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A Doll's House

By
Henrik Ibsen

An Acting Version by
Thornton Wilder

A SAMUEL FRENCH ACTING EDITION

**SAMUEL
FRENCH**
FOUNDED 1830

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ISBN 978-0-573-70526-7

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A DOLL'S HOUSE was first produced by Mr. Jed Harris at the Morosco Theatre in New York City on December 27, 1937. The performance was directed by Jed Harris with scenic and costume design by Donald Oenslager, choreography by Martha Graham, music by Bernice Richmond, women's costumes by Helene Pons, men's costumes by Eaves, shoes by Israel Miller. The scenery was built by Vail Construction Company and painted by Robert W. Bergman, Inc., the electrical equipment was by Century Lighting; the technical assistant to Mr. Oenslager was Isaac Benesch, the general manager was Joe Glick, the press representative was Emanuel Eisenberg, the assistant on production was Harold Johnsrud, the master carpenter was Frank Dwyer, the master electrician was Thomas Connel and the master of properties was Max Davis. The cast was as follows:

THORWALD HELMER	Dennis King
NORA HELMER	Ruth Gordon
EMMY	Lorna Lynn Meyers
IVAR	Howard Sherman
DOCTOR RANK	Paul Lukas
CHRISTINA LINDEN	Margaret Waller
NILS KROGSTAD	Sam Jaffe
ANNA	Grace Mills
ELLEN	Jessica Rogers
PORTER	Harold Johnsrud

A DOLL'S HOUSE was presented by Theatre for a New Audience (Jeffrey Horowitz, Artistic Director; Henry Christensen III, Chairman; Dorothy Ryan, Managing Director) at the Polonsky Shakespeare Center in Brooklyn, New York, on May 22, 2016. The production was directed by Arin Arbus, the scenic designer was Riccardo Hernandez, the costume designer was Susan Hilferty, the lighting designer was Marcus Doshi, the choreographer was Sam Pinkleton, the composer/co-sound designer was Daniel Kluger, the co-sound designer was Lee Kinney, the hair and makeup designer was Dave Bova, the properties supervisor was Jon Knust, the dramaturg was Jonathan Kalb, the fight director was J. Allen Suddeth, casting was by Deborah Brown, the production stage manager was Diane Healy, the assistant stage managers were Anne Ciarlone and Tori Sheehan, the press representative was The Bruce Cohen Group and the general manager was Michael Page. The cast was as follows:

THORWALD HELMER	John Douglas Thompson
NORA HELMER	Maggie Lacey
EMMY	Jayla Lavender Nicholas
IVAR	Ruben Almash
DOCTOR RANK	Nigel Gore
CHRISTINA LINDEN	Linda Powell
NILS KROGSTAD	Jesse J. Perez
ANNA	Laurie Kennedy
ELLEN	Kimber Monroe
PORTER	Christian J. Mallen

CHARACTERS

THORWALD HELMER

NORA HELMER – Helmer's wife

EMMY – their daughter

IVAR – their son

DOCTOR RANK

CHRISTINA LINDEN

NILS KROGSTAD

ANNA – the nurse

ELLEN – the maid

PORTER

SETTING

The action takes place in Helmer's house.

ACT I

*(The home of Thorwald **HELMER**, an honest member of the middle class, in Norway, late in the nineteenth century.)*

*(It is a pleasant warm, conventional, comfortable room, an adequate shelter for a wife, a growing reputation, and a pair of children. On stage left, double windows and a stove are guarantees against the northern cold. On stage right a glassed-in corridor leads from the outer door directly to **HELMER**'s study, passing other doors to the dining room and kitchen. In the rear wall are a pair of identical double doors, revealing, when they open, on the left, **NORA**'s room, with the nursery beyond; on the right, **HELMER**'s study.)*

(The room is furnished, for its time, simply. There is a splendid square piano center, and above it hang pictures, collected variously during eight years of marriage and probably not too closely regarded now. The piano is flanked by walnut side-chairs, relatives of two matching sofas, downstage right, with a small low table between them. Double doors, stage right, open in the center of the glassed-in wall. Stage left there are two windows, opening on the street, one story below. Between them stands the great stove, symbol of the secure comfort of the house. There are pleasant lamps of the period on a small table up left of the piano. There are small side tables beside a deep chair left, and to the right of the two matching sofas. There is a larger oval, inlaid table, up right, with a hanging shelf of books above it. There is some, but not too much,

bric-a-brac, and on the piano some books of old tunes.)

*(It is winter, the day before Christmas; the afternoon light is dying, casting shadows on the floor, the room is empty. The doors to **HELMER**'s study are closed; at the left, half of the doors to **NORA**'s room are slightly ajar. There is a short loud peal on the doorbell to the flat, then another, longer one. After a moment the maid, **ELLEN**, comes from her kitchen quarters, up left in the corridor, to open the door.)*

NORA. *(Out of sight at the door.)* Oh, thank you, Ellen. You'd better help me.

*(Her arms loaded with packages gaily wrapped, **NORA** surrenders some of them to **ELLEN**, shoves open the doors, stage left center, and sweeps into the room. Behind her is the **PORTER**, a basket of more parcels in one hand, a toy horse under one arm, a Christmas tree in his only remaining hand.)*

NORA. You bring that in here. How much?

PORTER. Oh, whatever you like, ma'am. A few pennies will do.

*(He sets down the tree, **NORA** takes the basket, he leaves the horse on the sofa.)*

NORA. Here!

*(She gives him a coin, takes up a box of flowers and crosses to the piano bench with them. **ELLEN** has set down some of the packages on the oval table. The **PORTER** fumbles for change.)*

Oh, no, keep the change. Merry Christmas!

PORTER. Thank you, ma'am. Merry Christmas to you.

*(He exits, cap in hand, as **NORA** quickly undoes the flowers.)*

ELLEN. Oh...flowers, too, ma'am!

NORA. Yes, Ellen, and so awfully expensive!

ELLEN. Well, they'll need some water. I'll go fetch a vase.

(She starts out for the kitchen.)

NORA. Yes, Ellen...hurry! Oh, are the children home yet?

ELLEN. No, ma'am. They're still out with Anna.

NORA. Oh! Come and take the tree into the kitchen...they mustn't see it until tonight.

(ELLEN returns to the room. She picks up the tree, starts out with it.)

ELLEN. Yes, ma'am. I understand. Mr. Helmer's got home already. He's in his study.

(She exits with the tree, through the vestibule, into the kitchen.)

NORA. Oh...

(NORA listens an instant at HELMER's door, begins to remove her gloves, coat and hat. She whistles a pleasant, gay little tune.)

HELMER. *(At his desk, inside the study, behind the doors.)* Is that you, Nora?

