

HEDDA

Screenplay by
Nia DaCosta

Based on the play, *Hedda Gabler*
by Henrik Ibsen

MAIN CHARACTERS

the women

HEDDA GABLER - Early-30s, black/mixed-race, housewife
EILEEN LOVBORG - Early-40s, white, doctorate professor
THEA CLIFTON - Early 30s, any race, writer

the men

GEORGE TESMAN - Mid-30s, white, research fellow
JUDGE ROLAND BRACK - early 50s, black, judge

"I trust only one thing in a woman: that she will not come to life again after she is dead."
- Antiphanes

EXT. LAKE - MORNING

HEDDA GABLER is calf-deep in the lake behind her house, a dozen feet from the shore. She doesn't move, just stares out into the fog that is thick in the air. She seems sad but she's merely numb. She takes a step into the water and -

TESMAN (O.S.)

Hedda.

Hedda is back to reality. She turns her head slightly, but not much. She knows it's only, GEORGE TESMAN (30s), her husband. He stands behind Hedda and looks at her oddly, but familiarly; her whims are surprising in their manifestations but not their occurrence.

TESMAN (CONT'D)

Eileen Lovborg is on the phone.

HEDDA

Eileen.

TESMAN

She wants to talk to you. Insisted on it.

HEDDA

Okay. I'll be up in a moment.

George waits for a beat then turns dispiritedly and walks back to the house.

Hedda returns her attention to the still lake. Her expression lifts. Her breathing quickens. She steps out of the water and pulls the heavy rocks out of her coat pockets, dropping them onto the bank.

EXT. TESMAN ESTATE GROUNDS (THE MALL) - MORNING

Hedda walks through the fog up towards the house. Her bare feet crunch through the early morning frost on the grass.

Her pace quickens. And then she's running. And then she's SCREAMING. Joy.

SMASH TO:

TITLE: HEDDA

INT. FOYER - DAY

Hedda's feet leave damp footsteps as she rushes past the study and to the phone room which sits behind glass under the stairs.

George, in the doorway of his study, watches her before retreating inside.

INT. PHONE ROOM - DAY

Hedda picks up the receiver. She breathes.

HEDDA

Eileen.

EILEEN (V.O.)

Hedda Gabler. I heard you're having a party tonight.

HEDDA

Yes. Introducing Mr. and Mrs. George Tesman to society. Showing who we are.

EILEEN

Who you aren't.

HEDDA

Will you come?

EILEEN

Yes.

HEDDA

You sound different.

EILEEN (V.O.)

Older.

HEDDA

Do I?

EILEEN (V.O.)

I'll see you tonight.

HEDDA

Eileen.

CLICK. The line is dead. Hedda can't help but smile.

INT. TESMAN ESTATE - DAY

A series of CLOSE UPS:

- Scalding water on Hedda's back.
- A stocking being rolled onto a leg.
- Lipstick being applied carefully.
- Hedda bites into a juicy nectarine.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Hedda stands in the window, squinting into the morning light. And then she gags. She spits out the nectarine and stares at it. Its core is rotten, like a worm got to it before Hedda did, she stares at it and then the blackened pit throbs, like a heart beating. Hedda throws the nectarine down and rushes to the bathroom across the hallway. The sounds of her throwing up filter in.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Cooks preside over bread coming out of the oven, trays being filled with hors d'oeuvres, pie crust being flattened and rolled. Hedda watches intensely as she walks by in the hallway. BERTIE (clearly in charge) glances her way then turns around with a roll of the eyes.

INT. FOYER - LATE AFTERNOON

A runner is rolled out over Hedda's damp footprints.

INT. DINING ROOM - SAME

SERVANTS set out a new tablecloth and set the table for a dinner. Hedda looks at the edge of one.

HEDDA

The thread is loose. Use the other one.

INT. FOYER/ANTEROOM - SAME

Fresh flowers are placed in a vase on a table in the foyer. Hedda passes through.

She looks now, and will throughout the evening, as if she's always seeing something out of the corner of her eye; something that she's terrified of and is trying to escape.

HEDDA

No flowers.

Hedda exits through the anteroom.

EXT. ANTEROOM - CONTINUOUS

Hedda stalks outside, past TWO MEN placing garden furniture and walks towards the exterior of the conservatory where a GARDENER is placing flowers.

We do not hear the conversation but it is clear that Hedda is displeased with them.

INT. CONSERVATORY - SAME

Two STRONG MEN pull on a rope, heaving a chandelier to the top of the high ceiling in the center of the room. Two MAIDS hurry under it, fearing it will fall on their heads.

Hedda enters the conservatory, crossing towards the great hall. She walks under the chandelier without fear, whether or not it falls on her head is not her concern. As she walks under it one of the strong men -- standing on the Juliet balcony -- loses his grip slightly. The chandelier quivers as he regains his holding. Hedda continues on, unfazed.

INT. LIBRARY - CONTINUOUS

Hedda enters the library. Two MAIDS are removing sheets from the chairs and tables. Another is beginning to open the doors to the Great Hall, she stops.

HEDDA

Out.

The maids scurry away, closing the doors behind them. She turns to see flowers on a table. She takes them and throws them out of the window. She closes it then draws the curtains. In the darkness she finds peace.

She finds a mirror and looks at her shadowy reflection. Her expression flits from admiration to contempt. Her hand finds her bare neck. She pauses, remembering.

OMITTED

INT. ATTIC - DAY

Hedda is rifling through an old military trunk, full of papers, some clothing and -

She finds a small, rectangular velvet jewelry box. She opens it and smiles. A soft smile, brimming with childish enthusiasm.

She removes the delicate gold necklace from the box and puts it on, her fingers grazing across the olive leaf pendant. She closes the box and puts it back into the suitcase. She stops when she notices the metal edge of a wooden box glinting.

She pulls it out, opens it: GENERAL GABLER'S GUNS.

HEDDA

Hello, father.

EXT. TESMAN ESTATE (ROOF) - LATE AFTERNOON

Hedda stands on the roof of her home shooting her GUN into the sky. She seems to be aiming at birds but she shoots mostly at nothing. She smiles every time the gun kicks back and she feels the recoil.

She looks in the direction of her back lawn, it leads to a maze in the distance. Beyond the maze is the lake.

ROLAND BRACK, 50s, walks toward the house through the grass of the backyard.

HEDDA

Judge Brack, you're a bit early for a party, no?

BRACK

Buying you this house, Mrs. Tesman!

Hedda trains the gun on him.

HEDDA

Shall I punish you?

BRACK

Don't point that thing at me!

HEDDA
This is what you get for bothering us
before we're ready!

Hedda aims away from Brack and fires.

BRACK
Are you out of your mind?!

HEDDA
(disappointed)
Oh no... I didn't hit you, did I?

BRACK
Does your husband know you're up there?

HEDDA
Ask him yourself.

Brack disappears out of view as he nears the house.
Hedda's smile fades as her amusements end. A bird chirps
nearby. She aims her gun at it.

The chirping continues. Hedda lowers the gun.

OMITTED

OMITTED

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Fire is crackling in Hedda and Tesman's bedroom. Hedda is
doing up George's shirt as he zips up her dress.

GEORGE
Tie.

Hedda moves to get ties from the wardrobe.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
And talk to Professor Greenwood, would
you?

HEDDA
To what end?

GEORGE
His review of my last book almost ruined
me. I need him on my good side. He likes
you. And he likes bohemians.
(MORE)

GEORGE (CONT'D)

He needs to have "fun" or I'll never hear the end of it.

She decides she doesn't like the tie. Moves to find a better one.

HEDDA

You'll be fine, Tesman. Tonight will be fun. You meet my friends, I meet your...colleagues.

GEORGE

I have friends, Hedda, please don't be rude. But your friends...

HEDDA

Trust me, George. They are well-behaved and well-bred and Greenwood will love them and you by extension. They will add enough worldliness to the evening to make you stand out. To make you interesting and indispensable.

GEORGE

They'd better. Nothing can go wrong tonight, Hedda. Nothing.

There is an edge of warning in George's voice. Easy to miss but sharp, like a paper cut.

HEDDA

I've heard you.

(beat)

Right. Do the clasp. At the top. Mind the necklace. Has Lovborg called again?

GEORGE

No. I was surprised she'd been invited.

HEDDA

Forgot to mention.

GEORGE

Hedda.

HEDDA

Yes?

GEORGE

This is what you wanted right? This house, the party, the... You're happy?

HEDDA

Don't I look happy?

I/E. CAR

A couple we will come to know as the GREENWOODS drive down the path in the rain. A car attendant directs them to a parking spot.

INT. MAIN STAIRCASE - DAY

George trails Hedda on the second story landing. The door is opened and the FIRST GUESTS arrive. Hedda sees Judge Brack. He is smiling up at her as she descends with George. Hedda takes his arm.

HEDDA

He's still here?

GEORGE

He's practically family.

HEDDA

He's business. He's functional. Know the difference.

INT. FOYER - DAY

George and Hedda come down to greet the new guests. Brack is angling towards Hedda.

HEDDA

Mr. and Mrs. Dunbar. I'm so glad you could make it. Judge Brack, would you show them in?

Hedda pushes them in Brack's direction.

BRACK

Of course.

More people come in and George greets them.

GEORGE

Ah, Professor Greenwood!

Professor GREENWOOD enters with his wife, TABITHA, a young woman in an eye-catching dress. They head into the library.

We see a series of greetings at the door. The difference between George's friends and Hedda's friends is stark.

For George his colleagues are all academics, they are all men, they all come with their wives, they are all white.

For Hedda, her friends are a diverse cross-section of low-born artists, new wave intellectuals, bohemians and high-born artists, new wave intellectuals and bohemians who have all deeply disappointed their parents. Most are white but many are women and people of color. Some are openly queer.

INT. GREAT HALL - LATER

The cocktail party hour. The guests mingle but self-segregate: Hedda's friends hang out with each other and George's colleagues hang out with each other. Every so often they stare at the other group as if they're looking at animals in a zoo.

We hear snatches of conversation as we move through the room.

PROF. THOMPSON

She's...duskier than I thought she'd be.

FRIEND OF HEDDA

Did you bring your joint?

MRS. DUNBAR

Is that man... is his ear pierced?

Hedda is talking to Tabitha Greenwood, nodding along to what she's saying. Her eyes drift to the party. People talk, they drink, they laugh... but Hedda is disinterested. Her eyes continue to scan the room when they land on Brack. He's looking at her. She turns back to Tabitha.

HEDDA

Sorry, Tabitha, what were you saying?

TABITHA

Just we were so surprised when we came up the drive. It's very nice. Bigger than we'd thought it would be.

Hedda looks as though she might bite off her head but Brack comes upon them.

HEDDA

Judge Brack. Have you met Professor Greenwood's wife, Tabitha? She's a painter, she says.

BRACK

Lovely to meet you. Be a dear and grab me another one of these. If you're topping up.

Tabitha is taken aback but she downs her drink and takes his glass.

HEDDA

Very rude. We have servants for that.

BRACK

It's no fun if they're paid.

HEDDA

Did I scare you off with my gun earlier? You haven't come to say hello.

BRACK

Oh really? You're avoiding me.

HEDDA

You love a chase.

BRACK

You seem -

HEDDA

What?

BRACK

...on edge.

Brack smiles teasingly. Everything between them is a game.

BRACK (CONT'D)

The house looks beautiful. A bit more than we discussed.

HEDDA

Don't --

The doorman comes up to Hedda and whispers in her ear.

HEDDA (CONT'D)

Bring her in.

The doorman goes off. Tabitha returns with new drinks. She hands one to Brack.

BRACK

You're a doll. So what kind of painting do you do? Something pretty, I hope.

Hedda walks around the room to get a clear view of the entrance. Soon, the doorman reappears with a woman.

It is THEA ELLISON (mid-20s). She looks like she's seen a ghost in a storm. She's wet from head to toe and thunderstruck. She holds a stuffed suitcase at her side. Hedda stands a distance away.

HEDDA

Oh no, is it raining?

THEA

Mrs. Tesman. I'm so sorry to interrupt but -

HEDDA

I had no idea you were in town, of course
I would have invited you, Mrs. Ellison.

Thea looks around at all of the people drinking, talking and smoking. A number of them look at her in her state, perplexed. Hedda makes no move to take her anywhere else, instead letting her stand there, exposed.

HEDDA (CONT'D)

Would you like a drink?

THEA

No, I just came to talk to you about - to see if - well -

Thea's eyes dart around at the people milling about. Some begin to whisper: *about her?*

HEDDA

Yes?

THEA

Eileen Lovborg.

The name rearranges Hedda's insides but she sees Thea's concern, her soft expression and it makes her suspicious.

THEA (CONT'D)

Is she here?

HEDDA

Come with me, you must be freezing.

THEA

I just need to find -

But Hedda is already dragging her upstairs.

HEDDA

We'll dry you off, get you changed.

THEA

I wouldn't want to take you away from your guests.

HEDDA

Nobody needs me, Mrs. Ellison. You have my undivided attention.

OMITTED

INT. BEDROOM - DUSK

Hedda practically shoves Thea into her room. She closes the door behind her and leans on it, taking Thea in - such a state.

After a beat, Hedda begins to turn on lamps, circling the room slowly. Thea is frozen in the middle, dripping onto the carpet, holding her suitcase awkwardly.

HEDDA

And where have you come from in such a hurry?

THEA

From home.

HEDDA

For Eileen?

THEA

I left in a rush.

