



**WHEN WE DEAD  
AWAKEN**

**HENRIK IBSEN**

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# WHEN WE DEAD AWAKEN

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**PROFESSOR RUBEK:** The day came when I could afford it easily enough; and so I bought it.

**IRENE:** [With a sidelong look at him.] Then do you live out there now--in our old house?

**PROFESSOR RUBEK:** No, I have had it pulled down long ago. And I have built myself a great, handsome, comfortable villa on the site--with a park around it. It is there that we-- [Stops and corrects himself.] --there that I usually live during the summer.

**IRENE:** [Mastering herself.] So you and--and the other one live out there now?

**PROFESSOR RUBEK:** [With a touch of defiance.] Yes. When my wife and I are not travelling--as we are this year.

**IRENE:** [Looking far before her.] Life was beautiful, beautiful by the Lake of Taunitz.

**PROFESSOR RUBEK:** [As though looking back into himself.] And yet, Irene--

**IRENE:** [Completing his thought.] --yet we two let slip all that life and its beauty.

**PROFESSOR RUBEK:** [Softly, urgently.] Does repentance come too late, now?

**IRENE:** [Does not answer, but sits silent for a moment; then she points over the upland.] Look there, Arnold,--now the sun is going down behind the peaks. See what a red glow the level rays cast over all the heathery knolls out yonder.

**PROFESSOR RUBEK:** [Looks where she is pointing.] It is long since I have seen a sunset in the mountains.

**IRENE:** Or a sunrise?

**PROFESSOR RUBEK:** A sunrise I don't think I have ever seen.

**IRENE:** [Smiles as though lost in recollection.] I once saw a marvellously lovely sunrise.

**PROFESSOR RUBEK:** Did you? Where was that?

**IRENE:** High, high up on a dizzy mountain-top.--You beguiled me up there by promising that I should see all the glory of the world if only I---

[She stops suddenly.]

**PROFESSOR RUBEK:** If only you--? Well?

**IRENE:** I did as you told me--went with you up to the heights. And there I fell upon my knees and worshipped you, and served you. [Is silent for a moment; then says softly.] Then I saw the sunrise.

**PROFESSOR RUBEK:** [Turning at him with a scornful smile.] With you--and the other woman?

**PROFESSOR RUBEK:** [Urgently.] With me--as in our days of creation. You could open all that is locked up in me. Can you not find it in your heart, Irene?

**IRENE:** [Shaking her head.] I have no longer the key to you, Arnold.

**PROFESSOR RUBEK:** You have the key! You and you alone possess it! [Beseechingly.] Help me--that I may be able to live my life over again!

**IRENE:** [Immovable as before.] Empty dreams! Idle--dead dreams. For the life you and I led there is no resurrection.

**PROFESSOR RUBEK:** [Curtly, breaking off.] Then let us go on playing.

**IRENE:** Yes, playing, playing--only playing!

[They sit and strew leaves and petals over the brook, where they float and sail away.]

[Up the slope to the left at the back come ULFHEIM and MAIA in hunting costume. After them comes the SERVANT with the leash of dogs, with which he goes out to the right.]

**PROFESSOR RUBEK:** [Catching sight of them.] Ah! There is little Maia, going out with the bear-hunter.

**IRENE:** Your lady, yes.

**PROFESSOR RUBEK:** Or the other's.

**MAIA:** [Looks around as she is crossing the upland, sees the two sitting by the brook, and calls out.] Good-night, Professor! Dream of me. Now I am going off on my adventures!

**PROFESSOR RUBEK:** [Calls back to her.] What sort of an adventure is this to be?

**MAIA:** [Approaching.] I am going to let life take the place of all the rest.

**PROFESSOR RUBEK:** [Mockingly.] Aha! So you too are going to do that, little Maia?

**MAIA:** Yes. And I've made a verse about it, and this is how it goes:

[Sings triumphantly.]

I am free! I am free! I am free!: No more life in the prison for me!: I am free as a bird! I am free!: For I believe I have awakened now--at last.