NORA. *(Pushing open the double doors to his study and hurrying up to his desk.)* Oh, Thorwald, I'm so glad you're at home. Come here! Come see what I've bought. The most wonderful bargains!

HELMER. My dear, I wish you wouldn't interrupt me.

NORA. Do come here!

(At this moment ELLEN has come out of the kitchen with a vase, crossed the vestibule, and entered the room. NORA runs merrily out of the study, taking the vase.)

Oh, thank you, Ellen...give that to me.

(ELLEN turns to exit, sees the toy horse, bravely standing on the sofa right.)

ELLEN. Well, well...

NORA. *(Already at the piano, arranging her flowers.)* Oh, yes,

that's a horse.

(ELLEN smiles and exits to the kitchen.)

Do come here, Thorwald!

(HELMER, disturbed at his work, must perforce rise, and he now saunters into the living room.)

Darling, you should see the tree! It's the most wonderful bargain.

HELMER. (*Surveying the litter of packages.*) You mean to say you've bought all these?

NORA. Oh, just a few little things. For the children...and Ellen and Anna...and Doctor Rank.

HELMER. (*He picks up one of the packages, then examines another.*) How many toys does it take to amuse these children?

NORA. (*Flies down, taking the package from him, hiding it swiftly under the chair left of the piano.*) No, no, not that one! You mustn't see that till tonight.

HELMER. (*Indulgently going to close the doors to the vestibule.*) Mmmm... I suppose you spent every penny I gave you.

NORA. (*Back again at her flowers.*) No, I did have some left... and then I saw these heavenly roses.

HELMER. (*Strolling toward the stove.*) But that's extravagant, my dear.

NORA. I know, Thorwald, I know. I just couldn't resist them.

HELMER. What a creature, what a creature.

(*He picks up his pipe, laid ready for him on the side table, and strikes a match for it.*)

And what did you buy for yourself?

NORA. Oh, I don't need anything.

HELMER. Nonsense. Tell me what you'd like.

NORA. Not a single thing.

HELMER. Put your little mind to it. Something useful... sensible.

NORA. Well...

HELMER. (*Back to her, still puffing his pipe to light it.*) Mmm?

NORA. If you really do want to give me something...You haven't bought anything yet, have you? (*She half turns toward him.*)

HELMER. No, I've been too busy at the bank.

NORA. Well, look, dearest...you could give me money!

HELMER. Now, Nora!

NORA. (*With a graceful, childlike blandness, she crosses toward him.*) And then I could buy myself something...just what I needed.

HELMER. There's no Christmas spirit about cold, hard money.

NORA. Oh, yes there is!

HELMER. But you're so extravagant, my dear. And we simply can't afford to go throwing money about, you know.

NORA. I know, but you'll be making lots of money now. Surely we can throw it about a little!

HELMER. My dear, my job doesn't even start till after New Year's.

NORA. (*Directly behind him, her hands placatingly on his shoulders.*) That's only next week.

HELMER. And I have to wait a whole quarter for my first check.

NORA. I know, but we can borrow enough in the meantime. We can get lots of credit now.

HELMER. (*Now touched on a vital point, he turns toward her for the first time.*) Borrow? My dear child, have you ever known me to borrow money?

NORA. No, but it ought to be easy enough now.

HELMER. I want no creditors in my life, thank you. We've held out all these years without ever owing anyone a penny, and we're certainly not going to begin now at the last minute.

NORA. Yes, darling...

HELMER. Besides, it would look bad...a man in my position.

NORA. (*Patting him soothingly, she moves away toward the sofas.*) Yes, I suppose so. Of course you know best, Thorwald.

HELMER. (*Relenting a little, now that he has gained his point.*) At the same time, we're not exactly paupers. It's a comfort to know we've lived within our means...no debts to worry us.

(*He sits in his deep chair, left.*)

NORA. (*Busily prying into one of her purchases, at the table, right.*) Yes, darling.

HELMER. I've even managed to save a little. Not many men could have done that, on my salary.

NORA. (*Piling some of her parcels on top of the others.*) No, Thorwald.

HELMER. (*In a mood for largesse, he draws out his wallet.*) And things are getting a little easier. Well, after all... Nora, what do you think I've got here?

NORA. (*Turning around instantly and racing to him.*) Money!

HELMER. (*Pulling out a handful of notes.*) I know you've been looking forward to Christmas...

NORA. (*Just behind him, she reaches out with both hands and takes what currency she can.*) Ten, twenty, thirty, forty...

HELMER. (*Clutching the funds to him.*) Here, here...

NORA. (*Hurrying into her room before he can change his mind.*) Oh, Thorwald, thank you! This will go a long way!

(*We hear a drawer slam, as she caches the money in her bureau.*)

HELMER. I should hope so. No one would believe how much it costs a man to keep a little thing like you.

NORA. (*Bustling back into the room to get her packages out of sight.*) Even little things have expenses, Thorwald.

HELMER. Just like your father...reaching out for money, money, all the time.

(*NORA takes an armload of presents into her room.*)

HELMER. Still, it's certainly a cheerier Christmas this year than last.

NORA. (*Back in the living room to dispose of more packages.*)
Mmmmm.

HELMER. I hardly saw you at all, remember? You shut yourself up in your room, toiling over those homemade decorations. Lord, I was bored.

(*NORA has gone into her room with the last of her presents. She now returns and moves to the side of THORWALD's chair, ready for something that has long been on her mind.*)

NORA. Well, I wasn't. Look, Thorwald, I thought...

(*She sits down on a small side chair, left of Thorwald's easy chair, when the doorbell rings.*)

Oh, dear, company...what a bore!

(*ELLEN enters the vestibule from the kitchen, goes to the front door.*)

Well, look, Thorwald, I think we ought to manage things a little differently now. After Christmas is over...

(*But ELLEN has opened the glass doors, left center, as the figure of a man is seen passing behind her, entering HELMER's study.*)

ELLEN. A lady to see you, Mrs. Helmer...

NORA. (*Rising.*) Oh, tell her to come in.

(*HELMER rises.*)

ELLEN. (*Crossing to the piano for the emptied flower box.*) And Doctor Rank has gone into the study, Mr. Helmer.

HELMER. (*Crossing right and up to his study.*) I'll join him.
Excuse me, Nora.

(*He closes his study doors after him. NORA stands uncertainly, center. ELLEN exits into the vestibule with the flower box, and shows in the visitor, closing the left center doors behind her, and exiting. This is CHRISTINA LINDEN, who comes in smiling and is stopped by the look of puzzled unrecognition in NORA's face.*)

MRS. LINDEN. How are you, Nora?

NORA. How do you do?

MRS. LINDEN. You don't remember me, do you?

NORA. I... I don't think I...

(CHRISTINA smiles again, uncertainly. Some remembered thing returns to NORA's mind, and she rushes into her old friend's arms.)