HEDDA

And why is she a concern of yours?

Thea says nothing.

HEDDA (CONT'D)

I mean, I hope everything is all right?

THEA

She was the children's tutor up until a couple of months ago and -

HEDDA

You have children? Congratulations. How many?

THEA

Three boys. They're my husband's.

HEDDA

And lovely, I'm sure.

Hedda turns on the last lamp. She walks toward Thea.

THEA

I just need to talk to her. And I don't have a number and I thought she might be here.

HEDDA

You must have become very attached to one another, being in such close quarters in a house of men.

Thea tenses up again. Hedda softens her expression.

HEDDA (CONT'D)

How have you been since...

THEA

Secondary school.

HEDDA

Oh yes. How's Mr. Ellison? How are things going at home?

Thea looks pained, doesn't respond.

HEDDA (CONT'D)

Oh come on Mrs -

THEA

Please! Stop calling me that. Thea is fine.

HEDDA

Of course. Let's get you out of these clothes, Thea.

Hedda, like a snake-charmer, coils her fingers into Thea's clothing and begins to strip her down to her slip. She cajoles Thea to talk.

HEDDA (CONT'D)

Come on. You can tell me. School friend.

THEA

We weren't friends in school. You used to pull my hair.

Hedda laughs this off and digs into her closet.

THEA (CONT'D)
You were terrifying back then.

HEDDA
I don't remember.

THEA
Every time I passed you on the stairs.
Once you told me you would burn it all
off.

HEDDA
(to self)
Amazing I never got around to it.

Hedda glances at Thea's suitcase.

HEDDA (CONT'D)
Will you be gone from home long?

THEA
(beat)
Yes.

This hangs in the air between them. Hedda lets Thea sit with this admission while she fishes a dress out of the closet.

As they talk Hedda puts on and pulls off many dress options for Thea.

HEDDA
(kindly)
What will you do on your own?

THEA
Work.

HEDDA
With Eileen.

THEA
Yes.

Hedda pulls a dress off of Thea roughly.

HEDDA
Not your color. What about money?

THEA
I write.

HEDDA

Like...books?

THEA

I co-wrote the last one with Eileen, the one that was published two weeks ago.

HEDDA

You're published!

THEA

Well, my name isn't on it. She said it would undermine the book to have a cowriter that was a housewife, not an intellectual.

HEDDA

Sounds like her.

THEA

But we've just finished the first draft of the next one and it's her best work yet. It's our...

HEDDA

Your baby.

THEA

Yes. You could say that. Ours. My name will be on it, right under hers.

HEDDA

Thea...Ellison?

THEA

Thea Clifton. I'm not putting my husband's name on it.

HEDDA

Just your father's. Raise your arms.

Thea does as she's told and Hedda pulls a pleasingly colored orange dress up over her head and tosses it aside.

HEDDA (CONT'D)

She's a bit rough around the edges, isn't she?

THEA

She's brilliant.

HEDDA

"A liability" I think I overheard the judge calling her a while back.

THEA

She's different now. Softer, more careful.

HEDDA

She's changed.

THEA

Yes. She stopped drinking, her periods of melancholy are shorter...

HEDDA

Quite an impression you've made.

THEA

No. I just -

HEDDA

Don't be shy. Seems you've rehabilitated our little love bug.

THEA

That's what she says.

HEDDA

And you're here to make sure she stays out of trouble.

THEA

She is... coming here? Isn't she?

HEDDA

Yes

THEA

Please don't tell her I said anything, I just - I worry and -

HEDDA

And you left your husband a bit sooner than you'd planned?

Thea stiffens again. Hedda pivots quickly:

HEDDA (CONT'D)

God, that looks amazing on you. Almost there.

INT. DINING ROOM - LATER

Eighteen GUESTS sit (a few stand) at the long dining room table, lit by candlelight and the dim overheads. Dinner has not yet begun. They've been waiting for the lady of the house.

Hedda brings in Thea, a bit sloppy but impressive in Hedda's dress.

HEDDA
(to servers)
We need another chair and setting.

Everyone noisily shifts down their chairs to make room for Thea next to Hedda. The noise as they shift down a space is agony to Thea. Hedda loves the disruption. The louder the sound gets the more gleeful she is.

A chair and setting are placed down. Hedda takes her seat at the head of the table. George is at the far end. Thea sinks into her chair, wishing to disappear. Hedda leans over to her.

HEDDA (CONT'D)
See, no trouble at all.

And dinner is served.

INT. DINING ROOM - LATER

Hedda looks down the length of the table as everyone talks. She's bored. She glances at George who is deep in conversation with PROFESSOR JAMES. She sighs.

INT. DINING ROOM - SAME

At George's end of the table he speaks to Professor James.

GEORGE
You wouldn't believe the things I found in the libraries. Old documents, notes, papers that no one knew existed.

PROFESSOR JAMES
It seems you've made great use of your honeymoon. Didn't waste any time.

GEORGE
No, I didn't.

VOICE (O.S.)

You were doing research? On your honeymoon?

George turns towards the voice. It is JANE, clearly a friend of Hedda's in a very avant garde outfit. She smokes from a long cigarette holder. She's wearing pants.

GEORGE

Yes.

JANE

Nothing else a bit more lively? Hedda has an insatiable appetite.

GEORGE

We went to a lot of excellent restaurants.

JANE

She does love eating out.

PROFESSOR JAMES

You must be one of Mrs. Tesman's friends.

JANE

Yes. Usually. When I'm in her good graces. Jane.

Professor James laughs.

PROFESSOR JAMES

Professor James.

JANE

James? That a first or a last name?

PROFESSOR JAMES

Last. Professor John Henry James.

JANE

My mother told me never trust a man with two first names, she never said what I should do with a man that has three.

Professor James finds Jane utterly charming. They laugh. George is uncomfortable. He looks down the long table at Hedda. She's visibly bored.

GEORGE

Have you been to Greece, Ms. Odasunya?

JANE

Jane is fine, George.

GEORGE

Of course.

George looks to Hedda again. This time, she is looking at him. After a beat she breaks the moment, turns to Thea.

INT. DINING ROOM - SAME

Thea is looking around the room, studying faces.

HEDDA

Who are you looking at?

THEA

No one.

HEDDA

Everyone.

THEA

There's this woman that Eileen used to be... acquainted with. She says she tried to shoot her when Eileen broke it off.

HEDDA

That sounds like one of her silly stories. People don't do things like that here.

THEA

She's back now, this woman. And I don't know who she is. If Eileen comes and she's here then -

HEDDA

Stop fretting, Thea. Eileen will be here soon and you can fear for her immortal soul then.

THEA

I just don't want her to lose this opportunity.

HEDDA

(exasperated)

What?

THEA

At the university. The professorship and the endowment. She'll never admit this but she needs that job. Not just for her well-being but for her debts.

(MORE)

THEA (CONT'D)

She's bringing the new manuscript to show
Greenwood, to seal the deal --

HEDDA

Let's not talk business at the table.

Further down the table Hedda finds Judge Brack. He's
looking at her intently. Hedda smiles.

She turns away from him just as the first course is
served -- a wedge of iceberg lettuce. Hedda stares down
at it. A rising, knowing fear begins to prick at her...
The yonic folds of the green leaves twitch and then,
bulging and black, a GRUB pushes its way from between the
leaves to the surface.

Hedda pushes the plate away.

INT. GREAT HALL - LATER

The doors between the library and great hall are opened
and people file in from the dining room.

A BAND begins to play *CRAZY HE CALLS ME*.

Thea stands by herself near the library. Hedda watches
her from the bar, then turns and makes a beeline for
Brack and Tesman.

GEORGE

I'm not worried at all about it. I'll get
this appointment and -

Hedda comes upon them. She puts an arm on George's
shoulder, hands him a drink and kisses him on the cheek.

HEDDA

Eileen Lovborg is applying for your
position at the university, George.
Endowment and all.

Brack cuts her eyes at Hedda. This was *his* news to tell.

GEORGE

(to Brack:)

What?

BRACK

She's asked to be considered.

GEORGE

I'm in competition with that woman?

BRACK

She's cozied up to Professor Greenwood.

GEORGE

Him or his wife?

HEDDA

George!

GEORGE

She's unstable.

BRACK

Her new book has been very well received.
And people actually buy it.

HEDDA

What was the book about?

BRACK

Representations of sex in the Hellenistic
period.

HEDDA

Of course it's flying off of the shelves.

GEORGE

So crude, with what she gets up to.

HEDDA

What does she get up to?

GEORGE

I'm sure you've heard the rumors.

HEDDA

I've heard she's reformed, changed her
ways. Stopped drinking, apparently.

BRACK

Really?

HEDDA

While she was at the Ellison's.

GEORGE

What does that matter? We got married
because the position was virtually mine.
We went into debt. Borrowed money--
The position was promised.

BRACK

Before the reappearance of Eileen
Lovborg.

HEDDA

Don't be afraid of a little competition,
Tesman.

GEORGE

This isn't a game. Do you even care?

HEDDA

I care deeply, my love. I can't wait to
see how it turns out.

BRACK

My point, my initial point, was that,
knowing that nothing is certain, perhaps
that changes the plans for a new piano
and few other "minor" things you wanted
to buy -

HEDDA

This changes nothing.

BRACK

This changes everything.

Hedda takes this in, stunned for a moment.

BRACK (CONT'D)

Mrs. Tesman -

HEDDA

Oh, look! There's Bart, one of Eileen's
friends. Brack, he was dying to meet you.
Shall we?

George looks horrified through his anger.

GEORGE

No.

George downs his drink and heads to the bar.

HEDDA

He hates owing people money.

BRACK

I've said already, there's no great rush.
Although, I wish we could have been a bit
more economical.

HEDDA

Hush.

BRACK

Where are you taking me?

HEDDA
I said "hush."

Hedda and Brack walk to the conservatory end of the great hall passing assorted characters: the too-drunk-too-early types, the husband with the blatantly roving eye, the young man slipping out with a maid.

BRACK
How are you, Hedda.

HEDDA
Bored.
(Off the judge's look:)
To go away for months on end. No one to talk to, no one from my //class.

Hedda stops herself.

BRACK
// Class. Neither the bohemian multi-culti crew of your mother's or the blue bloods of your father's.

HEDDA
Amazing isn't it? George is so very...middle class.
(beat)
The most unbearable thing of all -

BRACK
What?

HEDDA
To be with the same person all the time. Day in and day out.

BRACK
George is a good man. You'll get what you want out of him. You've got the house.

HEDDA
Is it your house if people go traipsing through it when they please?

BRACK
You're settled. You're protected. Forever.

HEDDA
Yes. Forever. Try listening to the cultural history of civilization morning, noon, night... and the middle ages and the merchant class of Macedonia. Christ!
(MORE)

HEDDA (CONT'D)

Skulking around libraries, collecting books, copying books. Next library, collect books, copy books. He hasn't got an original thought in his head.

BRACK

Books and libraries is who he is. It's what he does.

HEDDA

What about me? What am I meant to do?

BRACK

What is the matter, Hedda?

HEDDA

I'm bored!

Hedda says this louder than she meant. A few heads turn.

Hedda lets a shaky breath out then leads Brack across the room to the mezzanine stairwell. George, now speaking with Greenwood, watches them enter and disappear from view.

He watches the mezzanine, waiting for them to exit onto it, they take longer than they should. Before he can see them emerge his focus is pulled once again by Greenwood.

INT. STAIRS TO MEZZANINE - CONTINUOUS

Brack stops Hedda in the spiral staircase, out of view from the people downstairs. He presses himself into her, kisses her. She responds with vigor.

INT. GREAT HALL - SAME

George does not notice - nor does anyone else - Hedda and Brack's feet, just barely visible through the small, aged window that looks into the stairwell.

INT. MEZZANINE - SAME

Hedda pushes Brack away, pulling him up the rest of the stairs and onto the mezzanine. From here they are in clear view of the party below until they continue back into -

INT. MEZZANINE OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Out of view but very easy to find, Brack kisses Hedda again. He's much more enthusiastic than she is. When his mouth moves to the crook of her neck the full extent of her tepidness is revealed. She stares listlessly at the ceiling. Cherubs and angels are painted above.

BRACK

What's this to? Don't say your heart.

Hedda looks down at the key Brack is gripping, it's attached to another chain around Hedda's neck. The gold necklace just behind it.

She opens the desk drawer and pulls out the gun case. She unlocks it and opens it, turning them to Brack.

HEDDA

The gun case. I found it in the attic.

BRACK

So it was General Gabler's gun you were shooting at me earlier... You sure I can't buy those from you? Now that you've found them.

HEDDA

It's the only thing he left me.

BRACK

And your title. I know some bastard children who have faired far worse than you.

HEDDA

Thank you for the reminder.

Hedda looks at the guns lovingly, dangerously.

HEDDA (CONT'D)

You know what my father used to call me? His pretty little thing. So he gave me his prettiest things, these.

Brack moves a stray hair from Hedda's face.

BRACK

You are a pretty little thing. I missed you, every day you were gone.

HEDDA

Me too.

BRACK

Do you mean that? I thought you were having a marvelous time.

HEDDA

Marvelous.

BRACK

Tesman said that -

HEDDA

It was marvelous for him. Dull fool.

BRACK

Your choice.

HEDDA

Well, my time was up.

Hedda sighs and moves away.

BRACK

Hedda...

BRACK (CONT'D)

What do you want with me?

HEDDA

Hmm?

BRACK

You've been dodging me all evening then suddenly you make a beeline for me.

