorry I am for you.  
Do you recall  
when we were small...

and twilight came  
as we played...  
and both of us  
became frightened...  
and we'd cuddle very close  
and hold each other tight.  
It's simply the same thing now,  
isn't it?  
I can't hear  
what you're saying.  
You must come closer to me.  
Closer.  
Hold my hands.  
I'll stay with you.  
I'll stay here.  
Don't cry.  
You needn't be afraid.  
I'll stay by her.  
There's my daughter  
I must think about.  
She must realize that.  
Also, my husband needs me.  
It's pure morbidity,  
disgusting, meaningless.  
She's already begun to rot.  
She has foul spots  
on her hands.  
I'll take care of her.  
The funeral was tolerable.  
No one wept or grew hysterical.  
Thank you.  
Have you finished packing, Anna?  
I just have to bring  
the last trunk down, ma'am.  
Hurry up.  
We are pressed for time.  
The music was fine. Thankfully,  
the bishop's address was short.  
Fortunate that he had a chill  
so we could call off the dinner.  
Hadn't something  
better be done for Anna?  
Sorry, but I don't understand  
what you mean.

She's looked after Agnes  
for the last 12 years.  
Shouldn't we offer her  
a small sum...  
or help her find a new place?  
Out of the question.  
She's young and strong...  
and has had it very easy  
up until now.  
Her future  
is not our responsibility.  
I did promise her she could  
take a memento with her.  
- Of her own choosing?  
- I think she has that right.  
I do detest  
that sort of spontaneity...  
but you can't renege.  
I think we should  
speak to her right away.  
Anna, you may stay on here  
for a time if it is necessary.  
You were promised  
a memento of Agnes'.  
Thank you.  
I want nothing at all.  
She's trying  
to play a nice role.  
But she won't  
get anything for it.  
- Stay 'til the month's end.  
- Yes.  
Well, if there's nothing left  
for us to attend to.  
Let's leave before the roads  
to the station are snowed under.  
Good-bye now, Anna.  
Thank you.  
Thank you.  
Thank you for all you did.  
Hurry now.  
- Could I speak to you a second?  
- Of course.  
That evening we came close

to each other...  
have you thought  
about what we discussed?  
Yes, of course,  
I've thought a lot about it.  
Could we hold  
to all of our resolutions?  
Dearest Karin, why on earth  
shouldn't we do that?  
I have no idea.  
It's that everything seems  
different since that evening.  
I think we've become  
very much closer.  
What are you thinking about?  
I'm thinking  
about the conversation...  
- No, you're not.  
- I was thinking how Joakim...  
hates it  
if I keep him waiting.  
I have no idea  
why you call me to account...  
as if I were on trial  
for my thoughts, Karin.  
What do you want?  
- Nothing.  
- No.  
If there's nothing you want,  
don't be hurt...  
because I must say good-bye  
to you now.  
You touched me.  
Don't you remember that?  
I don't recall  
each stupid act...  
and never try forcing me  
to answer for one.  
Dearest Karin, give the children  
my love and keep well.  
'Til Twelfth Night.  
As usual, we'll meet then.  
How sad.  
"Wednesday,

the third of September.  
"The tang of autumn  
fills the clear, still air...  
"but it's mild and fine."  
My sisters, Karin and Maria,  
have come to see me.  
It's wonderful  
to be together again...  
like in the old days,  
and I am feeling much better.  
We were even able to go  
for a little walk together...  
such an event for me...  
especially since I haven't  
been out of doors for so long.  
Suddenly we began to laugh  
and run toward the old swing...  
that we hadn't seen  
since we were children.  
We sat in it like three  
good little sisters...  
and Anna pushed us,  
slowly and gently.  
All my aches and pains  
were gone.  
The people I am most fond of  
in all the world were with me.  
I could hear their chatting  
around me.  
I could feel the presence  
of their bodies...  
the warmth of their hands.  
I wanted to hold the moment fast

**and thought:**

"Come what may,  
this is happiness.  
"I cannot wish  
for anything better.  
"Now, for a few minutes...  
"I can experience perfection.  
"And I feel profoundly grateful  
to my life...  
"which gives me so much."