

1879

A DOLL'S HOUSE

Henrik Ibsen

translated by William Archer

Ibsen, Henrik (1828-1906) - Norwegian playwright and poet who is often called the father of modern drama. His works concentrated on individuals in realistic psychological conflict rather than on groups. A Doll's House (1879) - After eight years of marriage, Nora Helmer realizes that her husband has never looked at her as a human being but only as a doll. One of Ibsen's most popular plays, "A Doll's House" was ahead of its time in its expression of the theme of women's rights.

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INTRODUCTION by William Archer

ON June 27, 1879, Ibsen wrote from Rome to Marcus Gronvold: "It is now rather hot in Rome, so in about a week we are going to Amalfi, which, being close to the sea, is cooler, and offers opportunity for bathing. I intend to complete there a new dramatic work on which I am now engaged." From Amalfi, on September 20, he wrote to John Paulsen: "A new dramatic work, which I have just completed, has occupied so much of my time during these last months that I have had absolutely none to spare for answering letters." This "new dramatic work" was *Et Dukkehjem*, which was published in Copenhagen, December 4, 1879. Dr. George Brandes has given some account of the episode in real life which suggested to Ibsen the plot of this play; but the real Nora, it appears, committed forgery, not to save her husband's life, but to redecorate her house. The impulse received from this incident must have been trifling. It is much more to the purpose to remember that the character and situation of Nora had been clearly foreshadowed, ten years earlier, in the figure of Selma in *The League of Youth*.

Of *A Doll's House* we find in the *Literary Remains* a first brief memorandum, a fairly detailed scenario, a complete draft, in quite actable form, and a few detached fragments of dialogue. These documents put out of court a theory of my own¹ that Ibsen originally intended to give the play a "happy ending," and that the relation between Krogstad and Mrs. Linden was devised for that purpose. Here is the first memorandum
NOTES FOR THE TRAGEDY OF TO-DAY ROME, 19/10/78.

There are two kinds of spiritual laws, two kinds of conscience, one in men and a quite different one in women. They do not understand each other; but the woman is judged in practical life according to the man's law, as if she were not a woman but a man.

The wife in the play finds herself at last entirely at sea as to what is right and what wrong; natural feeling on the one side, and belief in authority on the other, leave her in utter bewilderment.

A woman cannot be herself in the society of to-day, which is exclusively a masculine society, with laws written by men, and with accusers and judges who judge feminine conduct from the masculine standpoint.

¹ Stated in the *Fortnightly Review*, July 1906, and repeated in the first edition of this Introduction.

² The definite article does not, I think, imply that Ibsen ever intended this to be the title of the play, but merely that the notes refer to "the" tragedy of contemporary life which he has had for sometime in his mind.

She has committed forgery, and it is her pride; for she did it for love of her husband, and to save his life. But this husband, full of everyday rectitude, stands on the basis of the law and regards the matter with a masculine eye.

Soul-struggles. Oppressed and bewildered by belief in authority, she loses her faith in her own moral right and ability to bring up her children. Bitterness. A mother in the society of to-day, like certain insects, (ought to) go away and die when she has done her duty towards the continuance of the species. Love of life, of home, of husband and

children and kin. Now and then a womanlike shaking off of cares. Then a sudden return of apprehension and dread. She must bear it all alone. The catastrophe approaches, inexorably, inevitably. Despair, struggle, and disaster. In reading Ibsen's statement of the conflict he meant to portray between the male and female conscience, one cannot but feel that he somewhat shirked the issue in making Nora's crime a formal rather than a real one. She had no intention of defrauding Krogstad; and though it is an interesting point of casuistry to determine whether, under the stated circumstances, she had a moral right to sign her father's name, opinion on the point would scarcely be divided along the line of sex.

One feels that, in order to illustrate the "two kinds of conscience," Ibsen ought to have made his play turn upon some point of conduct (if such there be) which would sharply divide masculine from feminine sympathies. The fact that such a point would be extremely hard to find seems to cast doubt on the ultimate validity of the thesis. If, for instance, Nora had deliberately stolen the money from Krogstad, with no intention of repaying it, that would certainly have revealed a great gulf between her morality and Helmer's; but would any considerable number of her sex have sympathised with her? I am not denying a marked difference between the average man and the average woman in the development of such characteristics as the sense of justice; but I doubt whether, when women have their full share in legislation, the laws relating to forgery will be seriously altered.

A parallel-text edition of the provisional and the final forms of *A Doll's House* would be intensely interesting. For the present, I can note only a few of the most salient differences between the two versions.

Helmer is at first called "Stenborg";³ it is not till the scene with Krogstad in the second act that the name Helmer makes its first appearance. Ibsen was constantly changing his characters' names in the course of composition- trying them on, as it were, until he found one that was a perfect fit. The first scene, down to the entrance of Mrs. Linden, though it contains all that is necessary for the mere development of the plot, runs to only twenty-three speeches, as compared with eighty-one in the completed text. The business of the macaroons is not even indicated; there is none of the charming talk about the Christmas-tree and the children's presents; no request on Nora's part that her present may take the form of money, no indication on Helmer's part that he regards her supposed extravagance as an inheritance from her father. Helmer knows that³ This name seems to have haunted Ibsen. It was also the original name of Stensgard in *The League of Youth*.

she toils at copying far into the night in order to earn a few crowns, though of course he has no suspicion as to how she employs the money. Ibsen evidently felt it inconsistent with his character that he should permit this, so in the completed version we learn that Nora, in order to do her copying, locked herself in under the pretext of making decorations for the Christmas-tree, and, when no result appeared, declared that the cat had destroyed her handiwork. The first version, in short, is like a stained glass window seen from without, the second like the same window seen from within.

The long scene between Nora and Mrs. Linden is more fully worked out, though many small touches of character are lacking, such as Nora's remark that some day "when

Torvald is not so much in love with me as he is now," she may tell him the great secret of how she saved his life. It is notable throughout that neither Helmer's aestheticism nor the sensual element in his relation to Nora is nearly so much emphasised as in the completed play; while Nora's tendency to small fibbing- that vice of the unfree- is almost an afterthought. In the first appearance of Krogstad, and the indication of his old acquaintance with Mrs. Linden, many small adjustments have been made, all strikingly for the better. The first scene with Dr. Rank,- originally called Dr. Hank- has been almost entirely rewritten. There is in the draft no indication of the doctor's ill-health or of his pessimism; it seems as though he had at first been designed as a mere confidant or *raisonneur*. This is how he talks: HANK Hallo! what's this? A new carpet? I congratulate you! Now take, for example, a handsome carpet like this; is it a luxury? I say it isn't. Such a carpet is a paying investment; with it underfoot, one has higher, subtler thoughts, and finer feelings, than when one moves over cold, creaking planks in a comfortless room. Especially where there are children in the house. The race ennobles itself in a beautiful environment.

NORA Oh, how often I have felt the same, but could never express it.

HANK No, I dare say not. It is an observation in spiritual statistics- a science as yet very little cultivated. As to Krogstad, the doctor remarks: If Krogstad's home had been, so to speak, on the sunny side of life, with all the spiritual windows opening towards the light,... I dare say he might have been a decent enough fellow, like the rest of us.

MRS. LINDEN You mean that he is not....?

HANK He cannot be. His marriage was not of the kind to make it possible. An unhappy marriage, Mrs. Linden, is like small-pox: it scars the soul.

NORA And what does a happy marriage do? HANK It is like a "cure" at the baths; it expels all peccant humours, and makes all that is good and fine in a man grow and flourish.

It is notable that we find in this scene nothing of Nora's glee on learning that Krogstad is now dependent on her husband; that fine touch of dramatic irony was an afterthought. After Helmer's entrance, the talk is very different in the original version. He remarks upon the painful interview he has just had with Krogstad, whom he is forced to dismiss from the bank; Nora, in a mild way, pleads for him; and the doctor, in the name of the survival of the fittest, denounces humanitarian sentimentality, and then goes off to do his best to save a patient who, he con4 It is noteworthy that Darwin's two great books were translated into Danish very shortly before Ibsen began to work at A Doll's House.

fesses, would be much better dead. This discussion of the Krogstad question before Nora has learnt how vital it is to her, manifestly discounts the effect of the scenes which are to follow: and Ibsen, on revision, did away with it entirely. Nora's romp with the children, interrupted by the entrance of Krogstad, stands very much as in the final version; and in the scene with Krogstad there is no essential change. One detail is worth noting, as an instance of the art of working up an effect. In the first version, when Krogstad says, "Mrs. Stenborg, you must see to it that I keep my place in the bank," Nora replies: "I? How can you think that I have any such influence with my husband?" - a natural but not specially effective remark. But in the final version she has

begun the scene by boasting to Krogstad of her influence, and telling him that people in a subordinate position ought to be careful how they offend such influential persons as herself; so that her subsequent denial that he has any influence becomes a notable dramatic effect.

The final scene of the act, between Nora and Helmer, is not materially altered in the final version; but the first version contains no hint of the business of decorating the Christmas-tree or of Nora's wheedling Helmer by pretending to need his aid in devising her costume for the fancy dress ball. Indeed, this ball has not yet entered Ibsen's mind. He thinks of it first as a children's party in the flat overhead, to which Helmer's family are invited.

In the opening scene of the second act there are one of two traits that might perhaps have been preserved, such as Nora's prayer: "Oh, God! Oh, God! do something to Torvald's mind to prevent him from enraging that terrible man! Oh, God! Oh, God! I have three little children! Do it for my children's sake." Very natural and touching, too, is her exclamation, "Oh, how glorious it would be if I could only wake up, and come to my senses, and cry, 'It was a dream! It was a dream!'" A week, by the way, has passed, instead of a single night, as in the finished play; and Nora has been wearing herself out by going to parties every evening. Helmer enters immediately on the nurse's exit; there is no scene with Mrs. Linden in which she remonstrates with Nora for having (as she thinks) borrowed money from Dr. Rank, and so suggests to her the idea of applying to him for aid.

In the scene with Helmer, we miss, among many other characteristic traits, his confession that the ultimate reason why he cannot keep Krogstad in the bank is that Krogstad, an old schoolfellow, is so tactless as to tutoye him. There is a curious little touch in the passage where Helmer draws a contrast between his own strict rectitude and the doubtful character of Nora's father. "I can give you proof of it," he says. "I never cared to mention it before- but the twelve hundred dollars he gave you when you were set on going to Italy he never entered in his books: we have been quite unable to discover where he got them from." When Dr. Rank enters, he speaks to Helmer and Nora together of his failing health; it is an enormous improvement which transfers this passage, in a carefully polished form, to his scene with Nora alone. That scene, in the draft, is almost insignificant. It consists mainly of somewhat melodramatic forecasts of disaster on Nora's part, and the doctor's alarm as to her health. Of the famous silk-stockings scene- that invaluable sidelight on Nora's relation with Helmer there is not a trace. There is no hint of Nora's appeal to Rank for help, nipped in the bud by his declaration of love for her. All these elements we find in a second draft of the scene which has been preserved. In this second draft, Rank says, "Helmer himself might quite well know every thought I have ever had of you; he shall know when I am gone." It might have been better, so far as England is concerned, if Ibsen had retained this speech; it might have prevented much critical misunderstanding of a perfectly harmless and really beautiful episode.

Between the scene with Rank and the scene with Krogstad there intervenes, in the draft, a discussion between Nora and Mrs. Linden, containing this curious passage: NORA

When an unhappy wife is separated from her husband she is not allowed to keep her children? Is that really so? MRS. LINDEN Yes, I think so. That's to say, if she is guilty.

NORA Oh, guilty, guilty; what does it mean to be guilty? Has a wife no right to love her husband? MRS. LINDEN Yes, precisely, her husband- and him only.

NORA Why, of course; who was thinking of anything else? But that law is unjust, Kristina. You can see clearly that it is the men that have made it.

MRS. LINDEN Aha- so you have begun to take up the woman question? NORA No, I don't care a bit about it. The scene with Krogstad is essentially the same as in the final form, though sharpened, so to speak, at many points. The question of suicide was originally discussed in a somewhat melodramatic tone: NORA I have been thinking of nothing else all these days.

KROGSTAD Perhaps. But how to do it? Poison? Not so easy to get hold of. Shooting? It needs some skill, Mrs. Helmer. Hanging? Bah- there's something ugly in that....

NORA Do you hear that rushing sound? KROGSTAD The river? Yes, of course you have thought of that. But you haven't pictured the thing to yourself.

And he proceeds to do so for her. After he has gone, leaving the letter in the box, Helmer and Rank enter, and Nora implores Helmer to do no work till New Year's Day (the next day) is over. He agrees, but says, "I will just see if any letters have come "; whereupon she rushes to the piano and strikes a few chords. He stops to listen, and she sits down and plays and sings Anitra's song from Peer Gynt. When Mrs. Linden presently enters, Nora makes her take her place at the piano, drapes a shawl around her, and dances Anitra's dance. It must be owned that Ibsen has immensely improved this very strained and arbitrary incident by devising the fancy dress ball and the necessity of rehearsing the tarantella for it; but at the best it remains a piece of theatricalism.

As a study in technique, the re-handling of the last act is immensely interesting. At the beginning, in the earlier form, Nora rushes down from the children's party overhead, and takes a significant farewell of Mrs. Linden, whom she finds awaiting her. Helmer almost forces her to return to the party; and thus the stage is cleared for the scene between Mrs. Linden and Krogstad, which, in the final version, opens the act. Then Nora enters with the two elder children, whom she sends to bed. Helmer immediately follows, and on his heels Dr. Rank, who announces in plain terms that his disease has entered on its last stage, that he is going home to die, and that he will not have Helmer or any one else hanging around his sick-room. In the final version, he says all this to Nora alone in the second act; while in the last act, coming in upon Helmer flushed with wine, and Nora pale and trembling in her masquerade dress, he has a parting scene with them, the significance of which she alone understands. In the earlier version, Rank has several long and heavy speeches in place of the light, swift dialogue of the final form, with its different significance for Helmer and for Nora. There is no trace of the wonderful passage which precedes Rank's exit. To compare the draft with the finished scene is to see a perfect instance of the transmutation of dramatic prose into dramatic poetry.

