

**PERUSAL SCRIPT**



**An Integrated Work of Art**



Newport, Maine

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**WILD DUCKS**

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## Musical Numbers

<b>Ibsen! Ibsen!</b>	The Company
<b>A Riddle – Dared</b>	Gina
<b>Images</b>	Hedvig
<b>How Does Man Keep Alive?</b>	Gregers
<b>Charade</b>	Old Ekdal
<b>Hjalmar</b>	Gregers
<b>Change</b>	Hjalmar
<b>The Wild Ducks</b>	Gina
<b>And Leaves Fall Down</b>	Hedvig
<b>And Leaves Fall Down</b>	Company

Two songs were cut in the original production because the actor was not a singer. They are included in the score, but not in the script. They were performed between HJALMAR and CHANGE, sung by Werle. Use them if you wish to.

<b>Truth</b>	Werle
<b>Theme</b>	Werle

## CAST

**GINA** – A strong unimaginative woman who is capable of accepting her fate and living life moment by moment

**HEDVIG** – The only true idealist in the play, since she alone is willing to make a sacrifice for others

**HJALMAR EKDAL**– An impressionable weakling who speaks as though he were sensitive, ambitious, and idealistic, but his actions show that he is insensitivity lazy and self-centered.

**OLD EKDAL** – Prefers the safety of his make-believe world to the real one. Like the Wild Duck, he, too, has been wounded and now lives in an artificial environment. (Can be a "Breeches part")

**GREGERS WERLE**– A vague, impractical, neurotic, self-centered, and ineffective idealist whose sole concern is to present his claim of the ideal.

**OLD WERLE** – A former libertine who salves his conscience by paying off those he has wronged.

**WILD DUCKS** is a notable example of symbolic realism which attacks any rigid, narrow-minded interpretation of the truth. It's concern is with illusion versus reality.

*EPIC/DIALECTICAL THEATRE* Wishes to actively teach the audience by means of audio-visual aids. Epic theatre believes that emotion and illusion dull the senses and inhibit learning. This form therefore attempts to decrease any emphasis on emotion by eliminating climax.

*EPIC THEATRE* Does not want the audience to become emotionally songs and involved with the plot, so distracting comments, slides have been inserted to interrupt the action of the story.

### **THE STORY:**

Hjalmar Ekdal, a poor retoucher of photographs, lives with his wife, Gina and his daughter, Hedvig. He deludes himself that he is a master inventor and spends his time dabbling in vague ideas while his wife does the actual work in the family. He is supported in his delusions by Hedvig, who adores him and innocently accepts his extravagant estimate of himself. Gregers Werle, the uncompromising idealist, son of a wealthy local businessman, returns to town, rejects his father for his past lies and turns to Hjalmar as a man capable of living the ideal life – Gregers tries to persuade Hjalmar to live by the whole truth. He tells Hjalmar that Hedvig is probably the daughter of Old Werle (his father), for whom Gina Ekdal worked at the time of her marriage. Instead of spurring Hjalmar to new conquests, the truth shatters his faith in his wife and daughter. Confused, but still the staunch idealist, Gregers decides he must go farther in shattering Hjalmar's illusions. He tries to persuade Hedvig to kill her pet wild duck, which Hjalmar has taken as a symbol for all the exotic and rare things for which he yearns. Grief-stricken by her father's rejection of her, wishing to prove her love but confused about the kind of sacrifice Gregers demands of her, Hedvig shoots herself, instead.

## WILD DUCKS

### ***SLIDE #1 – Wild Duck drawing with lettering: The Wild Duck***

*(Cast in full view of audience as the audience members are seated. There is erratic run on the piano, the cast freezes, another run and they sing sarcastically.)*

### **SONG: IBSEN! IBSEN!**

#### **COMPANY:**

IBSEN, IBSEN EVERYWHERE!  
NOTHING ELSE WILL DO!  
RIGHT AROUND THE EARTH'S SPHERE  
    THE IBSEN FEVER RAGES!  
ALL THE WORLD'S IBSEN-MAD,  
    THOUGH AGAINST ITS WILL,  
    FOR THE AIR IS SWARMING  
    WITH THE IBSEN-FAME-BACILLI!  
NO ESCAPE! EVERYWHERE  
IBSEN'S NAME PROCLAIMED:  
    TRUMPETING THE PRAISES  
    OF FASHIONS AND NOVELTIES.  
    ON CIGARS AND LADIES' BAUBLES,  
    PASTRIES, BODICES, CRAVATS,  
GLEAMS THE WORD IN GILDED LETTERS:  
IBSEN! A LA IBSEN!

### ***SLIDE #2 – Hedvig with lettering: Hedvig***

*(GINA and HEDVIG remain center stage; the rest of the cast exits. They sing.)*

### **SONG: A RIDDLE - DARED**

#### **GINA :**

RIDDLE OF YOUTH OF DREAMS,  
DARED I RIDDLE THEE OUT.  
DARED I TAKE THEE STRAIGHT  
FOR SOUL-MATE OF MY THOUGHTS;  
RIDDLE OF YOUTH OF DREAMS,  
DARED I SINK DEEP DEEP DEEP  
INTO THY SOUL'S FULL TREASURE.  
DARED I GAUGE FULL MEASURE

THY BLOSSOMING, UNTOUCHED SOUL.

