

## 3rd Lecture

### **The Wild Duck** **Henrik Ibsen**

#### List of characters

- **Håkon Werle**, a wholesale merchant
- **Gregers Werle**, his son
- **Old Ekdal**, the former business partner of Håkon Werle
- **Hjalmar Ekdal**, Old Ekdal's son, a photographer
- **Gina Ekdal**, his wife
- **Hedvig**, their daughter, aged fourteen
- **Mrs. Sørby**, housekeeper and fiancée of **Håkon Werle**
- **Relling**, a doctor, lives below the **Ekdals**.
- **Molvik**, formerly a student of theology, lives below the **Ekdals**
- **Pettersen**, servant to **Håkon Werle**
- **Jensen**, a hired waiter
- **Mr. Balle**, a dinner guest
- **Mr. Flor**, a dinner guest

**Setting** The 1880s. Werle's house and later Hjalmar  
Ekdal's studio in [Christiania, Norway](#)

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**Symbolism**: hidden meanings in symbolism are usually refers to characters, objects, or setting.

### sym-bol-ism

1. The practice of representing things by means of symbols or of attributing symbolic meanings or significance to objects, events, or relationships.
2. **Symbol**, something that represents, stands for, or suggests an idea, belief, action, or entity

The title of the play” *The Wild Duck*”

When the word wild comes to our mind, there are certain characteristics that are connected with the word **wild**- courageous- adventurous- forest-

**Wild** is the opposite of tame= an animal which is trained to behave in a certain way; for example, a tame lion. An animal that has been tamed means that he listens to the master who trained him.

Wild is very much connected with freedom.

When we say duck, domestic animal comes to our mind.

### Plot

We are introduced to two families; an old man **Hakon Werle** and his son **Gregers**. There is another old man **Old Ekdal** and his son **Hialmar**.

Hakon’s wife is dead. **Hjalmar’s wife is Gina**- previously the housemaid of **Hakon Werle** - now the wife **of Hialmar**. Hakon’s wife died believing that **Gina** and her husband had carried on an affair.

**Hedvig** is **Gina’s and Ekdal’s** daughter. She is 14 years old.

**Hialmar Ekdal** is married but **Gregers Werle** is not married.

Hakon Werle’s family is a rich family.

Old Ekdal’s family had been a rich family. But now, they are just struggling hard to survive.

These two old men were business partners. At that time, their sons- Hialmar and Gregers- were friends when they were young boys.

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They had business about forests, woods, lands cutting trees, taking them to different places. Details of business are not given.

A scandal spread that they have falsely made a wrong map that a land is belonging to them- including the environment lands into theirs and cut the trees and sold them. There was a case against both of them in the court. Hakon was acquitted, released = declared to be free - while Old Ekdal was convicted= found guilty.

Old Ekdal was a major- captain in the army. He was a very respectable man. When he was convicted, his resignation as a major was taken away. He was dismissed from his job because of the fort with the government.

His family immediately fell into poverty. They suffered from disgrace= opposite of respect. That is why Hjalmar had to leave his university. The family lost their reputation. The son's education came to a stop. Werle left to a far place to do a kind of work- in a place where raw work is done. Readymade things go to the city. Things were made in Hoidal mines Gregers had been there. At the beginning of Act I, he has come to the house after an absence of 15 years= very long absence. The family is still poor but they are still living there. The son had left to work and he is back. That is why the father gives a splendid dinner to his friends to celebrate the arrival of his son. The father has invited his son to the house.

When act I begins, the party was going on.

We know from the servants that Old Ekdal was convicted and sent to prison. He completed his sentence and now he is free. Now, the father and the son are coming together.

Now this old man- Old Ekdal in Hakon's office. He is a copyist- to write a clean copy of the rough work. He comes to take papers, go homes, makes copies and sends them back. He is paid by Hakon. He pays him generously.

It is supposed to be a party of friends where Mr. Hakon Werle invites his friend and a lady who takes care of the house **Mrs. Sorby**. She is the housekeeper of Hakon Werle's house. He insists that his old friends should be invited. All in all, in the part, become 13. It is supposed to be unlucky number. He is a superstitious man. This superstition is based on a

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Biblical reference. According to the Bible, the last dinner of **Jesus Christ**, there were 13 people; Jesus himself and 12 disciples. Christ has mentioned that he knew that one of them will betray him. Based on this, this superstition is common. People believe that if there is number 13, something bad will happen.

He believes in bad omen. The father remarks to his son that his friends are now 13- they used to be 12- by the arrival of the son, they are now 13.

Hakon believes that this day, they have 13 people. He expects that something unpleasant will happen. The writer gives us a clue of some unpleasant is going to happen in the play. While this party is going on, Old Ekdal comes to pick the papers for copying. He passes the hallway where the party was held. He was embarrassed. He was not invited. He is an intruder. The papers fell down. He picked them and said sorry.

His son was setting there. His son felt awkward that his father in bad dress came here. He does not show to the people that he is his father.

Through conversation between the two young men, later on father and son, we know all about what happened before the play.