There is in the draft no indication of Helmer's being warmed with wine, or of the excitement of the senses which gives the final touch of tragedy to Nora's despair. The

process of the action is practically the same in both versions; but everywhere in the final form a sharper edge is given to things. One little touch is very significant. In the draft, when Helmer has read the letter with which Krogstad returns the forged bill, he cries, "You are saved, Nora, you are saved!" In the revision, Ibsen cruelly altered this into, "I am saved, Nora, I am saved!" In the final scene, where Nora is telling Helmer how she expected him, when the revelation came, to take all the guilt upon himself, we look in vain, in the first draft, for this passage: HELMER I would gladly work for you night and day, Nora- bear sorrow and want for your sake. But no man sacrifices his honour, even for one he loves.

NORA Millions of women have done so. This, then, was an afterthought: was there ever a more brilliant one? It is with *A Doll's House* that Ibsen enters upon his kingdom as a world-poet.

He had done greater work in the past, and he was to do greater work in the future; but this was the play which was destined to carry his name beyond the limits of Scandinavia, and even of Germany, to the remotest regions of civilisation. Here the Fates were not altogether kind to him. The fact that for many years he was known to thousands of people solely as the author of *A Doll's House* and its successor, *Ghosts*, was largely responsible for the extravagant misconceptions of his genius and character which prevailed during the last decade of the nineteenth century, and are not yet entirely extinct. In these plays he seemed to be delivering a direct assault on marriage, from the standpoint of feminine individualism; wherefore he was taken to be a preacher and pamphleteer rather than a poet. In these plays, and in these only, he made physical disease a considerable factor in the action; whence it was concluded that he had a morbid predilection for "nauseous" subjects. In these plays he laid special and perhaps disproportionate stress on the influence of heredity; whence he was believed to be possessed by a monomania on the point. In these plays, finally, he was trying to act the essentially uncongenial part of the prosaic realist. The effort broke down at many points, and the poet reasserted himself; but these flaws in the prosaic texture were regarded as mere bewildering errors and eccentricities. In short, he was introduced to the world at large through two plays which showed his power, indeed, almost in perfection, but left the higher and subtler qualities of his genius for the most part unrepresented. Hence the grotesquely distorted vision of him which for so long haunted the minds even of intelligent people. Hence, for example, the amazing opinion, given forth as a truism by more than one critic of great ability, that the author of *Peer Gynt* was devoid of humour.

Within a little more than a fortnight of its publication, *A Doll's House* was presented at the Royal Theatre, Copenhagen, where Fru Hennings, as Nora, made the great success of her career. The play was soon being acted, as well as read, all over Scandinavia. Nora's startling "declaration of independence" afforded such an inexhaustible theme for heated discussion, that at last it had to be formally barred at social gatherings, just as, in Paris twenty years later, the Dreyfus Case was proclaimed a prohibited topic. The popularity of *Pillars of Society* in Germany had paved the way for its successor, which spread far and wide over the German stage in the spring of 1880, and has ever since held its place in the repertory of the leading theatres. As his works were at that time

wholly unprotected in Germany, Ibsen could not prevent managers from altering the end of the play to suit their taste and fancy. He was thus driven, under protest, to write an alternative ending, in which, at the last moment, the thought of her children restrained Nora from leaving home. He preferred, as he said, "to commit the outrage himself, rather than leave his work to the tender mercies of adaptors." The patched-up ending soon dropped out of use and out of memory. Ibsen's own account of the matter will be found in his Correspondence, Letter 142.

It took ten years for the play to pass beyond the limits of Scandinavia and Germany. Madame Modjeska, it is true, presented a version of it in Louisville, Kentucky, in 1883, but it attracted no attention. In the following year Messrs. Henry Arthur Jones and Henry Herman produced at the Prince of Wales's Theatre, London, a play entitled *Breaking a Butterfly*, which was described as being "founded on Ibsen's *Norah*," but bore only a remote resemblance to the original. In this production Mr. Beerbohm Tree took the part of Dunkley, a melodramatic villain who filled the place of Krogstad. In 1885, again, an adventurous amateur club gave a quaint performance of Miss Lord's translation of the play at a hall in Argyle Street, London. Not until June 7, 1889, was *A Doll's House* competently, and even brilliantly, presented to the English public, by Mr. Charles Charrington and Miss Janet Achurch, at the Novelty Theatre, London, afterwards re-named the Kingsway Theatre. It was this production that really made Ibsen known to the English-speaking peoples. In other words, it marked his second great stride towards world-wide, as distinct from merely national, renown- if we reckon as the first stride the success of *Pillars of Society* in Germany. Mr. and Mrs. Charrington took *A Doll's House* with them on a long Australian tour; Miss Beatrice Cameron (Mrs. Richard Mansfield) was encouraged by the success of the London production to present the play in New York, whence it soon spread to other American cities; while in London itself it was frequently revived and vehemently discussed.

The Ibsen controversy, indeed, did not break out in its full virulence until 1891, when *Ghosts* and *Hedda Gabler* were produced in London; but from the date of the Novelty production onwards, Ibsen was generally recognised as a potent factor in the intellectual and artistic life of the day.

A French adaptation of *Et Dukkehjem* was produced in Brussels in March 1889, but attracted little attention. Not until 1894 was the play introduced to the Parisian public, at the Gymnase, with Madame Rejane as Nora. This actress has since played the part frequently, not only in Paris but in London and in America.

In Italian the play was first produced in 1889, and soon passed into the repertory of Eleonora Duse, who appeared as Nora in London in 1893. Few heroines in modern drama have been played by so many actresses of the first rank. To those already enumerated must be added Hedwig Niemann-Raabe and Agnes Sorma in Germany, and Minnie Maddern-Fiske and Alla Nazimova in America; and, even so, the list is far from complete. There is probably no country in the world, possessing a theatre on the European model, in which *A Doll's House* has not been more or less frequently acted.

Undoubtedly the great attraction of the part of Nora to the average actress was the tarantella scene. This was a theatrical effect, of an obvious, unmistakable kind. It might have been- though I am not aware that it ever actually was- made the subject of a

picture-poster. But this, as it seems to me, was Ibsen's last concession to the ideal of technique which he had acquired, in the old Bergen days, from his French masters. It was at this point- or, more precisely, a little later, in the middle of the third act- that Ibsen definitely outgrew the theatrical orthodox of his earlier years. When the action, in the theatrical sense, was over, he found himself only on the threshold of the essential drama; and in that drama, compressed into the final scene of the play, he proclaimed his true power and his true mission.

How impossible, in his subsequent work, would be such figures as Mrs. Linden, the confidant, and Krogstad, the villain! They are not quite the ordinary confidant and villain, for Ibsen is always Ibsen, and his power of vitalisation is extraordinary. Yet we clearly feel them to belong to a different order of art from that of his later plays. How impossible, too, in the poet's after years, would have been the little tricks of ironic coincidence and picturesque contrast which abound in *A Doll's House*! The festal atmosphere of the whole play, the Christmas-tree, the tarantella, the masquerade ball, with its distant sounds of music- all the shimmer and tinsel of the background, against which Nora's soul-torture and Rank's despair are thrown into relief, belong to the system of external, artificial antithesis beloved by romantic playwrights from Lope de Vega onward, and carried to its limit by Victor Hugo. The same artificiality is apparent in minor details. "Oh, what a wonderful thing it is to live to be happy!" cries Nora, and instantly "The hall-door bell rings" and Krogstad's shadow falls across the threshold. So, too, for his second entrance, an elaborate effect of contrast is arranged, between Nora's gleeful romp with her children and the sinister figure which stands unannounced in their midst. It would be too much to call these things absolutely unnatural, but the very precision of the coincidence is eloquent of pre-arrangement. At any rate, they belong to an order of effects which in future Ibsen sedulously eschews. The one apparent exception to this rule which I can remember occurs in *The Master Builder*, where Solness's remark, "Presently the younger generation will come knocking at my door," gives the cue for Hilda's knock and entrance. But here an interesting distinction is to be noted. Throughout *The Master Builder* the poet subtly indicates the operation of mysterious, unseen agencies- the "helpers and servers" of whom Solness speaks, as well as the Power with which he held converse at the crisis in his life- guiding, or at any rate tampering with, the destinies of the characters. This being so, it is evident that the effect of pre-arrangement produced by Hilda's appearing exactly on the given cue was deliberately aimed at. Like so many other details in the play, it might be a mere coincidence, or it might be a result of inscrutable design- we were purposely left in doubt. But the suggestion of pre-arrangement which helped to create the atmosphere of *The Master Builder* was wholly out of place in *A Doll's House*. In the later play it was a subtle stroke of art; in the earlier it was the effect of imperfectly dissembled artifice.

The fact that Ibsen's full originality first reveals itself in the latter half of the third act is proved by the very protests, nay, the actual rebellion, which the last scene called forth. Up to that point he had been doing, approximately, what theatrical orthodoxy demanded of him. But when Nora, having put off her masquerade dress, returned to make up her account with Helmer, and with marriage as Helmer understood it, the

poet flew in the face of orthodoxy, and its professors cried, out in bewilderment and wrath. But it was just at this point that, in practice, the real grip and thrill of the drama were found to come in. The tarantella scene never, in my experience- and I have seen five or six great actresses in the part- produced an effect in any degree commensurate with the effort involved. But when Nora and Helmer faced each other, one on each side of the table, and set to work to ravel out the skein of their illusions, then one felt oneself face to face with a new thing in drama- an order of experience, at once intellectual and emotional, not hitherto attained in the theatre. This every one felt, I think, who was in any way accessible to that order of experience. For my own part, I shall never forget how surprised I was on first seeing the play, to find this scene, in its naked simplicity, far more exciting and moving than all the artfully-arranged situations of the earlier acts. To the same effect, from another point of view, we have the testimony of Fru Hennings, the first actress who ever played the part of Nora. In an interview published soon after Ibsen's death, she spoke of the delight it was to her, in her youth, to embody the Nora of the first and second acts, the "lark," the "squirrel," the irresponsible, butterfly Nora. "When I now play the part," she went on, "the first acts leave me indifferent. Not until the third act am I really interested- but then, intensely." To call the first and second acts positively uninteresting would of course be a gross exaggeration. What one really means is that their workmanship is still a little derivative and immature, and that not until the third act does the poet reveal the full originality and individuality of his genius.

CHARACTERS

TORVALD HELMER.

NORA, his wife.

DOCTOR RANK.

MRS. LINDEN⁵

NILS KROGSTAD.

THE HELMERS' THREE CHILDREN.

ANNA, ⁶ their nurse.

A MAID-SERVANT (ELLEN).

A PORTER.

⁵ In the original "Fru Linde."

⁶ In the original "Anne-Marie."

ACT FIRST

The action passes in Helmer's house (a flat) in Christiania.

A room, comfortably and tastefully, but not expensively, furnished. In the back, on the right, a door leads to the hall; on the left another door leads to HELMER's study. Between the two doors a pianoforte. In the middle of the left wall a door, and nearer the front a window. Near the window a round table with armchairs and a small sofa. In the right wall, somewhat to the back, a door, and against the same wall, further forward, a porcelain stove; in front of it a couple of arm-chairs and a rocking-chair. Between the stove and the side-door a small table. Engravings on the walls. A what-not with china and bric-a-brac. A small bookcase filled with handsomely bound books. Carpet. A fire in the stove. It is a winter day. A bell rings in the hall outside. Presently the outer door of the flat is heard to open.

Then NORA enters, humming gaily. She is in outdoor dress, and carries several parcels, which she lays on the right-hand table. She leaves the door into the hall open, and a PORTER is seen outside, carrying a Christmas-tree and a basket, which he gives to the MAID-SERVANT who has opened the door.

NORA Hide the Christmas-tree carefully, Ellen; the children must on no account see it before this evening, when it's lighted up.

[To the PORTER, taking out her purse.]

How much? PORTER Fifty ore.⁷ NORA There is a crown. No, keep the change.

[The PORTER thanks her and goes. NORA shuts the door. She continues smiling in quiet glee as she takes off her outdoor things. Taking from her pocket a bag of macaroons, she eats one or two. Then she goes on tip-toe to her husband's door and listens].

NORA Yes; he is at home.

[She begins humming again, crossing to the table on the right].

HELMER[In his room.] Is that my lark twittering there?

⁷ About sixpence. There are 100 ore in a krone or crown, which is worth thirteence halfpenny.

NORA[Busy opening some of her parcels.] Yes, it is.

HELMER Is it the squirrel frisking around? NORA Yes!

HELMER When did the squirrel get home? NORA Just this minute.

[Hides the bag of macaroons in her pocket and wipes her mouth.]

Come here, Torvald, and see what I've been buying.

HELMER Don't interrupt me.

[A little later he opens the door and looks in, pen in hand.]

Buying, did you say? What! All that? Has my little spendthrift been making the money fly again?

NORA Why, Torvald, surely we can afford to launch out a little now. It's the first Christmas we haven't had to pinch.

HELMER Come come; we can't afford to squander money.

NORA Oh yes, Torvald, do let us squander a little, now- just the least little bit! You know you'll soon be earning heaps of money.

HELMER Yes, from New Year's Day. But there's a whole quarter before my first salary is due.

NORA Never mind; we can borrow in the meantime.

HELMER Nora!

[He goes up to her and takes her playfully by the ear.]

Still my little featherbrain! Supposing I borrowed a thousand crowns to-day, and you made ducks and drakes of them during Christmas week, and then on New Year's Eve a tile blew off the roof and knocked my brains outNORA [Laying her hand on his mouth.] Hush! How can you talk so horridly? HELMER But supposing it were to happen- what then? NORA If anything so dreadful happened, it would be all the same to me whether I was in debt or not.

HELMER But what about the creditors? NORA They! Who cares for them? They're only strangers.

HELMER Nora, Nora! What a woman you are! But seriously, Nora, you know my principles on these points. No debts! No borrowing!

Home life ceases to be free and beautiful as soon as it is founded on borrowing and debt. We two have held out bravely till now, and we are not going to give in at the last.

NORA [Going to the fireplace.] Very well- as you please, Torvald.

HELMER [Following her.] Come come; my little lark mustn't droop her wings like that. What? Is my squirrel in the sulks?

[Takes out his purse.]

Nora, what do you think I have here? NORA [Turning round quickly.] Money!

HELMER There!

[Gives her some notes.]

Of course I know all sorts of things are wanted at Christmas.

NORA [Counting.] Ten, twenty, thirty, forty. Oh, thank you, thank you, Torvald! This will go a long way.

HELMER I should hope so.