Why, yes! Christina! Is it really you?

MRS. LINDEN. It really is.

NORA. Christina! And to think I didn't even know you! But you're so changed, Christina! You're so...

MRS. LINDEN. *(As the two women hold each other, studying the changes time puts in the face.)* Yes, I guess I am. In nine or ten years...

NORA. Good heavens! Has it been as long as that? I just can't believe it!

(NORA hugs CHRISTINA heartily.)

But what are you doing in town?

MRS. LINDEN. I arrived on the morning boat.

NORA. Oh! To spend Christmas. How wonderful! Do take your things off.

(She helps her off with her coat.)

Aren't you frozen? Come, sit by the fire and be cozy.

(She moves her to HELMER's big chair, left.)

Yes, now I begin to see the sweet old face...it was only at the first glance I didn't...

(Quickly she puts CHRISTINA's things on the chair by the piano and comes down to the footstool beside her.)

Oh, what a thoughtless wretch I am! Oh, darling, how can you forgive me?

MRS. LINDEN. Forgive you?

NORA. Oh Christina! I forgot that you...

MRS. LINDEN. (*With no trace of sentiment.*) Yes, my husband died three years ago.

NORA. I saw it in the paper, but...Well, you know how it is. You must believe me, Christina, I meant to write to you, but somehow things kept distracting me, getting in the way, and... (*In a characteristically swift change of direction.*) Did he leave you anything?

MRS. LINDEN. Nothing.

NORA. Not even any children?

MRS. LINDEN. No.

NORA. Nothing? Not anything?

MRS. LINDEN. Not even a regret.

NORA. But what do you mean, Christina? How could you have...

MRS. LINDEN. Oh, it happens that way sometimes, Nora.

NORA. Darling, you must tell me the whole story. I never would have dreamed it! It must have been awful...and to be absolutely alone afterwards! You know I have two of the sweetest children, just wait till you see them! They're out with their nurse now. So there's nothing to disturb us and you can tell me all about it.

MRS. LINDEN. No dear, you tell me.

NORA. No, really, darling, I won't be selfish today, I'll just think of you.

MRS. LINDEN. (*Smiling at her friend's eagerness.*) Thank you, Nora.

NORA. Oh, but I must tell you one thing! Or have you heard of our wonderful luck?

MRS. LINDEN. No, what is it?

NORA. Just think, darling! My husband has been appointed manager of the savings bank!

MRS. LINDEN. He has? How splendid!

NORA. He starts his new position right after New Year's, with a great big wonderful salary, and a share of the profits... Oh, Christina, can you imagine how it makes you feel to have lots of money?

MRS. LINDEN. (*A little wistfully.*) It would certainly be nice to have what you need.

NORA. No only what you need, but heaps of money!... Heaps, my dear!

MRS. LINDEN. (*Laughing.*) Oh, Nora, Nora! You're just the same, you haven't changed a bit, you're still the same old spend-thrift!

NORA. But don't be ridiculous. I've had to work.

(She rises, goes up to the piano, rummages in her bag.)

MRS. LINDEN. You? Work?

NORA. Yes, work! Sewing, embroidery, things like that. Other work, too! Oh yes, Thorwald hasn't been the only one.

(She takes a small striped sack from her bag, and plunges her hand in it, coming out with one of her little vices—macaroons.)

Have one?

(CHRISTINA smiles and shakes her head. NORA crams a macaroon in her mouth and goes right on talking.)

Of course, the poor darling has had a terrible time ever since we were married. He had to take on all sorts of odd jobs and work like a slave from morning till night. Well, it was just too much for him, and he became terribly ill. So then the doctors said he had to give up everything and go south.

(She is back again on the footstool.)

MRS. LINDEN. It must have cost a terrible lot!

NORA. Seventeen hundred...wasn't that frightful!

MRS. LINDEN. What luck that you had it!

NORA. (*With the slightest of hesitations.*) Yes...we got it from Papa.

MRS. LINDEN. Oh...so you inherited?

NORA. Yes, Christina.

MRS. LINDEN. But your husband... I thought when I came in your maid announced the doctor.

NORA. Oh, Doctor Rank, yes... But he doesn't come as a doctor, he's our best friend. No, Thorwald hasn't had an hour's illness since then. And the children are so sturdy and so am I. Oh, Christina, here I keep talking about myself, just rattling on. Darling, tell me, is it really true that you didn't love him?

MRS. LINDEN. What?

NORA. Your husband. Didn't you really? Whatever could you have been thinking of? To marry him, I mean. Was it...was he rich?

MRS. LINDEN. Nora, do you realize I had to provide for three people? I simply had to find some means of support. But my husband's business fell to pieces when he died, and I was right back where I started from.

NORA. (*With the astonishment of a sheltered woman.*) But what did you do?

MRS. LINDEN. (*Matter-of-factly, without self-pity.*) Oh, I taught school, kept a shop, anything. It's all past now, Nora... Then, Mother died and my brothers grew up. That's why I couldn't stay in that town any longer. There was nothing to hold me there. You see, if I had something to keep me busy...I don't care what. Clerical work, something in an office, anything. Nora, when you told me just now about your good fortune, really! I was thinking of myself more than I was of you.

NORA. How do you mean?

MRS. LINDEN. Well, with your husband...a bank official...

NORA. Oh, I see! You mean perhaps Thorwald might be able to do something for you. Darling, that's a wonderful idea! I'll be so happy to help you!

(*She rises, her busy mind already occupied with ways and means.*)

Now don't you worry about it another instant! (*Walking*

around slowly, a strategy taking shape.) Leave it all to me. First, I'll think of something pleasant to put him in a good humor, then I'll lead up to it... Oh, don't worry, I'll do it very, very skillfully!

MRS. LINDEN. Oh, Nora, it'll mean so much to me; you don't know how desperate I've been, you've never had to face such things.

NORA. (*Wisely, secretly.*) Don't you be so sure about that, my dear.

MRS. LINDEN. Oh, well, a little fancy work and so forth. You're a mere child, Nora.

NORA. Look here, Christina, don't you go patronizing me!

MRS. LINDEN. But, darling, I envy you.

NORA. You're just like everybody else. You all think I'm not fit for anything serious...

MRS. LINDEN. Well...

NORA. As if I hadn't had my share of troubles.

MRS. LINDEN. My dear Nora, you've just told me all your troubles.

NORA. (*Softly, as if debating whether to tell her.*) Oh, those things! I haven't told you my real troubles.

MRS. LINDEN. Your real troubles?

NORA. I know you look down on me, Christina. But you haven't any right to.

MRS. LINDEN. I'm sure I don't look down on anyone.

NORA. You're so proud of having taken care of your mother, aren't you? And of...