**PROFESSOR RUBEK:** It almost seems so.

**MAIA:** [Drawing a deep breath.] Oh--how divinely light one feels on waking!

**PROFESSOR RUBEK:** Good-night, Frau Maia--and good luck to---

**ULFHEIM:** [Calls out, interposing.] Hush, hush!--for the devil's sake let's have none of your wizard wishes. Don't you see that we are going out to shoot---

**PROFESSOR RUBEK:** What will you bring me home from the hunting, Maia?

**MAIA:** You shall have a bird of prey to model. I shall wing one for you.

**PROFESSOR RUBEK:** [Laughs mockingly and bitterly.] Yes, to wing things--without knowing what you are doing--that has long been quite in your way.

**MAIA:** [Tossing her head.] Oh, just let me take care of myself for the future, and I wish you then--! [Nods and laughs roguishly.] Good-bye--and a good, peaceful summer night on the upland!

**PROFESSOR RUBEK:** [Jestingly.] Thanks! And all the ill-luck in the world over you and your hunting!

**ULFHEIM:** [Roaring with laughter.] There now, that is a wish worth having!

**MAIA:** [Laughing.] Thanks, thanks, thanks, Professor!

[They have both crossed the visible portion of the upland, and go out through the bushes to the right.]

**PROFESSOR RUBEK:** [After a short pause.] A summer night on the upland! Yes, that would have been life!

**IRENE:** [Suddenly, with a wild expression in her eyes.] Will you spend a summer night on the upland--with me?

**PROFESSOR RUBEK:** [Stretching his arms wide.] Yes, yes,--come!

**IRENE:** My adored lord and master!

**PROFESSOR RUBEK:** Oh, Irene!

**IRENE:** [Hoarsely, smiling and groping in her breast.] It will be only an episode-- [Quickly, whispering.] Hush!--do not look round, Arnold!

**PROFESSOR RUBEK:** [Also in a low voice.] What is it?

**IRENE:** A face that is staring at me.

**PROFESSOR RUBEK:** [Turns involuntarily.] Where! [With a start.] Ah---!

[The SISTER OF MERCY's head is partly visible among the bushes beside the descent to the left. Her eyes are immovably fixed on IRENE.]

**IRENE:** [Rises and says softly.] We must part then. No, you must remain sitting. Do you hear? You must not go with me. [Bends over him and whispers.] Till we meet again--to-night--on the upland.

**PROFESSOR RUBEK:** And you will come, Irene?

**IRENE:** Yes, surely I will come. Wait for me here.

**PROFESSOR RUBEK:** [Repeats dreamily.] Summer night on the upland. With you. With you. [His eyes meet hers.] Oh, Irene--that might have been our life.--And that we have forfeited--we two.

**IRENE:** We see the irretrievable only when--

[Breaks off.]

**PROFESSOR RUBEK:** [Looks inquiringly at her.] When---?

**IRENE:** When we dead awaken.

**PROFESSOR RUBEK:** [Shakes his head mournfully.] What do we really see then?

**IRENE:** We see that we have never lived.

[She goes towards the slope and descends.]

[The **SISTER OF MERCY** makes way for her and follows her. **PROFESSOR RUBEK** remains sitting motionless beside the brook.]

**MAIA:** [Is heard singing triumphantly among the hills.]

I am free! I am free! I am free!: No more life in the prison for me!: I am free as a bird! I am free!

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## ACT THIRD

[A wild riven mountain-side, with sheer precipices at the back. Snow-clad peaks rise to the right, and lose themselves in drifting mists. To the left, on a stone-scrée, stands an old, half-ruined hut. It is early morning. Dawn is breaking. The sun has not yet risen.]

[MAIA comes, flushed and irritated, down over the stone-scrée on the left. ULFHEIM follows, half angry, half laughing, holding her fast by the sleeve.]

**MAIA:** [Trying to tear herself loose.] Let me go! Let me go, I say!

**ULFHEIM:** Come, Come! are you going to bite now? You're as snappish as a wolf.

**MAIA:** [Striking him over the hand.] Let me, I tell you? And be quiet!

**ULFHEIM:** No, confound me if I will!

**MAIA:** Then I will not go another step with you. Do you hear?--not a single step!

**ULFHEIM:** Ho, ho! How can you get away from me, here, on the wild mountain-side?

**MAIA:** I will jump over the precipice yonder, if need be---

**ULFHEIM:** And mangle and mash yourself up into dogs'-meat! A juicy morsel! [Lets go his hold.] As you please. Jump over the precipice if you want to. It's a dizzy drop. There's only one narrow footpath down it, and that's almost impassable.

