

Hedda Gabler by Henrik Ibsen

Dramaturgical Packet by Ness Sinclair

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Basic Info

- Meaning of the Title: Hedda Gabler takes the main character's name, but gives her father's surname instead of her husband's.
- When & Where
 - Set in fall of 1890's in Kristiania, Norway
 - The action of the play takes place in "The Tesman's residence, in the fashionable part of town." A large, furnished drawing room(living room)
- Playwright: Henrik Ibsen
 - Born: March 20, 1828, Skien, Norway
 - Died: May 23, 1906, Kristiania, Norway
 - After a series of strokes
 - Last words were "On the contrary" after a nurse said he was getting better.
 - Other works: *Brand*, *Peer Gynt*, *An Enemy of the People*, *Emperor and Galilean*, *A Doll's House*, *Ghosts*, *The Wild Duck*, *When We Dead Awaken*, *Rosmersholm*, and *The Master Builder*.
 - Many of Ibsen's plays look at mental health and women in unhealthy relationships
 - Considered one of the greatest playwrights, on par with Shakespeare
- First performed Munich at the Königliches Residenz-Theater on January 31, 1891
- First US performance 30 March 1898 at the Fifth Avenue Theatre, New York City.
- Quotes
 - "My intention in giving it this name was to indicate that Hedda as a personality is to be regarded rather as her father's daughter than her husband's wife." -Ibsen
 - Has been called the female Hamlet
 - "Gabler is one of the first fully developed neurotic female protagonists of literature." -Joseph Wood Krutch
- Genre: Tragic realism
- Heddatron: 2006 robot adaptation

Characters

- George Tesman: "research fellow in cultural history"
 - Wants to be called Dr. Tesman -Miss Tesman

- His dad is dead -Miss Tesman
- ~33 years old, medium sized, open and cheerful face, blond, bearded, wears glasses, dresses casually.
- Mom is dead or estranged -Miss Tesman
- A specialist -Hedda
- Writer
- Hedda Tesman(Head-uh): “his wife”
 - “Young bride”-Berta
 - Her father was a general
 - ~29 years old, pale, calm gray eyes, medium brown hair, in a tasteful loose fitting gown.
 - Very particular
 - OCD? Bipolar? BPD?
 - Gained weight recently (Pregnant) -Tesman
 - Was mean as a child/teen -Mrs. Elvsted
 - Persuasive
 - Ex of Løvborg
 - Weird thing with her dad’s pistols -24, 25, 68, 83
 - Not the biggest fan of monogamy -Hedda
 - Doesn’t love her husband -Hedda
 - Impulsive/pathological liar -Hedda
 - Envious of Mrs. Elvsted- burning manuscript at the end of act
 - Anti hero
- Miss Juliana Tesman: “his aunt”
 - ~65 years old, looks kind and good natured, clean/simple dress
 - Has sick sister Rina
 - Very generous towards George
- Mrs. Elvsted
 - A sheriff’s wife -Tesman
 - Ex of George’s -Hedda
 - Slender, soft features, pretty, large blue eyes, platinum blonde wavy hair, wears a tasteful but out of style black dress
 - Slightly younger than Hedda(29)
 - First name Thea -Mrs. Elvsted
 - Was a governess, married her employer- Mrs. Elvsted
 - Hates her husband who is 20 years older than her -Mrs Elvsted
 - Left her husband, packed up and ran -Mrs. Elvsted
 - Likes Løvborg -Mrs. Elvsted
- Judge Brack
 - ~45 years old

- Heavy but built, round face, distinguished profile, short groomed black hair, thick eyebrows and mustache, wears clothes too young for him, wears a monocle
- Manipulative
- Eilert Løvborg (eye-lert lov-berg)
 - Competitor of George -Miss Tesman
 - Tutor of Mrs. Elvsted's step children
 - Ex of Hedda
 - Alcoholic -Brack/Tesman
 - ~33 years old
 - Thin, worn down, dark brown hair and beard, pale skin with red splotches, in a new suit, gloves and hat
 - Loves Hedda
 - Loves Mrs. Elvsted
 - Loves redhead singer
 - Suicidal, but murdered?
 - Writer
- Berta: "the Tesmans' maid"
 - >50 years old, plain looking
 - Used to be Juliana's maid -Miss Tesman
 - Wants to please Hedda, but can't