HEDDA

What do you know about of Eileen Lovborg's reappearance?

BRACK

What about it?

HEDDA

What's her state? What's she like?

BRACK

It's as you said. She's on the straight and narrow. Still has some seedy friends but they're all good fun. In moderation.

(beat)

You want her.

HEDDA

No.

BRACK

She has a hold over you.

HEDDA

No one has a hold over me.

Brack just smiles, sliding the strap of Hedda's dress back onto her shoulder.

HEDDA (CONT'D)

The house is between you and Tesman.

BRACK

This house was only ever for you, you needed it, he said.

HEDDA

You believed that? You too think this house is my life's great passion.

BRACK

Isn't it?

HEDDA

Tesman used to walk me home last summer after those dinner parties and we passed by here one night and there was a lull in the conversation -

BRACK

I bought this house on a lull?

HEDDA

It was a pregnant pause.

BRACK

Pregnant with twins, I hope.

HEDDA

He was a nervous wreck trying to think of something to say to me, something clever. I guess I felt bad for him? I don't know, Roland, on a whim I just said I wanted the house.

BRACK

Just like that?

HEDDA

Just like that.

BRACK

And then.

HEDDA

My whimsicality had its consequences.

BRACK

As it often does, Hedda. For all of us.

Brack watches Hedda. She's fretful.

HEDDA

Sometimes I can't help myself. I just do things all of a sudden on a whim. I don't know why.

BRACK

So, Eileen.

HEDDA

You've really heard nothing?

BRACK

Nothing that would make George the wrong choice. Stay away from her, Hedda. You are still General Gabler's daughter and that woman is -

HEDDA

Competition.

BRACK

Not to me.

Brack tries to kiss her again, Hedda moves further away.

BRACK (CONT'D)

Don't resist me.

Hedda takes Brack's face in hand, gripping his jaw.

HEDDA

You have no power over me. I control this. I say when.

FIREWORKS EXPLODE OUTSIDE. Hedda and Brack go to the window.

BRACK

Really, Hedda?

HEDDA

If I've unwittingly resigned myself to a life of poverty I might as well go down in style.

Hedda leaves while Brack is enraptured by the sight outside. He turns to talk to her and sees that she is gone. On the table the gun case lies open. The two guns gleam in the light of the fireworks.

Brack closes the box and clicks the lock into place.

INT. BACK STAIRCASE - NIGHT

George and Thea are speaking. Thea is wringing her hands.

THEA

I just all of a sudden felt like I
couldn't breathe. I -

GEORGE

You'll be fine, it's... It's happened to
me before. Why don't you wait upstairs,
I'll retrieve you when Dr. Lovborg comes.

George sees Hedda leave the Great Hall. She adjusts her dress slightly. He unceremoniously leaves Thea and moves into the foyer.

INT. FOYER - CONTINUOUS

Hedda notices George come from the back staircase. Behind him Thea walks up the stairs.

HEDDA

(calling to her)

Mrs- Thea, the fireworks!

Thea disappears. Hedda turns away from Thea and sees George watching her. Her lipstick is slightly smudged. She's been caught but she smiles and pretends their life and marriage is normal.

HEDDA (CONT'D)

Everyone's loving the fireworks.

George begins to wipe the errant lipstick from Hedda's mouth. It's the first moment of honest intimacy between them and Hedda is caught off guard. Behind them Brack leaves the great hall and heads outside, exchanging a brief nod of acknowledgment to George as he goes.

HEDDA (CONT'D)

Don't fuss. Let's join the others.

She leads George out.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Thea enters the room, she's frazzled. She enters the ensuite bathroom and returns with two tablets.

She sees a stray glass of water. She peers into it - it looks clean - throws the tablets into her mouth and downs it with a gulp. She opens the window for fresh air. From this vantage point she has a view of the entire front lawn and the crowd.

She looks down at her hands, they're shaking. She notices her wedding band on her ring finger, surprised to still see it there. She hesitates and then takes it off. Another pause.

THEA

What am I doing what have I done what am
I --

She pushes it back on. Her entire body rejects it, another roiling shudder of anxiety winds through her, moving her hand back to the ring and - with finality - pulling it off and throwing it out of the window.

She puts her hands in front of her again, examining the faintest tan line where her wedding band once rested.

She does not notice that her hands are still.

INT. TESMAN ESTATE GROUNDS - NIGHT

Hedda pulls George outside and onto their large front lawn where everyone is gathered to see the small scale fireworks. People light them and run from them before they go off. It's no Fourth of July but, while the display is domestic, it's undeniably expensive.

George and Hedda find a spot on the stairs to watch. George is tense. He turns to see Brack move through the crowd towards a FEMALE COMPANION.

George looks at his wife. He looks at his friends and colleagues, all staring in awe. He realizes that this is what happiness looks like and he feels nothing.

INT. GREAT HALL - NIGHT

Later. People are mingling and drinking. Everyone's a little bit more drunk, George's friends and Hedda's friends are easier with one another now.

Hedda looks at the clock impatiently. She looks out of the window.

JANE

Hedda, darling, let's have music.

HEDDA

What?

JANE

What's the matter with you? I thought this was going to be a rager. You seemed absolutely ready for carnage when you invited me.

Hedda is distracted.

JANE (CONT'D)

Music! Damn it, Hedda.

HEDDA

Shut up, Jane. I've heard you.

Hedda stalks away to the musicians. She instructs them to play a song. They nod in agreement and start to play *OH SO QUIET*. Hedda pulls people onto the dance floor. Her friends are at it immediately but then some of the intellectuals begin to show off stilted moves.

For a moment, Hedda is carefree. She spins around the room, moving from person to person, smiling, laughing. In this moment, Hedda looks as young as she is, younger even.

The song ends and everyone seems to look in one direction. Hedda stops spinning and sees, at the other end of the room, EILEEN LOVBORG, early 40s. She's dressed impeccably, not a hair is out of place. She's stunning but tired beneath it all.

She and Hedda make eye contact through the shuffling guests. There's an electricity between them, palpable and obvious.

Hedda walks across the room to Eileen, her determined footsteps echo through the room.

The band starts another song. The guests leave their stupor and return to dancing. Hedda stops in front of Eileen Lovborg.

EILEEN

Hedda. Gabler.

Hedda is about to speak when Tesman converges on them.

GEORGE

Dr. Lovborg. It's been a long, long time.
Thank you for coming.

EILEEN

Thank you for having me, Tesman. Mrs.
Tesman.

GEORGE

Come in, have a drink.

EILEEN

I've brought a couple of friends if
that's all right?

HEDDA

The more the merrier!

Eileen waves at SIX PEOPLE outside the entrance. They include in their party DAVID, a flamboyant, huge personality. David zeroes in on Hedda.

DAVID

Aren't you gorgeous.

HEDDA

Charming.

EILEEN

Down boy. This is her husband, Dr. George
Tesman.

DAVID

Where's the bar, George?

George is aghast.

HEDDA

Just there, all of you, go on.

Hedda shoves them into that direction. George grabs Hedda's arm tightly, and pulls her into his confidential whisper:

GEORGE

You said they would behave.

HEDDA

They have been this isn't my --

GEORGE

Hedda -

Hedda twists out of his grip -- her skin is red where he's grabbed her -- and homes in on Eileen who's just finished a quick hello to Professor Greenwood.

HEDDA

Ei- Dr. Lovborg, I heard your book has been selling very well. That's so exciting.

Eileen takes this as intended, not as it was presented.

GEORGE

I've just got a copy of it myself, haven't had a chance to read it yet.

George's eyes follow David and Eileen's other friends as they mingle. He's enraptured by David's easy flirting with a Professor Greenwood's wife until-

EILEEN

Save yourself the trouble.

GEORGE

No need to be humble, Dr. Lovborg.

EILEEN

I'm not. There's nothing much to it really.

Hedda lights Eileen's cigarette.

GEORGE

It was very well-received.

EILEEN

And that's all I wanted. So I put nothing remotely controversial in the book.

HEDDA

Isn't the book about sex?

EILEEN

In the classical era. No one is scandalized by people fucking on millennia old clay pots.

(off of their reaction:)

Or perhaps I'm mistaken. Anyway, the real book, the real work is this.

Eileen pats her satchel.

EILEEN (CONT'D)

The next book. Something of a sequel to the first.

GEORGE
What's left to talk about?

EILEEN
The future.

GEORGE
Of...

EILEEN
Sex. Yes.

GEORGE
What would we know about the future? Of
that or anything?

EILEEN
We can point to some trends...

GEORGE
I never would have thought to write
anything like that.

HEDDA
Probably not.

Professor Greenwood comes upon them.

PROFESSOR GREENWOOD
Lovborg, lovely to see you looking so
well. What are you having?

EILEEN
Very, very tempting but no thank you,
Professor Greenwood. Just some water or a
soft drink for me.

HEDDA
A soft drink.

Greenwood sniffs at this.

DAVID (O.S.)
GEORGE! YOU HAVE A MAZE?!

Across the room David's arm is slung around PROFESSOR
JAMES.

EILEEN
You'll have to excuse his enthusiasm.

DAVID (O.S.)
GEORGE!

EILEEN
(to George)
Well, do you?

INT/EXT. GREAT HALL/LIBRARY/FOYER/DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

Everyone files out with their drinks and joints and cigarettes past the site of the fireworks to the maze.

HEDDA
Can I see it?

EILEEN
When you buy it.

HEDDA
Can't I take a peak?

EILEEN
It's the only complete copy I have and you are not getting your hands on it.

HEDDA
If you weren't going to share, you shouldn't have brought it with you -

EILEEN
Your husband mentioned Thea is here.

HEDDA
Haven't seen her. I think she's left.

EILEEN
Really?

HEDDA
Fine. Keep it to yourself. Thea seems to think it's your baby.

EILEEN
It is. I hope you were nice to her.

HEDDA
Yes. Gave her a dress and everything. She was in such a state.

Tesman and Brack come upon them.

HEDDA (CONT'D)
Would you like to hear about our honeymoon, Dr. Lovborg?

EILEEN

I would absolutely love to hear about it,
Mrs. Tesman, but -

HEDDA

We started in Paris...

EXT. THE MAZE - NIGHT

The guests are running and laughing through the maze.
Hedda and Eileen walk ahead of Brack and Tesman.

BRACK

Mrs. Tesman!

GEORGE

Hedda, dear!

HEDDA

Let the women talk!

They exchange a significant look then Hedda rushes ahead
with Eileen, pulling her around a corner.

Eileen and Hedda run through the maze until they've
turned enough corners that they are good and lost.

Hedda pushes Eileen against the shrubbery, comes up
close. Eileen doesn't push her away but she rejects
Hedda's bids to get closer.

EILEEN

Hedda Gabler. Married. To George Tesman.

HEDDA

Yes... So it goes.

EILEEN

How could you throw yourself away?

HEDDA

What?

EILEEN

He's... so...

HEDDA

He's kind. He's an academic, like you.

EILEEN

He's white.

HEDDA

He's -

EILEEN

And thoroughly middle-class.

HEDDA

He has a good job. Or will -

EILEEN

Or might... When will you understand that anything you need in life you must build for yourself. What will you do when he gets bored? If he leaves you? Once he sees through you.

HEDDA

I think I'll be all right. He goes on and on about how he wants to take care of me and give me anything I want.

EILEEN

Like this ridiculous house. His ambition is deeper than his pockets.

HEDDA

The Judge helped a bit.

(off Eileen's look:)

He promised my father he'd drop in from time to time, help out here and there.

EILEEN

What a *ménage a trois*.

Hedda inches closer. She puts a hand on the satchel.

HEDDA

Don't you miss me?

EILEEN

Like an appendix.

HEDDA

You're happy, now, are you? All of a sudden.

EILEEN

Good company will do that.

Hedda snatches the satchel out of Eileen's hands, starts rifling through to retrieve the manuscript.

HEDDA

Just a quick look.

Eileen lunges at her, they tangle and wrestle until the sound of FOOTSTEPS approach. They spring apart just in time for George and Brack to appear.

HEDDA (CONT'D)

And the view from the Val D'Ampezzo was absolutely breath-taking.

(to George)

What was the name of those mountains, darling?

GEORGE

The Dolomites.

HEDDA

The Dolomites, of course.

Hedda and Eileen move on, Brack and George trailing them. They are far enough away that Hedda and Eileen, in lowered voices, can speak confidentially.

HEDDA (CONT'D)

I hear you've been cured of your vices.

EILEEN

You're never cured of your vices, you resist them.

HEDDA

And you resist?

EILEEN

Yes.

HEDDA

Every time?

EILEEN

Going on three months, three days.

HEDDA

I don't believe it.

EILEEN

Your beliefs are no business of mine.

HEDDA

The woman I knew couldn't stop when she started.

EILEEN

Which is why I never start.

HEDDA

You ruined your sister's wedding you were so drunk. And high, if I remember correctly.

EILEEN

Which is why I never start.

HEDDA

Has she talked to you since? Will she let you around the children yet?

EILEEN

Shut up, Mrs. Tesman.

HEDDA

Touchy.

EILEEN

No, just annoyed with myself that I ever confided in you. The power you had over me.

HEDDA

You think I had a power over you?

EILEEN

Yes, the kind intelligent women wield when they're catastrophically bored.

There's a fracas behind Eileen and Hedda. They turn to see David and other guests coming upon Brack and George aggressively.

DAVID

Are you a *real* judge?