NORA Yes, indeed; a long way! But come here, and let me show you all I've been buying. And so cheap! Look, here's a new suit for Ivar, and a little sword. Here are a horse and a trumpet for Bob. And here are a doll and a cradle for Emmy. They're only common; but they're good enough for her to pull to pieces. And dress-stuffs and kerchiefs for the servants. I ought to have got something better for old Anna.

HELMER And what's in that other parcel? NORA [Crying out.] No, Torvald, you're not to see that until this evening.

HELMER Oh! Ah! But now tell me, you little spendthrift, have you thought of anything for yourself? NORA For myself! Oh, I don't want anything.

HELMER Nonsense! Just tell me something sensible you would like to have.

NORA No, really I don't know of anything- Well, listen, TorvaldHELMER Well?
NORA

[Playing with his coat-buttons, without looking him in the face.]

If you really want to give me something, you might, you know- you might
HELMER Well? Out with it!

NORA [Quickly.] You might give me money, Torvald. Only just what you think you can spare; then I can buy something with it later on.

HELMER But, Nora-

NORA Oh, please do, dear Torvald, please do! I should hang the money in lovely gilt paper on the Christmas-tree. Wouldn't that be fun? HELMER What do they call the birds that are always making the money fly? NORA Yes, I know- spendthrifts, 8 of course. But please do as I ask you, Torvald. Then I shall have time to think what I want most. Isn't that very sensible, now? HELMER [Smiling.] Certainly; that is to say, if you really kept the money I gave you, and really spent it on something for yourself. But it all goes in housekeeping, and for all manner of useless things, and then I have to pay up again.

NORA But, Torvald 8 "Spillefugl," literally "playbird," means a gambler.

HELMER Can you deny it, Nora dear? [He puts his arm round her.] It's a sweet little lark, but it gets through a lot of money. No one would believe how much it costs a man to keep such a little bird as you.

NORA For shame! How can you say so? Why, I save as much as ever I can.

HELMER [Laughing.] Very true- as much as you can- but that's precisely nothing.

NORA

[Hums and smiles with covert glee.]

H'm! If you only knew, Torvald, what expenses we larks and squirrels have.

HELMER You're a strange little being! Just like your father- always on the look-out for all the money you can lay your hands on; but the moment you have it, it seems to slip through your fingers; you never know what becomes of it. Well, one must take you as you are. It's in the blood. Yes, Nora, that sort of thing is hereditary.

NORA I wish I had inherited many of papa's qualities.

HELMER And I don't wish you anything but just what you are- my own, sweet little song-bird. But I say- it strikes me you look so- so what shall I call it?- so suspicious to-day
NORA Do I? HELMER You do, indeed. Look me full in the face.

NORA [Looking at him.] Well? HELMER [Threatening with his finger.] Hasn't the little sweet-tooth been playing pranks to-day? NORA No; how can you think such a thing!

HELMER Didn't she just look in at the confectioner's?

NORA No, Torvald; really
HELMER Not to sip a little jelly? NORA No; certainly not.

HELMER Hasn't she even nibbled a macaroon or two? NORA No, Torvald, indeed, indeed!

HELMER Well, well, well; of course I'm only joking.

NORA [Goes to the table on the right.] I shouldn't think of doing what you disapprove of.

HELMER No, I'm sure of that; and, besides, you've given me your word- [Going towards her.] Well, keep your little Christmas secrets to yourself, Nora darling. The Christmas-tree will bring them all to light, I daresay.

NORA Have you remembered to invite Doctor Rank? HELMER No. But it's not necessary; he'll come as a matter of course. Besides, I shall ask him when he looks in to-

day. I've ordered some capital wine. Nora, you can't think how I look forward to this evening.

NORA And I too. How the children will enjoy themselves, Torvald!

HELMER Ah, it's glorious to feel that one has an assured position and ample means. Isn't it delightful to think of? NORA Oh, it's wonderful!

HELMER Do you remember last Christmas? For three whole weeks beforehand you shut yourself up every evening till long past midnight to make flowers for the Christmas-tree, and all sorts of other marvels that were to have astonished us. I was never so bored in my life.

NORA I didn't bore myself at all.

HELMER [Smiling.] But it came to little enough in the end, Nora.

NORA Oh, are you going to tease me about that again? How could I help the cat getting in and pulling it all to pieces? HELMER To be sure you couldn't, my poor little Nora. You did your best to give us all pleasure, and that's the main point. But, all the same, it's a good thing the hard times are over.

NORA Oh, isn't it wonderful? HELMER Now I needn't sit here boring myself all alone; and you needn't tire your blessed eyes and your delicate little fingers

NORA [Clapping her hands.]

No, I needn't, need I, Torvald? Oh, how wonderful it is to think of?

[Takes his arm.]

And now I'll tell you how I think we ought to manage, Torvald.

As soon as Christmas is over-

[The hall-door bell rings.]

Oh, there's a ring!

[Arranging the room.]

That's somebody come to call. How tiresome!

HELMER I'm "not at home" to callers; remember that.

ELLEN [In the doorway.] A lady to see you, ma'am.

NORA Show her in.

ELLEN [To HELMER.] And the doctor has just come, sir.

HELMER Has he gone into my study? ELLEN Yes, sir.

[HELMER goes into his study. ELLEN ushers in MRS. LINDEN, in travelling costume, and goes out, closing the door.]

MRS. LINDEN [Embarrassed and hesitating.] How do you do, Nora?

NORA [Doubtfully.] How do you do? MRS. LINDEN I see you don't recognise me!

NORA No, I don't think- oh yes!- I believe [Suddenly brightening.] What, Christina! Is it really you? MRS. LINDEN Yes; really I!

NORA Christina! And to think I didn't know you! But how could I [More softly.]

How changed you are; Christina!

MRS. LINDEN Yes, no doubt. In nine or ten years NORA Is it really so long since we met? Yes, so it is. Oh, the last eight years have been a happy time, I can tell you. And now you have come to town? All that long journey in mid-winter! How brave of you!

MRS. LINDEN I arrived by this morning's steamer.

NORA To have a merry Christmas, of course. Oh, how delightful!

Yes, we will have a merry Christmas. Do take your things off.

Aren't you frozen?

[Helping her.]

There; now we'll sit cosily by

the fire. No, you take the arm-chair; I shall sit in this rocking-chair.

[Seizes her hands.]

Yes, now I can see the dear old face again. It was only at the first glance- But you're a little paler, Christina- and perhaps a little thinner.

MRS. LINDEN And much, much older, Nora.

NORA Yes, perhaps a little older- not much- ever so little.

[She suddenly checks herself; seriously.]

Oh, what a thoughtless wretch I am! Here I sit chattering on, and- Dear, dear Christina, can you forgive me!

MRS. LINDEN What do you mean, Nora? NORA[Softly.] Poor Christina! I forgot: you are a widow.

MRS. LINDEN Yes; my husband died three years ago.

NORA I know, I know; I saw it in the papers. Oh, believe me, Christina, I did mean to write to you; but I kept putting it off, and something always came in the way.

MRS. LINDEN I can quite understand that, Nora dear.

NORA No, Christina; it was horrid of me. Oh, you poor darling! how much you must have gone through!- And he left you nothing? MRS. LINDEN Nothing.

NORA And no children? MRS. LINDEN None.

NORA Nothing, nothing at all?

MRS. LINDEN Not even a sorrow or a longing to dwell upon.

NORA

[Looking at her incredulously.]

My dear Christina, how is that possible? MRS. LINDEN

[Smiling sadly and stroking her hair.]

Oh, it happens so sometimes, Nora.

NORA So utterly alone! How dreadful that must be! I have three of the loveliest children. I can't show them to you just now; they're out with their nurse. But now you must tell me everything.

MRS. LINDEN No, no; I want you to tell me NORA No, you must begin; I won't be egotistical to-day. To-day I'll think only of you. Oh! but I must tell you one thing- perhaps you've heard of our great stroke of fortune?

MRS. LINDEN No. What is it? NORA Only think! my husband has been made manager of the Joint Stock Bank.

MRS. LINDEN Your husband! Oh, how fortunate!

NORA Yes; isn't it? A lawyer's position is so uncertain, you see, especially when he won't touch any business that's the least bit shady, as of course Torvald never would; and there I quite agree with him. Oh! you can imagine how glad we are. He is to enter on his new position at the New Year, and then he'll have a large salary, and percentages. In future we shall be able to live quite differently just as we please, in fact. Oh, Christina, I feel so lighthearted and happy! It's delightful to have lots of money,

and no need to worry about things, isn't it? MRS. LINDEN Yes; at any rate it must be delightful to have what you need.

NORA No, not only what you need, but heaps of money- heaps!

MRS. LINDEN [Smiling.] Nora, Nora, haven't you learnt reason yet? In our school days you were a shocking little spendthrift.

NORA [Quietly smiling.] Yes; that's what Torvald says I am still. [Holding up her forefinger.] But "Nora, Nora" is not so silly as you all think. Oh! I haven't had the chance to be much of a spendthrift. We have both had to work.

MRS. LINDEN You too? NORA Yes, light fancy work: crochet, and embroidery, and things of that sort; [Carelessly] and other work too. You know, of course, that Torvald left the Government service when we were married. He had little chance of promotion, and of course he required to make more money. But in the first year after our marriage he overworked himself terribly. He had to undertake all sorts of extra work, you know, and to slave early and late. He couldn't stand it, and fell dangerously ill. Then the doctors declared he must go to the South.

MRS. LINDEN You spent a whole year in Italy, didn't you? NORA Yes, we did. It wasn't easy to manage, I can tell you. It was just after Ivar's birth. But of course we had to go. Oh, it was a wonderful, delicious journey! And it saved Torvald's life. But it cost a frightful lot of money, Christina.

MRS. LINDEN So I should think.

NORA Twelve hundred dollars! Four thousand eight hundred crowns! 9 Isn't that a lot of money? MRS. LINDEN How lucky you had the money to spend!

9 The dollar (4s. 6d.) was the old unit of currency in Norway. The crown was substituted for it shortly before the date of this play.

NORA We got it from father, you must know.

MRS. LINDEN Ah, I see. He died just about that time, didn't he? NORA Yes, Christina, just then. And only think! I couldn't go and nurse him! I was expecting little Ivar's birth daily; and then I had my poor sick Torvald to attend to. Dear, kind old father! I never saw him again, Christina. Oh! that's the hardest thing I have had to bear since my marriage.

MRS. LINDEN I know how fond you were of him. But then you went to Italy? NORA Yes; you see, we had the money, and the doctors said we must lose no time. We started a month later.

MRS. LINDEN And your husband came back completely cured.

NORA Sound as a bell.

MRS. LINDEN But- the doctor? NORA What do you mean? MRS. LINDEN I thought as I came in your servant announced the doctor NORA Oh, yes; Doctor Rank. But he doesn't come professionally. He is our best friend, and never lets a day pass without looking in. No, Torvald hasn't had an hour's illness since that time. And the children are so healthy and well, and so am I.

[Jumps up and claps her hands.]

Oh, Christina, Christina, what a wonderful thing it is to live and to be happy!- Oh, but it's really too horrid of me! Here am I talking about nothing but my own concerns.

[Seats herself upon a footstool close to CHRISTINA, and lays her arms on her friend's lap.]

Oh, don't be angry with me! Now tell me, is it really true that you didn't love your husband? What made you marry him, then?

MRS. LINDEN My mother was still alive, you see, bedridden and helpless; and then I had my two younger brothers to think of.

I didn't think it would be right for me to refuse him.

NORA Perhaps it wouldn't have been. I suppose he was rich then? MRS. LINDEN Very well off, I believe. But his business was uncertain. It fell to pieces at his death, and there was nothing left.

NORA And then-? MRS. LINDEN Then I had to fight my way by keeping a shop, a little school, anything I could turn my hand to. The last three years have been one long struggle for me. But now it is over, Nora. My poor mother no longer needs me; she is at rest. And the boys are in business, and can look after themselves.

NORA How free your life must feel!

MRS. LINDEN No, Nora; only inexpressibly empty. No one to live for!

[Stands up restlessly.]

That's why I could not bear to stay any longer in that out-of-the-way corner. Here it must be easier to find something to take one up- to occupy one's thoughts. If I could only get some settled employment- some office work.

NORA But, Christina, that's such drudgery, and you look worn out already. It would be ever so much better for you to go to some watering-place and rest.

MRS. LINDEN [Going to the window.] I have no father to give me the money, Nora.

NORA [Rising.] Oh, don't be vexed with me.

MRS. LINDEN [Going to her.] My dear Nora, don't you be vexed with me. The worst of a position like mine is that it makes one so bitter. You have no one to work for, yet you have to be always on the strain. You must live; and so you become selfish. When I heard of the happy change in

your fortunes- can you believe it?- I was glad for my own sake more than for yours.

NORA How do you mean? Ah, I see! You think Torvald can perhaps do something for you.

MRS. LINDEN Yes; I thought so.

NORA And so he shall, Christina. Just you leave it all to me. I shall lead up to it beautifully!- I shall think of some delightful plan to put him in a good humour! Oh, I should so love to help you.

MRS. LINDEN How good of you, Nora, to stand by me so warmly!

Doubly good in you, who knows so little of the troubles and burdens of life.

NORA I? I know so little of-? MRS. LINDEN [Smiling.] Oh, well- a little fancy-work, and so forth.- You're a child, Nora.

NORA

[Tosses her head and paces the room.]

Oh, come, you mustn't be so patronising!

MRS. LINDEN No? NORA You're like the rest. You all think I'm fit for nothing really serious
MRS. LINDEN Well, well
NORA You think I've had no troubles in this weary world.

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

NORA Pooh- those trifles!

[Softly.]

I haven't told you the great thing.

MRS. LINDEN The great thing? What do you mean? NORA I know you look down upon me, Christina; but you have no right to. You are proud of having worked so hard and so long for your mother.

MRS. LINDEN I am sure I don't look down upon any one; but it's true I am both proud and glad when I remember that I was able to keep my mother's last days free from care.

NORA And you're proud to think of what you have done for your brothers, too.

MRS. LINDEN Have I not the right to be? NORA Yes indeed. But now let me tell you, Christina- I, too, have something to be proud and glad of.

MRS. LINDEN I don't doubt it. But what do you mean? NORA Hush! Not so loud. Only think, if Torvald were to hear! He mustn't- not for worlds! No one must know about it, Christina- no one but you.

