

SCREENPLAY

THE RETURN

Copernicus has just returned from Ferrara to Poland. He arrives at the bishop's court. His friend Tadeusz hurries toward him and embraces him.

TADEUSZ

At last you've returned from Italy, where even Janus Pannonius once studied!
And now you are a lawyer, a physician, and a poet as well? Which one will you
become in the end?

COPERNICUS

My uncle—who is also like a father to me—intends me for theology and would
entrust me with episcopal duties. But you know how deeply the starry sky
fascinates me—I would study only that.

TADEUSZ

I remember—you spent your nights observing the stars. But look, your uncle is
coming.

The bishop, a stout and somewhat sickly-looking man, approaches and embraces him.

BISHOP

Nikolaus, my son, at last you are home again!

COPERNICUS

Father!... But why are you so pale?

BISHOP

My stomach gives me no peace.

COPERNICUS

I will examine you—we will find a remedy.

BISHOP

Leave that now. Tell me—what are you studying in the heavens?

COPERNICUS

I cannot stop thinking about the insight of the astronomer from Samos.

BISHOP

Aristarchus?

COPERNICUS

He calculated that the Sun is immense, and we are but a speck of dust. The
center must be the Sun.

TADEUSZ

That cannot be—we are at the center! The Moon and Sun revolve around us.

COPERNICUS

The Moon does orbit us—but the other planets behave differently. Their light
cannot be explained.

TADEUSZ

If only there were a lens to bring them closer!

COPERNICUS

Even without such tools, I concluded the Earth rotates on its axis.

BISHOP

Perhaps you will bring glory—but be careful, those who believe Ptolemy may oppose you.

TADEUSZ

He who strives higher reaches higher.

BISHOP

You must be tired—let us go to the refectory!

The three men leave the courtyard and enter the refectory.