The drunk guests laugh. Eileen is thoroughly unimpressed. She turns and spots an exit to the maze. She heads towards it. Hedda notices and follows.

HEDDA

Where are you going?

EILEEN

Where's Thea? I'm tired of running around this ridiculous hedge. I'm back in town less than a day and I'm already wrapped up in your frivolous life.

This hits Hedda hard.

EXT/INT. PATH FROM MAZE/ FRONT ENTRANCE/ FOYER -
CONTINUOUS

They exit the maze.

HEDDA

Frivolous? I have got everything I
wanted.

EILEEN

You waste your time scrambling about like
a roach trying to shape a man's destiny.
Shape your own.

HEDDA

Oh, please.

EILEEN

Work! Write. Do whatever, do something. I
left my mother's house when I was
seventeen years old -

HEDDA

When she found your lesbian sex book, yes
I know all about that.

EILEEN

You know nothing.

HEDDA

I've done my own research since...

EILEEN

In secret, I suppose? Where no one can
see or suspect... Keeping your reputation
clean.

HEDDA

Always.

EILEEN

Oh, Hedda. You could be so much more.
Look what I've done, you could do
anything.

HEDDA

Like... become a professor? Tell me, how
many women are at the university?
Teaching?

EILEEN

Two.

HEDDA

And they're both white, I presume?

Eileen stops and sighs. They've reached the door.

EILEEN

Whatever.

HEDDA

You're upset I couldn't choose you.

EILEEN

I was. Once. Not anymore and not for a long time.

HEDDA

Since Thea.

EILEEN

I know she's still here, I saw her broken umbrella near the door.

HEDDA

Terrible maids, always leaving things around.

EILEEN

Hedda.

HEDDA

She's upstairs.

INT. BACK STAIRCASE - NIGHT

Hedda leads Eileen up the stairs.

HEDDA

You're quite the duo.

EILEEN

She's brilliant. She's just been bullied into stupidity.

HEDDA

Oh, I believe that. Leaving her husband for a credit and a promise is quite something.

EILEEN

Brave.

HEDDA

Careful, you'll make me jealous.

Eileen is about to say something but she sees the two chains around her neck, the olive branch and the key.

EILEEN
You still like your guns.

HEDDA
Yes.

EILEEN
Why didn't you shoot me back then?

HEDDA
When you left?

EILEEN
When I left.

HEDDA
I was too close to avoid the splatter.

EILEEN
I really want to know.

HEDDA
(truthfully)
Because I knew you really wanted me to.

EILEEN
Of course.

HEDDA
What?

EILEEN
A coward at heart.

HEDDA
That wasn't my greatest act of cowardice.

EILEEN
Are you braver now?

Hedda doesn't respond.

EILEEN (CONT'D)
Where's Thea?

Hedda takes this in, expression unchanging.

HEDDA
Second door on the left.

Eileen leaves her standing on the landing, fuming.

She walks down the hall then catches her face in the hall mirror.

Hedda adjusts her hair for a beat. As she does some of the tension in her body fades away. Satisfied that she is perfect she goes downstairs.

INT. GREAT HALL - NIGHT

People have gathered in the great hall. Smoke billows in pockets, outside the window people are visible running around with sparklers.

Hedda watches George talk with the academics, a plan forming...

She stands near the window with Brack, he's watching her.

BRACK

You don't look glad of the company.

HEDDA

I am. I am. I just...I'm just thinking about when everyone leaves how -- It's a big house isn't it... And if I can't even entertain --

(beat)

I wonder whether I couldn't get Tesman interested in a political career.

BRACK

Ha! No, my dear, a political life is not for him. He's aggressively unsuited to it.

HEDDA

Maybe. But couldn't I ease him in that direction? Make him take it up?

BRACK

Why would you put him in a position to fail?

HEDDA

I've told you. Do you think it absolutely impossible for him to become, say, a cabinet minister?

BRACK

For him to become a cabinet minister he'd have to have money. A lot of money. What has got into you?

HEDDA

Is it completely hopeless? The professorship?

BRACK

...Perhaps. I'm as surprised as you by the new Lovborg. She's bold, she's well known, she's provocative and she's a woman...they like that these days. In moderation.

(beat)

Worry yourself about anything else. I'm sure you'll have some greater responsibility, something more pressing...

Brack looks down the length of her, looking pointedly at her stomach. Hedda downs her drink in response and grabs another one. She spots Professor Greenwood.

HEDDA

You will never see anything like that happen. Never.

BRACK

And why not?

HEDDA

I'd be a terrible mother.

A stolen confession. Brack is thrown slightly. This is not what they do.

BRACK

You made the safe choice. The only choice really for someone like you. Nothing you can do now but play the part and stay out of trouble.

Hedda storms away from Brack, who has a bemused smile on his face.

ON HEDDA:

Hedda goes over to a server with a tray.

HEDDA

Make sure Professor Greenwood never has an empty glass. That one over there.

The server nods, Hedda takes a drink off of the tray and ushers her away. She turns towards the room. Brack has already found someone else to amuse himself with. Tabitha Greenwood chats with Mrs. Dunbar.

Hedda's gaze settles briefly on a couple of men until she lands on David. He's amusing a couple of the wives. Perfect. She walks over to him.

He's just finishing his drink when she arrives by his side.

HEDDA (CONT'D)

Excuse me, ladies.

Hedda imposes herself to the degree that the women walk off wordlessly, leaving Hedda and David alone.

DAVID

I've heard so much about you, Mrs. Tesman.

HEDDA

Not enough to know not to call me that if we're to be friends.

DAVID

You want to be friends?

HEDDA

So what have you heard?

DAVID

That you're like fire.

HEDDA

Oh. You're a poet.

DAVID

Obvious?

HEDDA

Like everything else about you.

DAVID

Tell me about me.

HEDDA

I would but you're far too sober for that kind of honesty.

Hedda leads him to the bar which happens to be in Tabitha's direction. We watch David and Tabitha catch eyes, Hedda innocently stands by.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Eileen closes the door. She strides over to Thea and they kiss.

THEA

Where have you been where have you been?

They kiss again with a passion that is equal and mutually enthusiastic - unlike any encounter Hedda has experienced this evening.

EILEEN

I called at your house but they said you'd gone.

THEA

I had to leave.

EILEEN

Are you sure this is what you want?

THEA

Yes.

EILEEN

You still have time to go back. You can still go home.

THEA

No.

EILEEN

Is this enough?
(off Thea's look)
Me.

THEA

Yes.

EILEEN

You will be ruined.

THEA

I will be a ruined wife not a ruined woman.

Eileen smiles.

THEA (CONT'D)

And when we publish our book, no one will be able to say anything against us -

EILEEN
Well, they will -

THEA
But it won't matter.

Thea kisses Eileen again. There's a knock at the door.
Thea jumps away from Eileen.

EILEEN
It's okay. Everyone's pissed and won't
know their arse from their elbows.

Eileen walks over to the door. She's unpleasantly
surprised to see Hedda on the other side

HEDDA
Ah, what a pretty sight.

THEA
Hedda, you don't mind if I wear this
dress home do you? I'll have it cleaned
and sent back tomorrow.

HEDDA
You're not leaving, are you?

EILEEN
Best to resist temptation.

HEDDA
Oh, come on, Eileen, you're stronger than
that.

Thea stiffens, knowing this is a challenge to Eileen.

THEA
Let's go.

HEDDA
I just came up here to let you know,
Professor Greenwood wants to talk to you
about your book. The new one.

EILEEN
He asked for me?

Eileen is already leaving the room, toward the noise of
the party, Thea tugs on her arm.

HEDDA
And his defenses are down.

INT. BACK STAIRCASE - CONTINUOUS

Hedda pulls Eileen out of the room, away from Thea. Thea's grasp falls away but she follows them out and down the stairs.

GEORGE (O.S.)

Hedda!

George appears at the bottom of the stairs. The women look down at him.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

I need you downstairs.

HEDDA

Won't be a moment.

GEORGE

Now.

A pause. Eileen and Hedda share a fleeting look.

HEDDA

Of course.

George waits at the bottom of the stairs as Hedda, Eileen and Thea descend. George takes Hedda back to the foyer.

EILEEN

(to Thea)

Just give me half an hour then we can go.

THEA

Are you sure --

EILEEN

Don't be petulant. I'll be fine.

INT. FOYER - CONTINUOUS

Eileen strides towards the din of the party in the Great Hall, passing George and Hedda speaking with an academic. Thea trails Eileen then stops at Hedda's side.

THEA

Hedda, please...

HEDDA

Don't worry. This is all a part of the game. You should get some time with him as well. You did cowrite the book, after all.

Hedda begins walking to the Great Hall then stops when she realizes Thea is frozen in place.

HEDDA (CONT'D)

Are you staying there? You can't live on the fringes forever, Thea.

INT. GREAT HALL - NIGHT

Hedda is standing with Tesman, TWO ACADEMICS (DUNBAR and THOMPSON), and Brack. She is in trophy wife mode.

PROF. DUNBAR

The core thesis frames empathy as a disorder.

PROF. THOMPSON

Now that is very interesting. I feel I've come to similar conclusions but where have you gone with it?

PROF. DUNBAR

Empathy isn't necessary to human survival. It hinders it. But it triggers action.

PROF. THOMPSON

Mm, yes. Action as a salve for the emotion empathy creates.

And they continue on in this glib manner as:

Hedda looks around the party. She sees Thea and Lovborg in a corner, smiling with each other. She sees Professor Greenwood and some other academics red-faced and jovial. Greenwood in particular is pretty drunk. She turns and sees David across the room, ignoring his group and staring at - Hedda turns - Tabitha, who is looking back.

Hedda smiles. Then she catches Lovborg's eye again. Hedda looks caught for a brief moment before rearranging her features to a placid expression and turning back to the Glib Academics.

ON THEA AND EILEEN:

Thea looks at Eileen looking at Hedda looking at Tabitha.

THEA

What's funny?

EILEEN

Oh, Hedda is going to cause some trouble,
I can tell.

Thea can see that Eileen loves this. Thea does not.

EILEEN (CONT'D)

It's fine, just stay out of the path of
destruction.

Eileen watches Hedda pull George away from the Glib
Academics just as an opening appears with Professor
Greenwood. She lands in front of Professor Greenwood.
Even from a distance the frostiness between Greenwood and
George is clear. Hedda, however, is received amiably.

A server comes over with a tray of drinks. Thea shakes
her head "no." The server looks at Eileen expectantly.
She hesitates for a noticeable beat.

EILEEN (CONT'D)

No, thank you.

The server walks away.

THEA

When are you going to talk to him?

Eileen looks over at George, Professor Greenwood and
Hedda.

EILEEN

When he's done with Tesman.

Eyes still on Hedda, Eileen watches as she moves across
the room to Tabitha. She says something in her ear. They
walk toward the entrance of the room. Just as they are
about to disappear through the threshold Hedda turns back
and makes eye contact with David.

Eileen is amazed at how quickly the room has shifted,
flowing after Hedda's will, gliding towards a fate she's
designed.

THEA

Let's go. You came here to show him the
book, show him. He'll see you've changed.
They all will. There's nothing to be
afraid of.

EILEEN

I'm not afraid.

THEA

Come on.

Thea stands and heads in the direction of the library. Eileen follows. She passes David, who moves in the other direction, toward the exit (after Hedda and Tabitha).

As they pass each other:

EILEEN

Steady on. If you can.

They smile knowingly at each other and go their separate ways.

INT. LIBRARY - NIGHT

Thea sprays soda (just soda) into a glass at the bar and watches as Eileen and Professor Greenwood speak intensely near the fire place in the library. The manuscript is open and he's enthralled by what she's saying, what he's reading.

Hedda enters the room and sits on the arm of the chair next to Jane. No Tabitha, no David. She sees Eileen and Greenwood. Someone comes over with a tray of drinks.

HEDDA

Go and see if Dr. Lovborg and Professor Greenwood would like one. Over there in the corner.

A drink is offered to Eileen. She hesitates. She looks at Thea. She rejects the drink.

Hedda looks between the two women. The sheer anticipation of terror in Thea's eyes amuses Hedda. She chuckles to herself.

JANE

What are you up to?

HEDDA

Nothing, nothing at all.

JANE

I should leave before something terrible happens shouldn't I?

HEDDA

Don't be silly. The best time to leave a party is after something terrible happens but before the police come.

George and Brack stand to one side of the room. George watches Lovborg and Greenwood jealously. He's drunk.

He sees Hedda walk over to the duo. Thea, from across the room notices as well and goes in that direction.

INT. LIBRARY - SAME

Hedda and Thea come upon Eileen and Professor Greenwood at the same time. Hedda sits in a vacant chair. There is no space for Thea.

PROFESSOR GREENWOOD

Mrs. Tesman, such a marvelous party. An eclectic bunch.

HEDDA

I wanted to make sure we had fun.
Couldn't just talk about tombs, books and the bronze age all night could we?

Professor Greenwood laughs.

PROFESSOR GREENWOOD

I can't wait to read your book, Eileen.
It sounds fascinating.

EILEEN

Could get you an early copy...if you wanted to do an early review in the journal?

PROFESSOR GREENWOOD

I'll see if we can make space.

Thea beams. Eileen notices and smiles. Thea moves forward to introduce herself. Hedda boxes her out.

PROFESSOR GREENWOOD (CONT'D)

I ought to be going. Has anyone seen my wife?

HEDDA

I think she's in the maze.

PROFESSOR GREENWOOD

Well, good night ladies, Dr. Lovborg.