MRS LINDEN.

Why, what can it be? NORA Come over here.

[Draws her down beside her on the sofa.]

Yes, Christina- I, too, have something to be proud and glad of. I saved Torvald's life.

MRS. LINDEN Saved his life? How? NORA I told you about our going to Italy. Torvald would have died but for that.

MRS. LINDEN Well- and your father gave you the money.

NORA [Smiling.] Yes, so Torvald and every one believes; but

MRS. LINDEN But-? NORA Papa didn't give us one penny. It was I that found the money.

MRS. LINDEN You? All that money? NORA Twelve hundred dollars. Four thousand eight hundred crowns.

What do you say to that? MRS. LINDEN My dear Nora, how did you manage it? Did you win it in the lottery? NORA [Contemptuously.] In the lottery? Pooh! Any one could have done that!

MRS. LINDEN Then wherever did you get it from? NORA [Hums and smiles mysteriously.] H'm; tra-la-la-la!

MRS. LINDEN Of course you couldn't borrow it.

NORA No? Why not? MRS. LINDEN Why, a wife can't borrow without her husband's consent.

NORA [Tossing her head.] Oh! when the wife has some idea of business, and knows how to set about things
MRS. LINDEN But, Nora, I don't understand
NORA Well, you needn't. I never said I borrowed the money. There are many ways I may have got it.

[Throws herself back on the sofa.] I may have got it from some admirer. When one is so- attractive as I am
MRS. LINDEN You're too silly, Nora.

NORA Now I'm sure you're dying of curiosity, Christina
MRS. LINDEN Listen to me, Nora dear: haven't you been a little rash? NORA [Sitting upright again.] Is it rash to save one's husband's life? MRS. LINDEN I think it was rash of you, without his knowledge
NORA But it would have been fatal for him to know! Can't you understand that? He wasn't even to suspect how ill he was. The doctors came to me privately and told me his life was in danger that nothing could save him but a winter in the South. Do you think I didn't try diplomacy first? I told him how I longed to have a trip abroad, like other young wives; I wept and prayed; I said he ought to think of my condition, and not to thwart me; and then I hinted that he could borrow the money. But then, Christina, he got almost angry. He said I was frivolous, and that it was his duty as a husband not to yield to my whims and fancies- so he called them.

Very well, thought I, but saved you must be; and then I found the way to do it.

MRS. LINDEN And did your husband never learn from your father that the money was not from him? NORA No; never. Papa died at that very time. I meant to have told him all about it, and begged him to say nothing. But he was so ill- unhappily, it wasn't necessary.

MRS. LINDEN And you have never confessed to your husband? NORA Good heavens! What can you be thinking of of? Tell him when he has such a loathing of debt And besides- how painful and humiliating it would be for Torvald, with his manly self-respect, to know that he owed anything to me! It would utterly upset the relation between us; our beautiful, happy home would never again be what it is.

MRS. LINDEN Will you never tell him? NORA [Thoughtfully, half-smiling.] Yes, some time perhaps- many many years hence, when I'm- not so pretty. You mustn't laugh at me! Of course I mean when Torvald is not so much in love with me as he is now; when it doesn't amuse him any longer to see me dancing about, and dressing up and acting. Then it might be well to have something in reserve.

[Breaking off.]

Nonsense! nonsense!

That time will never come. Now, what do you say to my grand secret, Christina? Am I fit for nothing now? You may believe it has cost me a lot of anxiety. It has been no joke to meet my engagements punctually. You must know, Christina, that in business there are things called instalments, and quarterly interest, that are terribly hard to provide for. So I've had to pinch a little here and there, wherever I could. I couldn't save much out of the housekeeping, for of course Torvald had to live well. And I couldn't let the children go about badly dressed; all I got for them, I spent on them, the blessed darlings!

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

NORA Yes, of course. After all, the whole thing was my doing. When Torvald gave me money for clothes, and so on, I never spent more than half of it; I always bought the simplest and cheapest things.

It's a mercy that everything suits me so well- Torvald never had any suspicions. But it was often very hard, Christina dear. For it's nice to be beautifully dressed- now, isn't it?

MRS. LINDEN Indeed it is.

NORA Well, and besides that, I made money in other ways. Last winter I was so lucky- I got a heap of copying to do. I shut myself up every evening and wrote far into the night. Oh, sometimes I was so tired, so tired. And yet it was splendid to work in that way and earn money. I almost felt as if I was a man.

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

NORA Well, I can't precisely say. It's difficult to keep that sort of business clear. I only know that I've paid everything I could scrape together. Sometimes I really didn't know where to turn.

[Smiles.]

Then I used to sit here and pretend that a rich old gentleman was in love with meMRS. LINDEN What! gentleman? NORA Oh, nobody!- that he was dead now, and that when his will was opened, there stood in large letters: "Pay over at once everything of which I die possessed to that charming person, Mrs. Nora Helmer." MRS. LINDEN But, my dear Nora- what gentleman do you mean? NORA Oh dear, can't you understand? There wasn't any old gentleman: it was only what I used to dream and dream when I was at my wits' end for money. But it doesn't matter now- the tiresome old creature may stay where he is for me. I care nothing for him or his will; for now my troubles are over.

[Springing up.]

Oh, Christina, how glorious it is to think of! Free from all anxiety!

Free, quite free. To be able to play and romp about with the children; to have things tasteful and pretty in the house, exactly as Torvald likes it! And then the spring will soon be here, with the great blue sky. Perhaps then we shall have a little holiday. Perhaps I shall see the sea again. Oh, what a wonderful thing it is to live and to be happy!

[The hall-door bell rings.]

MRS. LINDEN[Rising.] There's a ring. Perhaps I had better go.

NORA No; do stay. No one will come here. It's sure to be some one for Torvald.

ELLEN[In the doorway.] If you please, ma'am, there's a gentleman to speak to Mr. Helmer.

NORA Who is the gentleman? KROGSTAD[In the doorway.] It is I, Mrs. Helmer.

[MRS. LINDEN starts and turns away to the window.]

NORA

[Goes a step towards him, anxiously, speaking low.]

You? What is it? What do you want with my husband? KROGSTAD Bank business- in a way. I hold a small post in the Joint Stock Bank, and your husband is to be our new chief, I hear.

NORA Then it is-? KROGSTAD Only tiresome business, Mrs. Helmer; nothing more.

NORA Then will you please go to his study.

[KROGSTAD goes. She bows indifferently while she closes the door into the hall. Then she goes to the stove and looks to the fire.]

MRS. LINDEN Nora- who was that man? NORA A Mr. Krogstad- a lawyer.

MRS. LINDEN Then it was really he? NORA Do you know him? MRS. LINDEN I used to know him- many years ago. He was in a lawyer's office in our town.

NORA Yes, so he was.

MRS. LINDEN How he has changed!

NORA I believe his marriage was unhappy.

MRS. LINDEN And he is a widower now? NORA With a lot of children. There! Now it will burn up.

[She closes the stove, and pushes the rocking-chair a little aside.]

MRS. LINDEN His business is not of the most creditable, they say? NORA Isn't it? I daresay not. I don't know. But don't let us think of business- it's so tiresome.

[DR. RANK comes out of HELMER'S room.]

RANK[Still in the doorway.] No, no; I'm in your way. I shall go and have a chat with your wife.

[Shuts the door and sees MRS.LINDEN.]

Oh, I beg your pardon. I'm in the way here too.

NORA No, not in the least.

[Introduces them.]

Doctor Rank- Mrs.Linden.

RANK Oh, indeed; I've often heard Mrs. Linden's name; I think I passed you on the stairs as I came up.

MRS. LINDEN Yes; I go so very slowly. Stairs try me so much.

RANK Ah- you are not very strong? MRS. LINDEN Only overworked.

RANK Nothing more? Then no doubt you've come to town to find rest in a round of dissipation? MRS. LINDEN I have come to look for employment.

RANK Is that an approved remedy for overwork?

MRS. LINDEN One must live, Doctor Rank.

RANK Yes, that seems to be the general opinion.

NORA Come, Doctor Rank- you want to live yourself.

RANK To be sure I do. However wretched I may be, I want to drag on as long as possible. All my patients, too, have the same mania.

And it's the same with people whose complaint is moral. At this very moment Helmer is talking to just such a moral incurableMRS. LINDEN

[Softly.]

Ah!

NORA Whom do you mean? RANK Oh, a fellow named Krogstad, a man you know nothing aboutcorrupt to the very core of his character. But even he began by announcing, as a matter of vast importance, that he must live.

NORA Indeed? And what did he want with Torvald? RANK I haven't an idea; I only gathered that it was some bank business. NORA I didn't know that Krog- that this Mr. Krogstad had anything to do with the Bank? RANK Yes. He has got some sort of place there.

[To MRS. LINDEN.]

I don't know whether in your part of the country, you have people who go grubbing and sniffing around in search of moral rottenness- and then, when they have found a "case," don't rest till they have got their man into some good position, where they can keep a watch upon him. Men with a clean bill of health they leave out in the cold.

MRS. LINDEN Well, I suppose the- delicate characters require most care.

RANK [Shrugs his shoulders.] There we have it! It's that notion that makes society a hospital.

[NORA, deep in her own thoughts, breaks into half-stifled laughter and claps her hands.

RANK Why do you laugh at that? Have you any idea what "society" is? NORA What do I care for your tiresome society? I was laughing at something else- something excessively amusing. Tell me, Doctor Rank, are all the employees at the Bank dependent on Torvald now? RANK Is that what strikes you as excessively amusing?

NORA [Smiles and hums.] Never mind, never mind!

[Walks about the room.]

Yes, it is funny to think that we- that Torvald has such power over so many people.

[Takes the bag from her pocket.]

Doctor Rank, will you have a macaroon? RANK What!- macaroons! I thought they were contraband here.

NORA Yes; but Christina brought me these.

MRS. LINDEN What! I-? NORA Oh, well! Don't be frightened. You couldn't possibly know that Torvald had forbidden them. The fact is, he's afraid of me spoiling my teeth. But, oh bother, just for once!- That's for you, Doctor Rank!

[Puts a macaroon into his mouth.]

And you too, Christina. And I'll have one while we're about it only a tiny one, or at most two.

[Walks about again.]

Oh dear, I am happy! There's only one thing in the world I really want.

RANK Well; what's that? NORA There's something I should so like to say- in Torvald's hearing.

RANK Then why don't you say it? NORA Because I daren't, it's so ugly.

MRS. LINDEN Ugly!

RANK In that case you'd better not. But to us you might- What is it you would so like to say in Helmer's hearing? NORA I should so love to say "Damn it all!" 10 -

RANK Are you out of your mind? MRS. LINDEN Good gracious, Nora-!

RANK Say it- there he is!

NORA [Hides the macaroons.] Hush- sh- sh! HELMER comes out of his room, hat in hand, with his overcoat on his arm. NORA [Going to him.] Well, Torvald dear, have you got rid of him? HELMER Yes; he has just gone.

NORA Let me introduce you- this is Christina, who has come to town 10 "Dod og pine," literally "death and torture"; but by usage a comparatively mild oath.

HELMER Christina? Pardon me, I don't know NORA Mrs. Linden, Torvald dear- Christina Linden.

HELMER [To MRS. LINDEN.] Indeed! A school-friend of my wife's, no doubt? MRS. LINDEN Yes; we knew each other as girls.

NORA And only think! she has taken this long journey on purpose to speak to you.

HELMER To speak to me!

MRS. LINDEN Well, not quite
NORA You see, Christina is tremendously clever at office-work, and she's so anxious to work under a first-rate man of business in order to learn still more
HELMER [To MRS. LINDEN.] Very sensible indeed.

NORA And when she heard you were appointed manager- it was telegraphed, you know- she started off at once, and- Torvald, dear, for my sake, you must do something for Christina. Now can't you?
HELMER It's not impossible. I presume Mrs. Linden is a widow?
MRS. LINDEN Yes.

HELMER And you have already had some experience of business?
MRS. LINDEN A good deal.

HELMER Well, then, it's very likely I may be able to find a place for you.

NORA [Clapping her hands.] There now! There now!

HELMER You have come at a fortunate moment, Mrs. Linden.

MRS. LINDEN Oh, how can I thank you-?
HELMER [Smiling.] There is no occasion.

[Puts on his overcoat.]

But for the present you must excuse me
RANK Wait; I am going with you.

[Fetches his fur coat from the hall and warms it at the fire.]

NORA Don't be long, Torvald dear.

HELMER Only an hour; not more.

NORA Are you going too, Christina?

MRS. LINDEN [Putting on her walking things.] Yes; I must set about looking for lodgings.

HELMER Then perhaps we can go together?
NORA [Helping her.] What a pity we haven't a spare room for you; but it's impossible
MRS. LINDEN I shouldn't think of troubling you. Good-bye, dear Nora, and thank you for all your kindness.

NORA Good-bye for the present. Of course you'll come back this evening. And you, too, Doctor Rank. What! If you're well enough? Of course you'll be well enough. Only wrap up warmly.

[They go out, talking, into the hall. Outside on the stairs are heard children's voices.]

There they are! There they are!

[She runs to the outer door and opens it. The nurse, ANNA, enters the hall with the children.]

Come in! Come in!

[Stoops down and kisses the children.]

Oh, my sweet darlings! Do you see them, Christina? Aren't they lovely?
RANK Don't let us stand here chattering in the draught.

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

[DR. RANK, HELMER, and MRS. LINDEN go down the stairs; ANNA enters the room with the children; NORA also, shutting the door.]

NORA How fresh and bright you look! And what red cheeks you've got! Like apples and roses.

[The children chatter to her during what follows.]

Have you had great fun? That's splendid! Oh, really! You've been giving Emmy and Bob a ride on your sledge!- both at once, only think, Why, you're quite a man, Ivar. Oh, give her to me a little, Anna. My sweet little dolly!

[Takes the smallest from the nurse and dances with her.]

Yes, yes; mother will dance with Bob too. What! Did you have a game of snowballs? Oh, I wish I'd been there. No; leave them, Anna; I'll take their things off. Oh, yes, let me do it; it's such fun.

Go to the nursery; you look frozen. You'll find some hot coffee on the stove.

[The NURSE goes into the room on the left. NORA takes off the children's things and throws them down anywhere, while the children talk all together.

