Hedvig  Why won’t Father have anything to do with me
any more?
Gregers  You shouldn’t ask about that until you’ve grown
up.
Hedvig  I can’t feel like this until I’ve grown up. I think
I know what it is . . . I’m not his real child.
Gregers  How could that be?
Hedvig  Mother found me and now he’s found out. I’ve
read about things like that.
Gregers  Well, if—
Hedvig  He can be fond of me just the same or even
more. The wild duck arrived as a present and I’m still fond
of her.
Gregers  That’s true. Let’s talk about your duck, Hedvig.
Hedvig  Poor Father. He can’t bear to look at her either
now. He wants to wring her neck.
Gregers  I don’t think he’ll do that.
Hedvig  He said it, and I thought it was very nasty to say
that, because I say a prayer for my duck every night to be
preserved from dying and everything evil.
Gregers  Do you always say a prayer in the evening?
Hedvig  Yes.
Gregers  Who taught you that?
Hedvig  I did. Once Father was so ill he had leeches on
his throat and he said that he was at death’s door.
Gregers  Did he?
Hedvig  So I said a prayer for him when I was in bed.
And I’ve done that ever since then. I thought it was a good
idea to include the duck as well because she was so sick at
the beginning.
Gregers  Do you say prayers in the morning?
Hedvig  No.
Gregers  Why not?
Hedvig  In the morning it's light and there's nothing to be frightened of.
Gregers  And your father wanted to wring its neck?
Hedvig  He said it would be best if he did, but he'd keep it for my sake.
Gregers  And what if you sacrificed the wild duck for your father's sake?
Hedvig  gets up.
Gregers  What if you sacrificed the most precious thing you have in the world for him?
Hedvig  Do you think it would help him?
Gregers  Try it, Hedvig.
Hedvig  Yes, I'll try it.
Gregers  Can you do it?
Hedvig  I'll ask Grandfather to shoot her for me.
Gregers  Not a word of this to your mother —
Hedvig  Why not?
Gregers  She wouldn't understand.
Hedvig  I'll try it tomorrow morning.
Gina  enters through the front door. Hedvig  goes to her.
Hedvig  Did you find him?
Gina  I heard he'd been down looking for Relling.
Gregers  Are you sure?
Gina  The caretaker's wife said so. She said Molvik was with them as well.

Gregers  His mind needs solitude.
Gina  takes her coat off.
Gina  God knows where Relling's taken him! They're not at Madam Eriksen's.
Hedvig  is fighting back tears.
Hedvig  What if he never comes back!
Gregers  He will. I'll send him a message tomorrow and he'll come home. Go to bed and think about that, Hedvig. Goodnight.
Gregers  goes out through the front door. Hedvig  throws herself around her mother's neck sobbing.
Hedvig  Mama — Mama!
Gina  pats her on the back and sighs.
Gina  Relling was right.