**MAIA:** [Dusts her skirt with her hand, and looks at him with angry eyes.] Well, you are a nice one to go hunting with!

**ULFHEIM:** Say rather, sporting.

**MAIA:** Oh! So you call this sport, do you?

**ULFHEIM:** Yes, I venture to take that liberty. It is the sort of sport I like best of all.

**MAIA:** [Tossing her head.] Well--I must say! [After a pause; looks searchingly at him.] Why did you let the dogs loose up there?

**ULFHEIM:** [Blinking his eyes and smiling.] So that they too might do a little hunting on their own account, don't you see?

**MAIA:** There's not a word of truth in that! It wasn't for the dogs' sake that you let them go.

**ULFHEIM:** [Still smiling.] Well, why did I let them go then? Let us hear.

**MAIA:** You let them go because you wanted to get rid of Lars. He was to run after them and bring them in again, you said. And in the meant-time--. Oh, it was a pretty way to behave!

**ULFHEIM:** In the meantime?

**MAIA:** [Curtly breaking off.] No matter!

**ULFHEIM:** [In a confidential tone.] Lars won't find them. You may safely swear to that. He won't come with them before the time's up.

**MAIA:** [Looking angrily at him.] No, I daresay not.

**ULFHEIM:** [Catching at her arm.] For Lars--he knows my--my methods of sport, you see.

**MAIA:** [Eludes him, and measures him with a glance.] Do you know what you look like, Mr. Ulfheim?

**ULFHEIM:** I should think I'm probably most like myself.

**MAIA:** Yes, there you're exactly right. For you're the living image of a faun.

**ULFHEIM:** A faun?

**MAIA:** Yes, precisely; a faun.

**ULFHEIM:** A faun! Isn't that a sort of monster? Or a kind of a wood demon, as you might call it?

**MAIA:** Yes, just the sort of creature you are. A thing with a goat's beard and goat-legs. Yes, and the faun has horns too!

**ULFHEIM:** So, so!--has he horns too?

**MAIA:** A pair of ugly horns, just like yours, yes.

**ULFHEIM:** Can you see the poor little horns *I* have?

**MAIA:** Yes, I seem to see them quite plainly.

**ULFHEIM:** [Taking the dogs' leash out of his pocket.] Then I had better see about tying you.

**MAIA:** Have you gone quite mad? Would you tie me?

**ULFHEIM:** If I am a demon, let me be a demon! So that's the way of it! You can see the horns, can you?

**MAIA:** [Soothingly.] There, there, there! Now try to behave nicely, Mr. Ulfheim. [Breaking off.] But what has become of that hunting-castle of yours, that you boasted so much of? You said it lay somewhere hereabouts.

**ULFHEIM:** [Points with a flourish to the hut.] There you have it, before your very eyes.

**MAIA:** [Looks at him.] That old pig-stye!

**ULFHEIM:** [Laughing in his beard.] It has harboured more than one king's daughter, I can tell you.

**MAIA:** Was it there that that horrid man you told me about came to the king's daughter in the form of a bear?

**ULFHEIM:** Yes, my fair companion of the chase--this is the scene. [With a gesture of invitation.] If you would deign to enter--

**MAIA:** Isch! If ever I set foot in it--! Isch!

**ULFHEIM:** Oh, two people can doze away a summer night in there comfortably enough. Or a whole summer, if it comes to that!

**MAIA:** Thanks! One would need to have a pretty strong taste for that kind of thing. [Impatiently.] But now I am tired both of you and the hunting expedition. Now I am going down to the hotel--before people awaken down there.

**ULFHEIM:** How do you propose to get down from here?

**MAIA:** That's your affair. There must be a way down somewhere or other, I suppose.

**ULFHEIM:** [Pointing towards the back.] Oh, certainly! There is a sort of way--right down the face of the precipice yonder---

**MAIA:** There, you see. With a little goodwill---

**ULFHEIM:** --but just you try if you dare go that way.

**MAIA:** [Doubtfully.] Do you think I can't?

**ULFHEIM:** Never in this world--if you don't let me help you.

**MAIA:** [Uneasily.] Why, then come and help me! What else are you here for?

**ULFHEIM:** Would you rather I should take you on my back---

**MAIA:** Nonsense!

**ULFHEIM:** --or carry you in my arms?

**MAIA:** Now do stop talking that rubbish!

**ULFHEIM:** [With suppressed exasperation.] I once took a young girl--lifted her up from the mire of the streets and carried her in my arms. Next my heart I carried her. So I would have borne her all through life-- lest haply she should dash her foot against a stone. For her shoes were worn very thin when I found her---

**MAIA:** And yet you took her up and carried her next your heart?

**ULFHEIM:** Took her up out of the gutter and carried her as high and as carefully as I could. [With a growling laugh.] And do you know what I got for my reward?

