

SCENE 12

*The plains. Sky. Evening.*

BAAL. EKART. SOPHIE.

SOPHIE: My knees are giving way. Why do you run around like you were out of your mind?

BAAL: Because you're a millstone round my neck.

EKART: How can you treat her like that when she's pregnant by you?

SOPHIE: I wanted it myself, Ekart.

BAAL: She wanted it herself. And now she's a millstone round my neck.

EKART: You are bestial. Sit down, Sophie.

SOPHIE (*sits down heavily*): Let him go!

EKART: If you throw her in the gutter, I'll stay with her.

BAAL: She wouldn't stay with *you*, but you would abandon *me* for her sake. It's just like you.

EKART: Twice you've thrown me out of your bed. My girls were a matter of indifference to you but you stole them from me, even though I loved them.

BAAL: Just *because* you loved them. Twice I've desecrated corpses to keep you pure. I need it, I took no pleasure in it, by God!

EKART (*to SOPHIE*): And you still love this blatant beast?

SOPHIE: I can't help it, Ekart. I'd love even his corpse.

I love even his fists. I can't help it, Ekart.

BAAL: I don't want to know what you two did while I was in the clink.

SOPHIE: We stood together in front of the white prison.

BAAL: Together.

SOPHIE: Beat me for it.

EKART (*yelling*): Didn't you throw her at me?

BAAL: At that time I didn't yet care for you.

EKART: I haven't got your elephant's hide.

BAAL: I love you for that.

EKART: At least keep your damned mouth shut about it while she's around.

BAAL: She should go. She's getting to be a pest. (*Puts both his hands to his throat.*) She washes her dirty linen in your tears. Haven't you noticed yet that she runs naked between the two of us? I'm as patient as a lamb but I can't get out of my own skin.

EKART (*sits down with SOPHIE*): Go home to your mother!

SOPHIE: But I can't!

BAAL: She can't, Ekart.

SOPHIE: Beat me, if you want to, Baal. I won't ask you to slow down again. I didn't mean it. Let me run with you as long as I have feet to run with. Then I'll lie down in the bushes and you needn't look. Don't chase me away, Baal.

BAAL: Lay it in the river, your flabby body. You wanted me to vomit you out.

SOPHIE: Do you want me to lie down right here? You don't want me to lie down right here. You don't know it yet, Baal. You're like a child, you don't mean what you say.

BAAL: I'm fed to the teeth.

SOPHIE: But not tonight, not tonight, Baal. I am afraid, alone. I am afraid of the dark. That's what I'm afraid of.

BAAL: In your condition nobody'll do you any harm.

SOPHIE: But the night. Won't you stay with me, just tonight?

BAAL: To the boatmen. It's midsummernight. They'll be drunk.

SOPHIE: A quarter of an hour.

BAAL: Come, Ekart!

SOPHIE: Where am I to go?  
BAAL: To heaven, my beloved!  
SOPHIE: With my child?  
BAAL: Bury it!  
SOPHIE: I only hope you won't live to think of what you're telling me now beneath the beautiful sky you like so much. That's what I'm praying for. On my knees.  
EKART: I'll stay with you. And then I'll take you to your mother. If only you'll say you no longer love this animal.  
BAAL: She loves me.  
SOPHIE: I love this animal.  
EKART: Are you still here, animal? Have you no knees? Are you drowned in brandy or in poetry? Degenerate beast! Degenerate beast!  
BAAL: Half-wit!  
*EKART jumps at him, they wrestle.*  
SOPHIE: Jesus Christ! They're wild beasts!  
EKART (*while wrestling*): Do you hear what she says: in the undergrowth, and right now, it's getting dark? Degenerate beast! Degenerate beast!  
BAAL (*against him, presses EKART to his breast*): Now you're at my breast. Can you smell me? I'm holding you: there's more to that than being close to a woman. (*Stops.*) Now you can see the stars above the bushes, Ekart.  
EKART (*staring at BAAL who is looking at the sky*): I can't master it.  
BAAL (*his arm around him*): It's getting dark. We must camp out for the night. There are hollows in the wood where no wind penetrates. Come, I'll tell you stories about the animals. (*He drags him away.*)  
SOPHIE (*alone in the dark, shouting*): Baal!

## SCENE 13

*Wooden brown room in an inn. Night. Wind.*

*At tables GOOGOO, BOLLEBOLL. The BEGGAR and MAJA, the beggarwoman, with her CHILD in a box.*

BOLLEBOLL (*playing cards with GOOGOO*): I have no money left. Let's play for our souls.  
BEGGAR: Brother Wind wants to come in. But we don't know our cold Brother Wind. Hehehel

*The CHILD cries.*

MAJA: Listen! Something going round the house. I hope it's not some big animal.

BOLLEBOLL: Why, are you horny again?

*A knock at the gate.*

MAJA: Listen! I won't open!

BEGGAR: You'll open.

MAJA: No. No. No. Dear Mother of God, No!

BEGGAR: Bouque la Madonne! Open!

*MAJA crawls to the door.*

MAJA: Who's outside?

*The CHILD cries. MAJA opens the door.*

*BAAL enters with EKART.*

BAAL: Is this the hospital tavern?

MAJA: Yes, but there are no beds free. (*More impatient.*) And I'm sick.

BAAL: We've got some champagne.