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Samuel French Acting Edition

A Doll's House

by
Henrik Ibsen

A New Version by
Christopher Hampton

|| SAMUEL FRENCH ||

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A DOLL'S HOUSE, a new adaptation of the Henrik Ibsen play from a literal translation by Hélène Grégoire, was given its New York presentation at the Playhouse Theatre under the direction of Patrick Garland. The producer was Hillard Elkins. Sets, Costumes and Lighting were by John Bury. The production supervisor was Michael Thoma, with the associate producer, George Platt. The following was the cast:

CAST

(In Order of Appearance)

TORVALD HELMER	<i>Donald Madden</i>
NORA, his wife	<i>Claire Bloom</i>
DR. RANK	<i>Roy Shuman</i>
MRS. KRISTINE LINDE	<i>Patricia Elliott</i>
NILS KROGSTAD	<i>Robert Gerringer</i>
ANNE-MARIE, the nursemaid	<i>Kate Wilkinson</i>
HELENE, the maid	<i>Eda Reiss Merin</i>
THE HELMERS' CHILDREN	<i>Michael Calvet,</i> <i>Jill Grafflin</i>

The action takes place in the Helmers' Flat.

ACT ONE

Christmas Eve

ACT TWO

Christmas Day

ACT THREE

The Day After Christmas

"There are two kinds of spiritual laws, two kinds of conscience, one for men and one, quite different, for women. They don't understand each other; but in practical life, woman is judged by masculine law, as though she weren't a woman but a man.

"A woman cannot be herself in modern society. It is an exclusively male society, with laws made by men and with prosecutors and judges who assess female conduct from a male standpoint.

"A mother in modern society, like certain insects, goes away and dies once she has done her duty by propagating the race."

—Henrik Ibsen in "Notes for a Modern Tragedy"
19 October 1878

A Doll's House

ACT ONE

A comfortable room, tastefully but not expensively furnished. U. R., a door leading into the hall, U. L., a door leading to HELMER's study. Between the two doors, a grand piano. In the middle of the left-hand wall, another door, and further forward, a window. Near the window, a round table with armchairs and a small sofa. Toward the back of the right-hand wall, a door, and further forward, a porcelain stove, two armchairs and a rocking chair, grouped round it. Between the stove and the side door, a small table. Engravings on the walls. Shelves with china and small objets d'art. A small bookcase filled with beautifully bound books. Carpet on the floor, fire in the stove. Winter day.

The DOORBELL RINGS out in the hall. Then, the front door opens. NORA enters, humming cheerfully. She is wearing an overcoat and carrying a pile of parcels which she puts down on the right-hand table. She leaves the door open behind her. [Revealing an ERRAND BOY, carrying a Christmas tree, and a basket, which he gives to the MAID who has opened the door for them.]*

NORA. Find a good hiding place for the Christmas tree, Helene. I don't want the children to see it till it's lit up

*Portions of the play printed with square brackets were omitted from the New York production. If desired, these portions may be reinstated.

this evening. [*To the ERRAND BOY, opening her purse.*]
How much do I owe you?

ERRAND BOY. Fifty ore.

NORA. Here you are. No, no, keep the change. (*The ERRAND BOY thanks her and leaves.*) NORA closes the door. She takes a bag of macaroons out of her pocket and eats one or two, tiptoeing over toward the door of her husband's study and listening outside.) Yes, he's in. (*She moves over to the table on the R., humming.*)

HELMER. (*Calling from the study.*) Who's that chirping out there? Is it my little lark?

NORA. (*Busy opening the parcels.*) It is.

HELMER. Is it that squirrel rummaging about again?

NORA. Yes.

HELMER. And when did my squirrel get home?

NORA. Just this minute. (*She puts the bag of macaroons in her pocket and wipes her mouth.*) If you come out, Torvald, I'll show you what I've bought.

HELMER. Do not disturb! (*A moment later, he opens the door and looks in, pen in hand.*) Did you say bought? What, all those things? Has my little prodigal been out frittering away all my money?

NORA. Oh, Torvald, surely this year we can let ourselves go a little. It's the first Christmas we haven't had to pinch and scrape.

HELMER. That doesn't mean we can go throwing money around.

NORA. I know, Torvald, but we can throw a bit around. Can't we? Just a teeny-weeny little bit. Soon you'll be getting an enormous salary and you'll have piles and piles of money.

HELMER. Yes, but not until the new year. And then I don't get paid until the end of the first quarter.

NORA. Well, that doesn't matter, we can always borrow some.

HELMER. Nora! (*He moves over to the table and takes her playfully by the ear.*) What a scatterbrain you are. Suppose I were to borrow a thousand kroner today, and

you were to fritter it away over Christmas. And then suppose on New Year's Eve a tile were to come off the roof and land on my head and kill me . . .

NORA. (*Putting her hand over his mouth.*) Ssh, you mustn't say horrible things like that.

HELMER. Well, suppose something like that happened. Then where would you be?

NORA. If anything as awful as that happened, it wouldn't make any difference whether I had debts or not.

HELMER. But what about the people I'd borrowed from?

NORA. Who cares about them? They're strangers.

HELMER. Nora, Nora. That's just typical of a woman. No, but seriously, Nora, you know what I think about that sort of thing. Neither a borrower nor a lender be! There's no freedom in a house that's built on borrowing and debt, it becomes ugly. So far we've put up with everything bravely, both of us; and there's only a short time left, so we're not going to give up now.

NORA. (*Moving over to the stove.*) All right, Torvald, just as you like.

HELMER. (*Following her.*) Oh, now, that can't be my little skylark with her wings all drooping, can it? Mm? Is it a little sulking squirrel? (*Takes out his wallet.*) Nora, what's this then, eh?

NORA. (*Spinning round.*) Money!

HELMER. That's right. (*Gives her some notes.*) I know you need all sorts of things round the house at Christmas.

NORA. (*Counting it.*) Ten . . . twenty . . . thirty . . . forty. Oh, thank you, Torvald, thank you, that'll go a long way.

HELMER. I should certainly hope so.

NORA. Yes, it will, it will. Come here and let me show you what I've bought. Everything was so cheap! Look, this is a new suit for Ivar—and a toy sword. I got a horse and a trumpet for Bob. And a doll and a doll's cradle for Emmy; they're very ordinary—but she always breaks things so quickly, doesn't she? And some material

and handkerchiefs for the servants. I really ought to have got something better than that for old Anne-Marie.

HELMER. And what's in that parcel?

NORA. (*Crying out.*) Oh, no, Torvald, you mustn't look at that till this evening!

HELMER. Aha. I see. Now tell me, what does little moneybags want for herself?

NORA. For me? Oh, nothing, I don't really want anything.

HELMER. Of course you do. Go on, think of something you'd really like, something sensible.

NORA. No, really, I don't want anything. Except, Torvald . . .

HELMER. Yes?

NORA. (*Fiddling with his buttons, not looking at him.*) Well, if you want to give me something, you could always . . . I mean, you could . . .

HELMER. Come on, out with it.

NORA. (*Quickly.*) You could give me money, Torvald. Just what you thought you could afford, no more. Then I could buy myself something later.

HELMER. But, Nora . . .

NORA. Oh, do, Torvald dear, please, please do. Then I could wrap the money in lovely gold paper and hang it on the tree. That'd be fun, wouldn't it?