**MAIA:** No. What did you get?

**ULFHEIM:** [Looks at her, smiles and nods.] I got the horns! The horns that you can see so plainly. Is not that a comical story, madam bear-murderess?

**MAIA:** Oh yes, comical enough! But I know another story that is still more comical.

**ULFHEIM:** How does that story go?

**MAIA:** This is how it goes. There was once a stupid girl, who had both a father and a mother--but a rather poverty-stricken home. Then there came a high and mighty seigneur into the midst of all this poverty. And he took the girl in his arms--as you did--and travelled far, far away with her---

**ULFHEIM:** Was she so anxious to be with him?

**MAIA:** Yes, for she was stupid, you see.

**ULFHEIM:** And he, no doubt, was a brilliant and beautiful personage?

**MAIA:** Oh, no, he wasn't so superlatively beautiful either. But he pretended that he would take her with him to the top of the highest of mountains, where there were light and sunshine without end.

**ULFHEIM:** So he was a mountaineer, was he, that man?

**MAIA:** Yes, he was--in his way.

**ULFHEIM:** And then he took the girl up with him---

**MAIA:** [With a toss of the head.] Took her up with him finely, you may be sure! Oh no! he beguiled her into a cold, clammy cage, where--as it seemed to her--there was neither sunlight nor fresh air, but only gilding and great petrified ghosts of people all around the walls.

**ULFHEIM:** Devil take me, but it served her right!

**MAIA:** Yes, but don't you think it's quite a comical story, all the same?

**ULFHEIM:** [Looks at her moment.] Now listen to me, my good companion of the chase---

**MAIA:** Well, what it is now?

**ULFHEIM:** Should not we two tack our poor shreds of life together?

**MAIA:** Is his worship inclined to set up as a patching-tailor?

**ULFHEIM:** Yes, indeed he is. Might not we two try to draw the rags together here and there--so as to make some sort of a human life out of them?

**MAIA:** And when the poor tatters were quite worn out--what then?

**ULFHEIM:** [With a large gesture.] Then there we shall stand, free and serene-- as the man and woman we really are!

**MAIA:** [Laughing.] You with your goat-legs yes!

**ULFHEIM:** And you with your--. Well, let that pass.

**MAIA:** Yes, come--let us pass--on.

**ULFHEIM:** Stop! Whither away, comrade?

**MAIA:** Down to the hotel, of course.

**ULFHEIM:** And afterward?

**MAIA:** Then we'll take a polite leave of each other, with thanks for pleasant company.

**ULFHEIM:** Can we part, we two? Do you think we can?

**MAIA:** Yes, you didn't manage to tie me up, you know.

**ULFHEIM:** I have a castle to offer you---

**MAIA:** [Pointing to the hut.] A fellow to that one?

**ULFHEIM:** It has not fallen to ruin yet.

**MAIA:** And all the glory of the world, perhaps?

**ULFHEIM:** A castle, I tell you---

**MAIA:** Thanks! I have had enough of castles.















[The **SISTER OF MERCY** appears upon the stone-scrree to the left. She stops and looks around silently and searchingly.

**MAIA:** I am free! I am free! I am free!: No more life in the prison for me!: I am free as a bird! I am free!

[Suddenly a sound like thunder is heard from high up on the snow- field, which glides and whirls downwards with headlong speed. **PROFESSOR RUBEK** and **IRENE** can be dimly discerned as they are whirled along with the masses of snow and buried in them.

**THE SISTER OF MERCY:** [Gives a shriek, stretches out her arms towards them and cries.] Irene!

[Stands silent a moment, then makes the sign of the cross before her in the air, and says.

Pax vobiscum!

[**MAIA**'s triumphant song sounds from still farther down below.

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