Greenwood rises and goes. Thea takes his seat.

EILEEN

Did you hear that?

THEA

Amazing. This is really happening.

EILEEN

I promised you it would.

Hedda gestures for the drinks. A server brings a tray and Hedda takes two glasses. She proffers it to Thea.

HEDDA

Drink something, you look thirsty.

THEA

I don't drink.

HEDDA

Eileen, here. One can't hurt.

THEA

She doesn't drink either.

Hedda looks at Eileen.

HEDDA

Never? I thought you were just cutting back.

EILEEN

That's not what I said.

HEDDA

And if I say you have to?

EILEEN

Then you'd be speaking.

HEDDA

You wouldn't do as I say?

EILEEN

Not where that is concerned, no.

HEDDA

I think you should. This is ridiculous. It's silly.

EILEEN

Oh, really?

HEDDA

It's okay for Thea but not for you.

EILEEN

What do you mean?

Hedda looks over to Brack and George who engage a group of ACADEMICS.

HEDDA

You can write your books with them, and teach with them at the university and you might even be able to get jobs alongside them but they'll never really respect you if they think you can't do it like the boys do.

THEA

Hedda, please.

HEDDA

You saw Professor Greenwood's face earlier when you asked for a soft drink. Like a soft woman.

EILEEN

What did you see?

HEDDA

Contempt.

EILEEN

I'm used to contempt.

HEDDA

Contempt for your extracurricular interests, yes. But your mind, your character...

EILEEN

He can think what he likes.

HEDDA

A woman of principle.

(to Thea)

What did I tell you earlier? She'll be fine. No need to be so upset.

EILEEN

Upset?

THEA

Hedda!

Hedda looks at her in mock confusion.

HEDDA

See for yourself, this state of mortal panic.

Eileen takes the drinks from Hedda's hands and places them on the table. She wants her undivided attention.

EILEEN

Explain what you mean.

HEDDA

Don't get too excited, that loathsome judge is watching you.

EILEEN

In mortal panic on my account?

HEDDA

Oh relax, Eileen, she only asked that Tesman look after you at the university.

EILEEN

Look after me?

HEDDA

Make sure you stay out of trouble.

THEA

Hedda, please...

EILEEN

Like a baby sitter?

HEDDA

I mean, I guess -

THEA

HEDDA (CONT'D)

No!

- Sort of.

THEA (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

HEDDA

Me?

EILEEN

(to Thea)

How much more must I do? After everything we've been through you run here and involve my colleague in my business? He must think -

Eileen turns to look to the corner of academics. George Tesman is looking right at her. Hedda raises her glass. George raises his.

HEDDA
From the academics to the gossiping
ladies in the corner.

Eileen looks at George then Thea.

HEDDA (CONT'D)
(low; to Eileen)
A coward at heart.

It's done. Eileen takes the glass from the table, raises
it to George -

EILEEN
To your health!

Eileen downs the glass in one. Thea's world has ended.
Eileen's face contorts into one of remembrance. Hedda
watches her wickedly.

THEA
Eileen...

Eileen takes another drink from the tray.

EILEEN
Please call me Dr. Lovborg when we are
around my colleagues.
(turning to Hedda)
I think I'll go and talk to your husband,
Mrs. Tesman.

Eileen stands and walks over to the academics. They all
welcome her heartily. She clinks glasses with a few.

THEA
Why are you like this?

HEDDA
You must know who she is by now.

They watch Eileen, holding court with the men.

THEA
Oh, god...

HEDDA
She'll be in control. You'll see.

THEA
I know who you are. You don't want her in
control. I'm not stupid, Hedda.

Hedda grabs Thea's arm tightly. She leans in close. From the outside it looks like two intimate friends talking familiarly.

HEDDA

You're not stupid at all. You're so smart. So brave... Perhaps I should burn off your hair after all.

THEA

Let go of me. Please.

HEDDA

If you ruin this for her, she'll never forgive you.

Thea turns to Eileen, still in Hedda's grasp. Eileen finishes her second drink. Her eyes begin to dart around the room until they find the drink tray.

Thea pulls herself from a smiling Hedda, her arm is red where Hedda grabbed her. She walks out.

And now Hedda is alone, surveying her guests. Slowly cataloguing, remembering, finding weaknesses. Slowly. Slowly.

And now Hedda is bored.

INT. LIBRARY - CONTINUOUS

Hedda looks at the manuscript, still tight in Eileen's hands as she crosses to the bar. She looks at Professor Greenwood, wandering out into the conservatory. She moves to Jane.

HEDDA

(whisper)

Want to go for a swim?

JANE

Yes!

HEDDA

Should we all go?

JANE

(to room:)

Everyone! We're going for a swim! Come on!

PROFESSOR JAMES

I don't have my trunks.

BOHEMIAN MAN
You don't need them.

BRACK
I think we'll stay in, but maybe we'll
catch you up.

Thea strides over to Eileen and takes her arm.

THEA
Dr. Lovborg, may I borrow you?

She doesn't allow Eileen to easily leave her grasp. The
men continue on to the library.

EILEEN
What?

THEA
We're leaving.

Hedda butts in. Thea is exasperated.

THEA (CONT'D)
Not now, please.

HEDDA
Come to the lake. Have some fun Thea. Let
your hair down.

Thea smacks Hedda's hand away.

HEDDA (CONT'D)
What are you so afraid of -

EILEEN
Come on, my love.

Thea doesn't move.

EILEEN (CONT'D)
I haven't had fun in months. I've done
everything right. Everything you've
wanted and I think I've earned tonight.
Okay?

Eileen leads Thea out of the room.

OMITTED

EXT. FIELD NEAR LAKE - NIGHT

About fifteen members of the party trot over to the lake. Some begin to strip on the way over. Hedda is grinning wide along side Jane.

HEDDA

I have another surprise.

Before Jane can inquire a seven-foot tall bonfire erupts into flames yards from the lake. The guests scream and cheer, running towards the burning mass -- their bodies silhouetted against the orange glow.

OMITTED

EXT. BONFIRE - NIGHT

The party dances around the fire, swigging from bottles of liquor they've taken from the house, stripping down, hollering.

Just outside of the fire's light, we see the TWO SERVANTS that lit the bonfire. TWO OTHERS stand near the lake with towels. They're exhausted and cold.

Some of the guests start running to the lake. Hedda turns to Eileen.

HEDDA

Ready for a swim?

EILEEN

You're getting in?

HEDDA

Aren't you?

Eileen drops her satchel near a bush and starts to unbutton her coat. Thea watches Eileen miserably.

HEDDA (CONT'D)

Thea, come on.

THEA

I'm fine here near the fire thank you.

HEDDA

If you don't bend you'll break.

EILEEN

Don't be such a bore.

THEA

I'm not a bore. It's cold.

Jane comes upon them, undressing.

HEDDA

Jane, will you tell her to get the stick out of her ass and get in the lake please?

JANE

Thea, get that stick out of your ass and get in the lake please.

HEDDA

(cajoling)

Thea... school friend.

Other members of the party begin to coo "Thea" "come on" to her until it's a chorus of voices echoing into the night.

JANE

Thea! Thea!

Jane starts a chant that is taken up quickly. It's mortifying, especially when members of the party start howling and beating their chests while running around the fire yelling Thea's name. Hedda begins to run as well, pulling Eileen with her.

EVERYONE

THEA! THEA!

As Hedda runs she keeps her eye on the satchel. People have started dropping their clothes near it. Hedda takes off her coat and on the next revolution tosses it in a care free manner that places it almost completely atop the satchel.

Eileen is having a blast, Hedda can't stop laughing, Thea is beginning to smile...almost. Her hand even twitches toward her jacket's belt but then two men, the bohemian man and another guest, come upon her.

The bohemian man lifts Thea off her feet as the other guest tears her jacket off of her.

THEA

Eileen!

A seam rips audibly, but the bohemian man continues to pull until Thea is wriggling in their arms in just her dress. Those who witness laugh and cheer the men on.

EVERYONE

THEA! THEA!

Eileen reaches Thea just as she's heaved over the bohemian man's shoulder. She reaches out for Eileen who grabs her arms, pulling her but to no avail.

EILEEN

Sorry, I'm so sorry.

THEA

Stop laughing! It's not --

MEN

Thea! Thea!

Eileen and Thea are holding onto each other hard. Together they realize they're no match for these men but they cling to each other for as long as they can, until Thea is wrenched from Eileen's grasp and carried to the lake.

Hedda comes to Eileen's side as they watch the group disappear into the dark. After a beat there's a big SPLASH and a SHRIEK.

THEA (O.S.)

Fuck! Fucking freezing!

HEDDA

Oh, dear.

EILEEN

Don't.

Hedda's concession is silence. Now it's quieter and the fire is warm and the light plays on Eileen's face in such a way that she is every bit the creature that Hedda is.

HEDDA

Hi.

EILEEN

Hi.

HEDDA

You said you had to see me.

EILEEN

Yes. I -- Oh no! Look at you!

Hedda turns to see Thea trudging back toward the bonfire soaked from head to toe. She stops in front of Hedda.

THEA
(dry)
Sorry about your dress.

Eileen laughs, then Hedda, then Thea can't help but smile, faint and stolen.

They look at each other. The real *ménage-a-trois*.

HEDDA
You poor thing.

Hedda waves over a servant who comes over with a pile of towels.

HEDDA (CONT'D)
Come.

Eileen grabs a towel as well and together they dry Thea off.

Hedda is behind her, toweling off her hair. Eileen is at her front, delicately patting her face dry. Thea's lips part.

EILEEN
(to Thea)
Kiss me.

THEA
Eileen...

EILEEN
What? Come here.

HEDDA
Go on, kiss her, Thea.

Thea looks at the people on the other side of the fire, who are paying them no mind.

THEA
It's just...

She doesn't say, she doesn't move towards Eileen.

HEDDA
No one cares, look.

Hedda presses into Thea as she moves in.

Hedda kisses Eileen, making a bit of a show of it. Thea stands there, sandwiched in between them.

THEA
For fuck's sake.

Thea pushes away from them and stalks toward the house.
Hedda laughs.

HEDDA
Thea, stop! Don't make a thing of it.

EILEEN
Thea! Wait! Oh, come on, Thea!

HEDDA
She's fine. Just let her cool down.

EILEEN
She's going to make me pay for that in the morning.

HEDDA
Can I watch?

EILEEN
You just do whatever you want don't you?

HEDDA
Of course. Otherwise what would be the point? Let's go.

Hedda pulls Eileen towards the lake. She turns over her shoulder and makes note of where the satchel lays, partially hidden under her coat.

INT. GREAT HALL - NIGHT

The guests dance and revel.

In one corner A WOMAN shows off an impressive skill, with a coupe balanced on her forehead she leans back while a MAN pours champagne into it. Another WOMAN leans forward, drinking from the glass still perched on the woman's head.

George watches with a mix of fear, envy and desire. He turns to Brack, who is, of course, nonplussed.

GEORGE
You'll let me know when this gets out of hand?

BRACK
Certain liberties come with power, George, enjoy them.

EXT. THE MAZE - NIGHT

Professor Greenwood is lost in the maze.

EXT. THE MAZE - NIGHT

Professor Greenwood wanders around some corners and peaks into a passage way.

Two people are having sex against the hedge.

PROFESSOR GREENWOOD
(chuckling)
Oh dear, terribly sorry!

Greenwood moves (rather slowly) past the corridor then stops. That dress looked familiar... He takes a step back and sees a MALE FIGURE (we may recognize as David) and MRS. GREENWOOD mid-coitus.

PROFESSOR GREENWOOD (CONT'D)
TABITHA!

David and Mrs. Greenwood fly apart. David runs.

MRS. GREENWOOD
Reginald!

Professor Greenwood storms over.

PROFESSOR GREENWOOD
What is the meaning of this! I'll kill
him!

Tabitha Greenwood screams and throws herself onto her husband, stopping him from pursuing David.

PROFESSOR GREENWOOD (CONT'D)
Who was that? Who was that man?

EXT. TESMAN ESTATE GROUNDS - NIGHT

David is running, shirt open, jacket in hand, across the grounds towards the house.

OMITTED

EXT. BONFIRE - NIGHT

Hedda, Jane and a couple other swimmers are trudging up to the bonfire wet from swimming. Hedda has her eye on the manuscript.

Just then, screams from the maze get everyone's attention. They see a man (David) running across the lawn. Laughs and cheers from those that know him. They're used to his antics.

JANE

Come on! We can't miss this.

They quickly grab their clothes up and follow the drama of David and the Greenwoods.

Hedda looks behind her to Eileen stepping out of the lake looking for her dress. The bonfire group led by Jane are looking toward the house, on the other side of the fire.

This is her window.

Hedda sees the manuscript peaking out of the satchel. She bundles her clothing over it and slips it out. Some other belongings come spilling out of the bag but she kicks them to the side, into the fire, and covers the manuscript with her coat.

Eileen comes over and puts on her dress. She's drunker than she seemed before. She picks up her satchel and walks back to the house. Hedda chucks the manuscript into the bushes near the lake then trails after her.

INT. GREAT HALL / CONSERVATORY - NIGHT

David enters through the conservatory, now dressed, smoothing his hair down and tucking his shirt in. He joins Brack, George and Thompson, who are confused by his harassed manner.

HEDDA (O.S.)

Who wants to dance?

The men turn to see Hedda and some of the crew entering with wet hair and damp clothes. Eileen is nowhere to be seen.

