

**ANNE** Oh Henrik, dear, don't you have anything less gloomy to practice?

**HENRIK** It isn't gloomy, it's profound.

**ANNE** (*takes HENRIK'S book, and begins reading from it*) "...in discussing temptation, Martin Luther says: 'You cannot prevent the birds from flying over your head, but you can prevent them from nesting in your hair.'" Oh dear, that's gloomy too! Don't they teach you anything at the seminary a little more cheerful?

**HENRIK** (*Grand*) A man who's going to serve in God's Army must learn all the ruses and stratagems of the Enemy.

**ANNE** (*Giggling*) And which of your professors made that historic statement?

**HENRIK** (*Caught out*) Pastor Ericson, as a matter of fact. He says we're like generals learning to win battles against the devil. Anne, I was wondering—could we go for a walk?

**ANNE** Now?

**HENRIK** I've so much to tell you. What I've been thinking, and everything.

**ANNE** Silly Henrik, don't you realize it's almost tea-time? And I think I hear your father. I'm sure you've made the most wonderful discoveries about life, and I long to talk, but—later.  
(*Fredrik enters*) Fredrik dear!

**HENRIK** (*Mutters to himself*) Later..

**ANNE** Look who's come home to us—holier than ever.

**FREDRIK** Hello, son. How was the examination?

**HENRIK** Well, as a matter of fact...

**FREDRIK** (*Breaking in*) You passed with flying colors, of course.

**ANNE** First on the list.

**HENRIK** (*Trying again*) And Pastor Ericson said...

**FREDRIK** (*Breaking in*) Splendid—you must give us a full report. Later.

**ANNE** He'd better be careful or he'll go straight to heaven before he has a chance to save any sinners.

**FREDRIK** Don't tease him, dear.

**ANNE** Oh, Henrik likes to be teased, don't you, Henrik? Fredrik, do you want your tea now?

**FREDRIK** Not now, I think. It's been rather an exhausting day in Court and as we have a long evening ahead of us, I feel a little nap is indicated.

*(He produces theatre tickets from his pocket)*

**ANNE** *(Grabbing at them, delighted as a child)* Tickets for the theatre!

**FREDRIK** It's a French comedy. I thought it might entertain you.

**ANNE** It's "Woman of the World," isn't it? With Desiree Armfeldt! She's on all the posters! Oh, Fredrik, how delicious! What shall I wear? My blue with the featherS—genuine angel's feathers—? Or the yellow? Ah, I know. My pink, with the bosom. And Henrik, you can do me up in the back.

*(She goes into the bedroom)*

**FREDRIK** I'm sorry, son. I should have remembered you were coming home and got a third ticket. *(Grinning)* But then perhaps a French comedy is hardly suitable.

**HENRIK** *(Outburst)* Why does everyone laugh at me? Is it so ridiculous to want to do some good in this world?

**FREDRIK** I'm afraid being young in itself can be a trifle ridiculous. Good has to be so good, bad so bad. Such superlatives!

**HENRIK** But to be old, I suppose, is not ridiculous

**FREDRIK** *(Sigh)* Ah, let's not get into that. I love you very much, you know. So does Anne—in her way. But you can't expect her to take your mother's place. She's young, too; she has not yet learned...

**HENRIK** ...to suffer fools gladly?

**FREDRIK** *(Gentle)* You said that, son. Not I.

**ANNE** *(calling from the bedroom)* Fredrik!

*(FREDRIK moves into the bedroom)*

You were sweet to think of the theatre for me.

**FREDRIK** I'll enjoy it too.

**ANNE** Who wouldn't—when all the posters call her The One And Only Desiree Armfeldt?