HELMER. What do I call those little birds who squander all their money away?

NORA. Spendswifts, Torvald, I know. But if we do what I suggest, I'll have time to think about what I need most. Doesn't that sound reasonable? Mm?

HELMER. (*Smiling.*) Of course, it *sounds* reasonable. I mean, if you could really hold on to the money I gave you, and really buy yourself something with it. But it'll just go on the housekeeping and all sorts of useless things, and then I'll have to fork out some more.

NORA. But, Torvald . . .

HELMER. You can't deny it, Nora darling. (*Puts his arms round her waist.*) Spendswifts are very sweet, but

they get through an awful lot of money. It's incredible how expensive it can be to keep a little spendswift.

NORA. That's not fair, how can you say that? I save as much as I can.

HELMER. (*Laughing.*) Of course you do. As much as you can. But as much as you can comes to nothing.

NORA. (*Humming and smiling, quietly happy.*) Larks and squirrels always have lots and lots of expenses, Torvald, you can't imagine.

HELMER. You're a funny little thing. Just like your father. You're always on the lookout for all the money you can get your hands on. But as soon as you do get hold of some, it seems to slip away through your fingers, and you can never remember what you've done with it. Ah, well, I shall just have to accept you as you are. It's in the blood. Yes, Nora. Hereditary.

NORA. I wish I'd inherited a few more of Father's qualities.

HELMER. And I wouldn't wish you any different, you're my sweet little skylark. Except . . . it seems to me you're looking a bit, erm, how shall I put it, a bit suspicious today. . . .

NORA. Am I?

HELMER. Yes, you are. Look me straight in the eye.

NORA. (*Looking at him.*) Yes?

HELMER. (*Wagging his finger.*) Now, Miss Sweettooth, are you quite sure you didn't get up to anything in town today?

NORA. No, whatever makes you think that?

HELMER. Well, little Miss Sweettooth used to be forever popping round to the confectioner's.

NORA. No, I promise you, Torvald . . .

HELMER. Not even to nibble a little something with jam in it?

NORA. No, nothing.

HELMER. Not even to munch a macaroon or two?

NORA. No, really, Torvald. I promise you . . .

HELMER. It's all right, just my little joke . . .

NORA. (*Moving across to the table on the R.*) I wouldn't dream of doing anything you disapproved of.

HELMER. No, I know that. And anyway, you promised, didn't you? (*Goes over to her.*) My dear Nora, you keep your little Christmas secrets to yourself. And they'll all be revealed this evening when the Christmas tree's lit up, won't they?

NORA. Did you remember to invite Dr. Rank?

HELMER. No, it's not necessary. I'm sure he'll come to dinner of his own accord. Anyway I can always ask him when he comes round this morning. I've ordered some very good wine. You can't imagine how much I'm looking forward to this evening, Nora.

NORA. I am too. And won't the children enjoy themselves, Torvald?

HELMER. Ah, it's marvelous to know one has a really solid, secure position. And such a comfortable income. It's a delightful thought, isn't it?

NORA. Wonderful.

HELMER. Remember last Christmas? How you shut yourself up till long after midnight every evening for three whole weeks, making flowers for the Christmas tree and all sorts of other wonders you were going to amaze us with. Ha, I've never been so bored in my life.

NORA. I wasn't at all bored.

HELMER. (*Smiling.*) Didn't come to much, though, did it, Nora?

NORA. Oh, you're not going to tease me about that again, are you? It wasn't my fault the cat got in and ripped everything to pieces.

HELMER. Poor Nora, no, of course it wasn't. You wanted to give us all a bit of pleasure and you did your best to, that's what counts. All the same, it's a good thing the lean times are over.

NORA. It's wonderful.

HELMER. Now I don't have to sit here on my own dying of boredom, and you don't have to wear out your lovely eyes and your dear little delicate hands . . .

NORA. (*Clapping her hands.*) No, I don't, Torvald, do I? Isn't that a wonderful thought? (*Takes his arm.*) Now, Torvald, I'll tell you what I think we should do. As soon as Christmas is over, I . . . (*A ring at the DOOR-BELL.*) Oh, that's the bell. (*Starts tidying up the room.*) It must be someone come to call. That's rather a bore.

HELMER. I'm not at home. Don't forget.

MAID. (*In the doorway.*) Madam, there's a lady here to see you, no one I know.

NORA. Show her in.

MAID. (*To HELMER.*) The doctor's here as well.

HELMER. Has he gone into the study?

MAID. Yes.

(*HELMER goes into his study. The MAID shows in MRS. LINDE, who is wearing traveling clothes, and shuts the door behind her.*)

MRS. LINDE. (*Nervous and hesitant.*) Good morning, Nora.

NORA. (*Uncertainly.*) Good morning. . . .

MRS. LINDE. You don't recognize me, do you?

NORA. No, I don't think I do. Oh yes, of course I do. . . . (*Expansively.*) Kristine! Is it really you?

MRS. LINDE. Yes, it is.

NORA. Kristine! Fancy me not recognizing you. But how could I, you . . . (*More gently.*) . . . You've changed so much, Kristine.

MRS. LINDE. Yes, I must have. In nine . . . ten years, it's a long time. . . .

NORA. Is it as long as that since we met? Yes, it must be. I've been so happy these last eight years, you know. So have you moved into town as well? All that long journey in the winter. That was very brave.

MRS. LINDE. I arrived this morning, by boat.

NORA. You must have come up to spend Christmas here. How lovely! We'll all have a much happier Christmas now. Do take your coat off. Are you freezing? (*Helps*

her.) Come over here by the fire and sit down. No, take the armchair. And I'll sit in the rocking chair. (*She takes her hands.*) Now, you look the same as ever. It was just when I first saw you . . . You look a bit paler, Kristine . . . and perhaps a bit thinner.

MRS. LINDE. And much older, Nora, much, much older.

NORA. Perhaps a little bit older. But only a teeny-weeny bit. Certainly not much. (*Stops suddenly; then, seriously.*) Oh, I'm so thoughtless, sitting here, prattling on. Forgive me, Kristine, please, can you?

MRS. LINDE. What do you mean, Nora?

NORA. (*Gently.*) Poor Kristine, you're a widow now, aren't you?

MRS. LINDE. Yes, I have been for three years.

NORA. Yes, I know, I saw it in the paper. Oh, you must believe me, Kristine, I kept meaning to write to you. But I was always putting it off and having to do something else.

MRS. LINDE. That's all right, Nora, I understand.

NORA. No, it was terrible of me, Kristine. What you must have gone through, you poor thing. Did he leave you anything to live on?

MRS. LINDE. No.

NORA. No children?

MRS. LINDE. No.

NORA. Nothing at all?

MRS. LINDE. Not even grief, not even a lingering regret.

NORA. (*Looking at her incredulously.*) But how can that be, Kristine?

MRS. LINDE. (*Smiling and stroking her hair.*) Oh, that's the way things are sometimes, Nora.

NORA. All alone. That must be terribly hard for you. I've got three lovely children. I can't show them to you now, they're out with their nanny. But now you must tell me all about yourself.

MRS. LINDE. No, no, it's better if you do the talking.

