Hedvig Don’t say such nasty things, Papa —
She looks up to the left.
Hjalmar What’s he doing, Hedvig?
Hedvig Making a new path to the water trough, I think.
Hjalmar He’ll never be able to do that on his own! And
I’m forced to sit here —
Hedvig goes to him.
Hedvig Let me have the brush, I can do it.
Hjalmar Don’t be silly, you’ll ruin your eyes.
Hedvig No I won’t — give me the brush.
Hjalmar It’ll only take a couple of minutes.
Hedvig Then it won’t hurt me, will it? (She takes the brush.)
There. (She sits down.) I can copy from this one.
Hjalmar You’ll ruin your eyes! Are you listening to me? If
you ruin your eyes, then it’s your fault, it’s not my fault —
I’m telling you.
Hedvig begins retouching.
Hedvig I know.
Hjalmar It’s very kind of you, Hedvig, but a couple of
minutes, that’s all.
He slips up to the left. Hedvig sits with the work. Hjalmar and
Ekdal can be heard arguing in there. Hjalmar comes back in.
Hjalmar Hedvig, pass me those pliers from the shelf —
and the chisel. (He turns back.) Now look, Father, let me show
you.
Hedvig fetches the required tools and hands them to him.
Hjalmar Thank you. It was a good job I looked in here.
He goes back inside and they hammer away while they’re chatting.
Hedvig remains standing, watching them. After a while there’s a
knock on the front door, but she doesn’t notice. Gregers, hatless and
without an overcoat, enters and stops in the doorway for a moment.
He coughs. Hedvig turns round and goes towards him.
Hedvig Good morning.
Gregers Thank you.
He looks towards the left.
Have you got workmen in the house?
Hedvig It’s only Father and Grandfather. Shall I tell them
you’re here?
Gregers Don’t — I’d rather wait.
He sits down.
Hedvig It’s so messy in here.
She tries to remove the photographs.
Gregers Leave them, they’re all right. Are those
photographs waiting to be finished?
Hedvig I was helping Father.
Gregers Don’t let me disturb you.
Hedvig Oh no —
She lays out the photographs again and starts work. Gregers watches
her.
Gregers Did your duck sleep well last night?
Hedvig Yes, I think so.
Gregers turns towards the left.
Gregers It looks quite different from last night — in the
moonlight.
Hedvig In the morning it looks different from the
afternoon and when it rains it looks different from when it’s
sunny.
Gregers Have you noticed that?
Hedvig Yes, I can see it.

Gregers Do you spend a lot of time with your duck?

Hedvig When I can.

Gregers I suppose you don’t have much time, what with school?

Hedvig I don’t go any more. Father is frightened I’ll ruin my sight.

Gregers So does he teach you himself?

Hedvig He’s promised me he’s going to, but he hasn’t had the time yet.

Gregers Isn’t there anyone else who can help you?

Hedvig There’s Mr Molvik, but he’s not always able to.

Gregers Does he drink?

Hedvig I’m afraid he does.

Gregers Well then, you’ve got time for a bit of everything. It must be like a world of its own in there?

Hedvig There are lots of other strange things as well.

Gregers Are there?

Hedvig There are big cupboards full of books and lots of the books have got pictures.

Gregers Ah —

Hedvig There’s an old bureau with some drawers and bits that slide out and there’s a big clock with little figures that are meant to pop out but don’t any more.

Gregers Time stands still in there, then.

Hedvig There are lots of things — old paintboxes and all the books.

Gregers Do you read any of them?

Hedvig Sometimes, but most of them are in English and I don’t understand them. But I look at the pictures. There’s a really big book called *Harrington’s History of London*. It’s more than a hundred years old and there are a lots and lots of pictures. The cover’s a picture of Death with an hourglass and a maiden, which I think is scary, but then there are all the other pictures of churches and castles and big ships sailing on the sea.

Gregers Where did you get all those things?

Hedvig An old sea captain used to live here and he brought them all. They used to call him the Flying Dutchman. And I thought that was very peculiar because he wasn’t Dutch at all.

Gregers Oh —

Hedvig Then one day he didn’t come back.

Gregers When you sit in there and look at the pictures, don’t you want to go out and see the real world for yourself?

Hedvig No, I want to stay at home.

Gregers What? To help your mother and father with their work?

Hedvig Not just that. I want to learn how to engrave pictures — like the ones in the English books.

Gregers What does your father think of that?

Hedvig I don’t think he likes the idea, and he’s very odd when it comes to things like that, anyway. All he talks about is me learning straw-plaiting and basket-weaving. I don’t think there’s any point in that, do you?

Gregers No.

Hedvig But he was right that if I’d learned to weave then I could’ve made a new basket for my duck.

Gregers Yes, you could. And you’re the person to do it.
Hedvig Well, it's my duck.
Gregers It is.
Hedvig It's my duck, but they can borrow it whenever they like.
Gregers Why, what do they do with it?
Hedvig They look after it and build things for it.
Gregers Well, it's the finest creature in there.
Hedvig That's because she's from the wild. That's why I feel so sorry for her, because she's not got anyone to look after.
Gregers Not like the rabbits.
Hedvig No, and the hens know so many other hens they used to be chickens with. That's what's strange about the duck. No one knows her and no one knows where she's from either.
Gregers And she's been to the bottom of the deep blue sea.
Hedvig glances at him quickly and suppresses a smile.
Hedvig Why did you say bottom of the deep blue sea?
Gregers Why, what should I have said then?
Hedvig You could have said the bottom of the sea or — the seabed.
Gregers Can't I say the bottom of the deep blue sea as well?
Hedvig It sounds peculiar when other people say the bottom of the deep blue sea.
Gregers Why? Tell me why.
Hedvig No, it's silly.
Gregers No — why did you smile?

Hedvig It's because whenever I think of everything up there I always think it's like the bottom of the deep blue sea. That is so silly.
Gregers No, it isn't.
Hedvig It is — it's only a loft.
Gregers Are you sure about that?
Hedvig That it's only a loft?
Gregers Yes. Why are you so sure?
Hedvig is silent and looks at him with her mouth open. Gina enters with a tablecloth and cutlery from the kitchen. Gregers gets up.
Gregers I think I'm too early.
Gina Well, you have to go somewhere and lunch is nearly ready anyway now. Clear the table, Hedvig.
Hedvig clears the table, and then she and Gina begin to lay the places. Gregers sits and leafs through an album.
Gregers I hear you can do the retouching, Mrs Ekdal?
Gina Yes, I can.
Gregers What a fortunate coincidence.
Gina Fortunate? How?
Gregers Well, since Ekdal became a photographer.
Hedvig Mama can take photographs, can't you, Mama?
Gina I had to teach myself that as well.
Gregers You run the business then?
Gina When Ekdal doesn't have the time.
Gregers He's probably busy with his father.
Gina Taking portraits isn't for a man like Ekdal.