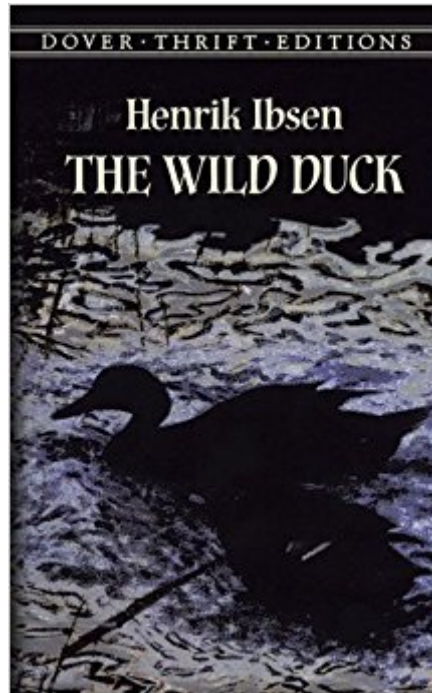


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Synopsis

The idealistic son of a corrupt merchant exposes his father's duplicity, but in the process destroys the very people he wishes to save. Gregers Werle forces his friends, the Ekdals, to confront the truth about their lives "but the truth only serves to wound them further.

Book Information

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THIS STARK PLAY, WRITTEN AT THE END OF IBSEN'S MIDDLE PERIOD, REPRISES SIMILAR THEMES: A PHILANDERING FAMILY MAN, AN ESTRANGED FATHER AND SON, AND THE QUESTIONABLE PARENTAGE OF A MAID'S DAUGHTER. CURIOUSLY ENOUGH THE TITLE CHARACTER--A WOUNDED WILD DUCK, TEMPORARILY TAMED AND LIVING IN AN ATTIC--IS NEVER ACTUALLY SEEN ON STAGE, JUST REFERENCED IN MANY CONVERSATIONS AND POSSIBLY HEARD QUACKING. ACT ONE REVEALS OLD WOUNDS AND THE REASON WHY THE EKDAL FAMILY STRUGGLES WITH POVERTY AND LINGERING SOCIAL HUMILIATION. FORMER BUSINESS PARTNERS IN THE "WORKINGS" UP IN THE NORTHERN FOREST, TWO OLD MEN HAVE REASONS TO AVOID EACH OTHER, BUT IT IS WEALTHY WERLE WHOSE GUILTY CONSCIENCE GOADS HIM INTO SURREPTITIOUSLY HELPING THE EKDALS WHEN HE CAN. HIS FORMER MAID, GINA, NOW MARRIED TO A MODESTLY SUCCESSFUL PHOTOGRAPHER NAMED HJALMAR, IS A GREAT HELP TO HER HUSBAND. THEIR ALMOST 15-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER, HEDVIG, IS DEVOTED TO HER

FATHER--BUT LIVES IN BLISSFUL IGNORANCE OF HER DUBIOUS PARENTAGE. ALSO SHE, LIKE OLD WERLE, IS LOSING HER EYESIGHTâA PAINFUL MEDICAL FATE WHICH HER PARENTS PATHETICALLY SHIELD HER FROM.AS THE ACTS UNFOLD AND MORE OF THE PAST IS REVEALED THE CONTROVERSY DEEPENS. WE WONDER IF HEDVIG WILL SET THE HOUSE ON FIRE OR IF HJALMAR WILL SHOOT HIMSELF WITH HIS FATHERâS UBIQUITOUS OLD PISTOL. THEN GREGER, AN OLD SCHOOL CHUM, RETURNS TO THE TOWN BUT REFUSES TO LIVE WITH HIS FATHER, WERLE. NAIVELY DETERMINED TO MAKE AMENDS (WITH INFORMATION IF NOT MONEY) GREGERâS MOTIVES ARE PRAISEWORTHY, BUT COME AT THE WRONG TIME. (AS IF THERE IS EVER A GOOD TIME TO INFORM A MAN THAT HE MAY NOT BE HIS DAUGHTERâS FATHER AFTER ALL...) HOW CAN HEDVIG BEST PROVE TO HJALMAR THAT SHE IS STILL HIS ADORING DAUGHTER? WHO MUST LEAVE THE BEDRAGGLED NEST TO RESTORE PEACE IN THEIR HUMBLE HOME?

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