NORA. No, you start. I mustn't be selfish today. Today I just want to think about you. Except there is one thing

I must tell you. Have you heard about our great stroke of luck?

MRS. LINDE. No, what's that?

NORA. Just think, my husband's been made manager of the Joint Stock Bank.

MRS. LINDE. Your husband? Isn't that marvelous?

NORA. Yes, extraordinary! You see, being a lawyer is such an insecure life, especially if you don't want to get involved in anything dishonest and underhand. Which of course Torvald didn't. And I absolutely agree with him. So you can imagine how pleased we are! He'll be starting at the bank in the New Year, and he'll be earning a large salary and quite a lot of commission as well. So from now on we'll be able to live quite differently, just as we like. I feel so bright and happy, Kristine. It is lovely to have lots of money and not have to worry about anything. Isn't it?

MRS. LINDE. Yes, well, at any rate, it must be lovely to have enough for the essentials.

NORA. No, no, not just enough for the essentials, but lots and lots and lots of money.

MRS. LINDE. (*Smiling.*) Nora, Nora, you still haven't learnt to be sensible, have you? Even when we were at school, you always liked spending money.

NORA. (*Laughing quietly.*) Yes, that's what Torvald always says. (*She wags her finger.*) But Nora Nora isn't as silly as you think. And I certainly haven't had a chance to spend any money. We've both had to work.

MRS. LINDE. You as well?

NORA. Yes, I did bits and pieces, you know, needlework and crochet and embroidery and that sort of thing. (*Casually.*) And other work as well. I expect you know that Torvald left the Civil Service when we got married. There was no prospect of promotion in his department, and he really needed a higher salary. But the first year he overworked and pushed himself far too hard. He had to take on all sorts of extra work, so you can imagine, he was slaving away day and night. He couldn't keep it

up, and in the end he became dangerously ill. Then the doctors said he would have to go and spend some time in the South.

MRS. LINDE. Yes, you were in Italy a whole year, weren't you?

NORA. Yes, that's right. It wasn't easy to arrange. I can tell you. Ivar had just been born. But obviously we had to go. Oh, it was a wonderful trip, lovely. And it saved Torvald's life. But it cost an awful lot of money, Kristine.

MRS. LINDE. I'm sure it did.

NORA. Four thousand, eight hundred kroner. That's a lot, isn't it?

MRS. LINDE. Yes. You're lucky to have had it when you needed it.

NORA. I should explain, we got it from my father.

MRS. LINDE. Ah. Wasn't it about that time that he died?

NORA. Yes, Kristine, just about then. And the awful thing was, I wasn't able to go and nurse him. I was expecting Ivar any day. And I had my poor sick Torvald to look after. Dear old Father, he was so kind. I never saw him again, Kristine. It's the worst thing that's happened since I got married.

MRS. LINDE. I know how fond of him you were. So then you went to Italy.

NORA. Yes. We had the money, and the doctors told us not to waste any time. So we left the next month.

MRS. LINDE. And was your husband quite better when he came back?

NORA. Fit as a fiddle.

MRS. LINDE. But then . . . why the doctor?

NORA. What?

MRS. LINDE. I thought I heard the maid say the gentleman who arrived the same time as I did was a doctor.

NORA. Oh, yes, that was Dr. Rank. But he's not here professionally. He's our closest friend and we always see him at least once a day. No, Torvald hasn't been ill at all

since we got back. And the children are fit and healthy, and so am I. (*Jumps up and claps her hands.*) Oh, God, Kristine, it's so wonderful to be alive and happy! . . . I'm sorry, I am terrible, just going on and on about myself. (*Sits down next to MRS. LINDE on a stool and puts her arms in her lap.*) You mustn't be angry with me. Tell me, is it true you didn't love your husband? Why did you marry him?

MRS. LINDE. My mother was still alive then: she was bedridden and helpless. And then I had two younger brothers to look after. I didn't think it would be right to turn down his offer.

NORA. No, I can understand that. Was he quite rich then?

MRS. LINDE. He was fairly well off, yes. But his business was rather precarious, Nora. And when he died, the whole thing collapsed and there was nothing left.

NORA. Then what?

MRS. LINDE. Well, I just had to struggle through, first by opening a little shop, then a school, and then whatever else I could think of. These last three years have been like one long non-stop workday. Now it's over, Nora. My mother doesn't need me any more, she died. Nor do the boys. They've gone into business, they can look after themselves.

NORA. You must feel very relieved now. . . .

MRS. LINDE. No. Just hopelessly futile. No one to live for any more. (*Gets up nervously.*) That's why I couldn't stand it stuck away in that out-of-the-way hole. It must be easier to find something here to occupy my mind, something I can take an interest in. If I could only be lucky enough to find something permanent here, some kind of office job . . .

NORA. But that's terribly tiring, Kristine, and you look worn out already. It'd be much better for you to go and spend a few days at some spa.

MRS. LINDE. (*Moving over to the window.*) I don't have a father to pay all my expenses, Nora.

NORA. (*Rising.*) Oh, don't be angry with me!

MRS. LINDE. (*Walking toward her.*) Don't you be angry with me, Nora dear. The worst thing about the kind of situation I'm in, is that it fills you with bitterness. You have no one to work for, and yet you have to put all your energy into it. You have to live, and so you get selfish. When you were telling me about your piece of good luck, I was more pleased for my sake than for yours, if you can believe it.

NORA. Why? Oh, I see. You mean you thought perhaps Torvald could do something for you?

MRS. LINDE. I was thinking that, yes.

NORA. Well, I'm sure he will, Kristine. Leave it to me. I shall work out some very, very subtle way to lead up to it, and I shall think of something charming to put him in a good mood. I'd really love to help you.

MRS. LINDE. It's very good of you, Nora, to take so much trouble. Especially as you know so little about the trials and tribulations of life.

NORA. I know so little . . . ?

MRS. LINDE. (*Smiling.*) Well, except for a bit of needlework, of course. You're a child, Nora.

NORA. (*Throwing her head back and crossing the room.*) You shouldn't be so patronizing.

MRS. LINDE. Shouldn't I?

NORA. You're just like everyone else. Nobody thinks I'm capable of doing anything really serious . . .

MRS. LINDE. Now, now. . . .

NORA. . . . or that I've ever had to face any real problems in this hard world.

MRS. LINDE. But, Nora dear, you've just told me about all your difficulties.

NORA. Oh, that, that was nothing! (*Quietly.*) I haven't told you about the really important thing.

MRS. LINDE. What really important thing? What do you mean?

NORA. You look down on me, Kristine. But you

shouldn't. I know you're very proud of having worked so hard and so long to help your mother.

MRS. LINDE. I'm sure I don't look down on anyone. But it is true it makes me proud *and* happy to think I was able to make my mother's last years relatively comfortable.

NORA. And you're proud of what you were able to do for your brothers.

MRS. LINDE. I think I have a right to be.

NORA. So do I. But I'll tell you something, Kristine. There is one thing I can be proud and happy about as well.

MRS. LINDE. I'm sure there is. What is it?

NORA. Keep your voice down. Torvald might hear us. He mustn't ever find out about it. Nor must anyone, Kristine. No one except you.

MRS. LINDE. What? Find out about what?