Usually, the first act of the play is expository. The writer exposes or introduces the characters, the relationship between them, the conflict, the disagreement between them. The play means action, no reporting. It should be done through speech, dialogue. To tell the events of the past, what happened before, it becomes very difficult to say it in an interesting way.

Most dramatist bring servants speaking to each other tell what happened before the play- or usually there is gathering, guests who are talking to each other.

Here, it begins with servants talking about the past.

There are two characters speaking together to provide us with information. Usually one has the knowledge and the other is ignorant, that why one asks questions and the other one answers. Either they discuss present situation or they talk about the past. Exposition is given

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by characters telling about the past or remembering scenes from the past in **a retrospective technique.**

This exposition – in the play- is a kind of **retrospective exposition-**

Apart from the information we get from the servants, we are introduced to the characters, situation and conflict.

We get some information from the friends who have met after a long time. There is much news to exchange. There is a lot to know about each other as they have not seen each other for a long time.

We get Part of the information from the conversation between the father and the son.

Characters and relations are revealed to us in three ways) conversation between servants- conversation between friends- conversation between father and son)- all are retrospective- all of them are remembering things from the past. It is a good chance to exchange information between the father and the son as the son has been absent or a long time. The writer is giving knowledge to the audience.

- **How does the dramatist try to make it interesting?**

There is not much action but the period of absence for 15 years, there is certain news that would surprise the father, which is very important and surprising for the others.

The writer tries to make the conversation between father and the son interesting by the stressful atmosphere between them. They are not friendly. Their response to each other is hostile, not friendly.

Hostility= being harsh= less than enmity

This is how the writer tries to make the exposition interesting in the dialogue between the father and the son either by surprise or hostility.

### Summary of plot

Hjalmar Ekdal, a photographer, lives with his wife Gina and daughter Hedvig in a combined studio and apartment with a large adjoining loft where they keep chickens and rabbits. Living with the family is old Ekdal, a former lieutenant who was earlier imprisoned for a financial offence for which Werle, a wholesaler, was actually responsible. Gina was Werle's housekeeper earlier. At the beginning of the play his son, Gregers Werle, has come home to attend

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a dinner given by his father. Gregers discovers that Gina Ekdal was his father's mistress before she married Hjalmar, and that his father had brought the two of them together and helped them financially. Gregers now considers it his duty to get Hjalmar to see the truth behind his marriage so that he and Gina can live together in a marriage based on truth. Hjalmar confronts Gina with her background and asks her whether he is Hedvig's father. Gina replies that she does not know, and in distraction Hjalmar rejects Hedvig as his daughter. Meanwhile Gregers has convinced Hedvig that she can win back her father's love by sacrificing the wild duck that lives in the loft and to which she is deeply attached. But Hedvig shoots herself instead of the wild duck, and the play ends with general despair at the death of the child.

### ACT I

*At WERLE'S house. A richly and comfortably furnished study; bookcases and upholstered furniture; a writing-table, with papers and documents, in the centre of the room; lighted lamps with green shades, giving a subdued light. At the back, open folding-doors with curtains drawn back. Within is seen a large and handsome room, brilliantly lighted with lamps and branching candle-sticks. In front, on the right (in the study), a small baize door leads into WERLE'S Office. On the left, in front, a fireplace with a glowing coal fire, and farther back a double door leading into the dining-room.*

**WERLE'S servant, PETTERSEN, in livery, and JENSEN**, the hired waiter, in black, are putting the study in order. In the large room, two or three other hired waiters are moving about, arranging things and lighting more candles. From the dining-room, the hum of conversation and laughter of many voices are heard; a glass is tapped with a knife; silence follows, and a toast is proposed; shouts of "Bravo!" and then again a buzz of conversation.

**Pettersen (lights a lamp on the chimney-place and places a shade over it). Hark to them, Jensen! now the old man's on his legs holding a long palaver about Mrs. Sorby.**

This is stage direction- whatever in the play is written in italics- it is stage direction. It gives us detailed picture of the setting.

**Jensen** and **Pettersen** are waiters that have been hired .Mrs. Sorby is the housekeeper. She is taking care of that house.

What kind of relation is indicated between the old man and Mrs. Sorby?

*Jensen [(pushing forward an arm-chair).]*

**Is it true, what folks say, that they're -- very good friends**, eh?

*Petterson.* Lord knows.

*Jensen.* I've heard tell as he's been a lively customer in his day.

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He is asking if the rumor is true- that there is something between them- the old man and the housekeeper.

*Petterson.* May be.

*Jensen.* And he's giving this spread in honour of his son, they say.

*Pettersen.* Yes. **His son came home yesterday.**

*Jensen.* This is **the first time I ever heard as Mr. Werle had a son.**

*Pettersen.* Oh yes, he has a son, right enough. But he's a fixture, as you might say, **up at the Hoidal works. He's never once come to town all the years I've been in service here.**

He gives a piece of information. His son came home after a long absence. Since this servant has been working here in this house, he has not seen the son. He never came back in this house. His long absence is indicated. It indicates, emphasizes, tells us that he would have no news, he must be provided with the news.

*A Waiter* [(in the doorway of the other room).] *Pettersen*, here's an old fellow wanting --

*Pettersen* [ (mutter).] The devil -- who's this now?