**DIRECT SEGUE TO  
SONG: IMAGES**

**HEDVIG:**

THEN WOULD LOVELY POEMS  
SPRING UP FROM MY HEART,  
THEN WOULD I SOAR FREE,  
A BIRD TO HEAVEN'S RIM.  
AND EVERY BROKEN IMAGE  
WOULD BE ON IN HARMONY,  
FOR LIFE'S LOVELIEST VISIONS  
WOULD BE REFLECTED IN MY SONG.

***SLIDE #3 – Werle with lettering: Werle***

**MOVEMENT 1** – GREGERS enter right. HJALMAR from left. They enter to center. Front of half-curtain.

**HJALMAR:** You shouldn't have sent me an invitation, Gregers.

**GREGERS:** This party is supposed to be for me. Why shouldn't I ask my best, and only, friend?

**HJALMAR:** I don't think your father likes it.

***SLIDE #4 – Old Ekdal with lettering: Old Ekdal***

**HJALMAR:** *(In a gloomy tone. HJALMAR races DR avoids GREGERS eyes. GREGERS moves DR to audience.)* You know, of course, about all the terrible things that have happened to me and my family since I saw you last. My poor father is staying with me. He hasn't anyone else in the world to turn to. Everything has changed. My father's ruin—the shame and the humiliation—

*(slight pause)*

—considering everything, I thought it was best—to tear myself completely away from all the old ties and connections. Your father, particularly, advised me to do it. And since he was taking such a helpful interest in me—

**GREGERS:** My father was?

**HJALMAR:** *(Stands with three-quarter turn back to GREGERS.)* Surely you know that. Where was I going to get the money to learn the trade and equip a studio and get started?

**GREGERS:** And your father paid for all of it?

**HJALMAR:** He's never wanted anybody to know about it.

*(Crosses to table.)*

And of course he was the one, too, who made it possible for me to get married. Or—perhaps you didn't know that either?

*(Feeds information directly.)*

**GREGERS:** *No, I should say I didn't—But, my dear friend, I can't tell you how happy this makes me—and how ashamed. Maybe I've been unfair to my father because this shows that he does have a heart. It's almost like a kind of conscience—*

**HJALMAR:** Conscience?

**GREGERS:** Yes, or whatever you want to call it.

*SLIDE # 5 Gina. with lettering: Gina*

**HJALMAR:** *(pause)* You would never know Gina?

**GREGERS:** Gina?

**HJALMAR:** Yes, Gregers. Don't you remember her name was Gina? My wife...Gina. Remember? She used to work for your father.

**GREGERS:** Are you talking about Gina Hansen—who ran the house for us the last year my mother was sick?

**HJALMAR:** Why certainly. But my dear Gregers, I know for a fact your father wrote you I'd married.

**GREGERS:** Yes, he did; but not that –

*(Pacing the floor.)*

How did you happen to meet your wife?

**HJALMAR:** It was very simple. As you know, Gina didn't stay in your house very long. Everything was so confused then. Your mother's illness and—It was too much for Gina; so she gave notice and left. It was the year before your mother died—or maybe it was the same year she went to live with her mother—who ran a little boardinghouse. She had a room for rent.

**GREGERS:** And you were lucky enough to get it.

**HJALMAR:** Actually, it was your father who put me on to it. And it was there—that I really got to know Gina.

*(Pause.)*

It's so easy for young people to fall in love—

**GREGERS:** Tell me, —after you'd gotten engaged—was that when my father—that you—I mean, was that when you decided to take up photography?

**HJALMAR:** Exactly. I wanted to get started and set up a home—the sooner, the better. And your father and I both thought that this photography business was the easiest way. And Gina thought so, too. And then there was another reason: it turned out, luckily, that Gina knew something about retouching.

**GREGERS:** What a lucky coincidence. My father seems to have been a: regular guardian angel for you.

**HJALMAR:** He didn't fail the son of his old friend when hard times came. Because he has a heart, you see.

*(Looks at pocket watch.)*

Gregers—tell your father goodbye for me.

**GREGERS:** Are you going straight home?

**HJALMAR:** Yes. Why?

**GREGERS:** I might drop by later.

**HJALMAR:** No, you mustn't. Not at my place. My house is a sad place, Gregers.

*(HJALMAR exits quickly. GREGERS exits right to left.)*

**MOVEMENT 2 --** *WERLE enters down stairs through the audience wiping off a dusty wine bottle. lie starts to*

*exit off SL but GREGERS stops him.*

**SLIDE #6 -- Old Ekdal**

**GREGERS:** Father, I'd like to talk to you.

**WERLE:** Can't it wait till we're alone?

**GREGERS:** No, it can't. Maybe we're not going to be alone. Why have you let that family get in such a rotten state?

**WERLE:** You're talking about the Ekdals, I suppose.

**GREGERS:** Yes, That's who I mean, the Ekdals. After all, Lt. Ekdal was once very close to you.

**WERLE:** Too close, I'm afraid. He's the one I have to thank for the stain on my good name and reputation.

**GREGERS:** *(Softly, but to the point.)* Was he really the only one to blame?

**WERLE:** Who else?

**GREGERS:** You and he more partners in that big lumber deal—

**WERLE:** It was Ekdal who drew up that fraudulent map? He was the one who did all that illegal cutting on Government property. I had no idea what he was doing.