Hedda strides into the Great Hall and over to the band.

HEDDA (CONT'D)

Music!

The party filters into the Great Hall as the band picks up into *GOPHER MAMBO*.

Hedda looks out of the window and waits and sure enough, moments later, Professor Greenwood comes storming out of the maze and towards the house, his wife chasing after him.

Hedda moves to another window to get a better angle on a second group coming towards the house. Eileen, Jane, Professor James and bohemian man.

She walks back to the entrance of the conservatory.

PROFESSOR GREENWOOD (O.S.)
WHO WAS FUCKING MY WIFE?

Professor Greenwood has appeared at the door brandishing HIS GUN. A few screams, some people scatter.

David makes himself small.

GEORGE
Professor Greenwood! What are you doing?!

BRACK
Put that away before you do something you regret.

PROFESSOR GREENWOOD
I'm going to shoot who ever is sleeping with my wife!

HEDDA
Well you're going to run out of bullets!

A titter of laughter, half-nervous, half-genuinely amused.

EXT. CONSERVATORY - SAME

Mrs. Greenwood presses herself against the wall, listening in terror. Eileen comes upon her with Jane, Professor James and the bohemian man. She shushes them and they creep inside the conservatory to see what's going on.

INT. CONSERVATORY - SAME

Hedda walks over to Professor Greenwood.

HEDDA
What sort of gun is that?

PROFESSOR GREENWOOD
What does that matter?

HEDDA
You are what you shoot, my father would say.

Hedda surveys the gun.

HEDDA (CONT'D)
Looks like a Webley to me.

PROFESSOR GREENWOOD
It is.

HEDDA
You know I would shoot him too.

GEORGE
Hedda!

HEDDA
But just now, with you in this state, it would be an ugly business and I don't like ugly things.

Hedda has her hand on the gun.

HEDDA (CONT'D)
And if you put this down right now, all will be forgotten and forgiven. Yes, Brack?

BRACK
No crime has been committed yet. Yet.

Professor Greenwood surveys the crowd, he looks at everyone. He sees David averting his eyes. David dares to look up. Professor Greenwood rages.

PROFESSOR GREENWOOD
You!

He raises the gun and -

JANE JUMPS ONTO HIS BACK.

The gun goes off.

POW!

Everyone screams then looks around for who or what the bullet has struck. Jane is on top of Professor Greenwood still, his gun loosened from his grip.

Hedda looks up, the rope holding up the chandelier is becoming untethered slowly. Other people find the subject of Hedda's gaze. Titters of "dear god" and "move, move!" ring out.

Everyone rushes to the edges of the room and then...

CRASH!

The chandelier drops to the center of the room, glass goes flying.

Everyone SCREAMS.

INT. BELOW STAIRS KITCHEN - NIGHT

BERTIE sits at a small wooden kitchen table smoking a cigarette while a flurry of activity happens behind her. Steam rising, water splashing, cleaning being done, heavy footsteps of women carrying heavy pots and pans. Many MEN and WOMEN change out of serving clothes and into their own. We hold on her though, throughout.

BERTIE

Did you count the silver?

JOAN (O.S.)

Yes. All there.

BERTIE

Good.

CRASH! SCREAMS. Bertie rolls her eyes.

BERTIE (CONT'D)

Jesus these people. Just finished the building work, first day back and they're dead set on destroying the place.

JOAN (O.S.)

Such a nice house too.

BERTIE

This place as nice as yours?

JOAN (O.S.)

No. But I think my folk have a bit more money.

BERTIE

If they have any money they'll have more than these two. This house is heading straight back to the bank. Maybe this is their last hurrah before they shut half of it down and let tours come through.

JOAN (O.S.)

Tours?! Through your own house?

BERTIE

Open to the public. It was all part of the deal, apparently. They get a grant for renovations, do the upkeep, they keep it for very, very little. Well, little for their lot, not us. Practically in ruins before they came along. Don't make much sense to me but the mistress was desperate for it apparently. Can't even fill the servants quarters. These girls are all hired for the night. I'm the only staff they've got and they got me from his aunt. Nice lady but spoils her nephew. Tesman. I've got a son like him, obsessed with books, started teaching and has never been happier. Not like Tesman, the more he gets the more he wants. And now he's got married... Poor fucker.

Bertie hoots with a smoker's laugh.

INT. CONSERVATORY - NIGHT

In the dark of the conservatory, a HAND picks up Greenwood's gun.

EILEEN (PRE-LAP)

I've been looking for you... Hedda Gabler.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Hedda sits at her vanity. Eileen is at the door.

EILEEN

That was quite the spectacle. Satisfied?

Hedda has no response.

EILEEN (CONT'D)

Come here.

Hedda acquiesces, sitting on the floor below her.

HEDDA

What?

EILEEN

I just want to look at you.

Hedda lets her and, somehow, under Eileen's unsteady, drunken gaze, Hedda is cracked open.

HEDDA

Eileen -

EILEEN

Why did you make me drink, Hedda?

HEDDA

I wanted to talk to you.

EILEEN

Why didn't you just?

HEDDA

You weren't being yourself.

EILEEN

I changed that's all.

HEDDA

People don't change.

EILEEN

Apparently.

Eileen touches Hedda's face, her neck...she sees the necklace. She meets Hedda's eyes, smiles.

EILEEN (CONT'D)

For me?

Hedda looks shy. Doesn't answer right away. Then:

HEDDA

Do you think that you - you and I if I'd said yes...

EILEEN

You never would have.

HEDDA

A coward at heart.

EILEEN

Yes.

HEDDA

But do you think -

EILEEN

I've tried not to think about you, Hedda -

HEDDA

But if I had stayed, things would have been different? I would have, could have been, your partner in all of this -

EILEEN

No.

HEDDA

Could have done what you said, build something, with you. Could have been -

EILEEN

Happy.

Hedda stops. Exactly that.

EILEEN (CONT'D)

I used to think I could never be happy. I thought being miserable was what I deserved, what I was owed for a vile life. I've since learned that I'm not that way at all.

(beat)

But you, you can never be happy. I think you were right about that.

HEDDA

(small)

I can. But not like this, not like this.

EILEEN

You have everything.

HEDDA

I have nothing.

EILEEN

You feel nothing.

HEDDA

I love you.

EILEEN

We were mad together. I would have been dead, by your hand or mine, if I'd stayed.

HEDDA

Why did you come here?

EILEEN

To make sure I didn't love you.

Hedda, grasping onto some vague hope.

HEDDA

And?

EILEEN

I don't.

The words shatter against the walls of Hedda's brain. THE SOUND of the LAKE rises, *slowly, slowly.*

EILEEN (CONT'D)

Thea left her life for me, she made me better, she showed me how to be whole. I love her. I had to be sure I had all of myself to give.

HEDDA

You have it all worked out then.

Hedda stands.

EILEEN

Don't be cross.

HEDDA

You should go to her. But -

EILEEN

Your "buts" have sharp edges.

HEDDA

But first, you finish what you started. Go into the library, talk to your colleagues. You've played with the girls, go be with the boys.

EILEEN

I drank too much.

HEDDA

You're fine. Come here.

Eileen stands slowly then makes her way to Hedda. Her hair still drips water onto the thin white, fabric of her dress. Hedda clearly sees but does nothing. She cleans up the makeup underneath Eileen's eyes.

HEDDA (CONT'D)

There. Perfect. Go.

(a confidential whisper)

You're one of them.

Eileen nods.

EILEEN

Thea doesn't understand that.

HEDDA

She will.

Hedda gently pushes Eileen towards the door.

EILEEN

You're really not upset?

Hedda smiles a small smile then leans into Eileen. They look at each other, unsure at first, then Eileen meets her. They kiss -- a chaste, sweet thing. A good bye.

OMITTED

INT. LIBRARY - NIGHT

Maids close the tall wooden doors that bisect the Great Hall. On one side is the main area connected to the conservatory and on the other, a small, more intimate space for the academics - exclusive.

Eileen enters the library from the foyer, just as Thea comes to the closing doors. Eileen gives her a warning shake of the head and Thea stops, the doors closing in her face.

Inside the library, the conversation stops when the men catch a glimpse of Eileen. George sees her chest.

GEORGE

Eileen -

Brack grabs his arm and shakes his head. He loves the view.

Eileen goes over to the bar and makes herself another drink.

EILEEN
Anybody want anything?

BRACK
An old fashioned.

PROF. DUNBAR
Same for me!

EILEEN
Three gin martinis, got it!

They laugh. Eileen mixes the drinks and slowly the conversation starts again even as some of the men still stare at the damp spot on her dress left by her wet underwear.

BRACK
What's with that girl?

EILEEN
What girl?

BRACK
Thea.

EILEEN
We worked on the book together.

BRACK
Is that all?

Eileen smiles and hands the drinks to Brack and the other man.

EILEEN
No.

BRACK
Is she your muse?

EILEEN
Muse... Muse is a man's word. For women they learn from - occasionally steal from - and don't wish to credit but absolutely want to fuck - or, I suppose, are fucking.

BRACK
Is that in the dictionary?

EILEEN
Merriam-Websters.

GEORGE
Is it in your book?

PROF. THOMPSON
What else is in your book?

PROF. DUNBAR
How'd you come up with it?

EILEEN
Well -

She loves holding court and must be positioned as such.

EILEEN (CONT'D)
I knew I had to write this book after a quite elucidating conversation with a young man at a bar. I went with a friend of mine, you might have met her here, Diana, and it was late, just before closing and we thought, "ah, why not? Just one more?"

EILEEN (CONT'D)
She likes a tableau, a bit of a show, so we go to Cissy's.

A murmur through the crowd.

EILEEN (CONT'D)
Oh don't be so prudish. We go in, grab a seat at the bar, I light a cigarette, Diana gets her whiskey and we have a nice chat with the men tending. There were two of them. Tall - good - weak chins - bad - but typical of their type.

GEORGE
What type is that?

EILEEN
The forgotten bastard children of lords.

Laughter.

EILEEN (CONT'D)
We have a bit of a flirt. Obviously with me it's not going anywhere and after a while they started to bore us so we retired to a table.

PROF. THOMPSON(O.S.)
Get to the fucking, Eileen!

EILEEN

So then! We're sitting there, Diana is complaining about her dull husband, Richard, who is dull and vile and I'm listening as much as one who has already decided not to waste one's days trying to please a man can.

An appreciative murmur at this directed jab.

EILEEN (CONT'D)

Then my weak-chinned bartender comes over, slides into the booth next to me and says "hello, I think you're beautiful, can I smell your feet?"

The men can not get enough of this. They laugh raucously. Even Brack is taken in at this point.

BRACK

What'd you say?

EILEEN

I said "whatever for?"

BRACK

Uh huh?

EILEEN

He says, "it's my thing. I like it. Don't be shy."

GEORGE

His thing.

BRACK

So did you let him?

Eileen smiles, pauses, waiting for everyone to lean in. They do.

EILEEN

Of course not you gang of perverts. I told him I prefer my sexual encounters to be mutual and in private.

Eileen downs the rest of her drink.

GEORGE

That was sexual?

EILEEN

Well, that's what I realized. Most people, maybe all people have "a thing" that they like, that is different, that is new maybe? And as some hidden "things" have become normalized, I wonder why shouldn't things that are hidden in the now becoming normal in the future?

BRACK

We'll be smelling feet and having a toss in ten years time.

EILEEN

Oh who knows what you get up to, Brack. I'm certain it's far more scandalous.

PROF. THOMPSON

What are some of these new things?

EILEEN

You'll have to buy the book. Or come to one of my lectures at the university.

George stiffens.

EILEEN (CONT'D)

But I promise I'll give your wives a copy of the book for free.

A hoot and a cheer. Eileen is teetering close to the edge but she is on her game.

INT. GREAT HALL - SAME

Thea paces nervously in front of the door, the sound of laughter comes through. She resists the urge to press her ear to it. Hedda watches Thea from the entrance to the conservatory. Around her, people continue to dance and booze.

HEDDA

Do you resent fun, you miserable creature?

Hedda is hard and cruel again. Thea turns around to face her, a mix of anger and defiance that throws Hedda momentarily. But she convinces herself she has the upper hand and forges on.

HEDDA (CONT'D)

If you wish to leave, leave. No use waiting on her like a handmaid.

THEA

This is going too far. I'm worried.

HEDDA

Don't do that. Worrying will make you ugly.

THEA

I won't leave without her.

HEDDA

(exasperated)

Okay. Then go in and get her.

The raucous laughter of the men filters out. Thea doesn't move.

HEDDA (CONT'D)

This is the Lovborg they know and want and will hire and will publish... with your name on the cover, just below hers. They don't know the simpering, small, sober Lovborg that you've brought to heel. And they don't want to know her. And you know why? She's no fucking fun.

More laughter from inside.

HEDDA (CONT'D)

But go on, Thea. You know best. Ruin your best chance at freedom.

Thea stares into Hedda's eyes, into the eyes of uncomfortable truth. Hedda watches her words work their way into Thea's marrow.

HEDDA (CONT'D)

Well? Is it her you love or the book?

THEA

I hope you choke.

Thea pushes past Hedda. Hedda laughs and roams toward the rest of the party.

We FOLLOW her and pickup Jane leading a WOMAN around the drunken revelers in the great hall, through the foyer and into the empty dining room. They close the door behind them.

A maid comes from the back holding a broom and dust pan.
She crosses into -

INT. GREAT HALL / CONSERVATORY - CONTINUOUS

We dolly in after her, she joins up with three other maids sweeping up the glass around the chandelier as best they can.