*OLD EKDAL* appears from the right, in the inner room. **He is dressed in a threadbare overcoat with a high collar; he wears woollen mittens, and carries in his hand a stick and a fur cap. Under his arm, a brown paper parcel. Dirty red-brown wig and small grey moustache.**

*Pettersen* [ (goes towards him).] Good Lord -- what do you want here?

*Ekdal* [ (in the doorway).] Must get into the office, *Pettersen*.

*Petterson.* The office was closed an hour ago, and --

*Ekdal.* So they told me at the front door. But *Graberg's* in there still. Let me slip in this way, *Pettersen*; there's a good fellow. (Points towards the baize door.) It's not the first time I've come this way.

*Pettersen.* Well, you may pass. (Opens the door.) But mind you go out again the proper way, for we've got company.

*Ekdal.* I know, I know -- h'm! Thanks, *Pettersen*, good old friend! Thanks! [(Mutter softly.)]

Ass!

Old *Ekdal* came to the house to take papers to photocopy. He knows that he is not allowed to move freely in the house. He has to go the way he has been used to before.

*He goes into the Office; PETERSEN shuts the door after him.*

*Jensen.* Is he one of the office people?

*Pettersen.* No he's only **an outside hand that does odd jobs of copying.** But he's been a tip-topper in his day, has old *Ekdal*.

*Jensen.* You can see **he's been through a lot.**

*Pettersen.* Yes; **he was an army officer, you know.**

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He is not one of the office people. He is only an outside hand. He is not a regular employer in the office. Whenever there is job, they call him.

*Jensen.* You don't say so?

*Pettersen.* No mistake about it. But then he went into **the timber trade** or something of the sort. They say he once played Mr. Werle **a very nasty trick**. **They were partners in the Hoidal works at the time**. Oh, I know old Ekdal well, I do. Many a nip of bitters and bottle of ale we two have drunk at Madam Eriksen's.

**the timber trade**= wood trade

it is common for people that Mr. Werle played a trick on Old Ekdal. He himself made the crime and he tried to trap him into it.

Nasty= bad= ugly

They were partners in Hoidal works.

*Jensen.* He don't look as if held much to stand treat with.

*Pettersen.* Why, bless you, Jensen, it's me that stands treat. I always think there's no harm in being a bit civil to folks that have seen better days.

*Jensen.* **Did he go bankrupt then?**

*Pettersen.* **Worse than that. He went to prison**

Civil= polite

*Jensen.* To prison!

*Pettersen.* Or perhaps it was the Penitentiary. [ *(Listens.)* ]

Sh! **They're leaving the table.**

*The dining-room door is thrown open from within, by a couple of waiters. MRS. SORBY comes out conversing with two gentlemen. Gradually the whole company follows, amongst them WERLE. Last come HIALMAR EKDAL and GREGERS WERLE.*

*Mrs. Sorby [(in passing, to the servant).]* **Tell them to serve the coffee in** the music-room, Pettersen.

*Pettersen.* Very well, Madam. [**She goes with the two Gentlemen into the inner room, and** thence out to the right. *PETTERSEN and JNSEN go out the same way.*

*A Flabby Gentleman [(to a THIN-HAIRED GENTLEMAN).]*

Whew! What a dinner! -- It was no joke to do it justice!

*The Thin-haired Gentleman.* Oh, with a little good-will one can get through a lot in three hours.

*The Flabby Gentleman.* Yes, but afterwards, afterwards, my dear Chamberlain!

*-A Third Gentleman.* I hear the coffee and maraschino are to be served in the music-room.

*The Flabby Gentleman.* Bravo! Then perhaps Mrs. Sorby will play us something.

*The Thin-haired Gentleman[( in a low voice).]*

I hope Mrs. Sorby mayn't play us a tune we don't like, one of these days!



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*The Flabby Gentleman.* Oh no, not she! Bertha will never turn against her old friends.  
[*They laugh and pass into the inner room.*]

They engaged in a small talk or social talk.

*Werle* [ *in a low voice, dejectedly*].] I don't think anybody noticed it, Gregers.

*Gregers* [ *looks at him*].] Noticed what?

*Werle.* **Did you not notice it either?**

*Gregers.* What do you mean?

*Werle.* We were thirteen at table.

*Gregers.* Indeed? **Were there thirteen of us?**

*Werle* [ *glances towards HIALMAR EKDAL*].] Our usual party is twelve. (To the others.) This way, gentlemen!

*WERLE and the others, all except HIALMAR and GREGERS, go out by the back, to the right.*

] *Gregers.* So I hear. But I wanted to see you and have a talk with you, and I certainly shan't be staying long. -- Ah, we two old schoolfellows have drifted far apart from each other. It must be sixteen or seventeen years since we met.

*Hialmar.* Is it so long?

*Gregers.* It is indeed. Well, how goes it with you? You look well. You have put on flesh, and grown almost stout.

*Hialmar* [ *who has overheard the conversation*].] **You ought not to have invited me, Gregers.**

*Gregers.* **What! Not ask my best and only friend to a party supposed to be in my honour -- ?**

*Hialmar.* **But I don't think your father likes it. You see I am quite outside his circle.**

Werle looks to his son- Gregers- The father points to his son that it is because of him they are having 13 men here. It is because he invited Hialmar. Hialmar heard all the conversation about the 13.