**GREGERS:** I'm afraid Lt. Ekdal didn't know himself what he was doing.

**WERLE:** The fact remains that he was found guilty and I was acquitted.

**GREGERS:** Yes, I know there was no proof against you.

**WERLE:** An acquittal is an acquittal.

*(Turns away from GREGERS SL.)*

**GREGERS:** What about the poor Ekdals?

**SLIDE #7 – Wild Duck.**

**WERLE:** What do you think I could have done for them? When Ekdal was released he was a broken man, completely beyond help. There are people in this world who sink to the bottom after they have been peppered just once, when they just have a couple of bird shot in them, and never come up again. I've given Ekdal copying to do for the office, and I pay him a lot more than his work is worth—

**GREGERS:** Father, why didn't you mention that Miss Hansen was Gina Hansen—our former housekeeper.

**WERLE:** I didn't think you were particularly interested in our former housekeeper.

**GREGERS:** I wasn't. But—

*(Lowering his voice.)*

I guess there was somebody else in this house who was particularly interested.

**WERLE:** How dare you! Do you have the nerve to—How does he—that ungrateful—that photographer—Hjalmar—how does he dare make such an insinuation?

**GREGERS:** Hjalmar hasn't said a word about it. I don't think he has even the slightest suspicion.

**WERLE:** Then where did you get the idea? Who's said anything like that?

**GREGERS:** *(Turns out to audience.)* My mother—poor thing. The last time I saw her.

**WERLE:** Your mother! She was the one who turned you against me, right from the start.

**GREGERS:** No. It was what she had to suffer from you. Until she gave up and was so pitifully destroyed.

**WERLE:** She didn't have to suffer anything. You can't get anywhere with sickly, hysterical weaklings. And you go around nourishing a suspicion like that—grubbing around in all sorts of old rumors and slanders against your own father!

*(Pause.)*

I know what it is. I understand you! You don't want to owe me anything.

*(Pause.)*

Listen, Gregers, there are a lot of things that stand between us; but, after all, we're still father and son. I should think we ought to be able to come to some kind of an understanding.

**GREGERS:** On the surface, you mean?

**WERLE:** *(Moves SL.)* Well, that would be something, at least.

**GREGERS:** *(Looking at him coldly.)* There's something behind this.

**WERLE:** What do you mean?

*(Turns to face GREGERS—steps toward him—his anger obvious.)*

**GREGERS:** There must be something you need me for.

**WERLE:** In a relationship as close as ours, one always needs the other. I'm a lonely man, Gregers. I've always been lonely—all my life; but most of all now. I need to have somebody around—to be at home...

**GREGERS:** When have we had any home life here? Not since I can remember.

**WERLE:** *(Turns, faces DS, in deep thought.)* Gregers—I don't believe there's anyone else in the world you hate as much as you do me.

**GREGERS:** *(Softly.)* I've seen you too close.

**WERLE:** You've seen me with your mother's eyes.

**GREGERS:** *(Trembling.)* I know what you're hinting at. Mother's unfortunate weakness—whose fault was it?

**WERLE:** Word for word, as if your mother were saying it!

**SLIDE #8—Hjalmar**

**GREGERS:** *(An aside, crosses DC.)* And there Hjalmar is, with his great, childlike mind—innocent—right in the midst of this mockery—living with Gina without knowing that what he calls his home is built on a lie!

*(To WERLE.)*

When I look back over your life, it's like looking at a battlefield, with mangled lives, lying all along the roads.

**WERLE:** *(Separate . . . distant.)* I'm afraid we are too far apart.

*(Exits L.)*

**GREGERS:** *(Distant . . . separate)* I've finally found something to live for.

*(Crosses center as HEDVIG and GINA enter and take their places.)*

**MOVEMENT 3 – Slide #8** remains on screen throughout song. *GINA and HEDVIG in tableau, GREGERS begins.*

**GREGERS:** *(Spoken.)*

So then I asked myself: what is this coldness  
That freezes up the people whom one knows?  
Who deals them such ghastly blows  
That they can be so bitterly affected?

You: help them soon! And act with boldness!  
Or you'll experience what you least expected.

**SONG: HOW DOES MAN KEEP ALIVE?**

*(Sings.)*

HOW DOES MAN KEEP ALIVE?  
HOW DOES MAN KEEP ALIVE?  
BECAUSE HIS FELLOWS  
ARE TORTURED, PERSECUTED, PLUNDERED, STRANGLED AND DIE.  
MAN ONLY KEEPS ALIVE BECAUSE HE SO WELL KNOWS  
HOW TO SUPPRESS HIS OWN HUMANITY.  
FOR ONCE YOU MUST TRY NOT TO SHIRK THE FACTS:  
MAN ONLY KEEPS ALIVE BY BESTIAL ACTS.

