

Synopsis

The play begins in the home of Haakon Werle, a wholesale merchant. He is giving a party in honor of his son's homecoming. Beside influential political friend, he has also invited Hjalmar Ekdal, an old school fellow of Gregers. Conversing with his old friend, Gregers is surprised to learn that Hjalmar has married their former maidservant.

When Werle has a chance for private talk with his son, Gregers shows deep bitterness toward his father. Accusing Werle of deceit in marrying of Gina to Hjalmar, reproaching his lecherous behavior which caused his mother's death, Gregers concludes that his father has ruined old Ekdal's life by framing him for the government swindle. Werle denies his last accusation. He tells his son that he should bury his past and shows filial approval for the intended marriage to Mrs. Sorby. Pitying Hjalmar who does not realize that what he calls his house is built up on a lie, Gregers says that he would leave the house forever.

Gina takes care of her husband Hjalmar, her daughter Hedvig, and her father in law, old Ekdal. Besides she also runs the studio while Hjalmar himself is a photographer. Instead of running his studio, Hjalmar works very hard on invention because he wants to restore the name of Ekdal to honor and dignity. Moreover, Hjalmar always thinks that he could manage to provide everything for his family. Actually, the family does not live on Hjalmar's income as a photographer but on Gina's running studio and Ekdal's salary because he works for Werle.

Gregers thinks that Hjalmar's marriage is not based on truthfulness because before they get married, his wife Gina has a love affair with his father, Werle. He becomes very sure of his assumption that Hedvig is not Hjalmar's own father, when he knows that she is in danger of losing her eyesight as the old Werle also has the same problem. Hjalmar informs him that although it is only the first symptom that the blindness of a hereditary disease will develop. Knowing that Hjalmar has sunk in the depth of self-deception and illusion, Gregers begins to carry out his mission. He claims that he would reveal the lies and bring the truth. He exposes all the facts that he has known.

Actually Hjalmar has a happy marriage. He loves his wife and daughter and they also love him so much. Yet, it is in danger when Gregers comes and meddles in to his wife. When Hjalmar knows all the facts, he is angry with Gina. He forces Gina to admit her affair with Werle. He also asks her whether Hedvig is really his daughter. However, Gina herself does not know whether Hedvig is the daughter of Werle or Hjalmar. When Hjalmar finds out that Werle's eyesight also becomes weak, he convinces that Hedvig is not his daughter. He rejects Hedvig immediately after the revelation that she is not his daughter. And it makes Hedvig so desperate since she loves and admires him so much. Hjalmar also demands Gina to pay back all the money that has been given by Werle to support Ekdal's family.

Gregers, realizing that his meddling has caused an unfortunate condition, tries to persuade Hedvig to sacrifice the thing he loves most, namely the wild duck, for her father's sake. By sacrificing the wild duck, it is hoped that Hedvig will get her