*Hialmar.* Well, "stout" is scarcely the word; but I daresay I look a little more of a man than I used to.

*Gregers.* Yes, you do; your outer man is in first-rate condition.

*Hialmar* [ *in a tone of gloom*].] Ah, but the inner man! That is a very different matter, I can tell you! Of course you **know of the terrible catastrophe that has befallen me and mine since last we met.**

*Gregers* [ *more softly*].] How are things going with your father now?

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*Hialmar.* Don't let us talk of it, old fellow. Of course my poor unhappy father lives with me. He hasn't another soul in the world to care for him. **But you can understand that this is a miserable subject for me.** -- Tell me, rather, how you have been getting on up at the works.

*Gregers.* **I have had a delightfully lonely time of it -- plenty of leisure** to think and think about things. Come over here; we may as well make ourselves comfortable.

Hialmar tells Gregers about what happened to him during his absence. Outwardly he seems strong but inwardly he has suffered a lot. His father was arrested, his dismissal from the job, his removal from the university. This is the catastrophe that happened to him. It is painful for him to talk about the catastrophe. He is trying to forget it.

*He seats himself in an arm-chair by the fire and draws HIALMAR down into another alongside of it.*

*Hialmar* [ *sentimentally*. ] **After all, Gregers, I thank you for inviting me to your father's table; for I take it as a sign that you have got over your feeling against me.**

*Gregers* [ *surprised*. ] **How could you imagine I had any feeling against you?**

*Hialmar.* You had at first, you know.

*Gregers.* How at first?

*Hialmar.* **After the great misfortune. It was natural enough that you should. Your father was within an ace of being drawn into that -- well, that terrible business.**

*Gregers.* **Why should that give me any feeling against you?** Who can have put that into your head?

*Hialmar.* **I know it did, Gregers; your father told me so himself.**

*Gregers* [ *starts*. ] **My father! Oh indeed. H'm.** -- Was that why you never let me hear from you? -- not a single word.

*Hialmar.* Yes.

*Gregers.* **Not even when you made up your mind to become a photographer?**

*Hialmar.* **Your father said I had better not write to you at all, about anything.**

*Gregers* [ *looking straight before him*. ] Well well, **perhaps he was right.** -- But tell me now, Hialmar: **are you pretty well satisfied with your present position?**

*Hialmar* [ *with a little sigh*. ] Oh yes, I am; I have really no cause to complain. At first, as you may guess, **I felt it a little strange. It was such a totally new state of things for me. But of course my whole circumstances were totally changed. Father's utter, irretrievable ruin, -- the shame and disgrace of it.**  
**Gregers**

After the great misfortune, Hialmar stopped thinking of their friendship.

Here we have the discrepancy between facts and reports.

Gregers says that he had never wrong feelings about Hialmar. Hialmar says that his father told him that he does not feel well about him now.

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It is either the son who is not honest or the father is not honest.

We get the news that Hialmar is a photographer. He had a big studio. He wanted to write to his friend Gregers, but Gregers' father asked him not to do.

It seems that his father is manipulating Hialmar.

*Gregers* [ *affected*.] Yes, yes; I understand.

*Hialmar*. **I couldn't think of remaining at college; there wasn't a shilling to spare**; on the contrary, there were debts -- mainly to your father I believe --

*Gregers*. H'm -- -

*Hialmar*. In short, I thought it best to break, once for all, with my old surroundings and associations. **It was your father that specially urged me to it; and since he interested himself so much in me**

Mr. Werle has been very generous and kind to Hialmar. It was him who urged him to open his studio.

*Gregers*. **My father did?**

*Hialmar*. Yes, you surely knew that, didn't you? Where do you suppose I found the money to learn photography, **and to furnish a studio and make a start?** All that costs a pretty penny, I can tell you.

*Gregers*. **And my father provided the money?**

*Hialmar*. Yes, my dear fellow, didn't you know? **I understood him to say he had written to you about it.**

*Gregers*. **Not a word about his part in the business.** He must have forgotten it. **Our correspondence has always been purely a business one. So it was my father that -- !**

*Hialmar*. Yes, certainly. **He didn't wish it to be generally known; but he it was. And of course it was he, too, that put me in a position to marry. Don't you -- don't you know about that either?**

It is not easy to understand why Mr. Werle has been generous to the family of Old Ekdal.

Even his son is suspicious. The father did not tell the son. He had helped him also to marry.

**Correspondence=** exchanging letters

Mr. Werle helped Hialmar and did not want it to be known among people. He did not wish it to be generally known.

*Gregers*. **No, I haven't heard a word of it.** [(Shakes him by the arm).]

But, my dear Hialmar, I can't tell you what pleasure all this gives me -- pleasure, and self-reproach. **I have perhaps done my father injustice after all -- in some things. This proves that he has a heart.** It shows a sort of compunction --

*Hialmar*. **Compunction** -- ?

