

8.2 INT. SCHREBER HOUSE - DINING ROOM/PINK ROOM - DAY

A family group are all clustered in the Dining Room: Schreber's sister ANNA, his brother-in-law CARL, and a NEPHEW (10), all here to welcome Daniel Paul home.

They murmur as they pass an x-ray greeting card from hand to hand.

In the adjoining room Sabine is with an exquisite young girl (12), dressed beautifully, with not a hair out of place, this is FRIDOLINE SCHREBER.

SABINE

Please be good today. I have the most horrible headache.

Sabine takes a hand-mirror out of Fridoline's hand and looks at herself.

SABINE (CONT'D)

Look at me, I look at death's door. Come on now. Do you have the book?

FRIDOLINE

Yes Mother.

Sabine picks up the worn copy of Hoffman's *Struwelpeter: Merry Stories and Funny Pictures*, that we saw in an earlier scene, and gives it to the little girl.

SABINE

And don't forget, we would like you to address Herr Schreber as Papa.

FRIDOLINE

He is not my father

SABINE

Please try. And you must not be frightened if sometimes... .. he is strange. He has been away a long time, resting. He has been most unwell, and now he needs peace and quiet and the love of his family. So promise you will be a good girl, and please stop asking questions, it's making my head worse.

FRIDOLINE

Why does he need it so quiet?

SABINE

For the sake of his nerves... .. and his writing.

A

B

C

Schreber enters.

Sabine ushers Fridoline towards the family group.

SABINE (CONT'D)

Go. Go.

Fridoline walks through to join the group.

MAID A appears in the main room, bringing a large vase of cut flowers, to add to those already decorating the room, she places and arranges the flowers..

The brother-in-law Carl is preparing a camera and leaves it on a table.

Schreber and Sabine tentatively embrace.

SCHREBER

She is very pretty.

SABINE

Yes. She is isn't she.

SCHREBER

As pretty as her mother.

SABINE

I'm...I'm very happy you're home now Paul.

SCHREBER

I was... .. very lonely, Sabchen. You cannot imagine.

MAID B brings in a tray with opened wine bottles and filled glasses.

Sabine walks through to the adjoining room with Schreber.

SABINE

Paul is home, everyone.

Anna steps forward to greet him with a kiss.

ANNA

Welcome home Paul.

Schreber kisses his sister ANNA, shakes hands with his brother CARL, shakes hands with his NEPHEW.

Both maids A & B are handing round wine glasses (water for the children) -

- and when everybody has a glass in their hands, Carl proposes a toast...

D

E

BROTHER-IN-LAW CARL
Toast! Toast!
(Whispers to Anna)
Come on my dear.

ANNA
You suffered, you struggled
against weakness. You endured.
You have overcome. Welcome home.

Everyone toasts Schreiber.

EVERYBODY
Welcome Home!
(They cheer him.)
Hep! Hep! Hurrah!

Sabine now brings Fridoline forward.

F.

9

SABINE
Fridoline. Say hello to your new
Papa.

Fridoline curtseys and dutifully receives a kiss from this
stranger.

SCHREBER
Fridoline?
(Schreiber kisses her
cheeks)
It is lovely to welcome you into
our family Fridoline. I hope
these last few weeks you have
been settling in.

Fridoline says nothing.

She is carrying a worn copy of Shock Headed Peter.

SCHREBER (CONT'D)
Ah... I see you have found my old
childhood library. Take any you
want, any you want.

F

SABINE
I gave it to her. I hope you
don't mind.

Schreiber smiles, shakes his head.

SCHREBER
They were always kept for a
child.
(To Fridoline)
Do you know any of the poems?

Fridoline stands as if to perform, but looks to her mother
for a cue.

SABINE
Go on my dear.

Fridoline pauses, looks round, starts.

FRIDOLINE
Just look at him!
There he stands,
With his nasty hair and hands.
See! His nails are never cut;
They are grim'd as black as soot;

Schreber moves towards her, crouches to her level, and joins in.

SCHREBER
And the sloven, I declare,
Never once has combed his hair!
Anything to me is sweeter
Than to see Shock-Headed Peter.

D₂ They finish together. *E₂*

Schreber looks directly at Fridoline as she closes the book.

SCHREBER (CONT'D)
You read very prettily my dear.
This book was my childhood
favourite.

SABINE
Now, now, my dear. Don't over-
tax your father. We must look
after him now he is restored to
us...

Fridoline and the Nephew are sent to play - they start building a house of cards.

ANNA
You must rest. Father would have
agreed, I am sure. Would have
said your organism was poisoned,
toxic, and is still in need of
cleansing, and above all, rest.

Schreber's face as he listens.

SCHREBER
Yes.

ANNA
Poor father. His books, his
plans for reform: they poisoned
him and wore him out.

This is greeted with silence: no-one says a thing.

SCHREBER
Father certainly left his mark on
the world. A life devoted to...
others...

CUT TO: