Mrs Sørby exits. Pettersen and Jensen follow her.

Flor That was hard work –

Balle One can get through an awful lot in three hours.

Flor But what about afterwards, my dear chamberlain?

Balle I think the mocha and the maraschino’s being served in the other room?

Flor Bravo!

Balle and Flor laugh. Håkon Werle is quiet.

Werle I don’t think anyone noticed.

Gregers What?

Werle You didn’t notice, Gregers?

Gregers What was there to notice?

Werle We were thirteen.

Gregers Really — were we thirteen?

Werle glances at Hjalmar.

Werle We’re usually twelve. Now, gentlemen, please!

He and the other gentlemen leave. Silence.

Hjalmar and Gregers are alone.

Hjalmar You shouldn’t have invited me.

Gregers Why shouldn’t I ask my oldest friend? Dinner is in my honour.

Hjalmar I don’t think your father approves. I never come here.

Gregers So I hear. I’ll be leaving again soon, Hjalmar. We’ve drifted apart, haven’t we? What’s it been now — sixteen, seventeen years?

Hjalmar Has it been that long?

Gregers You look well. You’ve filled out.
Hjalmar I look more like a man.

Gregers Yes, you do. You look well.

Hjalmar If only you could look inside me, Gregers. You know that everything's fallen apart?

Gregers How's your father?

Hjalmar No -- I don't want to --

_He thinks._

He lives with me. He's poor, he's unhappy, he's got no one else. This is very hard for me to talk about -- you understand? I'd much rather you tell me how you've been. About the sawmill.

Gregers I've been lonely. I've thought about a lot of things. It's been pleasant. Come here.

Gregers _sits down. He encourages Hjalmar to sit down by him._

Hjalmar I want to thank you for inviting me. It's hard to believe you're not holding a grudge against me.

Gregers What made you think I was holding a grudge?

Hjalmar Well -- you did.

G Gregers What?

Hjalmar After it all happened, of course -- none of us knew if your father would be implicated in the awful things that were being said.

G Gregers But why would I hold a grudge against you?

Hjalmar Your father told me you did.

G Gregers Is that the reason you haven't contacted me?

Hjalmar Yes, it is.

G Gregers Not even when you became a photographer?

Hjalmar Your father said I shouldn't bother writing to you.

Silence.

G Gregers Tell me, Hjalmar -- are you happy? You know, in your work?

Hjalmar I suppose I am. I can't really complain. It was strange to begin with. It's a very different way of life. But then everything else had changed. The shame and the disgrace of it all, Gregers, it was --

G Gregers Of course.

Hjalmar I couldn't study and there were enormous debts -- most of them to your father.

Silence.

He helped me.

G Gregers My father?

Hjalmar Didn't you know? How do you think I got the money to study and set up a studio and become established? It costs a lot of money.

G Gregers And he paid for it?

Hjalmar I understood from him that he'd written to you.

G Gregers Well, he must have forgotten. We write to each other about business and that's about it.

Silence.

So it was him.

Hjalmar He never wanted anyone to know. He made it possible for me to get married as well. Didn't you know that either?

G Gregers No, I didn't.

Silence.

Hjalmar, I can't tell you how happy all this makes me and -- I think perhaps I've done my father wrong. This shows real heart.
Hjalmar Heart?

Gregers I can't find the words to describe how happy I am to hear all this. So you're married, Hjalmar? Are you a happily married man?

Hjalmar She's kind. As good a wife as I could expect. And really she isn't altogether without accomplishment herself.

Gregers I don't suppose she is.

Hjalmar Life teaches you. She has me and we have a couple of clever friends who visit us. You wouldn't recognise Gina.

Gregers Gina?

Hjalmar Don't you remember she was called Gina?

Gregers How would I know?

Hjalmar She worked here.

Gregers Do you mean Gina Hansen?

Hjalmar Of course.

Gregers Who kept the house?

Hjalmar I'm sure that your father told me he wrote to you and told you that I'd got married.

Gregers stands.

Gregers He did, but not that.

He walks away.

Perhaps he did. His letters are always so short.

He sits again.

How did you come to know her - your wife?

Hjalmar She wasn't here for long. There was so much going on at the time. Your mother's illness - there was so much to do. She couldn't cope with it and she left. It was

the year before your mother died, or the same year. I can't recall exactly now.

Gregers It was the same year. I was up at the sawmill then.

Hjalmar She lived at home with her mother - Mrs Hansen? Very kind, hard-working, and she had a café and a room she wanted to let.

Gregers You were lucky.

Hjalmar Your father told me about it. That was when I got to know Gina.

Gregers And you became engaged?

Hjalmar We were both young. It happened quickly.

Gregers stands and walks a few paces.

Gregers Tell me, when you became engaged - was that when Father let you... Pardon me - I mean, was that when you started to study photography?

Hjalmar I wanted to earn a living and settle down. Your father and I both thought photography was the best thing for me, and Gina agreed. Coincidentally my wife knew how to retouch photographs.

Gregers What a coincidence.

Hjalmar gets up.

Hjalmar Yes, it was. Very lucky indeed.

Gregers My father does seem to have brought you some good luck.

Hjalmar You see, he didn't desert me - he does have a heart, Gregers.

Mrs Serby enters with Håkon Werle on his arm.

Mrs Serby Don't argue with me, my dear Mr Werle, you mustn't stay in there staring at the candles - it isn't good for you. Let's join the others.