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*Gregers.* Yes, yes -- whatever you like to call it. Oh, **I can't tell you how glad I am to hear this of father. -- So you are a married man, Hialmar! That is further than I shall ever get.** Well, **I hope you are happy in your married life?**

*Hialmar.* Yes, **thoroughly happy.** **She is as good and capable a wife as any man could wish for. And she is by no means without culture**

**Compunction**= regret

He never knew before that his father is a kind hearted man. He never knew that Hialmar is married.

*Gregers* [ *rather surprised.* ] No, of course not.

*Hialmar.* You see, **life is itself an education.** Her daily intercourse with me -- And then we know one or two rather remarkable men, who come a good deal about us. I assure you, **you would hardly know Gina again.**

*Gregers.* **Gina?**

*Hialmar.* Yes; had you forgotten that her name was Gina?

*Gregers.* Whose name? I haven't the slightest idea --

*Hialmar.* **Don't you remember that she used to be in service here?**

*Gregers* [ *looks at him.* ] Is it Gina Hansen -- ?

*Hialmar.* Yes, of course it is Gina Hansen.

*Gregers.* -- **who kept house for us during the last year of my mother's illness?**

*Hialmar.* Yes, exactly. But, my dear friend, I'm quite sure your father told you that I was married.

Gregers' mother had suspicions about Gina. She suspected relation between the father and Gina.

*Gregers* [ *who has risen.* ] Oh yes, he mentioned it; but not that -- [ *Walking about the room.* ]

Stay -- perhaps he did -- now that I think of it. My father always writes such short letters. [ *Half seats himself on the arm of the chair.* ]

Now, tell me, Hialmar -- this is interesting -- how did you come to know Gina -- your wife?

*Hialmar.* The simplest thing in the world. You know Gina did not stay here long, everything was so much upset at that time, owing to your mother's illness and so forth, that Gina was not equal to it all; so she gave notice and left. That was the year before your mother died -- or it may have been the same year.

Gregers wants to know how Hialmar and Gina came to know each other- was it through Mr. Werle or they did it independently?

## 4th Lecture

Expose= to open- to tell the readers.

Act I in every play is an exposition. It tells us about everything, characters, and relationships.

### **What kind of exposition does this play have?**

It is a retrospective exposition by remembering the past- unfolding the past to the audience so that they can understand what happened before the play begins.

It can be done by using the servants. The servants in the first page introduce the characters.

The writer can give his exposition through dialogue between friends. Through talking to each other, the audience gets the information.

In the play, we have a conversation between the father and the son. It is made possible as the son has been away for a long time. So, it is a good time to talk to each other to inform the audience by remembering the past. The son has been away so he does not know what was happening those years. It shows what type of relation between the father and the son. It paved the way to the conflict. It prepares us for the conflict. The father and the son are not in a good relation. The son suspects the father for his involvement in the downfall of Edkal's family.

*Hialmar.* The simplest thing in the world. You know Gina did not stay here long, everything was so much upset at that time, owing to your mother's illness and so forth, that Gina was not equal to it all; so she gave notice and left. That was the year before your mother died -- or it may have been the same year.

*Gregers.* It was the same year. I was up at the works then. But afterwards -- ?

*Hialmar.* Well, Gina lived at home with her mother, Madam Hansen, an excellent hard-working woman, who kept a little eating-house. She had a room to let too; a very nice comfortable room.

*Gregers.* And I suppose you were lucky enough to secure it?

*Hialmar.* **Yes; in fact, it was your father that recommended it to me. So it was there, you see, that I really came to know Gina.**

*Gregers.* And then you got engaged?

*Gregers* [ *(rises and moves about a little).* ] Tell me: **was it after your engagement -- was it then that my father -- I mean was it then that you began to take up photography?**

*Hialmar.* Yes, precisely. **I wanted to make a start, and to set up house as soon as possible; and your father and I agreed that this photography business was the readiest way.** Gina thought so too. Oh, and there was another thing in its favour, by-the-bye: **it happened, luckily, that Gina had learnt to retouch.**

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Gregers is talking to Hialmar. Hialmar tells him that he got married to Gina. He knows from him that his father Mr. Werle has been generous with Ekdal's family. The father did not tell his son about his generosity. He kept it in the dark. It may have two meanings. He might have something to hide that it may explain his generosity. He mightn't want his son to be jealous.

Gregers is surprised by Hialmar's information. Hialmar tells Gregers that it is his father Hakon Werle who asked him not to tell Gregers about the generosity of the father that he might not feel well about it.

Gregers' father gave Hialmar a place as a studio to work as a photographer. He also helped him to marry Gina. First he arranged for their marriage and then decided to help and support them financially. He helped him to set a business.

*Gregers.* That chimed in marvelously.

*Hialmar* [ *pleased, rises* ]. Yes, didn't it? **Don't you think it was a marvellous piece of luck?**

*Gregers.* Oh, unquestionably. **My father seems to have been almost a kind of providence for you.**

**Providence**= divine help= help from God.

*Hialmar* [ *with emotion* ]. **He did not forsake his old friend's son in the hour of his need.** For he has a heart. you see.

*Mrs. Sorby* [ *enters, arm-in-arm with WERLE* ]. Nonsense, my dear Mr. Werle; **you mustn't stop there any longer staring at all the lights. It's very bad for you.**

*Werle* [ *lets go her arm and passes his hand over his eyes* ]. I daresay you are right.