Really! A big dog ran after you? But he didn't bite you? No; dogs don't bite dear little dolly children. Don't peep into those parcels, Ivar. What is it? Wouldn't you like to know? Take care it'll bite! What? Shall we have a game? What shall we play at? Hide-and-seek? Yes, let's play hide-and-seek. Bob shall hide first. Am I to? Yes, let me hide first.

[She and the children play, with laughter and shouting, in the room and the adjacent one to the right. At last NORA hides under the table; the children come rushing in, look for her, but cannot find her, hear her half-choked laughter, rush to the table, lift up the cover and see her. Loud shouts. She creeps out, as though to frighten them. Fresh shouts. Meanwhile there has been a knock at the door leading into the hall. No one has heard it. Now the door is half opened and KROGSTAD appears. He waits a little; the game is renewed.

KROGSTAD I beg your pardon, Mrs. Helmer
NORA [With a suppressed cry, turns round and half jumps up.] Ah! What do you want?
KROGSTAD Excuse me; the outer door was ajar- somebody must have forgotten to shut it
NORA

[Standing up.]

My husband is not at home, Mr. Krogstad.

KROGSTAD I know it.

NORA Then what do you want here?
KROGSTAD To say a few words to you.

NORA To me?

[To the children, softly.]

Go in to Anna. What? No, the strange man won't hurt mamma.

When he's gone we'll go on playing.

[She leads the children into the left-hand room, and shuts the door behind them.

Uneasy, in suspense.]

It is to me you wish to speak?
KROGSTAD Yes, to you.

NORA To-day? But it's not the first yet
KROGSTAD No, to-day is Christmas Eve. It will depend upon yourself whether you have a merry Christmas.

NORA What do you want? I'm not ready to-day
KROGSTAD Never mind that just now. I have come about another matter. You have a minute to spare?

NORA Oh, yes, I suppose so; although
KROGSTAD Good. I was sitting in the restaurant opposite, and I saw your husband go down the street
NORA Well?
KROGSTAD -with a lady.

NORA What then?
KROGSTAD May I ask if the lady was a Mrs Linden?
NORA Yes.

KROGSTAD Who has just come to town?
NORA Yes. To-day.

KROGSTAD I believe she is an intimate friend of yours.

NORA Certainly. But I don't understand
KROGSTAD I used to know her too.

NORA I know you did.

KROGSTAD Ah! You know all about it. I thought as much. Now, frankly, is Mrs. Linden to have a place in the Bank? NORA How dare you catechise me in this way, Mr. Krogstad- you, a subordinate of my husband's? But since you ask, you shall know. Yes, Mrs. Linden is to be employed. And it is I who recommended her, Mr. Krogstad. Now you know.

KROGSTAD Then my guess was right.

NORA [Walking up and down.] You see one has a wee bit of influence, after all. It doesn't follow because one's only a woman- When people are in a subordinate position, Mr. Krogstad, they ought really to be careful how they offend anybody who- h'm KROGSTAD -who has influence? NORA Exactly.

KROGSTAD [Taking another tone.] Mrs. Helmer, will you have the kindness to employ your influence on my behalf? NORA What? How do you mean? KROGSTAD Will you be so good as to see that I retain my subordinate position in the Bank? NORA What do you mean? Who wants to take it from you?

KROGSTAD Oh, you needn't pretend ignorance. I can very well understand that it cannot be pleasant for your friend to meet me; and I can also understand now for whose sake I am to be hounded out.

NORA But I assure you KROGSTAD Come come now, once for all: there is time yet, and I advise you to use your influence to prevent it.

NORA But, Mr. Krogstad, I have no influence- absolutely none.

KROGSTAD None? I thought you said a moment ago NORA Of course not in that sense. I! How can you imagine that I should have any such influence over my husband?

KROGSTAD Oh, I know your husband from our college days. I don't think he is any more inflexible than other husbands.

NORA If you talk disrespectfully of my husband, I must request you to leave the house.

KROGSTAD You are bold, madam.

NORA I am afraid of you no longer. When New Year's Day is over, I shall soon be out of the whole business.

KROGSTAD [Controlling himself.] Listen to me, Mrs. Helmer.

If need be, I shall fight as though for my life to keep my little place in the Bank.

NORA Yes, so it seems.

KROGSTAD It's not only for the salary: that is what I care least about. It's something else- Well, I had better make a clean breast of it. Of course you know, like every one else, that some years ago I- got into trouble.

NORA I think I've heard something of the sort.

KROGSTAD The matter never came into court; but from that moment all paths were barred to me. Then I took up the business you know about. I had to turn my hand to something; and I don't think I've been one of the worst. But now I must get clear of it all. My sons are growing up; for their sake I must try to recover my character as well as I can. This place in the Bank was the first step; and now your husband wants to kick me off the ladder, back into the mire.

NORA But I assure you, Mr. Krogstad, I haven't the least power to help you.

KROGSTAD That is because you have not the will; but I can compel you.

NORA You won't tell my husband that I owe you money?

KROGSTAD H'm; suppose I were to? NORA It would be shameful of you. [With tears in her voice.] The secret that is my joy and my pride- that he should learn it in such an ugly, coarse way- and from you. It would involve me in all sorts of unpleasantnessKROGSTAD Only unpleasantness? NORA [Hotly.] But just do it. It's you that will come off worst, for then my husband will see what a bad man you are, and then you certainly won't keep your place.

KROGSTAD I asked whether it was only domestic unpleasantness you feared? NORA If my husband gets to know about it, he will of course pay you off at once, and then we shall have nothing more to do with you.

KROGSTAD[Coming a pace nearer.] Listen, Mrs. Helmer: either your memory is defective, or you don't know much about business. I must make the position a little clearer to you.

NORA How so? KROGSTAD When your husband was ill, you came to me to borrow twelve hundred dollars.

NORA I knew of nobody else.

KROGSTAD I promised to find you the moneyNORA And you did find it.

KROGSTAD I promised to find you the money, on certain conditions.

You were so much taken up at the time about your husband's illness, and so eager to have the wherewithal for your journey, that you probably did not give much thought to the details. Allow me to remind you of them. I promised to find you the amount in exchange for a note of hand, which I drew up.

NORA Yes, and I signed it.

KROGSTAD Quite right. But then I added a few lines, making your father security for the debt. Your father was to sign this.

NORA Was to-? He did sign it!

KROGSTAD I had left the date blank. That is to say, your father was himself to date his signature. Do you recollect that? NORA Yes, I believeKROGSTAD Then I gave you the paper to send to your father, by post. Is not that so? NORA Yes.

KROGSTAD And of course you did so at once; for within five or six days you brought me back the document with your father's signature; and I handed you the money.

NORA Well? Have I not made my payments punctually? KROGSTAD Fairly- yes. But to return to the point: You were in great trouble at the time, Mrs. Helmer.

NORA I was indeed!

KROGSTAD Your father was very ill, I believe? NORA He was on his death-bed.

KROGSTAD And died soon after? NORA Yes.

KROGSTAD Tell me, Mrs. Helmer: do you happen to recollect the day of his death? The day of the month, I mean? NORA Father died on the 29th of September.

KROGSTAD Quite correct. I have made inquiries. And here comes in the remarkable point [Produces a paper.] which I cannot explain.

NORA What remarkable point? I don't knowKROGSTAD The remarkable point, madam, that your father signed this paper three days after his death!

NORA What! I don't understand KROGSTAD Your father died on the 29th of September. But look here: he has dated his signature October 2nd! Is not that remarkable, Mrs. Helmer?

[NORA is silent.]

Can you explain it?

[NORA continues silent.]

It is noteworthy, too, that the words "October 2nd" and the year are not in your father's handwriting, but in one which I believe I know. Well, this may be explained; your father may have forgotten to date his signature, and somebody may have added the date at random, before the fact of your father's death was known. There is nothing wrong in that. Everything depends on the signature. Of course it is genuine, Mrs. Helmer? It was really your father himself who wrote his name here? NORA

[After a short silence, throws her head back and looks defiantly at him.]

No, it was not. I wrote father's name.

KROGSTAD Ah!- Are you aware, madam, that that is a dangerous admission? NORA How so? You will soon get your money.

KROGSTAD May I ask you one more question? Why did you not send the paper to your father? NORA It was impossible. Father was ill. If I had asked him for his signature, I should have had to tell him why I wanted the money; but he was so ill I really could not tell him that my husband's life was in danger. It was impossible.

KROGSTAD Then it would have been better to have given up your tour.

NORA No, I couldn't do that; my husband's life depended on that journey. I couldn't give it up.

KROGSTAD And did it never occur to you that you were playing me false? NORA That was nothing to me. I didn't care in the least about you.

I couldn't endure you for all the cruel difficulties you made, although you knew how ill my husband was.

KROGSTAD Mrs. Helmer, you evidently do not realise what you have been guilty of. But I can assure you it was nothing more and nothing worse that made me an outcast from society.

NORA You! You want me to believe that you did a brave thing to save your wife's life?

KROGSTAD The law takes no account of motives.

NORA Then it must be a very bad law.

KROGSTAD Bad or not, if I produce this document in court, you will be condemned according to law.

NORA I don't believe that. Do you mean to tell me that a daughter has no right to spare her dying father trouble and anxiety?- that a wife has no right to save her husband's life? I don't know much about the law, but I'm sure you'll find, somewhere or another, that that is allowed. And you don't know that- you, a lawyer! You must be a bad one, Mr. Krogstad.

KROGSTAD Possibly. But business- such business as ours- I do understand. You believe that? Very well; now do as you please.

But this I may tell you, that if I am flung into the gutter a second time, you shall keep me company.

[Bows and goes out through hall.]

NORA [Stands a while thinking, then tosses her head.] Oh nonsense! He wants to frighten me. I'm not so foolish as that.

[Begins folding the children's clothes. Pauses.]

But-? No, it's impossible! Why, I did it for love!

CHILDREN [At the door, left.] Mamma, the strange man has gone now.

NORA Yes, yes, I know. But don't tell any one about the strange man. Do you hear? Not even papa!

CHILDREN No, mamma; and now will you play with us again? NORA No, no; not now.

CHILDREN Oh, do, mamma; you know you promised.

NORA Yes, but I can't just now. Run to the nursery; I have so much to do. Run along, - run along, and be good, my darlings!

[She pushes them gently into the inner room, and closes the door behind them.]

Sits on the sofa, embroiders a few stitches, but soon pauses.]

No!

[Throws down the work, rises, goes to the hall door and calls out.]

Ellen, bring in the Christmas-tree!

[Goes to table, left, and opens the drawer, again pauses.]

No, it's quite impossible!

ELLEN [With Christmas-tree.] Where shall I stand it, ma'am?

NORA There, in the middle of the room.

ELLEN Shall I bring in anything else? NORA No, thank you, I have all I want.

[ELLEN, having put down the tree, goes out.]

NORA [Busy dressing the tree.] There must be a candle here- and flowers there.- That horrible man! Nonsense, nonsense! there's nothing to be afraid of. The Christmas-tree shall be beautiful.

I'll do everything to please you, Torvald; I'll sing and dance, Enter HELMER by the hall door, with a bundle of documents.

NORA Oh! You're back already? HELMER Yes. Has anybody been here? NORA No.

HELMER That's odd. I saw Krogstad come out of the house.

NORA Did you? Oh, yes, by-the-bye, he was here for a minute.

HELMER Nora, I can see by your manner that he has been begging you to put in a good word for him.

NORA Yes.

HELMER And you were to do it as if of your own accord? You were to say nothing to me of his having been here. Didn't he suggest that too? NORA Yes, Torvald; but HELMER Nora, Nora! And you could condescend to that! To speak to such a man, to make him a promise! And then to tell me an untruth about it!

NORA An untruth!

HELMER Didn't you say that nobody had been here?

[Threatens with his finger.]

My little bird must never do that again! A song-bird must sing clear and true; no false notes.

[Puts his arm round her.]

That's so, isn't it? Yes, I was sure of it.

[Lets her go]

And now we'll say no more about it. [Sits down before the fire.] Oh, how cosy and quiet it is here! [Glances into his documents.] NORA [Busy with the tree, after a short silence.] Torvald!

HELMER Yes.

NORA I'm looking forward so much to the Stenborgs' fancy ball the day after to-morrow.

HELMER And I'm on tenterhooks to see what surprise you have in store for me.

NORA Oh, it's too tiresome!

HELMER What is? NORA I can't think of anything good. Everything seems so foolish and meaningless.

HELMER Has little Nora made that discovery? NORA [Behind his chair, with her arms on the back.] Are you very busy, Torvald? HELMER Well NORA What papers are those?

HELMER Bank business.

NORA Already!

HELMER I have got the retiring manager to let me make some necessary changes in the staff and the organization. I can do this during Christmas week. I want to have everything straight by the New Year.

NORA Then that's why that poor Krogstad HELMER H'm.

NORA [Still leaning over the chair-back and slowly stroking his hair.] If you hadn't been so very busy, I should have asked you a great, great favour, Torvald.

HELMER What can it be? Out with it.

NORA Nobody has such perfect taste as you; and I should so love to look well at the fancy ball. Torvald, dear, couldn't you take me in hand, and settle what I'm to be, and arrange my costume for me? HELMER Aha! So my wilful little woman is at a loss, and making signals of distress.

NORA Yes, please, Torvald. I can't get on without your help.

HELMER Well, well, I'll think it over, and we'll soon hit upon something.

NORA Oh, how good that is of you!

[Goes to the tree again; pause.]

How well the red flowers show.- Tell me, was it anything so very dreadful this Krogstad got into trouble about? HELMER Forgery, that's all. Don't you know what that means?

NORA Mayn't he have been driven to it by need? HELMER Yes; or, like so many others, he may have done it in pure heedlessness. I am not so hard-hearted as to condemn a man absolutely for a single fault.

NORA No, surely not, Torvald!

HELMER Many a man can retrieve his character, if he owns his crime and takes the punishment.

NORA Punishment-? HELMER But Krogstad didn't do that. He evaded the law by means of tricks and subterfuges; and that is what has morally ruined him.

NORA Do you think that-? HELMER Just think how a man with a thing of that sort on his conscience must be always lying and canting and shamming. Think of the mask he must wear even towards those who stand nearest him- towards his own wife and children. The effect on the children- that's the most terrible part of it, Nora.

NORA Why? HELMER Because in such an atmosphere of lies home life is poisoned and contaminated in every fibre. Every breath the children draw contains some germ of evil.