NORA. Come here. (*Brings her over to the sofa and sits next to her.*) You see . . . There's one thing I can be proud and happy about. I saved Torvald's life.

MRS. LINDE. Saved his life? How?

NORA. I told you about our trip to Italy. Torvald wouldn't have recovered if he hadn't been able to go on it.

MRS. LINDE. Yes, so your father gave you the money you needed.

NORA. (*Smiling.*) Yes, that's what Torvald thinks, and so does everyone else. But . . .

MRS. LINDE. But what . . . ?

NORA. Father didn't give us a penny. I got hold of the money myself.

MRS. LINDE. You did? All of it?

NORA. Four thousand, eight hundred kroner. What do you think of that?

MRS. LINDE. Yes, but how, Nora, how could you? Did you win it in the lottery?

NORA. (*Scornfully.*) In the lottery? (*Snorts.*) There

wouldn't have been anything very clever about that, would there?

MRS. LINDE. Well then, where did you get it from?

NORA. (*Humming and smiling mysteriously.*) Aha!

MRS. LINDE. You couldn't possibly have borrowed it.

NORA. Oh, couldn't I? And why not?

MRS. LINDE. Well, wives aren't allowed to borrow without their husband's consent.

NORA. (*Tossing her head.*) Oh, when a wife's got a bit of business sense and knows how to use her intelligence . . .

MRS. LINDE. But, Nora, I don't understand at all . . .

NORA. You don't have to. Anyway, who said I'd borrowed it? There's more than one way to get hold of money. (*Flops back into the sofa.*) You never know, I might have got it from an admirer. When you're as attractive as I am . . .

MRS. LINDE. Oh, don't be so silly.

NORA. You must be bursting with curiosity, Kristine.

MRS. LINDE. Listen, Nora, are you sure you haven't done something rash?

NORA. (*Sitting up straight.*) Is it rash to save your husband's life?

MRS. LINDE. I think it's rash if you do it without his knowledge. . . .

NORA. But that was the whole point to do it without him finding out! God, don't you understand? We never intended him to find out how dangerously ill he was. The doctors came to see me and told me his life was in danger and that nothing could save him but a rest-cure in the South. Do you think I didn't try to wheedle him into it first? I told him how lovely it would be for me to go abroad like all the other young brides, I cried and begged, I said he should think of my condition and that he ought to be considerate and humor me; finally I suggested he might borrow the money. Well, that really made him angry, Kristine. He told me I was frivolous and said it was his duty as a husband not to give way to all my

whims and impulses, I think he called them. All right, I thought, but you've still got to be saved—and I worked out a way to do it. . . .

MRS. LINDE. Didn't your husband find out from your father that the money hadn't come from him?

NORA. No, never. It was about that time my father died. I had thought of explaining it to him and asking him not to say anything. But he was terribly ill, and sadly it was never necessary.

MRS. LINDE. And you've never confessed to your husband since?

NORA. Good heavens, no, what a suggestion. He's got such strict views about that sort of thing. And besides, it would be a terrible blow to Torvald's masculine self-esteem, he'd find it so painful and humiliating to think he owed me something. It would completely unbalance our relationship. It would be the end of our beautiful, happy home.

MRS. LINDE. Won't you ever tell him?

NORA. (*Pensively, half-smiling.*) Yes. Maybe one day I will. But not for years and years, not until I've stopped being so pretty. No, don't laugh. What I mean is not until Torvald's stopped being so fond of me, not until he's stopped enjoying it when I dance for him, or dress up and recite. Then it might be a good idea to have something up my sleeve. . . . (*Breaking off.*) Oh, I do talk rubbish, don't I? That could never happen.—Well, what do you think of my great secret, Kristine? See, I am good for something after all, aren't I?—But it's been a terrible worry, all this, you can imagine. It's not been at all easy to keep up with my payments. You see, in the world of business, there are things called instalments, and there's something else called quarterly interest. And they're always extremely difficult to get hold of. I've just had to save a little here and a little there, you know, whenever I could. I couldn't possibly put anything aside out of the housekeeping money, because Torvald had to be properly looked after. I couldn't let the children go around badly

dressed, so I felt I had to spend everything I was given for them, dear little things.

MRS. LINDE. Poor Nora. I suppose it all had to come out of your allowance, did it?

NORA. That's right. It was my responsibility, after all. Whenever Torvald used to give me money for new clothes or anything like that, I never used more than half of it. I always bought whatever was cheapest and simplest. Thank God things always suit me so well, Torvald never suspected anything. But it was often very difficult, Kristine. Because it's lovely to have beautiful clothes, isn't it?

MRS. LINDE. Yes, it must be.

NORA. I found other ways of making money, as well. I was very lucky last winter, I managed to get a whole lot of copying work. I locked myself up every evening and sat up writing long into the night. I often used to feel really worn out. And yet in a way it was quite fun sitting up like that and working and earning money. It was almost like being a man.

MRS. LINDE. And how much of it have you been able to pay off?

NORA. Well, I'm not quite sure, really. You see, it's rather complicated, keeping track of these financial dealings. All I know is that I've paid out everything I've managed to scrape together. There were times when I couldn't see any way out. (*Smiles.*) Then I used to sit here and think about a rich old man, who'd fallen madly in love with me . . .

MRS. LINDE. What! Who?

NORA. Don't interrupt . . . and then he died, and when they opened his will, they found he'd written in big, bold letters: "All my money is to be paid over to the adorable Mrs. Helmer. In cash."

MRS. LINDE. But who was he, Nora?

NORA. Oh, really, don't you understand? He was a fantasy, he didn't exist at all, I just sat here and imagined him when I couldn't think how I was going to get hold of the money. Anyway, it doesn't matter now. As far as I'm

concerned, he can stay where he is, dreary old man. I couldn't care less about him or his will, my worries are over. (*Jumps up.*) Oh, God, Kristine, isn't it marvelous? No more worries! And if there's nothing to worry about any more, I can be free. I can have fun and play games with the children. I can spend some time on the house, and make everything pretty and nice, the way Torvald likes it. And then it'll be spring soon, and all those endless blue skies. And perhaps we'll be able to travel. I might see the sea again. It's really wonderful, isn't it, to be alive and happy!

(*The DOORBELL rings.*)

MRS. LINDE. (*Rising.*) There's someone at the front door. Perhaps I'd better go.

NORA. No, don't. I'm not expecting anyone. I expect it's someone for Torvald.

MAID. (*In the doorway.*) Excuse me, madam, there's a gentleman here to see Mr. Helmer. The doctor's still with him, so I wasn't sure . . .

NORA. Who is it?

KROGSTAD. (*In the doorway.*) Good morning, Mrs. Helmer.

(*MRS. LINDE starts and turns to look out of the window.*

NORA *anxiously takes a step toward him and speaks quickly.*)

NORA. What are you doing here? Why do you want to see my husband?

KROGSTAD. It's to do with the bank. I have a minor post in the Joint Stock Bank, and I understand your husband is to be our new manager.

NORA. So you're . . .

KROGSTAD. Simply here on dull routine business, Mrs. Helmer. That's all.

NORA. Then would you be so good as to use the busi-

ness entrance? (*Nods indifferently to him, and closes the door leading to the hall. Then she crosses to the stove and attends to the fire.*)

MRS. LINDE. Nora, who was that?