[

Hialmar seems to appreciate Hakon's help.

While Gregers and Hialmar are talking- Mrs. Sorby the housekeeper came in. she enters arm-in-arm with Mr. Werle. He is getting old. He is losing his eyesight. He is doomed to be blind. he cannot avoid it.

Old Ekdal came accidentally to the room where other gentlemen are sitting. His appearance surprised everyone. The papers he had in his arm fell down. Hialmar was standing there without acknowledging his father. He did not show that he is his father- as if he does not know him.

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GRABERG and OLD EKDAL come out of the office. Werle[ (involuntarily).] Ugh!

[The laughter and talk among the Guests cease. HIALMAR starts at the sight of his father, puts down his glass, and turns towards the fireplace.

Ekdal[ (does not look up, but makes little bows to both sides as he passes, murmuring).]

Beg pardon, come the wrong way. Door locked -- door locked. Beg pardon.

[He and GRABERG go out by the back, to the right.

Werle[ (between his teeth).] That idiot Graberg.

Gregers[ (open-mouthed and staring, to HIALMAR).] Why surely that wasn't -- !

The Flabby Gentleman. What's the matter? Who was it?

Gregers. Oh, nobody, only the bookkeeper and some one with him.

Mrs. Sorby[(whispers to the Servant).] **Give him something to take with him; -- something good, mind.**

Gregers[ (softly and with emotion, to HIALMAR).] So that was really he!

Hialmar. Yes.

Gregers. And you could stand there and deny that you knew him!

Hialmar[ (whispers vehemently).] But how could I -- !

Gregers.

Hialmar[ (with pain).] Oh, if you were in my place --

[The conversation amongst the Guests, which has been carried on in a low tone, now swells into constrained joviality.

The Thin-haired Gentleman[ (approaching HIALMAR and GREGERS in a friendly manner).]

Aha! Reviving old college memories, eh? Don't you smoke, Mr. Ekdal? May I give you a light? Oh, by-the-bye, we mustn't -- -- acknowledge your own father?

Gregers. Yes, yes. Are you going straight home?

Hialmar. Yes. Why?

Gregers. Oh, because I may perhaps **look in on you later.**

Hialmar. No, you mustn't do that. **You must not come to my home. Mine is a melancholy** abode, Gregers; especially after a splendid banquet like this. We can always arrange to meet somewhere in the town.

He is telling him that there is no comparison between their houses. His house is not a good place to visit. There is a big contrast between the two houses.

Look in on = visit

We come to the core of the exposition- the conversation between the father and the son.

## Modern Drama – Dr. Batool

Gregers. **Father, won't you stay a moment?**

Werle [ (stops).] What is it?

Gregers. **I must have a word with you.**

Werle. Can it not wait till we are alone?

Gregers. **No, it cannot; for perhaps we shall never be alone together.**

Werle [ (drawing nearer).] What do you mean by that?

*[During what follows, the pianoforte is faintly heard from the distant music-room.]*

He had already decided to leave his father's house.

Gregers. **How has that family been allowed to go so miserably to the wall?**

Werle. **You mean the Ekdals, I suppose.**

Gregers. Yes, I mean the Ekdals. **Lieutenant Ekdal was once so closely associated with you.**

Werle. **Much too closely;** I have felt that to my cost for many a year. **It is thanks to him that I -- yes I -- have had a kind of slur cast upon my reputation.**

Gregers [ (softly).] **Are you sure that he alone was to blame?**

Werle. Who else do you suppose -- ?

It seems that he does not understand his son.

He is asking about the misery that happened to the Ekdal family. Ekdal was very closely associated to Werle. The son is using it ironically.

**Slur=** disgrace

Gregers. You and he acted together in that affair of the forests --

Werle. But was it not Ekdal that drew the map of the tracts we had bought -- that fraudulent map! **It was he who felled all that timber illegally on Government ground. In fact, the whole management was in his hands. I was quite in the dark as to what Lieutenant Ekdal was doing.**

Gregers. Lieutenant Ekdal himself seems to have been very much in the dark as to what he was doing.

He says that he had paid for this closeness. He is defending himself.

**Fraud=** cheating

Werle did not know what Ekdal was doing with the business of the land.

Werle. That may be. But the fact remains that **he was found guilty and I acquitted.**

Gregers. Yes, **I know that nothing was proved against you.**

Werle. **Acquittal is acquittal. Why do you rake up these old miseries that turned my hair grey before its time? Is that the sort of thing you have been brooding over up there, all these years?** I can assure you, Gregers, here in the town **the whole story has been forgotten long ago** -- so far as I am concerned.



## Modern Drama – Dr. Batool

Werle was acquitted not because he was not found guilty but because nothing was found against him.

Brooding= thinking

The father is asking his son if it is all he wants to ask about after this long absence- the family of Ekdal. The whole town has forgotten about the story.

After this long absence, this is the first conversation between the father and the son.

Rake up= gather= collect= bring up

The father is wondering why his son brings all these miseries of the past that he wants to forget about to the surface. It turns his hair into grey. It makes him old before age- before time. It was hard for him. He shows a picture of himself of an old man.