NORA[Closer behind him.] Are you sure of that? HELMER As a lawyer, my dear, I have seen it often enough. Nearly all cases of early corruption may be traced to lying mothers.

NORA Why- mothers? HELMER It generally comes from the mother's side; but of course the father's influence may act in the same way. Every lawyer knows it too well. And here has this Krogstad been poisoning his own children for years past by a life of lies and hypocrisy- that is why I call him morally ruined.

[Holds out both hands to her.]

So my sweet little Nora must promise not to plead his cause.

Shake hands upon it. Come, come, what's this? Give me your hand.

That's right. Then it's a bargain. I assure you it would have been impossible for me to work with him. It gives me a positive sense of physical discomfort to come in contact with such people.

[NORA draws her hand away, and moves to the other side of the Christmas-tree.

NORA How warm it is here. And I have so much to do.

HELMER[Rises and gathers up his papers.] Yes, and I must try to get some of these papers looked through before dinner. And I shall think over your costume too. Perhaps I may even find something to hang in gilt paper on the Christmastree-.

[Lays his hand on her head.]

My precious little song-bird!

[He goes into his room and shuts the door.

NORA[Softly, after a pause.] It can't be. It's impossible. It must be impossible!

ANNA[At the door, left.] The little ones are begging so prettily to come to mamma.

NORA No, no, no; don't let them come to me! Keep them with you, Anna.

ANNA Very well, ma'am.

[Shuts the door.

NORA[Pale with terror.] Corrupt my children!- Poison my home!

[Short pause. She throws back her head.]

It's not true! It can never, never be true!

ACT SECOND

The same room. In the corner, beside the piano, stands the Christmas-tree, stripped, and with the candles burnt out. NORA's outdoor things lie on the sofa.

NORA, alone, is walking about restlessly. At last she stops by the sofa, and takes up her cloak.

NORA [Dropping the cloak.] There's somebody coming!

[Goes to the hall door and listens.]

Nobody; of course nobody will come to-day, Christmas-day; nor to-morrow either. But perhaps [Opens the door and looks out.]

- No, nothing in the letter box; quite empty.

[Comes forward.]

Stuff and nonsense! Of course he won't really do anything. Such a thing couldn't happen. It's impossible! Why, I have three little children.

ANNA enters from the left, with a large cardboard box.

ANNA I've found the box with the fancy dress at last.

NORA Thanks; put it down on the table.

ANNA [Does so.] But I'm afraid it's very much out of order.

NORA Oh, I wish I could tear it into a hundred thousand pieces!

ANNA Oh, no. It can easily be put to rights- just a little patience.

NORA I shall go and get Mrs. Linden to help me.

ANNA Going out again? In such weather as this! You'll catch cold, ma'am, and be ill.

NORA Worse things might happen.- What are the children doing?

ANNA They're playing with their Christmas presents, poor little dears; but NORA Do they often ask for me? ANNA You see they've been so used to having their mamma with them.

NORA Yes; but, Anna, I can't have them so much with me in future.

ANNA Well, little children get used to anything.

NORA Do you think they do? Do you believe they would forget their mother if she went quite away? ANNA Gracious me! Quite away? NORA Tell me, Anna- I've so often wondered about it- how could you bring yourself to give your child up to strangers?

ANNA I had to when I came to nurse my little Miss Nora.

NORA But how could you make up your mind to it? ANNA When I had the chance of such a good place? A poor girl who's been in trouble must take what comes. That wicked man did nothing for me.

NORA But your daughter must have forgotten you.

ANNA Oh, no, ma'am, that she hasn't. She wrote to me both when she was confirmed and when she was married.

NORA [Embracing her.] Dear old Anna- you were a good mother to me when I was little.

ANNA My poor little Nora had no mother but me.

NORA And if my little ones had nobody else, I'm sure you would-

Nonsense, nonsense!

[Opens the box.]

Go in to the children. Now I must- You'll see how lovely I shall be to-morrow.

ANNA I'm sure there will be no one at the ball so lovely as my Miss Nora.

[She goes into the room on the left.]

NORA

[Takes the costume out of the box, but soon throws it down again.]

Oh, if I dared go out. If only nobody would come. If only nothing would happen here in the meantime. Rubbish; nobody is coming.

Only not to think. What a delicious muff! Beautiful gloves, beautiful gloves! To forget-to forget! One, two, three, four, five, six [With a scream.] Ah, there they come.

[Goes towards the door, then stands irresolute. MRS. LINDEN enters from the hall, where she has taken off her things. }

NORA Oh, it's you, Christina. There's nobody else there? I'm so glad you have come.

MRS. LINDEN I hear you called at my lodgings.

NORA Yes, I was just passing. There's something you must help me with. Let us sit here on the sofa so. To-morrow evening there's to be a fancy ball at Consul Stenborg's overhead, and Torvald wants me to appear as a Neapolitan fisher-girl, and dance the tarantella; I learned it at Capri.

MRS. LINDEN I see- quite a performance.

NORA Yes, Torvald wishes it. Look, this is the costume; Torvald had it made for me in Italy. But now it's all so torn, I don't know MRS. LINDEN Oh, we shall soon set that to rights. It's only the trimming that has come loose here and there. Have you a needle and thread? Ah, here's the very thing.

NORA Oh, how kind of you.

MRS. LINDEN [Sewing.] So you're to be in costume to-morrow, Nora? I'll tell you what- I shall come in for a moment to see you in all your glory. But I've quite forgotten to thank you for the pleasant evening yesterday.

NORA [Rises and walks across the room.] Oh, yesterday, it didn't seem so pleasant as usual.- You should have come to town a little sooner, Christina.- Torvald has certainly the art of making home bright and beautiful.

MRS. LINDEN You too, I should think, or you wouldn't be your father's daughter. But tell me- is Doctor Rank always so depressed as he was last evening?

NORA No, yesterday it was particularly noticeable. You see, he suffers from a dreadful illness. He has spinal consumption, poor fellow. They say his father was a horrible man, who kept mistresses and all sorts of things- so the son has been sickly from his childhood, you understand.

MRS. LINDEN [Lets her sewing fall into her lap.] Why, my darling Nora, how do you come to know such things? NORA [Moving about the room.] Oh, when one has three children, one sometimes has visits from women who are half- half doctors- and they talk of one thing and another.

MRS. LINDEN [Goes on sewing; a short pause.] Does Doctor Rank come here every day? NORA Every day of his life. He has been Torvald's most intimate friend from boyhood, and he's a good friend of mine too. Doctor Rank is quite one of the family.

MRS. LINDEN But tell me- is he quite sincere? I mean, isn't he rather given to flattering people? NORA No, quite the contrary. Why should you think so? MRS. LINDEN When you introduced us yesterday he said he had often heard my name; but I noticed afterwards that your husband had no notion who I was. How could Doctor Rank-? NORA He was quite right, Christina. You see, Torvald loves me so indescribably, he wants to have me all to himself, as he says.

When we were first married he was almost jealous if I even mentioned any of my old friends at home; so naturally I gave up doing it. But I often talk of the old times to Doctor Rank, for he likes to hear about them.

MRS. LINDEN Listen to me, Nora! You are still a child in many ways. I am older than you, and have had more experience. I'll tell you something? You ought to get clear of all this with Dr.

Rank.

NORA Get clear of what? MRS. LINDEN The whole affair, I should say. You were talking yesterday of a rich admirer who was to find you money NORA Yes, one who never existed, worse luck. What then? MRS. LINDEN Has Doctor Rank money? NORA Yes, he has.

MRS. LINDEN And nobody to provide for? NORA Nobody. But-? MRS. LINDEN And he comes here every day? NORA Yes, I told you so.

MRS. LINDEN I should have thought he would have had better taste.

NORA I don't understand you a bit.

MRS. LINDEN Don't pretend, Nora. Do you suppose I can't guess who lent you the twelve hundred dollars? NORA Are you out of your senses? How can you think such a thing? A friend who comes here every day! Why, the position would be unbearable!

MRS. LINDEN Then it really is not he? NORA No, I assure you. It never for a moment occurred to me Besides, at that time he had nothing to lend; he came into his property afterwards.

MRS. LINDEN Well, I believe that was lucky for you, Nora dear.

NORA No, really, it would never have struck me to ask Dr. Rank And yet, I'm certain that if I did MRS. LINDEN But of course you never would.

NORA Of course not. It's inconceivable that it should ever be necessary. But I'm quite sure that if I spoke to Doctor Rank MRS. LINDEN Behind your husband's back? NORA I must get clear of the other thing; that's behind his back too. I must get clear of that.

MRS. LINDEN Yes, yes, I told you so yesterday; but NORA [Walking up and down.] A man can manage these things much better than a woman.

MRS. LINDEN One's own husband, yes.

NORA Nonsense.

[Stands still.]

When everything is paid, one gets back the paper.

MRS. LINDEN Of course.

NORA And can tear it into a hundred thousand pieces, and burn it up, the nasty, filthy thing!

MRS. LINDEN

[Looks at her fixedly, lays down her work, and rises slowly.]

Nora, you are hiding something from me.

NORA Can you see it in my face? MRS. LINDEN Something has happened since yesterday morning. Nora, what is it?

NORA [Going towards her.] Christina-

[Listens.]

Hush! There's Torvald coming home. Do you mind going into the nursery for the present? Torvald can't bear to see dressmaking going on. Get Anna to help you.

MRS. LINDEN [Gathers some of the things together.] Very well; but I shan't go away until you have told me all about it.

She goes out to the left, as HELMER enters from the hall.

NORA [Runs to meet him.] Oh, how I've been longing for you to come, Torvald dear!

HELMER Was that the dressmaker-? NORA No, Christina. She's helping me with my costume. You'll see how nice I shall look.

HELMER Yes, wasn't that a happy thought of mine?

NORA Splendid! But isn't it good of me, too, to have given in to you about the tarantella? HELMER [Takes her under the chin.] Good of you! To give in to your own husband? Well well, you little madcap, I know you don't mean it. But I won't disturb you. I daresay you want to be "trying on." NORA And you are going to work, I suppose? HELMER Yes.

[Shows her a bundle of papers.]

Look here. I've just come from the Bank[Goes towards his room.]

NORA Torvald.

HELMER [Stopping.] Yes?

NORA If your little squirrel were to beg you for something so prettily HELMER Well? NORA Would you do it? HELMER I must know first what it is.

NORA The squirrel would skip about and play all sorts of tricks if you would only be nice and kind.

HELMER Come, then, out with it.

NORA Your lark would twitter from morning till night HELMER Oh, that she does in any case.

NORA I'll be an elf and dance in the moonlight for you, Torvald.

HELMER Nora- you can't mean what you were hinting at this morning? NORA[Coming nearer.] Yes, Torvald, I beg and implore you!

HELMER Have you really the courage to begin that again? NORA Yes, yes; for my sake, you must let Krogstad keep his place in the Bank.

HELMER My dear Nora, it's his place I intend for Mrs. Linden.

NORA Yes, that's so good of you. But instead of Krogstad, you could dismiss some other clerk.

HELMER Why, this is incredible obstinacy! Because you have thoughtlessly promised to put in a word for him, I am to-!

NORA It's not that, Torvald. It's for your own sake. This man writes for the most scurrilous newspapers; you said so yourself.

He can do you no end of harm. I'm so terribly afraid of him HELMER Ah, I understand; it's old recollections that are frightening you.

NORA What do you mean? HELMER Of course you're thinking of your father.

NORA Yes- yes, of course. Only think of the shameful slanders wicked people used to write about father. I believe they would have got him dismissed if you hadn't been sent to look into the thing, and been kind to him, and helped him.

HELMER My little Nora, between your father and me there is all the difference in the world. Your father was not altogether unimpeachable. I am; and I hope to remain so.

NORA Oh, no one knows what wicked men may hit upon. We could live so quietly and happily now, in our cosy, peaceful home, you and I and the children, Torvald! That's why I beg and implore youHELMER And it is just by pleading his cause that you make it impossible for me to keep him. It's already known at the Bank that I intend to dismiss Krogstad. If it were now reported that the new manager let himself be turned round his wife's little fingerNORA What then? HELMER Oh, nothing, so long as a wilful woman can have her way-! I am to make myself a laughing-stock to the whole staff, and set people saying that I am open to all sorts of outside influence? Take my word for it, I should soon feel the consequences. And besides there is one thing that makes Krogstad impossible for me to work withNORA What thing?

HELMER I could perhaps have overlooked his moral failings at a pinchNORA Yes, couldn't you, Torvald? HELMER And I hear he is good at his work. But the fact is, he was a college chum of mine- there was one of those rash friendships between us that one so often repents of later. I may as well confess it at oncehe calls me by my Christian name; 11 and he is tactless enough to do it even when others are present. He delights in putting on airs of familiarity- Torvald here, Torvald there! I assure you it's most painful to me. He would make my position at the Bank perfectly unendurable. NORA Torvald, surely you're not serious? HELMER No? Why not?

11 In the original, "We say 'thou' to each other."

NORA That's such a petty reason.

HELMER What! Petty! Do you consider me petty!

NORA No, on the contrary, Torvald dear; and that's just whyHELMER Never mind; you call my motives petty; then I must be petty too.

Petty! Very well!- Now we'll put an end to this, once for all.

[Goes to the door into the hall and calls.]

Ellen!

NORA What do you want? HELMER [Searching among his papers.] To settle the thing.

[ELLEN enters.]

Here; take this letter; give it to a messenger. See that he takes it at once. The address is on it. Here's the money.

ELLEN Very well, sir.

[Goes with the letter.]

HELMER [Putting his papers together.] There, Madam Obstinacy.

NORA [Breathless.] Torvald- what was in the letter? HELMER Krogstad's dismissal.

NORA Call it back again, Torvald! There's still time. Oh, Torvald, call it back again! For my sake, for your own, for the children's sake! Do you hear, Torvald? Do it! You don't know what that letter may bring upon us all.

HELMER Too late.

NORA Yes, too late.

HELMER My dear Nora, I forgive your anxiety, though it's anything but flattering to me. Why should you suppose that I would be afraid of a wretched scribbler's spite? But I forgive you all the same, for it's a proof of your great love for me.

[Takes her in his arms.]

That's as it should be, my own dear Nora. Let what will happen- when it comes to the pinch, I shall have strength and courage enough. You shall see: my shoulders are broad enough to bear the whole burden.