(The two women are practically talking at once now.)

MRS. LINDEN. I'm glad that I had the...

NORA. And of your brothers, too! So proud that...

MRS. LINDEN. Don't I have the right to be proud?

NORA. You're not the only one!

MRS. LINDEN. I didn't say I was.

NORA. Let me tell you...I have something to be proud of, too.

MRS. LINDEN. I'm sure you have.

NORA. Well, I have. Shhh!

(A quick glance at HELMER's closed door; then she comes down again to the footstool.)

Thorwald mustn't hear this for the world!

MRS. LINDEN. What on earth do you mean?

NORA. Listen, nobody knows about this...not anybody. You're the only one.

MRS. LINDEN. Yes?

NORA. I'm telling only you, do you understand? I saved Thorwald's life.

MRS. LINDEN. *(This startling statement leaving her completely unimpressed.)* Hm? Oh...

NORA. He would have died but for me.

MRS. LINDEN. I thought it was Italy that saved him.

NORA. Yes, but I...

MRS. LINDEN. *(A very practical person.)* Well, it was nice your father left you the money.

NORA. That's what Thorwald thinks...what everybody thinks. Papa didn't leave us a penny. I got the money myself.

MRS. LINDEN. You got it? All of it?

NORA. Every bit of it. Well, now what do you have to say?

(Now that she has got her friend astonished, she can rise and move away.)

MRS. LINDEN. But, my dear, where did you find it? Did you win it in the lottery?

NORA. Lottery! Why any old fool could have done that!

MRS. LINDEN. But where else would you have managed to pick up so much? Naturally you couldn't borrow it.

NORA. *(Strolling around the two sofas, upstage, simply delighted with herself.)* No? And why not?

MRS. LINDEN. A wife, borrow money without her husband's consent?

NORA. I never said I borrowed it. Perhaps I got it some other way.

(Conscious of herself, almost posing.)

I may have got it from an admirer! After all, I'm not an altogether unattractive woman...

(She reclines on the right-hand sofa, deliberately a picture.)

MRS. LINDEN. *(Rises.)* Don't be ridiculous, Nora!

NORA. Just dying of curiosity, aren't you?

MRS. LINDEN. *(Coming over to the sofas, genuinely worried.)* Now look here, my dear, haven't you been a little reckless?

NORA. *(Now firmly on top of the situation.)* You mean reckless enough to save my husband's life?

MRS. LINDEN. *(Sitting on the left-hand sofa.)* Well, perhaps a little rash...without his consent to go and...

NORA. *(CHRISTINA is really being a little dense.)* Yes, and suppose it was fatal for him to know! Do you think he realized how ill he was? The doctors depended on me to do the worrying about that, and I did!

MRS. LINDEN. Why, Nora! How wonderful!

NORA. *(Moving over beside her.)* I used diplomacy, I tell you! *(Talleyrand couldn't have done better.)* I said I was just longing for a trip abroad, I cried and carried on and said he ought to think of my condition...

MRS. LINDEN. Good.

NORA. But when I barely hinted that he might just borrow the money...Ohhhh! You should have heard him!

MRS. LINDEN. His principles.

NORA. He made big speeches about his duty, how it was up to him to guide me and protect me from having such whims...and so he talked, and so I saved him.

MRS. LINDEN. Nora! But I should think your father would have told him the money didn't come from him.

NORA. *(She has an answer for this too.)* Oh he couldn't, because just then Papa died. So Thorwald, with all his

grand ideas about independence, owes everything to me!

MRS. LINDEN. Haven't you ever told him?

NORA. Christina! What are you thinking of? Why, Thorwald thinks debts are immoral...almost criminal. If he ever found out what I'd done, our home just wouldn't be the same, that's all.

MRS. LINDEN. But won't you ever tell him?

NORA. Oh, after a great many years, perhaps...when I'm not so young.

(This is too much for CHRISTINA's sense of humor.)

Don't laugh, Christina. I mean when Thorwald isn't so much in love with me. When it isn't fun for him any longer to see me skipping about and dressing up and acting. Then it might be good to have something in reserve.

MRS. LINDEN. Oh, Nora, Nora!

NORA. Oh, but it's been so hard! Installments to meet, and interest, and interest on the installments... And all the time I had to pinch and plan...a little bit here, there, anywhere I could. I never could take any of the housekeeping money, because naturally Thorwald had to live well. And I couldn't let the children go about badly dressed...every penny I had for them I spent on them.

MRS. LINDEN. Poor Nora! So it had to come out of your own pocket money?

NORA. Yes, of course. I did the whole thing by myself! And besides that, I made money other ways. Just before Christmas last winter I was so lucky... I got a heap of copying to do. So every night I shut myself up and worked till long after midnight.

MRS. LINDEN. And how much have you been able to pay off?

NORA. Well, I can't say exactly. It's so hard to keep that sort of thing clear. I... I know that...well, that I paid off all I could scrape together anyway. Oh! Sometimes, Christina, I just didn't know which way to turn. Do you know what I used to think?

MRS. LINDEN. What?

NORA. That a nice rich man was in love with me.

MRS. LINDEN. What?

NORA. A nice one, who died right off. And so when they opened his will, they saw these words, in great big letters—"Pay over at once everything of which I die possessed to that charming creature, Mrs. Nora Helmer!"

MRS. LINDEN. But Nora, darling, what man are you talking about?

NORA. Oh, dear, can't you understand? There wasn't any man...it was just what I used to dream and dream when I was frantic for money. But it's all finished now.

(She rises, crosses center.) I don't care anything about him or his will. My troubles are over. Oh, Christina, isn't it glorious to think of? Free from all those cares... absolutely free! Now I'll be able to play and have a good time with the children... I can get lots of things for the house, really good things, just what Thorwald will like. Oh, what a wonderful thing it is to be alive and to be happy!

(She crosses to Christina and embraces her ecstatically.)

The doorbell rings, and we see ELLEN come from the kitchen into the vestibule, to open it. Christina gets up.)

MRS. LINDEN. Perhaps I'd better go...

NORA. No, no, stay! It's sure to be someone for Thorwald.

(CHRISTINA walks left. NORA looks curiously out into the vestibule to see the visitor. ELLEN comes to the left-center doors.)

ELLEN. If you please, ma'am, there's a gentleman to see Mr. Helmer.

NORA. Who is it?

(We see him only vaguely through the glass, but hear his voice, as he identifies himself. ELLEN closes the front door and returns to the kitchen.

NORA becomes almost visibly on the alert.)

KROGSTAD. It's I, Mrs. Helmer.

NORA. Oh! What is it? What do you want with my husband?

(CHRISTINA, way left, by the stove, hears the voice, and half turns, listening.)

KROGSTAD. Just something to do with the bank... I have a little job there and I hear your husband is to be our new chief.