DON'T PERSECUTE OUR MISDEEDS TOO HARSHLY; NEVER  
WILL THEY WITHSTAND THE FROST, FOR THEY ARE COLD.  
THINK OF THE DARKNESS AND THE BITTER WEATHER,  
THE FEAR AND PAIN THAT ECHO ROUND THIS WORLD.

*(He exits SR. GINA is sitting, sewing. HEDVIG is sitting, her hands shading her eyes and her thumbs in her ears, reading a book.)*

**GINA:** *(Glances at HEDVIG once or twice, hiding her anxiety.)* Hedvig!  
*(HEDVIG does not hear. More loudly.)*

Hedvig!

**HEDVIG:** *(Takes away her hands and looks up.)* Yes, mother?

**GINA:** Darling, don't sit there and read any longer.

**HEDVIG:** Oh, Mother, can't I read a little more?

**GINA:** No, no, put that book down now.

**HEDVIG:** I'm looking forward to Papa's coming home. He promised to ask Gregers for something good for me.

**GINA:** You can pick up a lot of good things in that house.  
*(Foreshadows the revealing of her life-lie)*

**MOVEMENT 4 – OLD EKDAL enters up stage slowly.**

**GINA:** Hello, Grandpa, you're home late today.

**HEDVIG:** Did they give you some more copying, Grandpa?  
*(Moves to OLD EKDAL.)*

**OLD EKDAL:** This whole bag. This'll keep me busy for a long time.

*(HEDVIG behind him, he moves to attic door and peeks in.)*

**Slide #9 – Wild Duck**

*(Climbs attic stairs and peeps into the room for a moment, then.-closes the door carefully.)*

She is asleep—the little thing's gotten into the basket herself.

**HEDVIG:** Are you sure she isn't cold in that basket, Grandpa?

**OLD EKDAL:** Cold? In all that straw?

*(HEDVIG sits C chair. OLD EKDAL exits off L slowly.)*

**MOVEMENT 5 –**

**HEDVIG:** *(In front of table on knees.)* It's nice that Grandpa got all that copying to do, now he won't have to just sit around. Papa's sure to be in a good mood when he comes home. Don't you think so, Mother?

**GINA:** Yes, if we could just tell him we'd rented the room.

*(GINA sits at table.)*

**HEDVIG:** Oh, we don't need that tonight.

*(Crosses DR in front of table, then moves to stairs.)*

**GINA:** Every little bit helps, dear.

**HEDVIG:** I mean we don't need it tonight because Papa will be in a good mood anyway. It would be better if we kept the room for some other time.

*(Sits at bottom of stairs.)*

**GINA:** *(Looks at her.)* You like having some good news to tell your father when he comes home at night?

*(Moves to HEDVIG and sits beside her on stairs.)*

**HEDVIG:** Yes, it makes things nicer around here somehow.

**MOVEMENT 6 –** *HJALMAR enters, GINA and HEDVIG move up stairs to greet him. She takes coat and hat—helps HJALMAR change into robe. They move to water basin and he washes his hands. HEDVIG follows.*

**GINA:** *(Throws down her sewing and stands up)* Hjalmar! Are you back already?

**HEDVIG:** Were there many people, Papa?

**HJALMAR:** Oh, not many. Gregers took up most of my time. Isn't the old man home?

**MOVEMENT 7 –** *Down center—sits in overstuffed chair, GINA changes his shoes. OLD EKDAL enters wearing a smock, carrying ink bottle and pens—wearing copier's sleeve's over arms.*

**OLD EKDAL:** You home? I thought I heard you talking. *(OLD EKDAL exits into attic to do copying with*

pens and ink.)

**HJALMAR:** I just got here.

**HEDVIG:** *(After a short pause, tugs at HJALMAR's jacket)* Papa!

**HJALMAR:** What is it?

**HEDVIG:** Oh, you know all right.

**HJALMAR:** No, I don't; I don't know what you're talking about.

**HEDVIG:** *(Laughing and begging.)* Oh yes, Papa, don't tease me any more!

**HJALMAR:** Well then, what is it?

**HEDVIG:** *(Shaking him.)* Ah, don't Papa! Give them to me. You know, all the good things you promised me. You know!

*(GINA moves to cabinet.)*

Oh—how could I forget it?

**HEDVIG:** You're just joking, Papa! That isn't nice of you. Where are they?

**HJALMAR:** But I did forget. It's the truth. Wait a minute! I have something else for you, Hedvig.

*(HEDVIG reacts quietly, hurt.)*

**GINA:** There, you see; if you'll just have a little patience—

**HJALMAR:** *(With a piece of paper.)* Here we are.

**HEDVIG:** That? That's just a piece of paper.

*(Unfolds paper-menu; she moves DC.)*

Don't you have anything else?