NORA. A lawyer, a Mr. Krogstad.

MRS. LINDE. So it was him.

NORA. Do you know him?

MRS. LINDE. I used to. Years ago. He used to work in a solicitor's office in our town.

NORA. That's right.

MRS. LINDE. He's changed.

NORA. He had rather an unhappy marriage.

MRS. LINDE. And he's a widower, isn't he?

NORA. With several children. That's better, I think it's caught now. (*Closes the stove door and moves the rocking chair a little to one side.*)

MRS. LINDE. Apparently he's dabbled in all sorts of different businesses.

NORA. Has he? Very likely. I wouldn't know. Anyway, don't let's talk about business, it's so boring.

(*DR. RANK enters from HELMER'S study.*)

RANK. (*In the doorway.*) No, no, I'll be in your way. I'd rather go and have a chat with your wife. (*Closes the door and notices MRS. LINDE.*) Oh, I'm sorry. I seem to be in the way here as well.

NORA. Not at all. (*Introduces them.*) Dr. Rank. Mrs. Linde.

RANK. Ah. That's a name I've often heard in this house. I think I passed you on the stairs when I arrived.

MRS. LINDE. Yes. Stairs take me a long time. I find them rather an effort.

RANK. Have you had some sort of internal trouble?

MRS. LINDE. No, it's just overwork, really.

RANK. Are you sure? So you've come up to town to go to all those restful parties, have you?

MRS. LINDE. I've come to look for a job.

RANK. Of course, that's an infallible cure for overwork.

MRS. LINDE. One has to live, Doctor.

RANK. Yes, that seems to be the general opinion.

NORA. Now, Dr. Rank, you know very well you want to live as much as anyone else.

RANK. You're right. However miserable I am, I want the pain to drag on as long as possible. And all my patients are the same. So are the morally ill. At this very moment one of those moral invalids is in there talking to Helmer.

MRS. LINDE. (*Softly.*) Oh!

NORA. Who's that?

RANK. Oh, no one you know, his name is Krogstad, he's a lawyer, and he's rotten to the core. But even he began by saying, as if he were making some breathtaking revelation, that he had to live.

NORA. Why does he want to see Torvald?

RANK. No idea. I gathered it was something about the Joint Stock Bank.

NORA. I didn't know Krog . . . I mean, I didn't know this Mr. Krogstad had anything to do with the bank.

RANK. Yes, he does have some sort of job there. (*To MRS. LINDE.*) I don't know whether this sort of thing happens where you come from, but there are people here who spend their time panting around, trying to root out moral derelicts, and then employing them in some profitable position, just so that they can keep an eye on them. And meanwhile honest, healthy men are left out in the cold.

MRS. LINDE. Well, I suppose it's the sick that most need looking after.

RANK. (*Shrugging his shoulders.*) That's just what I mean. That's the sort of attitude that turns society into a hospital. (*NORA, who has been buried in her own thoughts, half-stifles a sudden burst of laughter and claps her hands.*) What are you laughing at? Have you any idea what society is?

NORA. I couldn't care less about your boring old so-

ciety. I was laughing about something else altogether. . . . I just thought of something extremely funny. Tell me, Dr. Rank . . . is everyone who works at the bank dependent on Torvald now?

RANK. I don't see what's so funny about that.

NORA. (*Smiling and humming.*) Oh, never mind, never mind. (*Wanders around the room.*) I find it terribly amusing to think that we have, I mean, that Torvald has so much influence over so many people's lives. (*Takes the bag out of her pocket.*) Dr. Rank, would you like a little macaroon?

RANK. Ah, macaroons is it? I thought they were illegal in this house.

NORA. Yes, but these were given to me by Kristine.

MRS. LINDE. Me? I . . .

NORA. It's all right, nothing to worry about. You weren't to know Torvald had outlawed them. The thing is, he's afraid they'll rot my teeth. But it's not going to hurt just this once, is it, Doctor? Here you are. (*Puts a macaroon into his mouth.*) One for you, Kristine. And I'll have one too. Just a tiny one. Two at the most. (*Wanders around again.*) I feel terribly happy. There's only one thing in the world I really long to do.

RANK. What's that?

NORA. It's just something I really long to say in front of Torvald.

RANK. Go on then, what's stopping you?

NORA. I don't dare, it's so horrible.

MRS. LINDE. Horrible?

RANK. Well, then, perhaps it wouldn't be very advisable. But you can tell us what it is you really long to say in front of Helmer.

NORA. I really long to say: hell and damnation.

RANK. You're mad.

MRS. LINDE. Good Heavens, Nora . . .

RANK. Say it. Here he comes.

NORA. (*Hiding the bag of macaroons.*) Sh, sh, sh!
(*HELMER enters from his study with his hat in his hand*)

and his overcoat over his arm. Going over to him.') Did you get rid of him, Torvald?

HELMER. Yes, he's gone.

NORA. Let me introduce you. This is Kristine, she's just arrived in town.

HELMER. Kristine? I'm sorry, I don't think I . . .

NORA. Mrs. Linde, dear. Mrs. Kristine Linde.

HELMER. Oh, yes. Erm, you must be a school friend of my wife . . .

MRS. LINDE. Yes, we knew each other a long time ago.

NORA. And she's come all this way to talk to you.

HELMER. To me? I don't understand.

MRS. LINDE. Well, that's not really . . .

NORA. Kristine's terribly clever at office work, and what she really longs to do is to work for somebody very experienced, so that she can learn even more about it.

HELMER. Sounds very sensible, Mrs. Linde.

NORA. And when she heard that you'd been made bank manager, someone sent her a telegram about it, she traveled up here as soon as she could and . . . Don't you think you could do something for Kristine? For my sake, Torvald? Mm?

HELMER. It's not impossible. I assume you're a widow, Mrs. Linde.

MRS. LINDE. Yes.

HELMER. And you've had some business experience?

MRS. LINDE. Quite a lot, yes.

HELMER. Then it's very likely I'll be able to find you a place.

NORA. (*Clapping her hands.*) There you are, you see!

HELMER. You timed your arrival very well, Mrs. Linde. . . .

MRS. LINDE. Oh, how can I ever thank you . . . ?

HELMER. Think nothing of it. (*Puts on his overcoat.*) Well, you must excuse me now. . . .

RANK. Just a minute, I'll come with you. (*Fetches his fur coat from the hall and warms it in front of the fire.*)

NORA. Don't be long, dear.

HELMER. I shan't be more than an hour.

NORA. Are you leaving as well, Kristine?

MRS. LINDE. (*Putting on her overcoat.*) Yes, I must go and look for a room.

HELMER. Perhaps you'd like to walk down with us?

NORA. (*Helping her.*) It's a bind we're so short of room. I don't know if we could manage . . .

MRS. LINDE. Oh, no, I wouldn't dream of it. Good-bye, Nora dear, and thank you for everything.

NORA. Good-bye for now. Of course you must come back for dinner this evening. And you too, Dr. Rank. What's that?

RANK. I said, if I'm well enough.

NORA. If you're well enough? I'm sure you'll be well enough. As long as you wrap up warm. (*Further exchanges as they go out into the hall. [The CHILDREN'S voices are heard outside on the stairs.] Here they are! Here they are! (She runs to open the front door. ANNE-MARIE, the nurse, comes in with the CHILDREN.) Come in, come in! (She bends down to kiss them.) Sweet. Aren't you? You see, Kristine? Aren't they lovely?*

RANK. Don't let's just stand around chattering in the draught.