NORA. Oh, then it's not...?

KROGSTAD. Just a tiresome business matter, Mrs. Helmer... nothing more.

NORA. I'm afraid he's busy, but if you'll just knock on his door...

(He enters from the vestibule, knocks on HELMER'S door, and is bidden to enter. He doesn't notice CHRISTINA, but she has seen and heard him. NORA watches him go into the study. She has grown very, very thoughtful.)

MRS. LINDEN. Nora...who was that man?

NORA. A Mr. Krogstad. Do you know him?

MRS. LINDEN. *(Starting to cross right, slowly; she, too, is thinking.)* I used to know him...years ago.

NORA. *(Beginning to cross to the stove.)* I understand his marriage wasn't happy.

MRS. LINDEN. *(Aware of the tense NORA has used.)* And he is a widower now?

NORA. Yes.

MRS. LINDEN. So...people do go on living after all. Is he in business with your husband? *(She sits on the right-hand sofa.)*

NORA. (*Stoking the fire with the poker.*) Oh, no, certainly not. There, now it'll burn up.

(*She hangs the poker on its hook, and comes center.*)

I really don't know what he does. Anyway, the thing is to do something for you now...

(*HELMER's voice is heard as DOCTOR RANK opens the study door.*)

HELMER. (*From his study.*) My dear fellow, it's quite all right. You can stay...

DOCTOR RANK. No, no, don't bother, I'll just go have a talk with your wife...

(*DOCTOR RANK backs into the room, his coat over his arm, his hat and invariable stick in his hand. He turns and sees that NORA has a visitor.*)

Oh, I beg your pardon. I guess I'm just in the way wherever I go.

NORA. (*Coming up to take his things.*) No, no, come in, please! Doctor Rank, Mrs. Linden.

DOCTOR RANK. How do you do?

MRS. LINDEN. How do you do?

DOCTOR RANK. I believe I've heard your name before. I passed Mrs. Linden on the stairs as I came up.

(*He walks slowly to the left-hand sofa, as NORA, placing his things on the piano bench, crosses behind him, and moves toward the study door.*)

MRS. LINDEN. I'm afraid I climb very slowly.

DOCTOR RANK. Oh, you're not very strong.

MRS. LINDEN. Well, just overworked.

(*DOCTOR RANK has sat down comfortably opposite CHRISTINA, on the other sofa. NORA, unnoticed, is listening at HELMER's door.*)

DOCTOR RANK. Ah? So you've come up to the city to relax in a round of dissipation?

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

DOCTOR RANK. And is that an approved remedy for overwork?

MRS. LINDEN. One must live, Doctor Rank.

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

NORA. (*Who has kept one ear on their conversation.*) Oh come, Doctor Rank, you want to live yourself?

DOCTOR RANK. I seem to, don't I? Extraordinary, isn't it? No matter how miserable I feel, I still have a curious desire to hang on a little bit longer. And my patients, strangely enough, all seem to have the same mania. It's a disease... Even the fellow who just went in there seems infected with it.

MRS. LINDEN. Ah!

NORA. Whom do you mean?

DOCTOR RANK. That man Krogstad...you don't know him. Sly fellow, I hear. (*To CHRISTINA.*) He was saying the same thing to Thorwald that you were just telling me.

NORA. (*Carefully dissembling her curiosity.*) What was he telling him?

DOCTOR RANK. He made the solemn announcement he must live. I was so overwhelmed that I departed.

NORA. What could he want with Thorwald?

DOCTOR RANK. Oh, I don't know. Something to do with the bank, apparently.

NORA. (*Remaining carefully behind him.*) The bank?

DOCTOR RANK. Yes, he works there. (*Quite idly said, turning to address CHRISTINA.*) So there, you see, just another patient.

MRS. LINDEN. I'm afraid I don't follow you, Doctor.

DOCTOR RANK. I mean, he's alive, and he wants to stay that way.

MRS. LINDEN. (*Not sure whether she understands this mild cynicism.*) What then?

DOCTOR RANK. It's...delicate characters like that who seem to require the most elaborate treatment. There we have the thing that makes a hospital out of society.

(This apothegm has been listened to by both women: CHRISTINA with one personal interest, NORA with quite another. NORA, now to the left of DOCTOR RANK, suddenly laughs, spontaneous gaiety welling up in her.)

DOCTOR RANK. What are you laughing at? Do you have some ideas about society?

NORA. Oh, what do I care about your old society? I was laughing at something funny—terribly funny. *(She turns center and comes toward them.)* Are all the people who work at the bank dependent on Thorwald now?

DOCTOR RANK. H'mph! Do you call that funny?

NORA. *(Crossing airily behind him.)* Never mind, never mind. *(She is fumbling in the pocket of her skirt for her macaroons.)* But isn't it amusing that we...that Thorwald has such power over so many people? *(Suddenly she has the macaroons in her hand.)* Will you have a macaroon?

DOCTOR RANK. Dear, dear, macaroons! I thought they were contraband here.

NORA. Yes, but Christina brought me these.

MRS. LINDEN. Who, I?

NORA. *(Blandly covering her little lie.)* Oh, well! Don't be frightened. Thorwald's afraid they'll spoil my teeth. But, oh, bother, just for once! That's for you, Doctor Rank! *(She offers him one, which he takes.)* And this is for you, Christina! And as for me...*(Feeling all at once able to dare anything.)* I'll have one! Just a tiny one, or maybe two. *(She stops by the big chair, hardly able to contain her joy.)* Oh, dear! I am happy. There's only one thing in the world I really want.

(Unnoticed by any of them, KROGSTAD leaves HELMER's office by the door in the vestibule, crosses behind the glass panes, and goes out the front door.)

DOCTOR RANK. Yes? What is it?

NORA. Oh...something I wish I could say...in front of Thorwald.

DOCTOR RANK. Then why don't you say it?

NORA. It's so naughty.

MRS. LINDEN. Naughty?

DOCTOR RANK. Well, in that case you'd better not. But you might tell us. What is it you wish you could say in Thorwald's hearing?

NORA. (*Coming a little center, pleased with her own boldness.*) I want to say, "Hell and damnation!"

DOCTOR RANK. Ah! She's going to the dogs!

MRS. LINDEN. Good gracious me.

(*The door of HELMER's study is opening.*)

DOCTOR RANK. Say it, here he comes.

NORA. Shhh! (*She hurries up to her husband.*) Darling, did you get rid of him?

HELMER. (*He has his portfolio under his arm and is full of business.*) Yes, he's just gone.

NORA. (*Seizing his arm before he can get away from her.*) Oh, Thorwald! This is Christina...she just came here all the way from—

HELMER. Christina? I'm afraid I don't...