NORA [Terror-struck.] What do you mean by that? HELMER The whole burden, I say
NORA [With decision.] That you shall never, never do!

HELMER Very well; then we'll share it, Nora, as man and wife. That is how it should be.

[Petting her.]

Are you satisfied now? Come, come, come, don't look like a scared dove. It's all nothing- foolish fancies.- Now you ought to play the tarantella through and practise with the tambourine. I shall sit in my inner room and shut both doors, so that I shall hear nothing. as much noise as you please.

[Turns round in doorway.]

And when Rank comes, just tell him where I'm to be found.

[He nods to her, and goes with his papers into his room, closing the door.]

NORA [Bewildered with terror, stands as though rooted to the ground, and whispers.]
He would do it. Yes, he would do it. He would do it, in spite of all the world.- No, never that, never, never! Anything rather than that!

Oh, for some way of escape! What shall I do-!

[Hall bell rings.]

Doctor Rank-!- Anything, anything, rather than-!

[NORA draws her hands over her face, pulls herself together, goes to the door and opens it. RANK stands outside hanging up his fur coat. During what follows it begins to grow dark.

NORA Good afternoon, Doctor Rank, I knew you by your ring. But you mustn't go to Torvald now. I believe he's busy.

RANK And you? Enters and closes the door.
NORA Oh, you know very well, I have always time for you.

RANK Thank you. I shall avail myself of your kindness as long as I can.

NORA What do you mean? As long as you can? RANK Yes. Does that frighten you?

NORA I think it's an odd expression. Do you expect anything to happen?

RANK Something I have long been prepared for; but I didn't think it would come so soon.

NORA [Catching at his arm.] What have you discovered? Doctor Rank, you must tell me!

RANK [Sitting down by the stove.] I am running down hill. There's no help for it.

NORA [Draws a long breath of relief.] It's you?- RANK Who else should it be?- Why lie to one's self? I am the most wretched of all my patients, Mrs. Helmer. In these last days I have been auditing my life-account- bankrupt! Perhaps before a month is over, I shall lie rotting in the church-yard.

NORA Oh! What an ugly way to talk.

RANK The thing itself is so confoundedly ugly, you see. But the worst of it is, so many other ugly things have to be gone through first. There is only one last investigation to be made, and when that is over I shall know pretty certainly when the break-up will begin. There's one thing I want to say to you: Helmer's delicate nature shrinks so from all that is horrible: I will not have him in my sick-room. NORA But, Doctor Rank, I won't have him, I say- not on any account! I shall lock my door against him.- As soon as I am quite certain of the worst, I shall send you my visiting-card with a black cross on it; and then you will know that the final horror has begun.

NORA Why, you're perfectly unreasonable to-day; and I did so want you to be in a really good humour.

RANK With death staring me in the face?- And to suffer thus for another's sin! Where's the justice of it? And in one way or another you can trace in every family some such inexorable retribution. NORA [Stopping her ears.] Nonsense, nonsense! Now cheer up!

RANK Well, after all, the whole thing's only worth laughing at. My poor innocent spine must do penance for my father's wild oats.

NORA [At table, left.] I suppose he was too fond of asparagus and Strasbourg pate, wasn't he? RANK Yes; and truffles.

NORA Yes, truffles, to be sure. And oysters, I believe? RANK Yes, oysters; oysters, of course.

NORA And then all the port and champagne! It's sad that all these good things should attack the spine.

RANK Especially when the luckless spine attacked never had any good of them.

NORA Ah, yes, that's the worst of it.

RANK [Looks at her searchingly.] H'm. NORA [A moment later.] Why did you smile? RANK No; it was you that laughed.

NORA No; it was you that smiled, Doctor Rank.

RANK [Standing up.] I see you're deeper than I thought.

NORA I'm in such a crazy mood to-day.

RANK So it seems.

NORA [With her hands on his shoulders.] Dear, dear Doctor Rank, death shall not take you away from Torvald and me.

RANK Oh, you'll easily get over the loss. The absent are soon forgotten.

NORA [Looks at him anxiously.] Do you think so? RANK People make fresh ties, and then
NORA Who make fresh ties? RANK You and Helmer will,- when I am gone. You yourself are taking time by the forelock, it seems to me. What was that Mrs. Linden doing here yesterday? NORA Oh!- you're surely not jealous of poor Christina? RANK Yes, I am. She will be my successor in this house. When I am out of the way, this woman will perhaps
NORA Hush! Not so loud! She's in there.

RANK To-day as well? You see!

NORA Only to put my costume in order- dear me, how unreasonable you are!

[Sits on sofa.]

Now do be good, Doctor Rank! To-morrow you shall see how beautifully I shall dance; and then you may fancy that I'm doing it all to please you- and of course Torvald as well.

[Takes various things out of box.]

Doctor Rank, sit down here, and I'll show you something.

RANK [Sitting.] What is it? NORA Look here. Look!

RANK Silk stockings.

NORA Flesh-coloured. Aren't they lovely? It's so dark here now; but to-morrow- No, no, no; you must only look at the feet. Oh, well, I suppose you may look at the rest too.

RANK H'm
NORA What are you looking so critical about? Do you think they won't fit me? RANK I can't possibly give any competent opinion on that point.

NORA Looking at him a moment.] For shame!

[Hits him lightly on the ear with the stockings.]

Take that.

[Rolls them up again.]

RANK And what other wonders am I to see?

NORA You sha'n't see anything more; for you don't behave nicely.

[She hums a little and searches among the things.]

RANK [After a short silence.] When I sit here gossiping with you, I can't imagine- I simply cannot conceive- what would have become of me if I had never entered this house.

NORA [Smiling.] Yes, I think you do feel at home with us.

RANK [More softly- looking straight before him.] And now to have to leave it all
NORA Nonsense. You sha'n't leave us.

RANK [In the same tone.] And not to be able to leave behind the slightest token of gratitude; scarcely even a passing regret nothing but an empty place, that can be filled by the first comer.

NORA And if I were to ask you for-? No-

RANK For what? NORA For a great proof of your friendship.

RANK Yes- yes? NORA I mean- for a very, very great service
RANK Would you really, for once, make me so happy? NORA Oh, you don't know what it is.

RANK Then tell me.

NORA No, I really can't, Doctor Rank. It's far, far too much- not only a service, but help and advice besides
RANK So much the better. I can't think what you can mean. But go on. Don't you trust me? NORA As I trust no one else. I know you are my best and truest friend. So I will tell you. Well then, Doctor Rank, there is something you must help me to prevent. You know how deeply, how wonderfully Torvald loves me; he wouldn't hesitate a moment to give his very life for my sake.

RANK [Bending towards her.] Nora- do you think he is the only one who-? NORA [With a slight start.] Who-? RANK Who would gladly give his life for you? NORA [Sadly.] Oh!

RANK I have sworn that you shall know it before I- go. I shall never find a better opportunity.- Yes, Nora, now I have told you; and now you know that you can trust me as you can no one else.

NORA [Standing up; simply and calmly.] Let me pass, please.

RANK [Makes way for her, but remains sitting.] Nora
NORA [In the doorway.] Ellen, bring the lamp.

[Crosses to the stove.]

Oh dear, Doctor Rank, that was too bad of you.

RANK [Rising.] That I have loved you as deeply as- any one else? Was that too bad of me? NORA No, but that you should have told me so. It was so unnecessary
RANK What do you mean? Did you know-?

ELLEN enters with the lamp; sets it on the table and goes out again.

RANK Nora- Mrs. Helmer- I ask you, did you know? NORA Oh, how can I tell what I knew or didn't know? I really can't say- How could you be so clumsy, Doctor Rank? It was all so nice!

RANK Well, at any rate, you know now that I am at your service, body and soul. And now, go on.

NORA [Looking at him.] Go on- now? RANK I beg you to tell me what you want.

NORA I can tell you nothing now.

RANK Yes, yes! You mustn't punish me in that way. Let me do for you whatever a man can.

NORA You can do nothing for me now.- Besides, I really want no help. You shall see it was only my fancy. Yes, it must be so. Of course!

[Sits in the rocking-chair, looks at him and smiles.]

You are a nice person, Doctor Rank! Aren't you ashamed of yourself, now that the lamp is on the table? RANK No; not exactly. But perhaps I ought to go- for ever.

NORA No, indeed you mustn't. Of course you must come and go as you've always done. You know very well that Torvald can't do without you.

RANK Yes, but you? NORA Oh, you know I always like to have you here.

RANK That is just what led me astray. You are a riddle to me. It has often seemed to me as if you liked being with me almost as much as being with Helmer.

NORA Yes; don't you see? There are people one loves, and others one likes to talk to.

RANK Yes- there's something in that.

NORA When I was a girl, of course I loved papa best. But it always delighted me to steal into the servants' room. In the first place they never lectured me, and in the second it was such fun to hear them talk.

RANK Ah, I see; then it's their place I have taken? NORA [Jumps up and hurries towards him.] Oh, my dear Doctor Rank, I don't mean that. But you understand, with Torvald it's the same as with papa

ELLEN enters from the hall.

ELLEN Please, ma'am

[Whispers to NORA, and gives her a card.]

NORA [Glancing at card.] Ah!

[Puts it in her pocket.]

RANK Anything wrong? NORA No, no, not in the least. It's only- it's my new costume RANK Your costume! Why, it's there.

NORA Oh, that one, yes. But this is another that- I have ordered it- Torvald mustn't know RANK Aha! So that's the great secret.

NORA Yes, of course. Please go to him; he's in the inner room. Do keep him while I-

RANK Don't be alarmed; he sha'n't escape.

[RANK goes into HELMER's room.]

NORA [To ELLEN.] Is he waiting in the kitchen? ELLEN Yes, he came up the back stair NORA Didn't you tell him I was engaged? ELLEN Yes, but it was no use.

NORA He won't go away? ELLEN No, ma'am, not until he has spoken to you.

NORA Then let him come in; but quietly. And, Ellen- say nothing about it; it's a surprise for my husband.

ELLEN Oh, yes, ma'am, I understand.

[She goes out.]

NORA It is coming! The dreadful thing is coming, after all. No, no, no, it can never be; it shall not!

[She goes to HELMER'S door and slips the bolt. ELLEN opens the hall door for KROGSTAD, and shuts it after him. He wears a travelling-coat, high boots, and a fur cap.]

NORA [Goes towards him.] Speak softly; my husband is at home.

KROGSTAD All right. That's nothing to me.

NORA What do you want? KROGSTAD A little information.

NORA Be quick, then. What is it?

KROGSTAD You know I have got my dismissal.

NORA I couldn't prevent it, Mr. Krogstad. I fought for you to the last, but it was of no use.

KROGSTAD Does your husband care for you so little? He knows what I can bring upon you, and yet he dares—
NORA How could you think I should tell him? KROGSTAD Well, as a matter of fact, I didn't think it. It wasn't like my friend Torvald Helmer to show so much courage—
NORA Mr. Krogstad, be good enough to speak respectfully of my husband.

KROGSTAD Certainly, with all due respect. But since you are so anxious to keep the matter secret, I suppose you are a little clearer than yesterday as to what you have done.

NORA Clearer than you could ever make me.

KROGSTAD Yes, such a bad lawyer as I—
NORA What is it you want? KROGSTAD Only to see how you are getting on, Mrs. Helmer. I've been thinking about you all day. Even a mere money-lender, a gutter-journalist, a—in short, a creature like me— has a little bit of what people call feeling.

NORA Then show it; think of my little children.

KROGSTAD Did you and your husband think of mine? But enough of that. I only wanted to tell you that you needn't take this matter too seriously. I shall not lodge any information, for the present.

NORA No, surely not. I knew you wouldn't.

KROGSTAD The whole thing can be settled quite amicably. Nobody need know. It can remain among us three.

NORA My husband must never know.

KROGSTAD How can you prevent it? Can you pay off the balance? NORA No, not at once.

KROGSTAD Or have you any means of raising the money in the next few days? NORA None— that I will make use of.

KROGSTAD And if you had, it would not help you now. If you offered me ever so much money down, you should not get back your I.O.U.

NORA Tell me what you want to do with it.

KROGSTAD I only want to keep it- to have it in my possession. No outsider shall hear anything of it. So, if you have any desperate scheme in your headNORA What if I have? KROGSTAD If you should think of leaving your husband and childrenNORA What if I do? KROGSTAD Or if you should think of- something worseNORA How do you know that? KROGSTAD Put all that out of your head.

NORA How did you know what I had in my mind?

KROGSTAD Most of us think of that at first. I thought of it, too; but I hadn't the courageNORA [Tonelessly.] Nor I.

KROGSTAD [Relieved.] No, one hasn't. You haven't the courage either, have you? NORA I haven't, I haven't.

KROGSTAD Besides, it would be very foolish.- Just one domestic storm, and it's all over. I have a letter in my pocket for your husbandNORA Telling him everything? KROGSTAD Sparing you as much as possible.

NORA [Quickly.] He must never read that letter. Tear it up. I will manage to get the money somehow KROGSTAD Pardon me, Mrs. Helmer, but I believe I told youNORA Oh, I'm not talking about the money I owe you. Tell me how much you demand from my husband- I will get it.

KROGSTAD I demand no money from your husband.

NORA What do you demand then? KROGSTAD I will tell you. I want to regain my footing in the world. I want to rise; and your husband shall help me to do it.

For the last eighteen months my record has been spotless; I have been in bitter need all the time; but I was content to fight my way up, step by step. Now, I've been thrust down again, and I will not be satisfied with merely being reinstated as a matter of grace. I want to rise, I tell you. I must get into the Bank again, in a higher position than before. Your husband shall create a place on purpose for me-.

NORA He will never do that!

KROGSTAD He will do it; I know him- he won't dare to show fight! And when he and I are together there, you shall soon see! Before a year is out I shall be the manager's right hand. It won't be Torvald Helmer, but Nils Krogstad, that manages the Joint Stock Bank.

NORA That shall never be.

KROGSTAD Perhaps you will-? NORA Now I have the courage for it.

KROGSTAD Oh, you don't frighten me! A sensitive, petted creature like you
NORA You shall see, you shall see!

KROGSTAD Under the ice, perhaps? Down into the cold, black water? And next spring to come up again, ugly, hairless, unrecognisable
NORA You can't terrify me.

KROGSTAD Nor you me. People don't do that sort of thing, Mrs. Helmer. And, after all, what would be the use of it? I have your husband in my pocket, all the same.

