

SIDE - Fredrik and Desirée

FREDRIK: Your dragoon and his wife are glowering at each other in the green salon, and all the children appear to have vanished, so when I saw you sneaking up the stairs...

DESIRÉE: I ripped my hem on the dining room table in the furore.

FREDRIK (*hovering*): Is this all right?

DESIRÉE: Of course. Sit down.

(Patting the bed beside her, on which tumbled stockings are strewn)

FREDRIK: On the stockings?

DESIRÉE: I don't see why not. (*pause*) Well, we're back at the point where we were so rudely interrupted last week, aren't we?

FREDRIK: Not quite. If you'll remember, we'd progressed a step further.

DESIRÉE: How true.

FREDRIK: I imagine neither of us is contemplating a repeat performance.

DESIRÉE: Good heavens, with your wife in the house, and my lover and his wife and my daughter...

FREDRIK: ...and my devoted old friend, your mother.

(They both laugh.)

DESIRÉE (*During it, like a naughty girl*): Isn't my dragoon awful?

FREDRIK (*Laughs*): When you told me he had the brains of a pea, I think you were being generous.

DESIRÉE: What is God's name are we laughing about? Your son was right at dinner. We don't fool that boy, not for a moment. The One and Only Desirée Armfeldt, dragging around the country in shoddy tours, carrying on with someone else's dim-witted husband. And the Great Lawyer Egerman, busy renewing his unrenewable youth.

FREDRIK: Bravo! Probably that's an accurate description of us both.

DESIRÉE: Shall I tell you why I really invited you here? When we meet again and we made love, I thought: Maybe here it is at last – a change to turn back, to find some sort of coherent existence after so many years of muddle. (*Pause*) Of course, there's your wife. But I thought: Perhaps – just perhaps – you might be in need of rescue, too.

FREDRICK: From renewing my unrenewable youth?

DESIRÉE (*suddenly tentative*): It was only a thought:

FREDRICK: When my eyes are open and I look at you, I see a woman that I have loved for a long time, who entranced me all over again when I came to her rooms...who gives me such genuine pleasure that, in spite of myself, I came here for the sheer delight of being with her again. The woman who could rescue me? Of Course.
(Pause) But when my eyes are not open – which is most of the time – all I see is a girl in a pink dress teasing a canary, running through a sun lit garden to hug me at the gate, as if I'd come home from Timbuktu instead of the Municipal Courthouse three blocks away....*(Pause)* Desirée, I'm sorry. I should have never come. To flirt with rescue with one has no intention of being saved...Do try to forgive me.

ALNM - Fredrik/Desirée Side #2:

FREDRIK: They told me where to find you at the theatre.

DESIRÉE: Fredrik!

FREDRIK: Hello, Desirée

(For a moment they gaze at each other.)

DESIRÉE: So it *was* you! I peered and peered and said: “Is it...? Can it be...? Is it possible?”
And then, of course, when you walked out after five minutes, I was sure.

FREDRIK: Was my record that bad?

DESIRÉE: Terrible. You walked out of my Hedda in Halsingborg. And on my sensational Phaedra in Ekilstuna.

FREDRIK: Fourteen years!

DESIRÉE: Fourteen years!

FREDRIK: No rancor?

DESIRÉE: Rancor? For a while, a little. But now – no rancor, not a trace. Sandwich?

FREDRIK (Declining): Hungry as ever after a performance, I see.

DESIRÉE: Worse. I’m a wolf. Sit down. (pouring him a glass of schnapps)
Here. You never said no to schnapps.

FREDRIK: About *this* walking out! I’d like to explain.

DESIRÉE: The girl in the pink dress, I imagine.

FREDRIK: You still don’t miss a thing, do you?

DESIRÉE: Your wife.

FREDRIK: For the past eleven months. She was so looking forward to the play, she got a little overexcited. She’s only eighteen, still almost a child. (A Pause). I’m waiting.

DESIRÉE: For what?

FREDRIK: For you to tell me what an old fool I’ve become to have fallen under the spell of youth, beginnings, the blank page.