The party shows no signs of dying down. Many people stand and sit around, smoking, talking, aching for oblivion. Many others dance to the music.

A WOMAN, with a beautiful voice sings *TEACH ME, TONIGHT* earnestly and drunkenly.

We cut between the various guests as the song reveals the bizarreness of the gathering.

- Dr. and Mrs. Greenwood are among the dancers.

- Professor James is blatantly flirting with the bohemian man from dinner.

- A dancer is demonstrating her flexibility for a small group of interested folks.

- A young FRENCHMAN takes a cigarette out of another man's mouth and uses the tobacco to roll a spliff for him and his GIRLFRIEND.

No one pays any attention to the help unless it's to admire a backside or two.

INT. HALLWAY BY KITCHEN / CONSERVATORY

Hedda creeps across the grounds to the still burning, though smaller, bonfire.

EXT. BONFIRE - NIGHT

Hedda pulls the manuscript from under the bushes.

INT. MEZZANINE OFFICE - NIGHT

Hedda hides the manuscript with the gun box and locks the drawer.

INT. LIBRARY - NIGHT

Later in the evening. Around 5am. Everyone is smashed. Eileen cradles yet another drink. They speak in a corner. Eileen is blackout.

EILEEN

Don't worry so much, George. It hasn't been decided yet and if I do get it there are many, many universities that would have you. I'm certain of it.

GEORGE

I need the money, Eileen. I'm married -

EILEEN

To Hedda Gabler. Yes, you do need the money.

GEORGE

Hedda Tesman.

EILEEN

I keep forgetting.

George picks up on Eileen's amusement. Eileen speaks more loudly, people begin to overhear.

EILEEN (CONT'D)

Where is your wife anyway? I've never known her to miss the company of rowdy men.

GEORGE

You don't know her very well then.

EILEEN

I've known Hedda Gabler since she was a child parading around with her father on their prize horses. The General and Hedda. They'd go galloping past my house every Sunday. She was in that long black riding outfit - you know the one. With the feather in her hat. My mother, sour old cow, would lean over to me and say "look at that bastard making a show of herself!"

GEORGE

Eileen.

Eileen stands.

EILEEN

What else should we do with the evening boys? The night is still young and I am very, very thirsty.

Eileen begins to walk but almost topples over. She regains her balance on a PROFESSOR. He helps her up and people exchange looks. The eyes on her triggers Eileen.

EILEEN (CONT'D)

What do you want another story?

PROF. DUNBAR

If you get your kit off.

BRACK

Show us something from the new book.

PROF. DUNBAR

Or the old one, I'm not fussed.

VOICE (O.S.)

Slag.

The voice seems to come from nowhere but Eileen hurls her glass in the direction of THOMPSON. He ducks it but it shatters against the wall and the glass shards strike his face. He bleeds.

PROF. THOMPSON

Cunt.

EILEEN

What did you say?!

BRACK

(to Dunbar)

You deserved that.

George grabs Eileen and pulls her out of the room, she fights against him.

GEORGE

Enough!

INT. ANTEROOM - NIGHT

Eileen fights against George. He pins her to a mirror in the hall.

EILEEN

Get off me!

GEORGE

Calm down! You're making a fool of yourself.

EILEEN

Who cares? I'll still get the job. I'll have everything I want and you'll just have Hedda Gabler running around doing whatever and whomever she pleases.

GEORGE

Hedda Tesman loves me.

EILEEN

Hedda Gabler doesn't love anyone but herself and Hedda Tesman doesn't exist.

George looks as though he may be distraught or angry or devastated. He spies a look at himself in the mirror, not a pretty sight. He lets Eileen go.

EILEEN (CONT'D)

Did you enjoy that?

GEORGE

How do you restrain a woman like her? How can you hold her?

EILEEN

With rope. Tesman, you're a lucky man. She's a prize, to be sure, but she is not a horse, she can not be broken in.

GEORGE

Sometimes I think I should take a riding crop to her.

EILEEN

She might enjoy it.
(off of his look)
Another "thing" from my book.

GEORGE

Your fucking book.

Eileen looks shocked. Then she laughs.

EILEEN

I don't think I've ever heard you curse before.

GEORGE

Can I see it?

Eileen stumbles slightly as she stares at him.

EILEEN

Okay.

Eileen moves then stops.

EILEEN (CONT'D)

Where's my bag?

INT. GREAT HALL - NIGHT

Eileen storms through the Great Hall. Glass crunches under foot.

Her eyes rove madly as she scans the remaining guests. She bursts into the conservatory.

INT. CONSERVATORY - CONTINUOUS

She sees her bag at David's feet. She dives for it and opens it up with a flood of relief. Until she sees that the book inside is not her book.

Eileen looks at David.

EILEEN

Where is it?

DAVID

What?

EILEEN

Were you reading it again?

DAVID

I don't -

EILEEN

The book, you imbecile!

She smacks him.

EILEEN (CONT'D)

Where is it?! Give it back!

JANE

What are you doing?

DAVID

Stop! Stop!

They tussle. George tries to restrain David, he elbows him in the face. The academics respond to the fracas and rush over. Jane tries to pull Eileen away from David but she keeps screaming her accusation.

George returns a hit to David. Now they're fighting. Brack grabs at David. David swings. Brack dodges and it lands on Eileen.

A stunned silence.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Oh god, I'm so sorry but Jesus what are you doing?

EILEEN

Where is it!

DAVID

WHAT?

EILEEN

The manuscript!

DAVID

Eileen, I have no idea what you're talking about.

EILEEN

You filthy bitch I know you've taken it.

Eileen looks around. She's another level down in her personal hell.

EILEEN (CONT'D)

We are not leaving this house until it's found.

JANE

I love a scavenger hunt.

INT. TESMAN HOME - NIGHT

The party has now been divided into groups of two. They rove around the rooms of the house looking for the manuscript.

INT. GREAT HALL - MEZZANINE - NIGHT

Hedda smokes alone in a darkened corned of the Juliet balcony, looking down on the conservatory.

EXT. THE MAZE - SAME

Half of the party is outside in the maze, looking, pretending to look or blatantly just continuing the party outside. Their lanterns and torches glow in the night.

EXT. LAKE / BONFIRE - NIGHT

The fire is still going. Eileen looks around the bank desperately. Behind her George, Brack and two other academics help look with lanterns.

Eileen is covered in mud by the time she discovers a loose page under a bush. George sees, they both look at the lake.

GEORGE

Oh, Eileen...

Eileen moves toward the water, ready to dive in.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Don't!

George, Brack and the two academics are on her quickly. She fights against them bitterly as she tries to go into the lake and search for her book.

EILEEN

No!

Eileen fights but to no avail. Again, she is no match for the strength of men.

BRACK

It's gone, Eileen! It's done!

Eileen looks up at them all looking down at her.

She gets up and staggers away. They trail her to the bonfire.

GEORGE

Wait. Eileen!

BRACK

Leave her.

Brack notices something shiny at the edge of the bonfire remnants. He stoops down to see a tin of mints and the smoldered remnants of a small notepad. He says nothing.

OMITTED

OMITTED

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Eileen enters the bedroom to Thea rifling through Hedda's things.

EILEEN
I've been looking for you every --

THEA
Close the door.

Eileen does as she's told.

EILEEN
Thea --

THEA
Don't look at me like that. I'm... I know what I'm doing. I'm going to end her reign of fucking... I'm just looking for some... something... some weapon to use against that woman.

EILEEN
You can't kill her, I've tried.

THEA
I mean, something incriminating, something...

Thea stops, staring at the absolute state Eileen is in.

THEA (CONT'D)
What's happened?

EILEEN
I've ruined you.

THEA
What have you done?

EILEEN
You should pretend you never met me. Don't you wish it sometimes?

THEA
I can't do that. You know I can't.

EILEEN
You have to.

THEA
No.

EILEEN
I've lost it.

THEA
What?

EILEEN
The manuscript, it's gone.

THEA
No, no, Eileen. It must be here
somewhere.

EILEEN
I've looked everywhere. I -

THEA
No, no, it must -

EILEEN
It's gone! GONE! Bottom of the lake...

Thea is dumbfounded. Eileen looks far-away.

THEA
The lake, Eileen?

Eileen wants to speak but can't.

THEA (CONT'D)
No matter what I do you're always going
to be on this path.

EILEEN
It's too hard.

THEA
Why are you like this?

EILEEN
Do you love me?

THEA
Only as much as you love me.

EILEEN
Can that be enough for you?

THEA

No.

We move away from them slowly towards the door.

EILEEN

You don't mean that -

THEA

You want more than I can give. More than anyone has the right to ask for.

EILEEN

Thea, please, please...

THEA

Do what you want, doesn't involve me anymore.

EILEEN

Thea.

THEA

I mean it.

She does.

EILEEN

Fine. Go. I don't need you. Go on.
Fucking pathetic housewife -

THEA

Oh, there's the old Eileen.
Miserable and deluded just
where you're comfortable,
right where you're happy.

EILEEN (CONT'D)

Use me then fuck off - I
never needed you -

THEA (CONT'D)

You were a mess, a mess,
without me Eileen! A
fucking child -

EILEEN (CONT'D)

Take what you wanted didn't
you and now you -

THEA (CONT'D)

You take what you want -

EILEEN (CONT'D)

Use me so you can feel like
your life means something -

THEA (CONT'D)

I know what I am -

EILEEN (CONT'D)

Your life means nothing.

THEA (CONT'D)

I'm going to find my book. And it will be
published with my name on the cover right
next to yours. And then none of this will
have mattered.

The door to the room is open just a crack and standing just outside is a figure, listening to every word.

INT. BACK STAIRCASE - SAME

Hedda Gabler moves silently from the door.

OMITTED

INT. GREAT HALL - NIGHT

Hedda walks through her house like a thrilled ghost in the middle of a haunting. The place is turned absolutely upside down and she's loving all of it. She slips into the foyer.

Just then Eileen appears from the back staircase and enters the study. Hedda follows her inside.

OMITTED

INT. STUDY - NIGHT

Hedda enters to Eileen looking for the manuscript. Hedda closes the door behind her and locks it. They look at each other for a beat before -

HEDDA

I'm so sorry, Eileen. I didn't see it anywhere.

EILEEN

You aren't sorry at all. This is exactly what you wanted.

HEDDA

I wanted you to be true to yourself. To have courage.

EILEEN

Like this?!

HEDDA

No!

EILEEN

Thea left me.

Hedda doesn't show anything.

EILEEN (CONT'D)

Why did you push me?

HEDDA

You were lost. You needed to have strength in who you are.

EILEEN

And I have none left for this life. All of my colleagues have seen me make a fool of myself. The one person who mattered to me is gone. I can't ride out another disgrace, Hedda. Doing whatever you want and being whomever you choose has its limits.

HEDDA

And its consequences.

Eileen startles at this.

HEDDA (CONT'D)

You'll land on your feet.

EILEEN

Where do you find your power, Hedda?

She doesn't respond.

EILEEN (CONT'D)

Of course, I already know. For me, everything I am, everything I have, is because I am fucking brilliant. Because I can write and *think* and because I convinced those dick-swinging troglodytes that they had to listen to me. This book would have been undeniable, unignorable. Even after this mess. I would have been protected from their ridicule because I would be right. And now I am alone and I am nothing.

She looks Hedda up and down, then square in the eyes.

EILEEN (CONT'D)

Now I am just a woman.

A long beat.

HEDDA

Where will you go from here?

EILEEN

I'll make an end of it as quickly as possible.

HEDDA

Do what needs doing.

Eileen nods. Hedda's expression is inscrutable. Is that a spasm of pity?

HEDDA (CONT'D)

Wait -- wait here.

Before Eileen can agree Hedda leaves the room. Eileen sits.

Her despair grows, etching its way across her face. Every failure of her life is compounding into this moment.

HEDDA (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Eileen. Eileen!

Eileen jolts. Hedda has returned. How long was she gone?

Hedda reaches into her coat.

HEDDA (CONT'D)

I want you to have this.

She pulls her hand out of her coat and reveals General Gabler's gun. Eileen sees it and nods. Of course.

EILEEN

You should have used it then.

HEDDA

You can use it now.

Eileen takes the gun from her and feels the weight of it in her hands. It might as well be a feather because Eileen feels nothing. She place the gun in her jacket pocket.

EILEEN

Goodbye, Hedda Gabler.

Eileen walks out of the room. Hedda is a bit stunned but after a moment to collect herself she rushes over to the door and locks it.

She moves to the fireplace and adds to the fire.

INT. FOYER/PHONE ROOM - NIGHT

Eileen walks to the back of the foyer and slips behind the glass into the tiny phone booth-style room. She takes out the gun. She takes a breath.

We hold on distorted image through the glass. Waiting. We hear the sound of a gun cocking and -

A long beat.

Eileen staggers out from behind the glass lost, broken -- a fallen angel. She conceals the gun in her jacket pocket and heads to the front door just as George comes in through the anteroom.

GEORGE

Eileen! We -

George stops, alarmed by Eileen's state. She moves past him in a daze, unseeing. He stares after her dumbfounded.

OMITTED

INT. STUDY - NIGHT

Hedda stands at the edge of the fireplace, staring.

Next to her is Eileen's manuscript. She opens up the bundle of papers again. This time she takes a moment to read the first page.

THE FUTURE OF SEX
BY EILEEN LOVBORG
AND
THEA CLIFTON

Hedda takes this first sheet of paper and throws it in. She watches the names on the title page turn black, curl and disappear into ash.