Themes

- Patriarchy
 - Brack tries to gain control over Hedda at the end of the show because she gave Løvborg her father's pistol, which was used in his death.
 - Much of Hedda's identity depends on her being her father's daughter.
 - Hedda says "Ah, if only a fair lady could be there, invisible, to hear a little of your unadulterated liveliness." when the men are off to a party. The men think it is amusing that she would even think to go to a party as a woman of her class.
 - The pistols are phallic symbols that show how Hedda tries to have a grasp at the world men live in.
- Class distinction
 - Hedda was used to living in more luxury than Tesman could offer.
 - Hedda feels stifled by the restrictions and social norms of the time for women of her age and class
- Adultery

- Hedda flirts with Løvborg and Brack, even though she is married.
- Mrs. Elvsted flirts with Løvborg even though she is married.
- Mental illness/addiction
 - Hedda does not enjoy her life, she constantly lies to people to get them to do what she wants.
 - Hedda commits suicide at the end of the show.
 - Løvborg is an alcoholic.
 - Løvborg is depressed and plans to commit suicide.
 - Hedda thinks it is important to die beautifully

Essential Questions

- How are women supposed to react/cope with a society that they are not allowed to fully participate in?
- How does addiction affect how people make decisions? Both physical and psychological.
- Are there any true protagonists or antagonists in real life?

Historical Context:

- 1890's Norway
- Events leading up to 1890
 - 1879-Dual Alliance between Germany and Austria-Hungary.
 - 1882-Triple Alliance between Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy.
 - 1884-Berlin Conference held to regulate imperialism in Africa.
 - 1885-Second Balkan Crisis between Bulgaria and Serbia.
 - 1886-Gold discovered in the Transvaal territory in South Africa, heightening British interests in controlling this area.
 - 1889-Boulangier Affair in France.
 - Poverty, overpopulation, and limited opportunities drove many Norwegians to emigrate during the 19th century.
 - New industries like mining, shipbuilding, and textile manufacturing grew, and transformed the economy and led to urbanization.
 - Transition from an agrarian society to an industrial one.
 - Social mobility remained limited, and class divisions persisted
 - The establishment of public schools aimed to provide basic education for all children, regardless of social class.

- Norwegian literature, art, and music thrived, influenced by the romantic movement.
- Rapid expansion of railroads in Norway
- In 1884, the Norwegian Association for Women's Rights was founded, becoming a driving force for gender equality and suffrage.
- The play takes place in the span of two days.

Line-By-Line Breakdown:

Word/Phrase	Who says it	Page	Definition
Veranda	Stage Directions	1	a roofed platform along the outside of a house, level with the ground floor
Foreground	Stage Directions	1	the part of a view that is nearest to the observer, especially in a picture or photograph
Porcelain	Stage Directions	1	a white vitrified translucent ceramic
Footstool	Stage Directions	1	a low stool for resting the feet on when sitting
Taboret	Stage Directions	1	a low stool or small table
Settee	Stage Directions	1	a long upholstered seat for more than one person, typically with a back and arms
Étagères	Stage Directions	1	a piece of furniture with a number of open shelves for displaying ornaments
Terra-cotta	Stage Directions	1	unglazed, typically brownish-red earthenware, used chiefly as an ornamental building material and in modeling