*(Turns to him.)*

**HJALMAR:** I forgot the other things, Hedvig.

**HEDVIG:** *(Choking down her tears.)* Thank you, Papa.

*(HEDVIG moves to table, tosses paper aside. She is crying, HJALMAR notices it.)*

**HJALMAR:** *(Crosses to Gina and Hedvig at table.)* It's unbelievable what things the head of the family is supposed to remember. And if you forget even the least thing—right away it's sulky faces.

*(Behind Hedvig.)*

Did you take a look in there tonight, Father?

*(OLD EKDAL enters and washes hands.)*

**OLD EKDAL:** She's in the basket.

**HJALMAR:** Really? She has gotten into the basket. So she's used to it

*(Moves up to OLD EKDAL.)*

**OLD EKDAL:** I told you she would.

*(He exits back into attic.)*

## MOVEMENT 8 –

**GINA:** *(At table.)* I'm afraid you won't have time tomorrow for the improvements that Grandpa wants to be done in there.

**HEDVIG:** (*Breaking in.*) Oh yes, he will, Mother!

(*Sitting L of table, HJALMAR crosses.*)

**GINA:** Remember the prints that have to be retouched. They keep callin' for them.

(*HJALMAR crosses behind to R of table.*)

**HJALMAR:** I see. It's those prints again! Don't worry, they'll be finished. Do you have any new orders?

**GINA:** No, I'm sorry to say. Tomorrow I don't have anything but those two portraits.

(*HEDVIG moves L by overstuffed chair.*)

**HJALMAR:** Is that all? Oh well, of course, if people don't make an effort–

**GINA:** What do you want me to do? I put all the ads in the papers we can afford.

**HJALMAR:** (*He crosses L in front of table.*) Oh, the papers. You can see how much good that does. I don't suppose there's been anybody to look at the room, either?

**GINA:** No, not yet.

**HJALMAR:** That's to be expected. When people don't go after things—you don't get anywhere unless you really try, Gina!

(*Turns away, moves DR.*)

**HEDVIG:** (*Coming to him.*) Do you want me to get anything for you, Papa?

(*Moves to him DR, moves to his R side.*)

**HJALMAR:** (*Moves L, walks slowly, sits in over-stuffed chair.*) No, I don't want anything. I don't need any pleasures in this world. I'll work tomorrow; do&t you worry about that. I'll work as long as my strength holds out.

**GINA:** (*Moves to him.*) But dear! Hjalmar! That wasn't what I meant.

(*HEDVIG kneels at his feet.*)

**HJALMAR:** (*Looks at HEDVIG—takes her head in his hands and presses her to him.*) Hedvig, Hedvig!

(*GINA at cabinet.*)

**HEDVIG:** (*With tears of joy.*) Oh, you sweet, nice papa!

(*Rests her head in his lap.*)

**HJALMAR:** (*HEDVIG sits on arm of chair.*) No, don't call me that. Here I've been sitting, stuffing myself at a rich man's table—and still I didn't even—but you mustn't hold it against me. You know how much I love you anyway.

(*GINA moves to right of table.*)

**HEDVIG:** (*Throws her arms around him behind chair.*) And we love you so much—so much, Papa.

**HJALMAR:** If I do seem unreasonable every once in a while, then—oh, well—remember that I'm a man who's overwhelmed by a sea of sorrows.

(*HEDVIG kisses him and exits. HJALMAR and GINA freeze in tableaux. OLD EKDAL enters from attic and sings.*)

**SLIDE #10 – Old Ekdal during song**

## SONG: CHARADE

### OLD EKDAL:

I AM A PITIFUL OLD WRECK,

I HAVE BEGUN TO DIE,  
I HAVE GIVEN UP MY DREAMS –  
REPLACING THEM WITH REGRETS,  
I FEEL NOW THAT I HAVE SPENT MY DAYS PUTTING ON A CLOWN'S MAKE-UP, AND COSTUME;  
BUT NEVER ENTERING ONTO THE BOARDS TO PERFORM MY SCENE.

*(Music breaks. Spoken.)*

I have stood silent–frozen in the wings,  
And watched tearfully-  
As someone else played my role to its end.

I WOULD ALWAYS REACH CENTER STAGE JUST AS THE CURTAIN RANG DOWN FOR THE LAST TIME.  
I WOULD SINK WITH IT TO THE FLOOR, AND REMAIN THERE BENT AND BROKEN-  
UNTIL THE SET WAS STRUCK,  
THE OTHER ACTORS GONE, AND THE LIGHTMEN HAD DIMMED THEMSELVES INTO DARKNESS,  
I WOULD THEN EXIT BACK INTO MY DRESSING ROOM TO AWAIT THE NEXT PERFORMANCE  
AT WHICH MY ROUTINE WENT UNCHANGED.

