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Writing about Easter and Søren Kierkegaard's parable, "The King and the Maiden," Thomas Froese writes, "A certain king takes a journey, a road trip of sorts, because he's hopelessly in love."

# *I'm loved, therefore I am*



**THOMAS FROESE**  
OPINION

Today, between Easter's chocolate rabbits and coloured eggs, here's something on a parable by Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard. Called "The King and the Maiden," it's as close as inside your phone.

A certain king takes a journey, a road trip of sorts, because he's hopelessly in love. He leaves his kingdom and becomes a beggar because he doesn't want his object of affection, a beautiful commoner, to know he's a king. He doesn't want to frighten her, or make her feel obligated. He also doesn't want her to marry him just for his wealth and power. All he wants is a relationship. The real deal.

The story is an allusion to God coming to earth as a human. But with less than 300 words, Kierkegaard's thoughtful parable ends abruptly. Readers never get the young lady's perspective, never mind her response. Here's my own go at it.

I picture her with a tired face, standing in her doorway. She'd invite the stranger in, but the place is a mess, her bed unmade and her half-eaten breakfast, cold toast, on a table beside an empty wine bottle from last night. Even so, she sees something in this man's eyes, something like the seaside.

She senses he's come some distance just for her, and he'd come inside to visit, but he's more interested in getting her out of her home, or at least out of herself.

This is because she's been knocked around by life and feels like a loser. In truth, she has lost much, even as things have been taken from her.

She's far more beautiful than she realizes. But what the young lady thinks that she knows for sure is that, as far as marital partners go, she's the worst candidate out there. This, funny enough, is why her suit-or loves her so much, why he's standing there with his peasant clothing flapping in the wind.

Finally she says, "Who did you say you are?"

I'll stop my rendition there. But the point is that your story, and mine, indeed the human story, is like the young lady's. We're born into this world's suffering and troubles as surely as sparks fly upward. In this we ask, if nothing else, "Who am I?"

Descartes said, "I think, therefore I am." Kierkegaard's parable says, "I'm loved, therefore I am." And it's the historic account of the first Easter, Christ's crucifixion and much-sandalized resurrection, that confirms this love.

It's true there's an off-centeredness to this understanding of life's journey. Writer Frederick Buechner puts it this way, that "If the world is sane, then Jesus is mad as a hatter and the Last Supper is the Mad Tea

Party."

Buechner continues: "The world says 'Mind your own business,' and Jesus says 'There's no such thing as your own business.' The world says 'Follow the wisest course, be a success,' and Jesus says 'Follow me and be crucified.' The world says 'Drive carefully, the life you save may be your own,' and Jesus says 'Whoever saves his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.'

"The world says 'Law and order,' and Jesus says 'Love.' The world says 'Get,' and Jesus says 'Give.' In terms of the world's sanity, Jesus is crazy as a coot, and anyone who thinks they can follow him without being a little crazy too is labouring less under a cross than under a delusion."

Which is all to say that there are worse things than being called crazy, even as there are worse adventures to have than those where you're unsure where you're even going.

It's not unlike some seed losing itself in the freshly-plowed spring ground. The seed doesn't say, "I'll do it my way." No, rather it just dies to itself and breaks open. Which allows it to grow into something it otherwise never imagined. That's giving up what you can't keep to gain what you can't lose. That's also the real deal.

THOMAS FROESE WRITES ABOUT NEWS, TRAVEL AND LIFE. FIND HIM AT THOMASFROESE.COM AND THOMASFROESE.SUBSTACK.COM.