Everyone has forgotten that he was involved. Now, he has a good fame. Everyone has forgotten.

*Gregers.* But that unhappy Ekdal family --

*Werle.* What would you have had me do for the people? **When Ekdal came out of prison he was a broken-down being, past all help. There are people in the world who dive to the bottom the moment they get a couple of slugs in their body, and never come to the surface again.** You may take my word for it, Gregers, **I have done all I could without positively laying myself open to all sorts of suspicion and gossip --**

Past all help= he went beyond.

Some people have courage, some people do not have courage. People have courage try to get the remedy. Some people are too centered- too weak, they disappear from the social circle. They cut up all relation with the society. They adopt solitude and loneliness one simple blow is enough for them. He tells him that he was helpful for the family as much as he could.

*Gregers.* Suspicion -- ? Oh, I see.

*Werle.* I have given Ekdal copying to do for the office, and I pay him far, far more for it than his work is worth --

*Gregers* [ *without looking at him*.] H'm; that I don't doubt.

*Gregers.* You wrote me a letter about that time -- a business letter, of course; **and in a postscript you mentioned -- quite briefly -- that Hjalmar Ekdal had married a Miss Hansen.**

*Werle.* Yes, that was quite right. **That was her name.**

*Gregers.* **But you did not mention that this Miss Hansen was Gina Hansen -- our former housekeeper.**

## Modern Drama – Dr. Batool

Werle [ *(with a forced laugh of derision).*] **No; to tell the truth, it didn't occur to me that you were so particularly interested in our former housekeeper.**

Gregers. No more I was. But [*(lowers his voice)*] **there were others in this house who were particularly interested in her.**

Werle. What do you mean by that? [*(Flaring up.)*] **You are not alluding to me**, I hope?

Gregers [*(softly but firmly).*] **Yes, I am alluding to you.**

Werle. **And you dare -- ! You presume to -- ! How can that ungrateful hound** -- that photographer fellow -- how dare he go making such insinuations!

Gregers. **Hialmar has never breathed a word about this. I don't believe he has the faintest suspicion of such a thing.**

Hound= hunting dogs

He accuses his son of being ungrateful- unthankful. He does not believe that his son can dare to make such insinuation- to suspect his father- to speak against his father.

Hialmar never mentioned a word about this to Gregers. He had no suspicion

Werle. **Then where have you got it from? Who can have put such notions in your head?**

Gregers. **My poor unhappy mother told me; and that the very last time I saw her.**

Werle. Your mother! I might have known as much! You and she -- you always held together. **It was she** who turned you against me, from the first.

It was his mother that told him about her suspicions about his father and Gina the last time he saw her.

The father thinks that it is the mother who turned the son against his father.

Gregers. No, **it was all that she had to suffer and submit to, until she broke down and came to such a pitiful end.**

Werle. Oh, she had nothing to suffer or submit to; not more than most people, at all events. But there's no getting on with **morbid, overstrained creatures** -- that I have learnt to my cost. -- **And you could go on nursing such a suspicion** -- burrowing into all sorts of **old rumours and slanders** against your own father! I must say, Gregers, **I really think that at your age you might find something more useful to do.**

Gregers. Yes, it is high time.

Werle. Then perhaps your mind would be easier than it seems to be now. What can be your object in remaining

He alludes to his father- that he was interested in Gina- their former housekeeper.

Allusion= imitation of reality.

Morbid= gloomy- sad- no liveliness

Overstrained= pessimistic

## Modern Drama – Dr. Batool

She was always gloomy, sad, mentally disturbed.

**old rumours and slanders**= bad news about somebody

He says that he should find something more useful to do than to suspect his father.

*Werle.* I understand you well enough. **You want to be independent; you won't be beholden to me for anything.** Well, now there happens to be an opportunity **for you to become independent**, your own master in everything.

*Werle.* **I want to propose that you should enter the firm, as partner.**

*Gregers.* I! Join your firm? As partner?

The father wants the son to join his firm as a partner. He thinks that his father is guilty into dragging his friend into this business.

*Werle.* Yes. It would not involve our being constantly together. You could take over the business here in town, and I should move up to the works.

*Gregers.* You would?

*Werle.* The fact is, I am not so fit for work as I once was. I am obliged to spare my eyes, Gregers; they have begun to trouble me.

*Werle.* Listen, Gregers: there are many things that stand between us; but we are father and son after all. We ought surely to be able to come to some sort of understanding with each other.

*Werle.* Well, even that would be something. Think it over, Gregers. Don't you think it ought to be possible? Eh?

*Gregers* [ *looking at him coldly.* ] There is something behind all this.

*Werle.* How so?

*Gregers.* **You want to make use of me in some way.**

*Werle.* In such a close relationship as ours, the one can always be useful to the other.

*Gregers.* Yes, so people say.

*Werle.* I want very much to have you at home with me for a time. **I am a lonely man, Gregers; I have always felt lonely, all my life through; but most of all now that I am getting up in years. I feel the need of some one about me --**

*Gregers.* You have Mrs. Sorby.