*(Exits back into attic.)*

**MOVEMENT 9** – *Knock at hall door; GINA goes to door UR.*

**GREGERS:** *(Off-stage)* Pardon me-

**GINA:** Yes.

**GREGERS:** Is this where Mr. Ekdal lives–the photographer?

**HJALMAR:** *(Rises from chair and goes toward door.)* Gregers!

**GREGERS:** *(Coming in, stopping on stairs.)* I told you I was goVg to come to see you.

**HJALMAR:** *(At bottom of stairs.)* But tonight? Did you leave the party?

**GREGERS:** The party–and my father's house, too. Good evening, Mrs. Ekdal. I don't know if you recognize me?

**GINA:** *(At top of stairs.)* Oh, yes; it isn't hard to remember young Mr. Werle.

**GREGERS:** No, that's right. I look like my mother; and I'm sure you remember her.

**HJALMAR:** Did you say you'd left home?

**GREGERS:** Yes, I moved to a hotel.

**HJALMAR:** I see. Well, now that you're here, take off your coat and have a seat.

*(GINA acts nervous but takes coat and hat.)*

**GREGERS:** Thanks. So here's where you keep yourself, Hjalmar–this is where you live.

**HJALMAR:** *(Crosses DS.)* We had a better place before but this apartment has one big advantage–it has fine front rooms with lots of light.

*(Sits GREGERS in overstuffed chair.)*

**GINA:** And we have a room on the other side of the hall that we can rent out.

**GREGERS:** *(To HJALMAR.)* I see—you've roomers, too.

**HJALMAR:** No, not yet.

*(HJALMAR sits in center upstage chair. HEDVIG enters with food—exits into attic.)*

**SLIDE #11 – Hedvig**

**GREGERS:** Is that your daughter?

**HJALMAR:** Yes, that's Hedvig.

**GREGERS:** And she's your only child?

**HJALMAR:** Yes, she's the greatest joy we have in the world and –

*(Lowers voice.)*

She's also our deepest sorrow, Gregers.

**GREGERS:** What does it mean?

**HJALMAR:** Just what I said. There's grave danger that she'll lose her eyesight.

**GREGERS:** Go blind?

**HJALMAR:** Yes. She has only the first symptoms so far, and everything may be all right for a while yet. But the doctor has warned us. It's coming. Nothing can stop it.

**GREGERS:** What does it come from?

**HJALMAR:** I suppose she's inherited it.

*(He rises and crosses behind GREGERS chair.)*

**GREGERS:** *(Somewhat startled.)* Inherited?

**GINA:** Hjalmar's mother had weak eyes.

**GREGERS:** The poor child. How does she take it?

**HJALMAR:** Naturally we haven't the heart to tell her. She's as happy and carefree as a little bird—flying straight into a life of endless night.

**GREGERS:** She looks healthy enough.

**GINA:** Yes, she's all right except for that, thank God.

**GREGERS:** How old is she?

**GINA:** She'll be just fourteen soon; it's her birthday day after tomorrow.

**GREGERS:** Watching children grow up makes you realize how old you're getting—How long have you been married now?

**GINA:** We've been married for—it'll soon be fifteen years.

**GREGERS:** Really? Has it been that long?

**GINA:** *(With sudden attention; looks at him.)* Yes—certainly it has. They were long years while I was living them. But now, afterwards, I hardly know what's happened to the time.

*(Exits.)*

**MOVEMENT 10 – OLD EKDAL enters from attic and moves down stairs.**

**SLIDE #12 – Wild Duck**

**HJALMAR:** Sit down, Father.

*(Sits OLD EKDAL in center chair by GREGERS.)*

**GREGERS:** *(Talks to him as if he's hard of hearing.)* Remember, Lt. Ekdal, when Hjalmar and I used to come up to visit you . . .

*(Looking at him sympathetically.)*

Do you ever to hunting anymore?

*(HJALMAR crosses right behind table, sits in chair R of table.)*

**OLD EKDAL:** I go hunting every once in a while.

**GREGERS:** How can a man like you—a man who belongs in the open—live right here in the center of a stifling town, walled in like this?

**OLD EKDAL:** Oh, it isn't so bad here. Not bad at all.

**GREGERS:** But the things that used to be a part of you—the cool, sweeping wind, the free life in the woods and the mountains meadows, with the wild ducks and —

**OLD EKDAL:** Hjalmar, shall we show him?

*(Begins to rise.)*

**HJALMAR:** *(Quickly, a little embarrassed, attempts to stop him.)* Oh no, no, Father; not tonight.

**GREGERS:** What does he want to show me?

**HJALMAR:** Oh, it's just something—you can see it some other time.

**OLD EKDAL:** *(Strikes the floor with cane.)* Hjalmar, he's got to see it now!

**HJALMAR:** But Father, do you think we'd better? It's dark and —

**OLD EKDAL:** Oh, nonsense! There's plenty of moonlight. He's got to see it.

*(They exit into attic with OLD EKDAL leading... voices can be heard ... door is left half-open.)*

## **MOVEMENT 11 –**

**OLD EKDAL:** Come closer, my boy, it's all right.

**GREGERS:** Well, what is it?

**OLD EKDAL:** Take a closer look.

**HJALMAR:** *(A little embarrassed, closing the door.)* This belongs to my father, you understand.

*(Door closes.)*

**GREGERS:** Why, you keep chickens, Lt. Ekdal.

**OLD EKDAL:** I should think we do. They've gone to roost now. But you ought to see those chickens by daylight.

**HEDVIG:** And then there's ...

**OLD EKDAL:** Don't tell him yet.

**GREGERS:** And you've got pigeons, too, I see.

**OLD EKDAL:** They have their boxes up there under the eaves because pigeons like to nest way up in the air, you know. See that hutch over there by the wall?

