Presently, TESMAN returns and closes the door behind him.

TESMAN.
[Picks up the slippers from the floor.] What are you looking at, Hedda?

HEDDA.
[Once more calm and mistress of herself.] I am only looking at the leaves. They are so yellow—so withered.

TESMAN.
[Wraps up the slippers and lays them on the table.] Well, you see, we are well into September now.

HEDDA.
[Again restless.] Yes, to think of it!—already in—in September.

TESMAN.
Don't you think Aunt Julia's manner was strange, dear? Almost solemn? Can you imagine what was the matter with her? Eh?

HEDDA.
I scarcely know her, you see. Is she not often like that?

TESMAN.
No, not as she was to-day.

HEDDA.
[Leaving the glass door.] Do you think she was annoyed about the bonnet?

TESMAN.
Oh, scarcely at all. Perhaps a little, just at the moment—

HEDDA.
But what an idea, to pitch her bonnet about in the drawing-room! No one does that sort of thing.

TESMAN.
Well you may be sure Aunt Julia won't do it again.

HEDDA.
In any case, I shall manage to make my peace with her.

TESMAN.
Yes, my dear, good Hedda, if you only would.

HEDDA.
When you call this afternoon, you might invite her to spend the evening here.

TESMAN.
Yes, that I will. And there's one thing more you could do that would delight her heart.

HEDDA.
What is it?

TESMAN.
If you could only prevail on yourself to say du to her. For my sake, Hedda? Eh?

HEDDA.
No, no, Tesman—you really mustn't ask that of me. I have told you so already. I shall try to call her "Aunt"; and you must be satisfied with that.

TESMAN.
Well well. Only I think now that you belong to the family, you—

HEDDA.
H'm—I can't in the least see why—
[She goes up towards the middle doorway.

TESMAN.
[After a pause.] Is there anything the matter with you, Hedda? Eh?

HEDDA.
I'm only looking at my old piano. It doesn't go at all well with all the other things.

TESMAN.
The first time I draw my salary, we'll see about exchanging it.

HEDDA.
No, no—no exchanging. I don't want to part with it. Suppose we put it there in the inner room, and then get another here in its place. When it's convenient, I mean.

TESMAN.
[A little taken aback.] Yes—of course we could do that.

HEDDA.
[Takes up the bouquet from the piano.] These flowers were not here last night when we arrived.

TESMAN.
Aunt Julia must have brought them for you.

HEDDA.
[Examining the bouquet.] A visiting-card. [Takes it out and reads:] "Shall return later in the day." Can you guess whose card it is?

TESMAN.
No. Whose? Eh?

HEDDA.
The name is "Mrs. Elvsted."

TESMAN.
Is it really? Sheriff Elvsted's wife? Miss Rysing that was.

HEDDA.
Exactly. The girl with the irritating hair, that she was always showing off. An old flame of yours I've been told.

TESMAN.
[Laughing.] Oh, that didn't last long; and it was before I met you, Hedda. But fancy her being in town!

HEDDA.
It's odd that she should call upon us. I have scarcely seen her since we left school.

TESMAN.
I haven't see her either for—heaven knows how long. I wonder how she can endure to live in such an out-of-the way hole—eh?

HEDDA.
[After a moment's thought, says suddenly.] Tell me, Tesman—isn't it somewhere near there that he—that—Eilert Lovborg is living?

TESMAN.
Yes, he is somewhere in that part of the country.