**THEA (MRS ELVSTED) AUDITION TEXT:**

HEDDA: Now we can talk in private.

MRS ELVSTED: There’s nothing more to say.

HEDDA: Oh, there’s so much more.

MRS ELVSTED: I should go.

HEDDA: I want to learn from you; tell me about your marriage.

MRS ELVSTED: I – I’d rather not.

HEDDA: But we’re old friends, from school!

MRS ELVSTED: Yes, but you were a few years above me. And – to be frank I was frightened of you. Then.

HEDDA: You were frightened?

MRS ELVSTED: Extremely. Whenever we passed each other on the stairs you would pull my hair.

HEDDA: Me? No.

MRS ELVSTED: And one time you threatened to set fire to it.

HEDDA: I’m sure that was just boisterous girlishness.

MRS ELVSTED: Well, perhaps I was unable to detect it. In those days we moved in very different social circles and in truth, we still do.

HEDDA: Yet here we are, having an intimate conversation about our shared past. I think you’ve misremembered our relationship; we used to confide in one another and I’m sure we called each other by our Christian names.

MRS ELVSTED: No, we really didn’t.

HEDDA: Then from now on we will.

*Offers her hand, which Mrs Evlsted shakes.*

Friends? Yes?

*Mrs Elvsted nods. Hedda kisses her cheek.*

MRS ELVSTED: *(Grasps Hedda’s hand, eagerly)* I’m not used to such kindness.s

HEDDA: So you will call me Hedda, like before? And I will call you Freya.

MRS ELVSTED: It’s Thea.

HEDDA: So it is. You said you’re not used to such kindness. Did you mean at home?

MRS ELVSTED:… I have no home. I’ve never felt at home.

HEDDA: I sensed that.

MRS ELVSTED: *(helplessly)* Yes… yes… yes…

HEDDA: Remind me, didn’t you move to the country to be Mr Elvsted’s housekeeper?

MRS ELVSTED: I was employed as governess. But his wife – his then wife – was very poorly, she was dying, so I had to look after the house as well.

HEDDA: And then nature took its course and you became mistress of the house.

MRS ELVSTED: … Yes.

HEDDA: How long have you been married?

MRS ELVSTED: Five years. But the last two or three…

HEDDA: Yes?

MRS ELVSTED: I wish I could tell you.

*Pause.*