

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE

Any preshow announcement, if there is one, is interrupted by the sudden appearance of HEDDA onstage. House lights dim slightly, if at all. She addresses the audience.

HEDDA

→ Don't take pictures, unwrap your candy now, turn off your cell phones. Blah, blah, blah. Unimportant. These things don't matter. As a matter of fact, it wouldn't be a bad idea for a few of you to keep your phones on and ready to use – at least on airplane mode. And yes, I know what an airplane is. I know a lot of shit that might surprise you.

For example ... by the end of this show, unless something goes wrong – or should I say right ... anyway, there's going to be a murder. That's why your cell phones might prove handy. To call 911, when it happens. And it always does. It always has. How do I know? I'm the murder victim. I've been the victim over ten thousand times, ever since this fucking play was first produced in 1891. Sorry for the spoiler alert – but that's what you paid for. I die at the end of the play. Shot through the head. Kablam. Of course I die. People love to see me die. They can't wait for it. They can't get enough of it. And why not? I'm the biggest, craziest bitch in dramatic history. All right, maybe a close second to Medea. Let's call it a tossup. One notch above Lady MacB.

I should clarify. I'm not talking about the actress playing me, whoever she is. She's a nice person, I'm sure, they usually are. Thrilled to get a lead role for a change, especially one for which she doesn't have to take off her clothes – sorry pervs, that ain't happening here. But she doesn't have a clue about what it all means to *me*. She doesn't have to die. She gets to come back for the next show and do the same tortured crap every night till the curtain falls. Then she goes out with the cast to the dive down the street, eats a late night Cobb salad, flirts a little with the guy playing Eilert, just to stay in character, maybe even has a glass of chardonnay if she's feeling good about herself. Meanwhile, I'm left on the floor, bleeding. Fake blood for her – not always, not even that's consistent – but real blood for me. Get it? The character – that's me, Hedda G – dies. Every stinking night. Sometimes offstage, sometimes in full view. Depends on the director's taste for shock value. But whether you see it or not, I always get shot in the head. With my own pistol.

Lemme ask you something, out of professional curiosity. Any of you ever been shot? No? Didn't think so. Theatregoers - wrong demographic. So let me tell you a little something about bullets. They hurt. Like a son of a bitch. Even when they enter the brain. Sure, it may only last a second or two, but now imagine thousands and thousands of them. Sometimes dozens in one night, all around the world. Sure, I may be speaking in other languages, but bullets don't require much translation, know what I mean? I die over and over and over and I still come back for more. It's like that Tom Cruise movie from a few years ago, what was the tag line? "Live. Die. Repeat." Something he and I have in common, I guess. Like Scientology. Kidding! - End

Spoiler alert. Those of you who know this play are already saying, hold on babe, you're talking about murder, but that's not how it ends - nobody whacks you. You blow out your own brains – nobody does it for you. So who are you to blame anyone else on what's essentially a matter of