HELMER. Come along, Mrs. Linde. This is where it becomes unbearable for anyone who isn't a mother.

(DR. RANK, HELMER and MRS. LINDE go down the stairs.

ANNE-MARIE enters the room with the CHILDREN.

NORA follows, closing the door behind her.)

NORA. You're looking very cheeky, where did you get those healthy little red faces? You look like apples and roses. (*The CHILDREN are all talking at once during what follows.*) Have you had a nice time? Good. You gave Emmy and Bob a ride on your sledge, did you? Both at once? Aren't you a clever little boy, Ivar? Give her to me a minute, Anne-Marie. She's like a little doll, aren't you, sweetie? Mm? (*She takes the smallest from ANNE-MARIE*

and dances round with her.) All right, all right, Mummy will dance with Bob as well. What? Snowballs? Oh, I wish I'd been with you. No, just a minute, Anne-Marie, I'll take their things off. No, let me, please, it's such fun. You look terribly cold, why don't you go in for a bit? There's some hot coffee on the stove in there. (ANNE-MARIE *exits* L. NORA *takes the CHILDREN's things off, throwing them down all over the place, letting the CHILDREN chatter away all at once.*) A big what ran after you? A dog? He didn't bite you, did he? Dogs never bite lovely little dolls. Ivar! Stop it, you mustn't look at the parcels. Aha, wouldn't you like to know? No, it's something absolutely horrible. Now. Shall we play a game? Let's play a game. Hide-and-seek? Bob, you hide first. Me? All right, I'll hide first. (*She and the CHILDREN play hide-and-seek in the living room and the room adjoining it on the R.*)

(*Finally, NORA hides under the table, the CHILDREN come storming in, look for her but can't find her, hear her smothered laughter, rush over to the table, lift the cloth and see her. Great excitement. She creeps out from under the table, as if to frighten them.*) If the CHILDREN are omitted from the production, omit portion on bottom half of page 26, all of page 27 and two portions on page 28. Insert the following after omitted portion, top of page 28. More excitement. Meanwhile, there has been a knock at the front door which no one has noticed. The door is half-opened and KROGSTAD appears. He waits a moment. [*The game continues.*])

ANNE-MARIE. (*Bangs outer door shut.*) Into the kitchen and have your cocoa. Give me your hat.

RANK. (*At the door.*) Ah, the children are here. Hello, Ivar. Hello, Emmy. Don't let's stand here chattering in the draught.

ANNIE-MARIE. It's cold out there. Wrap up warm.

HELMER. Come along, Mrs. Linde. This is where it becomes unbearable for anyone who isn't a mother.

MRS. LINDE. Good-bye.

(HELMER, DR. RANK and MRS. LINDE exit. NORA goes into living room. ANNE-MARIE closes door and crosses toward the nursery.)

ANNIE-MARIE. We had a fine time out there. Little Ivar gave Emmy a ride on his sled.

NORA. What a good boy.

ANNIE-MARIE. And they threw snowballs. Didn't want to stop.

NORA. Snowballs! Oh, I wish I'd been there. (*Takes ANNE-MARIE's right hand.*) You're freezing. There's some hot coffee in the nursery.

ANNIE-MARIE. Thank you, Miss Nora. Thank you. (*She exits.*)]

KROGSTAD. Excuse me, Mrs. Helmer . . .

NORA. (*Smothering a cry, turning round and half-jumping.*) Oh! What do you want?

KROGSTAD. I'm sorry to—er . . . the front door was open, someone must have forgotten to close it. . . .

NORA. (*Getting up.*) My husband is out, Mr. Krogstad.

KROGSTAD. I know.

NORA. Then . . . what is it you want?

KROGSTAD. A word with you.

NORA. With me? [*(Quietly to the CHILDREN.)* Go in and see Anne-Marie. No, there's nothing to worry about, he won't hurt me. And when he's gone, we'll play another game. (*She takes the CHILDREN over to the room on the L. and closes the door behind them. Tense, uneasy.*) You want to talk to me?]

KROGSTAD. Yes.

NORA. Why today? It's not the first of the month yet.

KROGSTAD. No, I know, it's Christmas Eve. And if you want it to be a happy Christmas, it's up to you.

NORA. What do you want? I can't possibly get hold of it today.

KROGSTAD. There's no need to worry about that just at the moment. It's something else. Have you got a minute?

NORA. Yes. Yes, of course. Except . . .

KROGSTAD. Good. I was sitting in Olsen's restaurant just now, and I saw your husband passing down the street . . .

NORA. Well?

KROGSTAD. . . . with a lady.

NORA. What of it?

KROGSTAD. Might I be so bold as to ask whether that lady was a certain Mrs. Linde?

NORA. Yes, it was.

KROGSTAD. Has she just arrived in town?

NORA. Yes, today.

KROGSTAD. Is she a close friend of yours?

NORA. Yes, she is. But I don't see . . .

KROGSTAD. I used to know her as well.

NORA. Yes.

KROGSTAD. Ah, she told you about all that, did she? I thought as much. Now, will you please give me a straight answer to this? Has Mrs. Linde been given a job at the bank?

NORA. I don't know how you can have the face to interrogate me like this, Mr. Krogstad. You are one of my husband's employees, after all. However, since you ask, I might as well tell you. Mrs. Linde has been given a job there. On my recommendation, Mr. Krogstad. Now you know.

KROGSTAD. So I guessed right.

NORA. (*Pacing round the room.*) I think I do have a little bit of influence, you know. Just because I'm a woman, it doesn't mean I don't . . . So you see, Mr. Krogstad, when one finds oneself in a subordinate position, one really needs to be careful not to offend anyone with . . . erm . . .

KROGSTAD. Influence.

NORA. Exactly.

KROGSTAD. (*A change of tone.*) Mrs. Helmer, I wonder if you'd be kind enough to use your influence on my behalf?

NORA. What? What do you mean?

KROGSTAD. Would you be so kind as to make sure I keep my subordinate position at the bank?

NORA. I don't understand. Why should anyone take it away from you?

KROGSTAD. Oh, there's no point pretending you don't know anything about it. I realize it can't be very pleasant for your friend to be pushed together with me. And now I realize who's responsible for hounding me out.

NORA. I assure you I . . .

KROGSTAD. Yes, yes, well, never mind that. There's still time to stop it, and I advise you to use your influence to do something about it.

NORA. But, Mr. Krogstad, I've got no influence, really.

KROGSTAD. You just said . . .

NORA. I know, I know, but that was different. You can't really think I have that much influence over my husband.

KROGSTAD. Oh, I know your husband, we were students together. I know he's a bank manager, but I don't think you'll find him any more resolute than any other husband.

NORA. If you're going to insult my husband, I shall have to ask you to leave.

KROGSTAD. A lady of spirit.

NORA. I'm not afraid of you any more. By the new year, all this will be behind me.

KROGSTAD. (*Controlling himself.*) Now listen to me, Mrs. Helmer. If necessary, I'm prepared to fight for my little job at the bank as if I were fighting for my life.

NORA. Apparently.