NORA. Mrs. Linden, Thorwald... Christina Linden.

HELMER. (*Only politely.*) Ah...an old friend of my wife's, perhaps?

MRS. LINDEN. Yes. We used to go to school together.

NORA. Just imagine, darling! She came all this way just to have a word with you.

HELMER. Really?

(*He starts left, looking for some papers he's left around.*)

MRS. LINDEN. Well, not quite...

NORA. You see, Christina is awfully good at accounting...

(*NORA follows HELMER, who is preoccupied with his hunt for the documents.*)

Isn't that what it's called?... And naturally she wants

to work under a first-rate businessman to learn a lot more...

HELMER. (*Finding the papers on the piano, he carefully inserts them in his portfolio; he is still not much concerned about CHRISTINA.*) Very sensible.

NORA. So when she heard you were the new manager—it was telegraphed you know—she started right off... (*Carried along on the current of her own invention, she crosses past HELMER toward CHRISTINA, and is all but grooming her for the job.*)...and darling, you simply must do something for Christina, you absolutely must, Thorwald!

HELMER. (*On his way out, is beguilingly stopped.*) Well, it's not altogether impossible, of course. You're a widow, are you?

MRS. LINDEN. Yes.

HELMER. And you have had some experience in office work? (*Plainly giving her no encouragement.*)

MRS. LINDEN. A good deal.

HELMER. (*Going into the vestibule, to the coat tree, for his coat and hat.*) Well, there might just possibly be something...

NORA. See? What did I tell you?

HELMER. Perhaps you've come at a very opportune moment, Mrs. Linden.

(**DOCTOR RANK** rises to accompany **HELMER** on his way, and goes to the piano bench for his coat and hat.)

MRS. LINDEN. How can I thank you?

HELMER. (*In the vestibule.*) Not at all.

(**CHRISTINA** gets up and hurries to the chair left of the piano for her coat. **DOCTOR RANK** crosses to the stove to warm his coat.)

Well, I'll be back after a while.

DOCTOR RANK. Wait, I'm coming with you.

NORA. Don't be long, dear!

HELMER. Half an hour or so.

NORA. Are you going, too, Christina?

MRS. LINDEN. Yes, I must start hunting for lodgings.

(NORA helps her friend with her coat.)

HELMER. *(To CHRISTINA.)* Then I'll wait for you.

NORA. I'm so sorry we haven't a room to spare. Isn't it a pity?

MRS. LINDEN. I wouldn't think of troubling you. Thank you, Nora. *(She is in her coat and hat now, gathering up her gloves and bag.)* Good-bye, Nora, darling, and thank you for all your kindness.

(They are both crossing toward the doors, right center.)

NORA. Good-bye for a little while. Now listen, Christina, you'll come back this evening, won't you? *(Ushering CHRISTINA into the vestibule, she now turns back to DOCTOR RANK.)* And you, too, Doctor Rank, of course.

DOCTOR RANK. *(Lumbering across the stage in his overcoat.)* Yes, if I'm still alive.

NORA. Oh, you—what a way for a doctor to talk! Be careful, now, and wrap up tight.

(The outer door opens, there is a shrill, little boy's whistle, and NORA, knowing her children are coming in from outdoors, rushes past everybody to meet them.)

Oh! Here they are!... Oh, my darlings!... Mmmm-mmm.... .

(EMMY runs into her mother's arms. IVAR, more dignified in the presence of adults, stands back. They are all in the vestibule.)

NORA. Look, Christina, aren't they wonderful!

MRS. LINDEN. They're angels.

DOCTOR RANK. Brrr! What a draft! Let's not stand here chattering.

HELMER. Come, Mrs. Linden. Only mothers can stand such a temperature.

(The three go out the front door of the flat. NORA picks up EMMY and comes happily into the room with the child in her arms. IVAR follows more soberly behind, with ANNA, the nurse.)

EMMY. Mama, he threw a snowball and hit me!

IVAR. I did not!

EMMY. I hit him back.

NORA. Oh, my baby!... Mmm, such cheeks! Darling, you've been out hours! Aren't you frozen?

(She is in the big chair, taking off EMMY's little bonnet and coat.)

EMMY. I'm warm!

IVAR. I saw a dog, Mama.

(ANNA has helped him out of his coat, and he comes down to his mother.)

He ran after a man, and he growled.

EMMY. I saw the dog, too!

NORA. Did you, sweet?

IVAR. And the man picked up a stick, and the dog ran around biting people.

NORA. Really? I know he didn't bite you, did he, darling?

(IVAR, through with his story, sees the attractive packages on the table and skips up toward them.)

EMMY. I'd like a dog!

ANNA. I'll just take their coats, ma'am.

NORA. Oh, yes, Anna. And there's some hot coffee on the stove. Just go pour yourself some.

(ANNA goes into NORA's quarters, up left.)

EMMY. Can we play now, Mama?

NORA. Of course, darling. Any single thing you want! It's Christmas!

EMMY. I want to play Blind Man's Buff!

(IVAR, unobserved, is busily unwrapping one of

the packages.)

NORA. Blind Man's Buff! Oh, goody! *(She lifts EMMY up, sets her on her feet, kneels beside her.)* Now you know what you do first?

(EMMY, knowing very well, trots off into her mother's room.)

IVAR. *(Who has now completely unwrapped a fine toy drum.)* This isn't for me, is it, Mama?

NORA. *(Almost childishly upset by this.)* Oh, Ivar, I didn't want you to see that until tomorrow!

IVAR. Well, I can wrap it up again!

EMMY. *(Toddling out of NORA's room with IVAR's scarf, which is to serve as a blindfold.)* Come on, Mama, let's play!

NORA. *(Taking the scarf and knotting it over her eyes.)* Run and hide, Emmy...in a good place! Turn me around, Ivar, then you hide!

(EMMY enthusiastically investigates the sofas as a place to hide, rejects them, and trots to the small side chair, down left. IVAR turns his mother around several times, and dodges under the piano.

NORA, quite one of them by this time, blunders about, center stage, looking for them.)

EMMY. *(In a whisper, from behind her chair.)* Look where I am, Ivar!

IVAR. *(Under the piano.)* Shhh!

EMMY. He's under the piano, Mama!

IVAR. *(Upset by his sister's treachery.)* Emmy!

(KROGSTAD appears in the right center doors, timid, hesitant, completely uncertain of himself, yet determined.)

EMMY. *(Who sees him first.)* There's a man, Mama!

NORA. *(Still fumbling about blindfolded.)* What?

IVAR. It's a man!

(IVAR crawls out from under the piano, EMMY comes up to her mother.)

KROGSTAD. (*Completely upset by this domestic scene.*) I'm sorry, I...

NORA. (*Pulling off the blindfold.*) Oh...what do you want?