**GREGERS:** Yes, what's it for?

**OLD EKDAL:** That's where we keep the rabbits at night.

**GREGERS:** You've got rabbits, too?

**OLD EKDAL:** Yes, we've got rabbits! He asks if we've got rabbits, Hjalmar! But now I'm going to show you the real thing! This is it! Move over, Hedvig. You stand right here—like that—and now look down there. Do you see a basket with straw in it?

**GREGERS:** Yes. And I can see there's a bird lying in the basket.

**OLD EKDAL:** —a “bird” —

**GREGERS:** Isn't it a duck?

**OLD EKDAL:** (*Wounded.*) Well of course, it's a duck.

**HJALMAR:** But what kind of duck?

**HEDVIG:** It's not just an ordinary one—

**OLD EKDAL:** (*Upset.*) —ordinary! —It's a wild duck!

**GREGERS:** A wild duck?

**OLD EKDAL:** That “bird” as you called it—that's our wild duck.

**HEDVIG:** Mine. Because she belongs to me.

*(They exit down onto the main playing area )*

**MOVEMENT 12** – *HEDVIG sitting on attic stairs. OLD EKDAL leading way out of attic.*

**OLD EKDAL:** They're strange birds, those wild ducks, let me tell you.

**GREGERS:** But how did you manage to catch this one, Lt. Ekdal?

**OLD EKDAL:** I didn't catch her. There's a certain gentleman here in town that we can thank for her.

*(At bottom of stairs and moves DC.)*

**GREGERS:** (*A bit startled.*) That gentleman wouldn't be my father by any chance?

*(Following OLD EKDAL DC.)*

**OLD EKDAL:** That's exactly who it was. He was out in a boat, you see, and took a shot at her. But your father's eyes aren't very good. He just crippled her.

**HEDVIG:** Under her wing, so she couldn't fly.

**GREGERS:** I suppose she dove to the bottom?

*(Turns up to HEDVIG.)*

**OLD EKDAL:** Naturally. They always do, those wild ducks. Beat it for the bottom as far down as they can get—and grab a good hold on the seaweed that grows down there. And they don't ever come up again.

**GREGERS:** But, Lt. Ekdal, your wild duck did come up again.

**OLD EKDAL:** He has an awful smart dog, your father has.

*(Crosses up center to attic.)*

And that dog—he dove right down after her and brought her up.

*(Exits into attic. HJALMAR closes door.)*

**SLIDE #13** – *Hedvig; then quickly changed to*

**SLIDE #14** – *Wild Duck*

**GREGERS:** You mentioned you had a room for rent—a vacant room?

*(Changing the subject; HJALMAR crosses DL and sits in overstuffed chair.)*

**HJALMAR:** Yes; why? Do you know of anybody?

**GREGERS:** May I have it?

**HJALMAR:** You?

**GINA:** But—you—Mr. Werle?

**GREGERS:** May I have it? I'll move in first thing tomorrow morning.

**HJALMAR:** Why, yes –

**GINA:** But, Mr. Werle, that's no kind of a room for you ...

*(Stands, then crosses to GREGERS.)*

The room isn't big enough or light enough—

**GREGERS:** It doesn't take long to get used to something like that. I hope to be like the wild duck—or smart dog ...

**GINA:** Dog!?

*(Questioning.)*

**GREGERS:** Yes. A tremendously smart dog, the kind that goes down after wild ducks when they dive to the bottom and grab hold of the tangled seaweed down in the mud.

*(GREGERS exits with HJALMAR.)*

### **MOVEMENT 13 –**

#### ***SLIDE #15 – GREGERS***

**GINA:** Wasn't that a funny thing to say about wanting to be a dog?

**HEDVIG:** Mother, I think he meant something else by it.

**GINA:** And what might that have been?

**HEDVIG:** I don't know; but it was just as if he meant something else—all the time.

*(GINA exits left with HEDVIG.)*

### **MOVEMENT 14 –**

#### ***SLIDE #16 – WERLE***

*(OLD EKDAL in attic moving about – HJALMAR retouching photos sloppily. HEDVIG enters—crosses L to cabinet and sets magnifying glass and crosses R to table.)*

**HJALMAR:** What do you want?

**HEDVIG:** I just wanted to be with you, Papa. Isn't there something I could help you with, Papa?

**HJALMAR:** No. I'd better do it all by myself – as long as my strength holds out. Just don't worry, Hedvig; as long as your father is allowed to keep his health—

**HEDVIG:** Papa! You mustn't say such awful things!

*(Going to him.)*

Give me the brush, Papa; I can do it.

**HJALMAR:** You'll ruin your eyes with it.

**HEDVIG:** No, I won't.

**HJALMAR:** (*Rising.*) Just a couple of minutes. But don't ruin your eyes! I'm not going to be responsible.

You've got to take the responsibility yourself – understand?