KROGSTAD. It's not just the salary, you know. That's the last thing I'm worried about. It's something else. . . . I'll tell you about it, shall I, explain it to you. I suppose

you know, like everyone else, that a few years ago I . . . made a mistake.

NORA. I did hear something about it.

KROGSTAD. I was never brought to trial for it. But from then on, for me, all roads were blocked. You know what business I went into then. I had to do something; and I don't think I've been as bad as many of them. But now I've got to put all that behind me. My sons are growing up, I've got to win back as much public respectability as I can, for their sake. For me that job at the bank was the first step on the ladder. And now your husband wants to kick me off again, back into the mud.

NORA. But for God's sake, Mr. Krogstad, it really isn't in my power to help you.

KROGSTAD. You only say that, because you don't want to help me. But I have the means to force you.

NORA. You aren't going to tell my husband I owe you money?

KROGSTAD. Well? Suppose I do?

NORA. That would be a wicked thing to do. (*Tearfully.*) That secret is my pride and my happiness, if he were to find out about it in such a crude, ugly way, from you . . . It would put me in the most frightfully unpleasant position.

KROGSTAD. Unpleasant, is that all?

NORA. (*Vehemently.*) All right then, do it. It'll be the worse for you. Then my husband really will see how vicious you are, and you're bound to lose your job.

KROGSTAD. I asked you if it was just a bit of domestic unpleasantness you were afraid of?

NORA. If my husband does find out about it, he will of course pay whatever's outstanding at once, and then we need have nothing more to do with you.

KROGSTAD. (*Moving a step nearer.*) Listen, Mrs. Helmer. Either you have a very poor memory, or else you haven't much of a clue about business. I can see I'm going to have to give you a course of basic instruction.

NORA. What do-you mean?

KROGSTAD. When your husband was ill, you came to me to borrow four thousand, eight hundred kroner.

NORA. You were the only one I knew of.

KROGSTAD. I promised to raise the money for you. . . .

NORA. And you did.

KROGSTAD. I promised to raise the money for you on certain conditions. But at the time, you were so pre-occupied with your husband's illness and so anxious to get hold of enough money for the journey, I don't think you paid very much attention to the technicalities of the contract. That's why I feel it would be not inappropriate to remind you of them. Now, I promised to raise the money for you in return for an I.O.U., which I drew up.

NORA. Yes, and which I signed.

KROGSTAD. Right. But then I added another clause at the bottom, which said your father would act as guarantor for the loan, and which needed your father's signature.

NORA. He did sign it.

KROGSTAD. The date was left blank, so that your father could fill it in himself when he signed the contract. Do you remember?

NORA. I think so, yes. . . .

KROGSTAD. I gave you the contract to post to your father, didn't I?

NORA. Yes.

KROGSTAD. You must have sent it off to him straight-away. Because five or six days later you brought it in to me with your father's signature. Whereupon I handed over the money.

NORA. Well? I've kept my payments regular, haven't I?

KROGSTAD. More or less. But anyway, to go back to what we were discussing, I imagine that must have been a very difficult time for you, Mrs. Helmer.

NORA. Yes, it was.

KROGSTAD. I believe your father was very ill as well.

NORA. He was dying.

KROGSTAD. And did die shortly afterwards?

NORA. Yes.

KROGSTAD. Tell me, Mrs. Helmer, do you by any chance remember what day your father died? The date, I mean.

NORA. Father died on the 29th of September.

KROGSTAD. That's right. I made inquiries. And this is where we come to the unusual feature of the case . . . (*Produces a document.*) . . . which I must say I'm at a loss to explain.

NORA. Unusual feature? I don't think . . .

KROGSTAD. The unusual feature of the case, Mrs. Helmer, is that your father signed this contract three days after he died.

NORA. What? I don't understand. . . .

KROGSTAD. Your father died on September the 29th. Now, look at this. Here your father has dated his signature October the 2nd. Now, that is rather unusual, Mrs. Helmer, wouldn't you agree? (*NORA is silent.*) Not easy to explain, is it? (*NORA still doesn't answer.*) It also struck me that the words October the 2nd and the year were not in your father's handwriting, but in a handwriting I think I recognize. Well, I'm sure there's an explanation for that, your father might have forgotten to date his signature, and someone else has added a date at random, not knowing about his death. There's nothing wrong with that. What is vitally important is the signature itself. I suppose it is genuine, Mrs. Helmer? Your father really did sign here, did he?

NORA. (*After a short silence, throwing her head back and confronting him defiantly.*) No, he didn't. I did.

KROGSTAD. Mrs. Helmer . . . you realize that's a very dangerous confession?

NORA. Why? You'll have your money soon enough.

KROGSTAD. May I ask you a question? Why didn't you send your father the contract?

NORA. I couldn't. Father was very ill. If I'd asked him for his signature, I'd have to have told him why I needed

the money. He was so ill, I couldn't have told him my husband's life was in danger. It was impossible.

KROGSTAD. Then you would have done better to cancel your trip.

NORA. I couldn't possibly. It saved my husband's life. I couldn't possibly cancel it.

KROGSTAD. But you were cheating me, or did that never occur to you?

NORA. I couldn't afford to worry about things like that. I didn't care about you. I hated you for making all those ruthless conditions when you knew how dangerously ill my husband was.

KROGSTAD. Mrs. Helmer, you obviously have no clear idea what you're guilty of. I can assure you that what I did was no more and no worse than that, and it totally destroyed my position in society.

NORA. What you did? Are you trying to tell me you took any risks to save your wife's life?

KROGSTAD. The law is not interested in motives.

NORA. Then the law is useless.

KROGSTAD. Useless or not, if I were to submit this contract to a court, you would be condemned by the law.

NORA. I don't believe it. You mean a daughter isn't allowed to spare her old, dying father worry and anxiety? A wife isn't allowed to save her husband's life? I don't know much about the law, but I'm sure there must be provisions made somewhere for that kind of situation. And if you don't know that, then all I can say is that you must be a pretty useless lawyer, Mr. Krogstad.

KROGSTAD. That's as may be. But when it comes to business, the kind of business we're involved in, you can take my word for it I know what I'm talking about. All right. Now do what you like. But I'm telling you one thing: if I'm thrown out again, you're coming with me. *(Bows and exits into the hall.)*

NORA. *(Stands for a moment, thinking, then tosses her head back.)* Hm! He's just trying to frighten me. I'm

not as stupid as that. (*Starts folding up the children's clothes, then pauses.*) But . . . ? No, no, it's impossible.

[CHILDREN. (*In the left-hand doorway.*) Mummy, the stranger's gone now, Mummy.

NORA. Yes, I know. But you're not to tell anyone there was a stranger here. Do you understand? Not even Daddy.

CHILDREN. Yes, Mummy. Are we going to play a game now?

NORA. No. No, not now.

CHILDREN. Oh, Mummy, you promised.

NORA. Yes, but I can't now. I've got so much to do. Come along now, in you go, dears, in you go. (*She pushes them gently into their room and closes the door behind them.*) Then she sits on the sofa, embroiders a few stitches, then gives up.) No. (*Puts down the embroidery, gets up, goes over to the hall door and calls out.*) Helene! Bring the tree in. (*She crosses L. to the table, opens a drawer, pauses.*) No, it's impossible.