Majolica	Stage Directions	1	a kind of earthenware made in imitation of Italian majolica, especially in England during the 19th century made by a tin-glaze process, resulting in an opaque white glazed surface decorated with brush-painting in metal oxide
Opalescent	Stage Directions	1	showing varying colors as an opal does
Parasol	Stage Directions	1	a light umbrella used to give shade from the sun
Provincial	Stage Directions	1	of or concerning a province of a country or empire
Perplexed	Stage Directions	2	completely baffled; very puzzled
Invalid	Berta	2	not valid, logically inconsequent, or affected by disease or disability
Slipcovers	Miss Tesman	3	a removable fitted cloth cover for a chair or sofa
Parlor	Tesman	4	a sitting room in a private house
Crestfallen	Stage Directions	4	sad and disappointed
Mortgage	Miss Tesman	5	a legal agreement by which a bank or other creditor lends money at interest in exchange for taking title of the debtor's property, with the condition that the conveyance of title becomes void upon the payment of the debt
Pension	Miss Tesman	5	a regular payment made during a person's retirement from an

			investment fund to which that person or their employer has contributed during their working life
Brabant (Bruh-bant)	Tesman	6	Feudal Duchy, now Belgium/Luxembourg
Pallid	Stage Directions	6	pale, typically because of poor health
Opaque	Stage Directions	6	not able to be seen through; not transparent
Buxom (Buck-some)	Tesman	8	plump, especially with large breasts
Tyrol (Tie-roll)	Miss Tesman	8	Alps in Northern Italy/Western Austria
Brusquely	Stage Directions	8	markedly short and abrupt, often to the point of ungracious harshness
Murmur	Mrs. Elvsted	13	say something in a low, soft, or indistinct voice
Imploringly	Stage Directions	14	in a way that expresses urgent or piteous pleading, as for aid or mercy
Governess	Mrs. Elvsted	16	a woman employed to teach children in a private household
Imperceptibly	Hedda	17	in a way that is so slight, gradual, or subtle as not to be perceived
Earnest	Hedda	18	a thing intended or regarded as a sign or promise of what is to come
Despondently	Stage Directions	19	having lost all or nearly all hope, or feeling or showing extreme

			discouragement, dejection, or depression
Hang Fire	Brack	20	a situation that's delayed, awaiting action or a decision
Stag party	Brack	22	a celebration held for a man shortly before his wedding, attended by his male friends only
Têtes-à-têtes (Tet-ah-tet)	Hedda	29	a private conversation between two persons
Rashness	Hedda	34	quality of being careless or unwise, without thought for what might happen or result
Ludacris	Hedda	35	amusing or laughable through obvious absurdity, incongruity, exaggeration, or eccentricity
Curtly	Stage Directions	36	so briefly or stiffly as to seem rude or snippy
Decanter	Stage Directions	41	a stoppered glass container into which wine is decanted
Ortler	Hedda	42	highest mountain in the Eastern Alps outside the Bernina Range
Meran (Mare-in)	Hedda	42	comune (municipality) in South Tyrol, Northern Italy
Val d'Ampezzo (Val dam-pezh-oh)	Hedda	43	Town and comune in the Province of Belluno, in the Veneto region of Northern Italy
Dolomites (doll-oh-mites)	Tesman	43	mountain range in northeastern Italy
Petits fours (pet-eat fwahs)	Hedda	43	A petit four is a small bite-sized confectionery or savory appetizer. The name is French,

			petit four, meaning "small oven"
Brenner pass	Tesman	44	mountain pass over the Alps which forms the border between Italy and Austria
Skoal (s-coal)	Løvborg	50	used to express friendly feelings toward one's companions before drinking
Unadulterated	Hedda	51	not mixed or diluted with any different or extra elements; complete and absolute
Irreclaimable	Tesman	57	not able to be reclaimed or reformed
Palmy	Brack	61	flourishing or successful
Piquant (pee-cahnt)	Brack	63	having a pleasantly sharp taste or appetizing flavor
Fjord (fee-yord)	Løvborg	66	long, narrow sea inlet with steep sides or cliffs, created by a glacier
Jochum (yo-hum)	Miss Tesman	71	German conductor
Delirium	Mrs. Elvsted	76	a disturbed state of mind or consciousness, especially an acute, transient condition associated with fever, intoxication, and certain other physical disorders, characterized by symptoms such as confusion, disorientation, agitation, and hallucinations
Sordid	Hedda	82	involving ignoble actions and motives; arousing moral distaste and contempt

Prostrated	Stage Directions	84	lying stretched out on the ground with one's face downward
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Sources:

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