

ANNE Charlotte Olafsson! It is, isn't it? Marta's big sister who married that magnificent Count Something or other—and I was a flower girl at the wedding.

CHARLOTTE Unhappily without a time-bomb in your lily of the valley bouquet.

ANNE *(Laughing)* Oh, Charlotte, you always did say the most amusing things.

CHARLOTTE I still do. I frequently laugh myself to sleep contemplating my own future. Well, dear, how are you? And how is your marriage working out?

ANNE I'm in bliss. I have all the dresses in the world and a maid to take care of me and this charming house and a husband who spoils me shamelessly.

CHARLOTTE That list, I trust, is in diminishing order of priority.

ANNE How dreadful you are! Of course, it isn't. And how's dear Marta?

CHARLOTTE Ecstatic. Dear Marta has renounced men and is teaching gymnastics in a school for dull girls in Beetleheim. Which brings me or, rather, should bring me, as my time is strictly limited—to the subject of men. How do you rate your husband as a man?

ANNE I—don't quite know what you mean.

CHARLOTTE I will give you an example. As a man, my husband could be rated as a louse, a bastard, a conceited, puffed-up, adulterous egomaniac. He constantly makes me do the most degrading, the most humiliating things like...like... *(Her composure starts to crumble.)*

ANNE Like?

CHARLOTTE Like... *(bursting into tears)* Oh, why do I put up with it? Why do I let him treat me like—like an intimidated corporal in his regiment? Why? Why? Why? I'll tell you why. I despise him! I hate him! I love him! Oh, damn that woman! May she rot forever in some infernal dressing room with lipstick of fire and scalding mascara! Let every billboard in hell eternally announce: Desiree Armfeldt in—in—in *The Wild Duck!* *(Abandons herself to tears)*

ANNE Desiree Armfeldt? But what has she done to you?

CHARLOTTE What has she not done? Enslaved my husband—enslaved yours...

ANNE Fredrik!

CHARLOTTE He was there last night in her bedroom—in a nightshirt. My husband threw him out into the street and he’s insanely jealous. He told me to come here and tell you... and I’m actually *telling* you! Oh, what a monster I’ve become!

ANNE Charlotte, is that the truth? Fredrik was there—in a nightshirt?

CHARLOTTE *(sobs)* My husband’s nightshirt!

ANNE Oh I knew it! I was sure he’d met her before. And when she smiled at us in the theatre... *(She begins to weep)*

CHARLOTTE Poor Anne!