MAID. (*With the Christmas tree.*) Where shall I put it, madam?

NORA. There. In the middle. I'll just move the table.

MAID. Is there anything else to be brought in?

NORA. No, thank you. I have everything I need. (*The MAID puts down the tree and exits. Decorating the tree.*) A candle here . . . and flowers here. . . . Horrible man. Anyway, it's all a lot of nonsense. Not worth worrying about. The Christmas tree's going to be lovely. I'll do anything you want me to, Torvald, sing for you, dance for you . . . (*HELMER enters, with a bundle of papers under his arm.*) Oh . . . back already?

HELMER. Yes. Has anyone been here?

NORA. Here? No.

HELMER. That's funny. I saw Krogstad leaving the house.

NORA. Really? Yes, that's right, Krogstad was here for a minute.

HELMER. Nora, he was here begging you to put in a

good word for him, wasn't he? I can tell just by looking at you.

NORA. Yes.

HELMER. And you were going to pretend it was your idea, weren't you? You weren't going to tell me he'd been here. Was that his suggestion, as well?

NORA. Yes, Torvald, but . . .

HELMER. Nora, really, how could you agree to something like that? How could you talk to that sort of man, let alone make promises to him? And then lie to me on top of everything.

NORA. Lie to you . . . ?

HELMER. You said no one had been here. Didn't you? (*Wags his finger at her.*) My little songbird must never do that again. A songbird must have a clean beak, mustn't she, she mustn't sing out of tune. (*Puts his arm round her.*) Isn't that right? Yes, I thought so. (*Lets her go.*) Now, we'll say no more about it. (*Sits down by the stove.*) Isn't it warm and cozy here? (*Starts looking through his papers.* NORA is busy with the Christmas tree. *Short silence.*)

NORA. Torvald.

HELMER. Yes.

NORA. I'm really looking forward to the Stenborgs' fancy dress ball the day after tomorrow.

HELMER. And I'm dying to see what you're going to surprise me with this time.

NORA. Oh, it's so silly!

HELMER. What?

NORA. I can't think of anything good. Everything seems so stupid and pointless.

HELMER. So you've found that out, have you, Nora?

NORA. (*Behind him, looking over the back of his chair.*) Are you very busy, Torvald?

HELMER. Well . . .

NORA. What are those papers?

HELMER. They're to do with the bank.

NORA. Already?

HELMER. I've persuaded the outgoing manager to give me the authority to make the necessary staff and administration changes. I must get that done during Christmas week. I want all that sorted out by the New Year.

NORA. And that's why poor Krogstad . . .

HELMER. Mm.

NORA. (*Still leaning over the back of his chair and slowly ruffling his hair.*) If you hadn't been so busy, Torvald, I would have asked you an enormous favor.

HELMER. And what might that be? Tell me.

NORA. Your taste is better than anyone's. And I really want to look nice at the fancy dress ball. Couldn't you take charge of me, Torvald, and decide what I should be and what sort of costume I should wear?

HELMER. What, a stubborn little girl like you appealing for a savior?

NORA. Yes, Torvald, I'll never be able to manage without your help.

HELMER. All right, I'll think about it, see what we come up with.

NORA. You're very kind to me. (*Moves over to the Christmas tree. Pause.*) Aren't those red flowers pretty? . . . Tell me, was it really so terrible, whatever it was Krogstad did wrong?

HELMER. Forgery. Have you any idea how serious that is?

NORA. But isn't it possible he was forced into it by necessity?

HELMER. Yes. Or else he just did it without thinking, like so many people. I'm not so heartless as to condemn a man irrevocably because of one isolated incident.

NORA. No, I know you're not, Torvald.

HELMER. A man can always regain his moral stature, if he openly confesses his crime and takes his punishment.

NORA. Punishment . . . ?

HELMER. But that wasn't Krogstad's method. He got out of it by trickery and deceit. And that's what makes him a moral cripple.

NORA. Don't you think . . . ?

HELMER. Think of the way a man with a guilty conscience has to live: lies, hypocrisy, pretense, even those nearest to him, even his wife and children can never see behind his mask. And the most dreadful thing about it is what happens to the children.

NORA. Why?

HELMER. Because an atmosphere of lies can infect and contaminate the whole life of a home. Every breath the children take in a house like that is full of disgusting germs.

NORA. (*Moving closer behind him.*) Are you sure about that?

HELMER. My dear, as a lawyer, I've had more than enough experience of that sort of thing. Nearly all young criminals have had dishonest mothers.

NORA. Why do you say mothers?

HELMER. Because it usually is the mother's responsibility. Although, of course, the father can have the same effect. Any lawyer knows that. And yet Krogstad has been at home all these years, poisoning his own children with lies and deceit. That's why I say he's morally degenerate. (*Holds out his arms to her.*) And that's why my dear little Nora is going to promise me never to mention him again. Shake hands on it. Now, what's the matter? Give me your hand. Right. That's settled. Anyway, it would have been quite impossible for me to work with him, I can tell you. People like that literally make me feel physically ill.

NORA. (*Withdrawing her hand and moving over to the other side of the Christmas tree.*) It's very warm in here. I've got so much to do.

HELMER. (*Standing and gathering up his papers.*) Yes, and I ought to read through some of these papers before lunch. And I'll have a think about your costume as well. And I might even find a little something to wrap up in gold paper and hang on the Christmas tree. (*Puts his*

hand on her head.) Darling little songbird. (*Goes into the study and closes the door behind him.*)

NORA. (*Quietly, after a pause.*) No. It's not true. It's impossible. Must be impossible.

ANNE-MARIE. (*In the doorway, L.*) The children want to know if they can come in and see Mummy.

NORA. No. No, they mustn't, don't let them in. Keep them with you, Anne-Marie.

ANNE-MARIE. Very good, madam. (*Closes the door.*)

NORA. (*Pale with terror.*) Corrupt my children. Poison my home. (*Pause. She throws back her head.*) It's not true. It could never be true.

ACT TWO

The same room. In the corner, by the piano, is the Christmas tree, stripped, bedraggled, the candles burnt out. NORA'S overcoat is on the sofa.

NORA, *alone in the room, is pacing up and down restlessly. Finally she stops by the sofa and picks up her coat.*

NORA. (*Putting on her coat.*) Who's that? (*Moves over to the door and listens.*) No, it's nobody. Of course not. Nobody would come on Christmas Day. Or tomorrow. Unless . . . (*Opens the door and looks out.*) No. Nothing in the letter box. Nothing at all. (*Crosses the room.*) Oh, don't be silly. He didn't mean it. Of course he didn't, he couldn't do a thing like that. It's impossible. I have three children.

(ANNE-MARIE *enters from the L., carrying a large cardboard box.*)

ANNE-MARIE. I finally found the box with the fancy dress costumes.

NORA. Thank you. Put it down on the table.

ANNE-MARIE. (*Doing so.*) But they're in an awful muddle.

NORA. I wish I could rip them up into a hundred thousand pieces.

ANNE-MARIE. Oh, there's no need to do that, they can easily be sorted out. All it needs is a bit of patience.

NORA. I'm going to get Mrs. Linde over to help me.

ANNE-MARIE. Going out again? In this weather? You'll catch cold, madam, you will.

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