Gina And what about your father?

Hjalmar He’ll come with me. I’ll make some enquiries in town. Hum — did anyone find my hat on the stairs?

Gina Have you lost your hat?

Hjalmar I had it when I came home last night, but I can’t find it.

Gina Where did you go with those two rogues?

Hjalmar Don’t ask me irrelevant questions, I’m not in the mood.

Gina I hope you haven’t caught a cold, Ekdal.

She goes to the kitchen. Hjalmar empties the drawer.

Hjalmar Relling, you bloody scoundrel!

He puts some old letters aside, finds the torn letter from yesterday, takes it and looks at the pieces. Gina places a tray of sandwiches and coffee on the table.

Gina There’s a hot drink if you want it. And some sandwiches, and a bit of salted fish.

Hjalmar Salted fish? Not under this roof. Never. And I’ve not had a solid meal for twenty-four hours. The beginnings of my memoirs are here. Where’s my diary? Where are my papers? (He opens the door to the parlour, but retreats.) She’s in there!

Gina She has to go somewhere.

Hjalmar Get out.

He makes room for her and Hedvig enters the studio, frightened.

Hjalmar During the last few minutes I’m spending in my former home I’d like to be spared the company of strangers.

He enters the parlour.

Hedvig Is that me?
Hjalmar Do you think I could live in the parlour for a couple of days without being pestered by anyone – at all?
Gina If you wanted to.
Hjalmar I don’t think it’s possible to move Father’s things in such a hurry.
Gina You have to tell him as well.
Hjalmar pushes the coffee cup away.
Hjalmar I need some quiet. I can’t cope with all this in one day.
Gina The weather’s awful.
Hjalmar touches the letter from Håkon Werle.
Hjalmar I see the letter’s still here.
Gina I haven’t touched it.
Hjalmar It’s none of my business –
Gina It’s no use to me.
Hjalmar But there’s no point in it becoming misplaced. It could be in all the commotion when I move out.
Gina I’ll take care of it, Ekdal.
Hjalmar It belongs to my father and it’s his business if he wants to make use of it.
Gina Poor old Father.
Hjalmar For safety’s sake. Where can I find some glue?
Gina It’s here.
Hjalmar And a brush as well.
Gina Here it is.
She brings him the pot of glue and the brush. Hjalmar takes a pair of scissors.
Hjalmar I’ll put a strip of paper on the back. (He cuts and pastes.) Far be it from me to take someone else’s property –
least of all an impoverished old man's. Well, it's not anyone else's either. There. Leave it for a bit. And when it's dried put it away. I never want to set eyes on it again. Never!

**Gregers** enters from the hall.

**Gregers** You're here, Hjalmar?

**Hjalmar** I collapsed from fatigue.

**Gregers** I see you've had your lunch.

**Hjalmar** The body makes its own demands as well sometimes.

**Gregers** What have you decided to do, then?

**Hjalmar** For a man like me there's only one thing to do. I'm getting together my most important possessions. But it all takes time.

**Gina** Shall I get the parlour ready for you or shall I pack your bag?

**Hjalmar** Pack my bag and get the parlour ready!

**Gina** takes the bag and goes. She closes the door behind her. A slight pause.

**Gregers** I never imagined it would all end like this. Are you really leaving your home?

**Hjalmar** wonders about uneasily in the room.

**Hjalmar** What else do you want me to do? I'm not cut out to be unhappy. I need to be comfortable -- I need security and peace and quiet around me.

**Gregers** I think there's solid ground to build and start again. Don't forget your invention.

**Hjalmar** Don't talk about that.

**Gregers** Why?

**Hjalmar** What do you want me to invent? Most things have been invented by other people already. It's more and more difficult every day that passes.

**Gregers** But you've put so much into it.

**Hjalmar** It was Relling who first put me up to it.

**Gregers** Relling?

**Hjalmar** He noticed my talent for making a remarkable invention in photography.

**Gregers** It was Relling!

**Hjalmar** It's made me happy. Not the invention itself. But Hedvig believed in it -- with all the power of a child's imagination. Well, I've told myself she believed in it, the bloody fool that I am.

**Gregers** Do you think Hedvig would lie to you?

**Hjalmar** Well, I can think what I like now. Hedvig's the one who's in my way.

**Gregers** Hedvig?

**Hjalmar** I loved that child more than anything. I felt happier than anything every time I came home and she rushed to meet me with her lovely squinting eyes. Naive fool. I deluded myself she loved me more than anything as well.

**Gregers** Are you saying it was just a delusion?

**Hjalmar** How can I ever know now?

**Gregers** Can you hear the duck?

**Hjalmar** Father's in the loft.

**Gregers** Is he? You'll see how fond Hedvig is of you!

**Hjalmar** Who knows what Gina and Mrs Sørby have been gossiping about. Hedvig always keeps her ears open. Perhaps the letter wasn't such a surprise?

**Gregers** What on earth's possessed you?

**Hjalmar** My eyes have been opened. Mrs Sørby always had time for Hedvig -- well, she's welcome to her.

**Gregers** Hedvig would never leave you.