KROGSTAD. You see, the door was open and I thought...I wanted to...

NORA. My husband's not at home, Mr. Krogstad...(*To her children, who are crowding around her.*) Go to Anna, dears.

KROGSTAD. I know that, but...

NORA. Then what did you come here for?

IVAR. Shall I stay here with you, Mama?

NORA. No, no, run along and see Anna!

EMMY. But I want to play!

NORA. (*Hurrying them out.*) Yes, we'll play in a minute...

EMMY. Is that a promise?

NORA. That's a real promise...(*She has them at her door.*) Take care of them, Anna.

(*They exit, she shuts her door, and turns to face*
KROGSTAD.)

You wanted to see me?

KROGSTAD. It's just something...

NORA. But what for? It isn't the first of the month.

KROGSTAD. It isn't that. I wanted to ask you something.
Can you spare a minute?

NORA. I suppose I can, but...

KROGSTAD. You see, I...when I was in the restaurant after I was here, I...

NORA. What's that?

KROGSTAD. I was sitting in the restaurant across the street and I saw your husband come out of here and...

NORA. I told you he wasn't home...

KROGSTAD. No, no...he went down the street with a lady.

NORA. Well?

KROGSTAD. Excuse me, but—would you mind telling me if it was a Mrs. Linden?

NORA. Why, yes!

KROGSTAD. I... I haven't seen her for so many years, and naturally I was surprised to see her coming out with your husband...

NORA. Oh, yes! She's going to be given a position at my husband's bank.

KROGSTAD. She is?!

NORA. Why, yes!

KROGSTAD. But...but now...?

NORA. Well, you see, sometimes a little influence with the right people, Mr. Krogstad...

KROGSTAD. You mean you had something to do with it?

NORA. Well, naturally, I did what I could for my friend.

KROGSTAD. Do you mean to tell me that Mrs. Linden is going to...?

NORA. Really, Mr. Krogstad, I'm not used to being questioned this way. You seem very much interested in Mrs. Linden.

KROGSTAD. Come, Mrs. Helmer, you know very well whose job it is your friend is getting.

NORA. What are you talking about?

KROGSTAD. (*Trying to assimilate this new blow.*) So I'm just to be thrown out, am I?

NORA. (*Honestly puzzled.*) What?

KROGSTAD. Oh, you needn't pretend you didn't know.

NORA. How dare you talk like that to me?

KROGSTAD. Oh, really! Look here, I can well understand why it wouldn't be pleasant for your dear friend to meet me. Influence, is it? Very well, Mrs. Helmer, then I must ask you to use your influence for me.

NORA. But I assure you I have...

KROGSTAD. There is still time for you to help me.

NORA. I have no influence whatever.

KROGSTAD. But you just said you had, Mrs. Helmer.

NORA. I meant nothing of the sort. I meant something quite different. Do you expect me to be able to tell my husband what to do?

KROGSTAD. I merely ask you...

NORA. (*Disturbed by his insistence, she moves away from him.*)

I'm not afraid of you anymore. In a little while I'll be through with the whole business.

KROGSTAD. Please listen to me, Mrs. Helmer! (*He follows her, desperately needing to make his point.*) Try to understand that it is vital to me to keep my job in the bank!

NORA. I'm sorry, Mr. Krogstad...

KROGSTAD. I tell you I've got to keep it, that's all! I've got children and they're growing up. They need to have a father who's able to hold up his head in a respectable position... I tell you, I... There just aren't any jobs open to me, I've been cut off from everything!

NORA. Mr. Krogstad...

KROGSTAD. People just pass the word around quietly, don't you think I know? I tell you my job in the bank is the only chance I've got to get anywhere, and now your husband wants to kick me off the ladder and down into the mud again!

NORA. (*Trying to get even farther away from him.*) I'm sorry, Mr. Krogstad, but I just can't listen.

KROGSTAD. You've got to listen!

NORA. Mr. Krogstad, are you threatening me?

KROGSTAD. (*Miserably turning away from her.*) I don't care what you call it... I...

NORA. Mr. Krogstad, would you tell my husband I owe you money?

(**KROGSTAD** simply shrugs and turns away.)

Why, you ought to be ashamed of yourself! When it's all my own secret and I'm so proud of it! Why, if he heard about it that way, there's no telling how unpleasant it would be!

KROGSTAD. Unpleasant!

NORA. Well, you just try it. It will be much worse for you, because then my husband will see what a bad man you are and you certainly won't keep your job!

KROGSTAD. Yes, it was very bad of me to lend you money when your husband was dying.

NORA. And if he does find out about it, why, then he'll pay you right off and we'll have nothing more to do with you.

KROGSTAD. Mrs. Helmer, I'm afraid there are some things you don't understand very well. Let me make them clearer for you.

NORA. You needn't bother.

KROGSTAD. When your husband was ill, you came to me to borrow a sum of money...a large sum of money. I promised to find it for you.

NORA. What's all that got to do with...

(She sits in the big chair, left, not wanting to listen.)

KROGSTAD. I promised to find you the money under certain conditions. Do you remember what they were?

NORA. *(In a mood chiefly of exasperation.)* Ohhhh!

KROGSTAD. You probably didn't do much thinking about them because you were so busy taking care of your husband. Let me remind you what they were. I promised to find you the money in exchange for a written agreement which I drew up.

NORA. Well, I signed it, didn't I?

KROGSTAD. Yes. You did. And then I added a few lines, making your father sponsor for the amount. Your father was to sign this.

NORA. Was to? He did sign it!

KROGSTAD. Did he, Mrs. Helmer?

NORA. You know he did!

KROGSTAD. Do you remember I left the date blank? Your father was to date his signature himself.

NORA. Yes, and I...

KROGSTAD. Then I gave you the paper to send to your father. Isn't that right, Mrs. Helmer?

NORA. Yes.

KROGSTAD. And of course you did it at once.

NORA. Yes, of course!

KROGSTAD. And five or six days afterwards, Mrs. Helmer, you brought the paper back to me, with his signature, and I gave you the money.

NORA. Well, haven't I made my payments on time?

KROGSTAD. (*Moving on relentlessly to the next peg of his argument.*) Mrs. Helmer, your father was very ill, wasn't he?

NORA. He was on his death bed.

KROGSTAD. Tell me, Mrs. Helmer—do you happen to remember the day he died? The day of the month, I mean?

NORA. It was the twenty-ninth of September.

KROGSTAD. (*He has now the necessary admission in his hands.*) Ah! That's correct. But you see, I made a little investigation for myself, and I discovered a rather remarkable fact, which I can't quite explain...

(*Surer of himself now, he turns away as if to exit.*)

NORA rises and is after him.)

NORA. What remarkable fact? What are you trying...

KROGSTAD. The remarkable fact is, or seems to be, that your father signed this paper three days after his death.