*Werle.* Yes, I have her; and she has become, I may say, almost indispensable to me. She is lively and even-tempered; she brightens up the house; and that is a very great thing for me.

*Gregers.* Well then, you have everything just as you wish it.

*Gregers.* **You have Mrs. Sorby.**

*Werle.* Yes, I have her; and she has become, I may say, almost indispensable to me. She is lively and even-tempered; she brightens up the house; and that is a very great thing for me.

*Gregers.* Well then, you have everything just as you wish it.

*Werle.* Yes, but I am afraid it can't last. A woman so situated may easily find herself in a false position, in the eyes of the world. For that matter it does a man no good, either.

## Modern Drama – Dr. Batool

Werle. Yes, but how about the woman, Gregers? I fear she won't accept the situation much longer; and even if she did -- even if, out of attachment to me, she were to take her chance of gossip and scandal and all that -- ? Do you think, Gregers -- you with your strong sense of justice --

Gregers[ *(interrupts him).*] **Tell me in one word: are you thinking of marrying her?**

Werle. **Suppose I were thinking of it? What then?**

Werle. Yes, but how about the woman, Gregers? **I fear she won't accept the situation much longer**; and even if she did -- even if, out of attachment to me, she were to take her chance of gossip and scandal and all that -- ? Do you think, Gregers -- you with your strong sense of justice --

Gregers[ *(interrupts him).*] Tell me in one word: are you thinking of marrying her?

Werle. **Suppose I were thinking of it? What then?**

Gregers. -- Not at all. Not by any means.

Werle. **I was not sure whether your devotion to your mother's memory --**

Gregers. I am not overstrained.

Werle. Well, whatever you may or may not be, at all events you have lifted a great weight from my mind. **I am extremely pleased that I can reckon on your concurrence in this matter.**

### **Reckon on= depend on**

Gregers[ *(looking intently at him).*] Now **I see the use you want to put me to.**

Werle. **Use to put you to? What an expression!**

Gregers. Oh, don't let us be nice in our choice of words -- **not when we are alone together**, at any rate. [*(With a short laugh.)*] Well well. So this is what made it absolutely essential that I should come to town in person. For the sake of Mrs. Sorby, we are to get up a pretence at family life in the house -- a tableau of filial affection! That will be something new indeed.

He has nourished a suspicion against his father. He was bold enough to say it openly to his father.

Werle. **How dare you speak in that tone!**

Gregers. Was there ever any family life here? Never since I can remember. But now, forsooth, your plans demand something of the sort. No doubt it will have an excellent effect when it is reported that the son has hastened home, on the wings of filial piety, to the grey-haired father's wedding-feast. **What will then remain of all the rumours as to the wrongs the poor dead mother had to submit to?** Not a vestige. Her son annihilates them at one stroke.

Werle. Gregers -- **I believe there is no one in the world you detest as you do me.**

Gregers[ *(softly).*] **I have seen you at too close quarters.**

Werle. **You have seen me with your mother's eyes.** [*(Lowers his voice a little.)*]  
**But you should remember that her eyes were -- clouded now and then.**

The son accuses his father of not caring about his dying mother. While she was dying, he had an affair with the housekeeper. Now, he wants to marry Mrs. Sorby.

## Modern Drama – Dr. Batool

He compares between his father's treatment of his mother and the lady he wants to marry now.

The father wants to get his son's approval for this marriage. depending on his power of perception , he turns his father down.

He tells him that he hates him because he knows his reality. He really knows him.

He understands the real motives of his father. He gives his reason for his hatred that he has seen him very closely.

He accuses the son of seeing him with his mother's eyes- he assesses him according to his mother.

The father accuses his mother of not having good perception- her perception- eyes were clouded. She could not understand very well.

*Gregers* [ *quivering* ].] I see what you are hinting at. **But who was to blame for mother's unfortunate weakness?** Why you, and all those -- ! The last of them was this woman that you palmed off upon Hjalmar Ekdal, when you were -- Ugh!

*Gregers* [ *without heeding* ].] And there he is now, with his great, confiding, childlike mind, compassed about with all this treachery -- living under the same roof with such a creature, and never dreaming that what he calls **his home is built upon a lie!** [ *(Comes a step nearer.* ) ]

When I look back upon your past, I seem to see a battle-field with shattered lives on every hand.

*Werle.* I begin to think the chasm that divides us is too wide.

*Gregers* [ *bowing, with self-command* ].] So I have observed; and therefore I take my hat and go.

*Werle.* **You are going! Out of the house?**

*Gregers.* Yes. **For at last I see my mission in life.**

*Werle.* **What mission?**

Mrs. Sorby is going to be Mr. Werle's wife.

She is playing a game with the gentlemen- Werle's friends. Mr. Werle is going to be blind.

[ *pointing towards the background* ].] Look, father, -- the Chamberlains **are playing blind-man's-buff with Mrs. Sorby.** -- Good-night and good-bye.

*He goes out by the back to the right. Sounds of laughter and merriment from the Company, who are now visible in the outer room.*

*Werle* [ *muttering contemptuously after GREGERS* ].] Ha -- ! Poor wretch -- and he says he is not overstrained

## Modern Drama – Dr. Batool