HEDDA

(whisper; barely audible)
I am burning your child.

She throws another sheet of paper in. Then another. As she waits for the pages to burn she fondles her necklace. She pulls it off roughly and tosses it into the fire. She knows it won't burn but watching is cathartic.

She puts another page into the fire. And another.

The door handle jiggles. Then KNOCKING.

GEORGE (O.S.)

Hedda!

Hedda rushes to the door and unlocks it. She pulls George inside quickly. She locks the door.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

What a mess. We have to find the manuscript. I just saw Eileen she's a wreck.

Hedda walks back over to the fire. George watches her then sees the pages, the fire, Hedda.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

What're you doing? No... Hedda.

George strides over to her. Hedda picks up the remaining pages of the manuscript.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Some of it can be saved.

HEDDA

Why save it?

GEORGE

Hedda! This is her life's work.

HEDDA

What about your life? Mine?

GEORGE

Are you out of your mind?

Hedda moves to throw the pages into the fire.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Wait! Stop, Hedda!

Hedda stops, looks at George. He doesn't move. She throws the pages in.

HEDDA

You can still save some of them. If that's what you really want, George. But if she's find it, she will get your job.

(beat)

Is that what you want?

INT. ANTEROOM / BACK STAIRCASE - NIGHT

Brack comes in through the anteroom and finds a drinks cart in the hallway of the back staircase. He starts pouring water just as Thea comes down the stairs.

BRACK

Mrs. Ellison, are you heading out?

THEA

Looking for the manuscript.

BRACK

I think all hope is lost for that.

THEA

Do you think so?

Brack shrugs. He finishes pouring his water.

THEA (CONT'D)

I can't give up yet.

Thea walks out. Brack is amused by her spirit. He walks past the study and stops, his ear piqued.

He leans close to the door and hears George and Hedda's hushed voices from inside.

INT. STUDY - SAME

GEORGE

What's got into you? What made you...

HEDDA

I did this for your sake, George.

GEORGE

Me?!

HEDDA

I wanted you out of that woman's shadow. I couldn't bear the idea of you living that way.

GEORGE

You wanted money.

HEDDA

I wanted you to have what you wanted! I wanted you to be happy. To be strong.

GEORGE

...Really?

HEDDA

And... We... we needed this. By we -- I
may as well tell you now that -- I - I'm -
Well, your Aunt Julie will be so pleased -
-

GEORGE

Is it true? Really!

HEDDA

Please don't fuss. But George, look at me-

GEORGE

I am looking at you, Hedda.

HEDDA

No one must know.

George just looks at his wife.

GEORGE

You love me, Hedda Tesman.

Hedda doesn't answer. She looks up at George with an
inscrutable expression meant for the receiver to project
all of his desires onto it. He does. He kisses her.

Quickly her hands are undoing the buckle of his pants and
he is pulling up the long fabric of her dress.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Do that thing with your mouth.

HEDDA

No.

GEORGE

Hedda...

HEDDA

You do it.

Hedda sits on the armchair near the fire and lifts up her
skirt. George obliges. Hedda turns her head to the fire
and smiles. She has everything she wanted.

OMITTED

EXT. TESMAN ESTATE GROUNDS - DAWN

Brack walks around the house and sees a sheaf of paper blowing this way and that in the wind. He jogs to catch up with it and picks it up.

Turning it over he sees typed and handwritten notes. It's a page from the manuscript. He looks around. No one's seen him. He folds up the page and puts it into his pocket.

EXT. TESMAN ESTATE GROUNDS - DAWN

Eileen trudges over to the path to the maze. She's on her second wind and she's crazed. Every so often the wind flaps her jacket up, revealing the butt of the gun at her waist, her hand primed on it.

EXT. PATH TO MAZE - DAWN

Here, under the trees, the sun crawling over the horizon, the party hasn't died down at all. David, Jane, the Bohemian Man, Professor James and others dance around to two band members still playing their songs. Jazz.

Eileen moves through acknowledging no one. When she passes David:

DAVID

I hope you're in a better mood.

Eileen continues on.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Come on, don't be like that!

He grabs at her, she shakes him off.

DAVID (CONT'D)

You're not even going to apologize?

He grabs for her again, aggressively. She tries to shake him off again but he grabs her shoulder, spinning her around to face him, the hand holding the gun comes up as they meet and the gun goes off.

POP!

The gun goes flying. Screams.

Feet running. Hands to mouths. Eileen slumped over. Breathing.

A HAND picks up the gun covertly.

EXT. TESMAN ESTATE GROUNDS (THE MALL) - SAME

POP!

Thea stops walking and turns toward the sound.

INT. STUDY - SAME

Hedda is now straddling George in his chair when - POP! - the sound of the gun shot rings through the room. George jolts, and moves to get up. Hedda stops him and pulls his face towards her.

HEDDA

Look at me.

She continues to move against him and George can't help but look at her - really look at her. His wife.

The fire burns.

INT. FOYER - DAY (LATER)

It is eerily still. We slowly drift down and then there is A BURST OF SOUND as the front doors fly open.

Brack, David, Jane and others help carry the bleeding body of Eileen in. Thea runs in from the anteroom. They put Eileen on the floor. Her blood sweeps around her. The bohemian man, it turns out, is a doctor.

Hedda and George rush out of the study, fumbling with their clothes. George screams involuntarily when he sees the red blood on the floor, Eileen's pale white face.

Hedda is thunderstruck now, standing in her foyer, lost.

THEA

Call an ambulance!

Hedda is frozen, looking at what she's wrought. What a mess.

THEA (CONT'D)

HEDDA! NOW!

Hedda jolts into action, she charges over to the phone booth and dials.

INT. MAIN STAIRCASE - LATER

Hedda is coming down from the second story landing as AMBULANCE MEN put Eileen on a stretcher. Thea tries to grab Eileen's hand and follow her.

When they get to the door two detectives, LOGAN and SMITH arrive. They stop her from leaving and usher everyone into the library. Hedda sees them talk with George. He gestures to Hedda and they all look at her.

INT. DINING ROOM - MORNING

HEDDA, now in her coat, smokes in the dim lighting of the dining room across from the two unseen police officers.

HEDDA

Hedda.

SMITH

Hedda...Tesman, is that right? This is your husband's home.

HEDDA

Hedda is fine.

SMITH

Could you tell us the events of the evening, the way you remember them, leading up to the incident?

HEDDA

My memory is a bit fuzzy, it was a party, after all.

(off an officers look:)

Certainly, I can do my best. The first thing I remember is seeing a bloody mess of a person dragged into my foyer -

LOGAN

Before that, please.

HEDDA

I heard a lot of yelling and -

LOGAN

Earlier.

HEDDA

Well, where should I start?

LOGAN

The beginning.

Hedda exhales a plume of smoke.

OMITTED

INT. FOYER - AFTERNOON

Hedda leaves the dining room, her nerves frayed. Voices pull her focus.

She sees Thea and George outside.

I/E. ANTEROOM - AFTERNOON

Hedda, now in her coat, comes upon Thea and George talking fervently.

HEDDA
Is everything all right?
(off a look:)
I mean, besides the obvious.

Thea and George just look at her.

HEDDA (CONT'D)
What are you talking about?

THEA
We're going to reconstruct the book.

HEDDA
You are?

Hedda looks pointedly at George.

GEORGE
She's kept notes.

THEA
We could publish in time for the next
school year maybe. She won't lose much.

HEDDA
(to Thea)
And if she dies, you'll have all the
money.

GEORGE
If it isn't finished in time Dr. Lovborg
will have nothing.

HEDDA

If she lives. And if you don't focus on
your own research, Tesman, we'll -

GEORGE

Move to a smaller house.

Hedda is quiet. Her brain working.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

What do you want?

HEDDA

Nothing.

George and Thea turn back to each other. Hedda heads to
the door.

GEORGE

I will dedicate my life to this. Every
moment that I can spare.

Hedda stalls and turns back to them, they're thick as
thieves.

HEDDA

Can I do anything?

GEORGE

No.

THEA

No.

Hedda is taken aback but recovers swiftly.

HEDDA

George, clear the fireplace in the study
when you have a moment? It's full of
soot.

George looks at her with incredulity and ire. Hedda
doesn't know what she expected. She leaves.

OMITTED

OMITTED

INT. GREAT HALL - AFTERNOON

Hedda is alone. The weight of her evening begins to seep
through, in tiny increments changing her demeanor, a
creature transforming -

Until she hears a SOUND from upstairs. She takes the stairs two at a time and comes upon -

INT. GREAT HALL - MEZZANINE - AFTERNOON

Brack inside the mezzanine office, looking through the drawers.

Hedda looks down at the desk, her gun case is on it. It's open.

Hedda walks to the other end of the room. Thinking, thinking, switching gears.

BRACK

Are you worried about something, Mrs. Tesman?

HEDDA

Well, this is all very worrisome, isn't it?

BRACK

How was Eileen when you saw her last? You found yourselves alone last night didn't you? In the midst of the madness.

HEDDA

For a moment.

BRACK

In the bedroom.

HEDDA

For a moment.

BRACK

Did they ask you about the gun?

HEDDA

What gun?

BRACK

The one at the center of all this. The one that Eileen shot herself with.

Hedda doesn't answer. Brack walks towards her slowly, she snatches a glance at the gun case.

BRACK (CONT'D)

It's nowhere to be found, apparently. Professor Greenwood thinks it was his.

(MORE)

BRACK (CONT'D)

He lost track of it last night. I'm sure they'll talk to him soon.

HEDDA

They want to see you next.

BRACK

And what will I say...

HEDDA

Roland, don't tease me.

BRACK

There were two guns fired last night. One of them is Professor Greenwood's and the other is yours.

HEDDA

Is that what you'll say?

BRACK

I'll say, I have the gun that shot Eileen Lovborg.

HEDDA

Do you?

BRACK

Yes.

HEDDA

And whose is it?

BRACK

I think you know.

HEDDA

But what will you say?

BRACK

Depends. On my whimsicality.

Brack is upon Hedda now, a quiet and purposeful force on her.

BRACK (CONT'D)

It was a good idea. Sloppily executed but...

HEDDA

I never thought she'd do it here. I thought she'd find somewhere beautiful -

She stops herself short, embarrassed at what she's now realizing is naivety.

BRACK

Imagine the scandal when they find out the gun belonged to the great General Gabler. That his bastard gave it to the lesbian who tried to kill someone in the house our little Hedda can't afford. What will they think?

HEDDA

The thought hadn't entered my mind.

BRACK

Fortunately there is no danger of that - so long as I say nothing.

Brack's hand glides from her chest, to her collar bone, to her neck. Hedda tries to move.

BRACK (CONT'D)

Don't resist me.

Hedda doesn't at first. But then she pushes him away and storms over to the desk angrily.

HEDDA

No. No.

Hedda is at the desk, close to the gun case, close to the gun.

BRACK

People usually get used to the inevitable.

Hedda looks up at him across the room. He has a smug smile on his face. In a quick movement she snatches up the gun and points it at Brack. He's not afraid at all.

She stares at him, hand wavering slightly.

BRACK (CONT'D)

Oh, stop it, Hedda. Enough of your -

She shoots the gun at him and it *narrowly* misses, striking a book near his shoulder. They're both stunned.

Brack is enraged. She tries to shoot him again but the gun clicks - empty chamber. Another horrified pause then Hedda throws down the gun and runs.

INT. GREAT HALL - MOMENTS LATER

Hedda launches herself off the last steps from the mezzanine and races through the great hall, the conservatory and out its door. Brack comes down the stairs and charges after her.

EXT. TESMAN ESTATE GROUNDS (THE MALL) - DUSK

Hedda runs into the darkness, up the mall that stretches in front of the house, into oblivion. Brack runs after her, gaining on her slowly.

They get pretty far from the house before he catches up to her. He knocks her down. She claws at him but he overpowers and straddles her. He slaps her and before she can process what's happening his hands are around her neck, pressing.

BRACK

I own you.

He's choking her. Hedda is clawing at his face and clothes but he doesn't stop.

BRACK (CONT'D)

I control this.

Until a sound from the house - yells - snaps him out of his bloodlust.

He releases her and stands. In a daze, he staggers back towards the house. Hedda catches her breath in ragged gasps. She comes to her feet uneasily, faltering a couple of times before she stumbles to the lake.

EXT. THE MALL - CONTINUOUS

Hedda runs, arms pumping, breath ragged. She falls to the ground at the lake's edge.

Distantly, coming lightly on the wind:

VOICES (O.S.)

(barely audible)

Hedda! Hedda!

EXT. LAKE - CONTINUOUS

Hedda, on her hands and knees now, with fierce desperation is looking for stones. She takes the biggest ones and sticks them into the pockets of her trench coat.

When she is heavy with them, she stands.

VOICES (O.S.)
(closer now:)
Hedda! Hedda!

Hedda looks back at the house, numb, then she turns and wades into the lake. The sound of rushing water rises as she is submerged to her knees, her waist. The voices are closer, clearer but we stay on Hedda as--

GEORGE (O.S.)
Hedda!

She continues into the deep, chest and shoulders under water now.

GEORGE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Eileen--! She's --

Hedda falters but doesn't -- *Eileen*. She stops.

GEORGE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
She's awake. She --

Hedda, frozen between life and death, dark possibility and dark finality can do nothing, nothing but break out into a wild, wicked, and wanting smile.

SMASH TO BLACK.