**HEDVIG:** Yes, I will.

**HJALMAR:** You're a good girl, Hedvig.

(*Sits HEDVIG in his chair and exits to attic.*)

**MOVEMENT 15** – *After a moment, there are several knocks at the hall door. HEDVIG does not hear it.*

*GREGERS comes in and stops—moves up behind her—startling her.*

**GREGERS:** Hedvig ...

(*HEDVIG moves to R of table; GREGERS L.*)

**HEDVIG:** (*Turns and goes toward him.*) Good morning.

(*Notices his awkwardness.*)

It's so messy here—

(*She starts to remove the pictures.*)

**GREGERS:** Are those pictures that are being touched up?

**HEDVIG:** Yes, a couple I was helping Papa with.

**GREGERS:** Please don't let me stop you.

(*Starts toward attic door, slight pause.*)

Did the wild duck sleep well last night?

(*Slight pause, goes to attic and looks 'in'.*)

Do you like to sly in there with the wild duck, too?

**HEDVIG:** (*Slight pause, considering his question.*) Yes, whenever I can.

**GREGERS:** But I don't suppose you have much free time; you're going to school aren't you?

**HEDVIG:** No, not any more; Papa's afraid it will hurt my eyes.

**GREGERS:** Well, then, you have time for all sorts of things. And in there, I suppose, it's like another world—  
isn't it?

**HEDVIG:** Yes, it is —

(*Crosses L.*)

— there are big cabinets with books in them. And lots of the books have pictures. And then there's an old desk with drawers and flaps, and a big clock with figures that come popping out.

(*Breaks away from GREGERS to SL.*)

But the clock doesn't run any more.

**GREGERS:** (*Point up this line*) So time is standing still in there—with the wild duck.

**HEDVIG:** (*Continuing —seems not to have understood his pointed statement.*) There's a great big book—in the front, there's a picture of Death with an hourglass and a young lady.

**SLIDE #17 – Hedvig**

*(GREGERS attempts to catch HEDVIG; she is very shy and scared, and like a frightened animal, flees.)*

**GREGERS:** When you're sitting in there looking at the pictures, don't you ever want to go out and see the real world?

**HEDVIG:** Oh, no! I'm always going to stay at home and help my father and mother.

**GREGERS:** What does your father have to say to that?

*(GREGERS, moves to overstuffed chair—he has given up the chase, but then crosses and sits at table. HEDVIG, feeling safe, sits on stairs. She cowers on them.)*

**HEDVIG:** I don't think he likes it much. He's very funny about those things. Can you imagine, he keeps saying that I ought to learn to weave baskets and mats! But I don't see how there can be anything in that.

*(Slight pause.)*

But Father is right when he says that if I'd learned to weave baskets, I could have made the new one for the wild duck, because

*(She adds proudly.)*

she's my wild duck.

**GREGERS:** I suppose the wild duck is the aristocrat of the attic.

**HEDVIG:** She certainly is; because she's a real wild bird. And you can't help feeling sorry for her; she doesn't have anybody to keep her company, poor thing. But she's left all her family behind. And then, of course, it's very mysterious about the wild duck. Nobody knows who she is, and nobody knows where she comes from.

**GREGERS:** And she's been down in the depths of the sea.

**HEDVIG:** ...it sounds so strange to me when someone else says "the depths of the sea," because when I think of the place in there – the attic – all of a sudden, it always seems to me as if the best name of the whole room and everything in it is "the depths of the sea" . . .

**MOVEMENT 16 –**

**SLIDE #18 – Wild Duck**

*(Shot is heard from the attic. GREGERS leaps to his feet. GINA enters SL.)*

**GREGERS:** What was that?

**GINA:** *(Crosses L to R.)* They're shooting again.

*(HJALMAR enters from the attic. HEDVIG crosses L by GINA. GREGERS sits again, chair center.)*

**GREGERS:** Do you hunt in the attic?

**HJALMAR:** *(Showing him a double-barrelled pistol as he cleans it.)* Just with this.

*(GINA at stove.)*

**GINA:** You and Grandpa are going to have an accident sometime with that pistol.

*(HJALMAR moves center then down to chair R.)*

**HJALMAR:** Just a little rabbit-hunting every once in a while.

**PERUSAL SCRIPT – WILD DUCKS** Adapted from the Ibsen original by *Lee G. Williams III*

*(To GREGERS.)*

It's mostly for my father's sake.

**GINA:** Men sure are funny; they always have to have something to divert themselves with.

**HJALMAR:** *(Irritated, moves to HEDVIG by cabinet.)* That's right; we always have to have something to divert ourselves with.

*(To GREGERS.)*

You see we're fortunate in that the attic is so located that nobody can hear us when we shoot.

*(He puts the pistol on the top shelf of the bookcase.)*

Don't touch the pistol, Hedvig! One of the barrels is still loaded.

*(GINA and HEDVIG exit off, HJALMAR moves to chair L and sits by GREGERS.)*

**13 more pages fill out the entire play**