NORA. What? I don't understand—

KROGSTAD. Well, neither do I, Mrs. Helmer. Here your father dies on the twenty-ninth of September... (*He reaches into an inside pocket for his wallet, where he carries NORA's promissory note.*)...and here he signs his name on October the second. There's the date, don't you see? Now isn't that remarkable?

(*Unconsciously, NORA reaches for the piece of paper, and KROGSTAD draws it back. NORA is utterly astonished that he should think her capable of snatching it or destroying it.*)

KROGSTAD. Perhaps you can explain it? The trouble seems to be that the words "October second" and the year,

don't seem to be in your father's handwriting. They're in somebody else's. But that could be explained, too—possibly your father just forgot to date his signature and somebody else added the date hastily, without thinking very hard. Still, that's nothing to worry about. It's the signature that counts. It's genuine, Mrs. Helmer...isn't it?

(NORA has turned slowly away, stopping, quite quiet now, no longer protesting, behind the big chair.)

Your father really did write his name here himself... didn't he?

NORA. *(After a pause.)* No. I wrote it.

KROGSTAD. Do you realize what you're admitting? That was a very dangerous thing to do, Mrs. Helmer.

NORA. *(Honestly not seeing that anything important is involved.)* Why? You'll have your last payment in a few days.

KROGSTAD. Do you mind if I ask you one more question? Why didn't you send this paper to your father?

NORA. How could I do such a thing? He was too ill to be worried about it.

KROGSTAD. Then don't you think it might have been better to give up your trip? After all...

NORA. *(Pursuing her own logic, out of her own integrity.)* But I couldn't possibly think of such a thing! It was to save my husband's life!

KROGSTAD. Well, but, Mrs. Helmer you were deceiving me.

NORA. Oh, for Heaven's sake, suppose I was!

KROGSTAD. Mrs. Helmer, you really don't seem to understand what you've done! Mrs. Helmer...do you know, I did something just about like that once, and it ruined me?

NORA. How could it?

KROGSTAD. It wasn't a bit worse or a bit more important than what you've just confessed to me.

NORA. You mean you took a risk to save someone's life?

KROGSTAD. The law, Mrs. Helmer, takes no account of motives.

NORA. (*For the first time in her life understanding this, and making up her own mind about it.*) Then the law must be very bad.

KROGSTAD. (*Crossing toward the vestibule.*) Bad or not, if I take this paper to court, the law will condemn you exactly as it did me.

NORA. I don't believe it! As if I didn't have the right to save my father from worry when he was dying! As if anyone should tell me that I hadn't the right to save my husband's life! I don't know very much about law, and I don't want to, if that's the way it is. But I'm certain they'd let you do that. Why, the idea of not knowing they would, when you're a lawyer! You must be a very poor one.

KROGSTAD. Maybe I am. But I do understand something about this business you and I are in together. And now you can do exactly as you please... (*He picks up his hat off the table.*) But let me tell you one thing...if I'm thrown off into the mud again, there'll be others to keep me company.

(He goes into the vestibule and out the front door, leaving NORA alone with the obvious and ominous import of his visit. She is alone for only a moment before her children come bursting into the room.

EMMY has been made ready for bed, and is in a white flannel nightdress and pink slippers.)

EMMY. Mama, can we come in?

IVAR. Can we go on playing now, Mama?

EMMY. (*Tugging at her.*) Come on, Mama!

NORA. (*Kneeling down beside them, to hold their complete attention.*) Listen to what Mama says. Don't you ever tell anybody there was a man here. Cross your heart. Do you hear?

EMMY. Why?

NORA. You mustn't even tell Papa.

EMMY. (*As IVAR walks away; considering this proposition.*) Why?

NORA. Because you mustn't, darling.

IVAR. We won't say anything. Hear, Emmy?

(He puts a finger to his lips, a gesture EMMY faithfully duplicates.)

Now will you play?

NORA. (*Rises, turns away.*) No, no, not now. I can't.

EMMY. Won't you come in and even read to us?

IVAR. You promised you'd play just as soon as he went!

NORA. Shhh! Go on back to Anna, please, my darlings...

EMMY. (*Pretty discouraged.*) Oh, dear, oh, dear...

NORA. Emmy, do you hear me? Anna, take care of them and see that they don't...

(The children exit. NORA closes her door, then moves slowly back into the room. ELLEN comes from the kitchen with the Christmas tree, ready for trimming, and sets it on the table between the sofas.)

ELLEN. Well, Mrs. Helmer, here it is!

NORA. Oh...

ELLEN. There now, doesn't it smell good? Shall I help you?

NORA. No, no, thank you, Ellen.

ELLEN. It makes such a picture. (*She returns to the kitchen.*)

(NORA, her mind anywhere but on Christmas preparations now, sits on the piano bench a moment. She makes an effort to throw off the burden of her thought, rises, picks up a small wicker basket of Christmas tree trimmings, comes down to the tree, opens the basket, and fastens a single hanging to the tree. She picks up another and is reaching up to tie it on the branches when she hears the street door to the house slam, below. The bit of trimming drops from her hand and breaks. She looks toward the vestibule and her own house door, expecting anything. HELMER enters the

vestibule and, passing the coat tree, comes to the glass doors to the living room, hat and coat on, the inevitable portfolio under his arm.)

NORA. Oh, Thorwald! Back already?

HELMER. *(Elaborately casual.)* Has anybody been here?

NORA. *(With the thorough naïveté of the good liar.)* Here? No.

HELMER. *(Retreats to the coat tree to dispose of his hat and coat.)*

That's strange. *(Enters the room and crosses soberly behind her, to the piano bench, where he puts down his portfolio.)* I saw Krogstad leave the house.

NORA. *(Busily trimming the tree now.)* Krogstad? Well, he really was here for just a minute.

HELMER. *(Turning.)* Nora!

NORA. What? I tell you it was just for a minute!

HELMER. Nora, look at me. I'm very, very much surprised. Krogstad has been asking you to put in a good word for him, hasn't he? Hmm?

NORA. *(She crosses to him, prettily.)* Are you going to be angry with me?

HELMER. And you were supposed to do it just as if you'd thought of it yourself. Isn't that right? Without ever mentioning the fact that he came here and put you up to it?

NORA. Yes...but I...

HELMER. No, Nora! And you could stoop to that! To speak to such a man, to make him a promise! And then to tell a lie about it...to me!

NORA. A lie?

HELMER. Didn't you say nobody had been here? That's lying. You won't do that again, will you?

(She doesn't answer. He takes her chin in his hand and turns her face to his.)

Will you?

(This promise exacted, he turns away, picks up his portfolio and walks to his big chair, left.)

Well, we won't say any more about it. *(He selects a cigar*

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