NORA Afterwards? When I am no longer-?
KROGSTAD You forget, your reputation remains in my hands!

[NORA stands speechless and looks at him.]

Well, now you are prepared. Do nothing foolish. As soon as Helmer has received my letter, I shall expect to hear from him. And remember that it is your husband himself who has forced me back again into such paths. That I will never forgive him. Good-bye, Mrs. Helmer.

[Goes out through the hall. NORA hurries to the door, opens it a little, and listens.]

NORA He's going. He's not putting the letter into the box. No, no, it would be impossible! [Opens the door further and further.] What's that. He's standing still; not going downstairs. Has he changed his mind? Is he-?

[A letter falls into the box. KROGSTAD's footsteps are heard gradually receding down the stair. NORA utters a suppressed shriek, and rushes forward towards the sofa-table; pause.]

In the letter-box!

[Slips shrinkingly up to the hall door.]

There it lies.- Torvald, Torvald- now we are lost! MRS. LINDEN enters from the left with the costume.

MRS. LINDEN There, I think it's all right now. Shall we just try it on?
NORA [Hoarsely and softly.] Christina, come here.

MRS. LINDEN [Throws down the dress on the sofa.] What's the matter? You look quite distracted.

NORA Come here. Do you see that letter? There, see- through the glass of the letter-box.

MRS. LINDEN Yes, yes, I see it.

NORA That letter is from Krogstad
MRS. LINDEN Nora- it was Krogstad who lent you the money?
NORA Yes; and now Torvald will know everything.

MRS. LINDEN Believe me, Nora, it's the best thing for both of you.

NORA You don't know all yet. I have forged a name**MRS. LINDEN Good heavens!**

NORA Now, listen to me, Christina; you shall bear me witness
MRS. LINDEN How "witness"? What am I to-?

NORA If I should go out of my mind- it might easily happen**MRS. LINDEN Nora!**

NORA Or if anything else should happen to me- so that I couldn't be here-!

MRS. LINDEN Nora, Nora, you're quite beside yourself!

NORA In case any one wanted to take it all upon himself- the whole blame- you understand
MRS. LINDEN Yes, yes; but how can you think-? NORA You shall bear witness that it's not true, Christina. I'm not out of my mind at all; I know quite well what I'm saying; and I tell you nobody else knew anything about it; I did the whole thing, I myself. Remember that.

MRS. LINDEN I shall remember. But I don't understand what you mean
NORA Oh, how should you? It's the miracle coming to pass.

MRS. LINDEN The miracle? NORA Yes, the miracle. But it's so terrible, Christina; it mustn't happen for all the world.

MRS. LINDEN I shall go straight to Krogstad and talk to him.

NORA Don't; he'll do you some harm.

MRS. LINDEN Once he would have done anything for me.

NORA He?

MRS. LINDEN Where does he live? NORA Oh, how can I tell-? Yes-

[Feels in her pocket.]

Here's his card. But the letter, the letter-!

HELMER [Knocking outside.] Nora!

NORA [Shrieks in terror.] Oh, what is it? What do you want? HELMER Well, well, don't be frightened. We're not coming in; you've bolted the door. Are you trying on your dress? NORA Yes, yes, I'm trying it on. It suits me so well, Torvald.

MRS. LINDEN [Who has read the card.] Why, he lives close by here.

NORA Yes, but it's no use now. We are lost. The letter is there in the box.

MRS. LINDEN And your husband has the key? NORA Always.

MRS. LINDEN Krogstad must demand his letter back, unread. He must find some pretext
NORA But this is the very time when Torvald generally
MRS. LINDEN Prevent him. Keep him occupied. I shall come back as quickly as I can.

[She goes out hastily by the hall door.]

NORA [Opens HELMER'S door and peeps in.] Torvald!

HELMER Well, may one come into one's own room again at last? Come, Rank, we'll have a look
[In the doorway.]

But how's this? NORA What, Torvald dear? HELMER Rank led me to expect a grand transformation.

RANK [In the doorway.] So I understood. I suppose I was mistaken.

NORA No, no one shall see me in my glory till to-morrow evening.

HELMER Why, Nora dear, you look so tired. Have you been practising too hard?

NORA No, I haven't practised at all yet.

HELMER But you'll have to NORA Oh yes, I must, I must! But, Torvald, I can't get on at all without your help. I've forgotten everything.

HELMER Oh, we shall soon freshen it up again.

NORA Yes, do help me, Torvald. You must promise me- Oh, I'm so nervous about it. Before so many people- This evening you must give yourself up entirely to me. You mustn't do a stroke of work; you mustn't even touch a pen. Do promise, Torvald dear!

HELMER I promise. All this evening I shall be your slave. Little helpless thing-! But, by-the-bye, I must just [Going to hall door.

NORA What do you want there? HELMER Only to see if there are any letters.

NORA No, no, don't do that, Torvald.

HELMER Why not?

NORA Torvald, I beg you not to. There are none there.

HELMER Let me just see.

[Is going. NORA, at the piano, plays the first bars of the tarantella.

HELMER [At the door, stops.] Aha!

NORA I can't dance to-morrow if I don't rehearse with you first.

HELMER [Going to her.] Are you really so nervous, dear Nora? NORA Yes, dreadfully! Let me rehearse at once. We have time before dinner. Oh, do sit down and play for me, Torvald dear; direct me and put me right, as you used to do.

HELMER With all the pleasure in life, since you wish it.

[Sits at piano. NORA snatches the tambourine out of the box, and hurriedly drapes herself in a long parti-coloured shawl; then, with a bound, stands in the middle of the floor.

NORA Now play for me! Now I'll dance!

[HELMER plays and NORA dances. RANK stands at the piano behind HELMER and looks on.

HELMER [Playing.] Slower! Slower!

NORA Can't do it slower!

HELMER Not so violently, Nora.

NORA I must! I must!

HELMER [Stops.] No, no, Nora- that will never do.

NORA [Laughs and swings her tambourine.] Didn't I tell you so!

RANK Let me play for her.

HELMER [Rising.] Yes, do- then I can direct her better.

[RANK sits down to the piano and plays; NORA dances more and more wildly.

HELMER stands by the stove and addresses frequent corrections to her; she seems not to hear. Her hair breaks loose, and falls over her shoulders. She does not notice it, but goes on dancing. MRS. LINDEN enters and stands spellbound in the doorway.

MRS. LINDEN Ah-!

NORA [Dancing.] We're having such fun here, Christina!

HELMER Why, Nora dear, you're dancing as if it were a matter of life and death.

NORA So it is.

HELMER Rank, stop! This is the merest madness. Stop, I say!

[RANK stops playing, and NORA comes to a sudden standstill.

HELMER [Going towards her.] I couldn't have believed it. You've positively forgotten all I taught you.

NORA [Throws the tambourine away.] You see for yourself.

HELMER You really do want teaching.

NORA Yes, you see how much I need it. You must practise with me up to the last moment. Will you promise me, Torvald? HELMER Certainly, certainly.

NORA Neither to-day nor to-morrow must you think of anything but me.

You mustn't open a single letter- mustn't look at the letter- box.

HELMER Ah, you're still afraid of that man NORA Oh yes, yes, I am.

HELMER Nora, I can see it in your face- there's a letter from him in the box.

NORA I don't know, I believe so. But you're not to read anything now; nothing ugly must come between us until all is over.

RANK [Softly, to HELMER.] You mustn't contradict her.

HELMER [Putting his arm around her.] The child shall have her own way. But to-morrow night, when the dance is over NORA Then you shall be free.

ELLEN appears in the doorway, right. ELLEN Dinner is on the table, ma'am.

NORA We'll have some champagne, Ellen.

ELLEN Yes, ma'am.

[Goes out.

HELMER Dear me! Quite a banquet.

NORA Yes, and we'll keep it up till morning.

[Calling out.]

And macaroons, Ellen- plenty- just this once.

HELMER [Seizing her hand.] Come, come, don't let us have this wild excitement! Be my own little lark again.

NORA Oh yes, I will. But now go into the dining-room; and you too, Doctor Rank. Christina, you must help me to do up my hair.

RANK [Softly, as they go.] There's nothing in the wind? Nothing- I mean-? HELMER
Oh no, nothing of the kind. It's merely this babyish anxiety I was telling you about.

[They go out to the right.

NORA Well? MRS. LINDEN He's gone out of town.

NORA I saw it in your face.

MRS. LINDEN He comes back to-morrow evening. I left a note for him.

NORA You shouldn't have done that. Things must take their course.

After all, there's something glorious in waiting for the miracle.

MRS. LINDEN What is it you're waiting for? NORA Oh, you can't understand. Go to
them in the dining-room; I shall come in a moment.

[MRS. LINDEN goes into the dining-room. NORA stands for a moment as though
collecting her thoughts; then looks at her watch.

NORA Seven hours till midnight. Then twenty-four hours till the next midnight. Then
the tarantella will be over. Twenty-four and seven? Thirty-one hours to live.

HELMER appears at the door, right.

HELMER What has become of my little lark? NORA [Runs to him with open arms.]
Here she is!

ACT THIRD

The same room. The table, with the chairs around it, in the middle. A lighted lamp on the table. The door to the hall stands open. Dance music is heard from the floor above. MRS. LINDEN sits by the table and absently turns the pages of a book. She tries to read, but seems unable to fix her attention; she frequently listens and looks anxiously towards the hall door.

MRS. LINDEN [Looks at her watch.] Not here yet; and the time is nearly up. If only he hasn't- [Listens again.] Ah, there he is.

[She goes into the hall and cautiously opens the outer door; soft footsteps are heard on the stairs; she whispers.]

Come in; there is no one here.

KROGSTAD [In the doorway.] I found a note from you at my house. What does it mean? MRS. LINDEN I must speak to you.

KROGSTAD Indeed? And in this house?

MRS. LINDEN I could not see you at my rooms. They have no separate entrance.

Come in; we are quite alone. The servants are asleep, and the Helmers are at the ball upstairs.

KROGSTAD [Coming into the room.] Ah! So the Helmers are dancing this evening? Really? MRS. LINDEN Yes. Why not? KROGSTAD Quite right. Why not? MRS. LINDEN And now let us talk a little.

KROGSTAD Have we two anything to say to each other? MRS. LINDEN A great deal.

KROGSTAD I should not have thought so.

MRS. LINDEN Because you have never really understood me.

KROGSTAD What was there to understand? The most natural thing in the world- a heartless woman throws a man over when a better match offers.

MRS. LINDEN Do you really think me so heartless? Do you think I broke with you lightly? KROGSTAD Did you not? MRS. LINDEN Do you really think so? KROGSTAD If not, why did you write me that letter? MRS. LINDEN Was it not best? Since I had to break with you, was it not right that I should try to put an end to all that you felt for me?

KROGSTAD [Clenching his hands together.] So that was it? And all this- for the sake of money!

MRS. LINDEN You ought not to forget that I had a helpless mother and two little brothers. We could not wait for you, Nils, as your prospects then stood.

KROGSTAD Perhaps not; but you had no right to cast me off for the sake of others, whoever the others might be.

MRS. LINDEN I don't know. I have often asked myself whether I had the right.

KROGSTAD [More softly.] When I had lost you, I seemed to have no firm ground left under my feet. Look at me now. I am a shipwrecked man clinging to a spar.

MRS. LINDEN Rescue may be at hand.

KROGSTAD It was at hand; but then you came and stood in the way.

MRS. LINDEN Without my knowledge, Nils. I did not know till today that it was you I was to replace in the Bank.

KROGSTAD Well, I take your word for it. But now that you do know, do you mean to give way? MRS. LINDEN No, for that would not help you in the least.

KROGSTAD Oh, help, help-! I should do it whether or no.

MRS. LINDEN I have learnt prudence. Life and bitter necessity have schooled me.

KROGSTAD And life has taught me not to trust fine speeches.

MRS. LINDEN Then life has taught you a very sensible thing. But deeds you will trust?

KROGSTAD What do you mean?

MRS. LINDEN You said you were a shipwrecked man, clinging to a spar.

KROGSTAD I have good reason to say so.

MRS. LINDEN I too am shipwrecked, and clinging to a spar. I have no one to mourn for, no one to care for.

KROGSTAD You made your own choice.

MRS. LINDEN No choice was left me.

KROGSTAD Well, what then? MRS. LINDEN Nils, how if we two shipwrecked people could join hands? KROGSTAD What!

MRS. LINDEN Two on a raft have a better chance than if each clings to a separate spar.

KROGSTAD Christina!

MRS. LINDEN What do you think brought me to town? KROGSTAD Had you any thought of me? MRS. LINDEN I must have work or I can't bear to live. All my life, as long as I can remember, I have worked; work has been my one great joy.

Now I stand quite alone in the world, aimless and forlorn. There is no happiness in working for one's self. Nils, give me somebody and something to work for.

KROGSTAD I cannot believe in all this. It is simply a woman's romantic craving for self-sacrifice.

MRS. LINDEN Have you ever found me romantic? KROGSTAD Would you really-? Tell me: do you know all my past?

MRS. LINDEN Yes.

KROGSTAD And do you know what people say of me? MRS. LINDEN Did you not say just now that with me you could have been another man? KROGSTAD I am sure of it.

MRS. LINDEN Is it too late? KROGSTAD Christina, do you know what you are doing? Yes, you do; I see it in your face. Have you the courage then-? MRS. LINDEN I need some one to be a mother to, and your children need a mother. You need me, and I- I need you. Nils, I believe in your better self. With you I fear nothing.

KROGSTAD [Seizing her hands.] Thank you- thank you, Christina. Now I shall make others see me as you do.- Ah, I forgotMRS. LINDEN [Listening.] Hush! The tarantella! Go! go!

KROGSTAD Why? What is it? MRS. LINDEN Don't you hear the dancing overhead? As soon as that is over they will be here.

KROGSTAD Oh yes, I shall go. Nothing will come of this, after all.

Of course, you don't know the step I have taken against the Helmers.

MRS. LINDEN Yes, Nils, I do know.

KROGSTAD And yet you have the courage to-? MRS. LINDEN I know to what lengths despair can drive a man.

KROGSTAD Oh, if I could only undo it!

MRS. LINDEN You could. Your letter is still in the box.

KROGSTAD Are you sure? MRS. LINDEN Yes; butKROGSTAD [Looking to her searchingly.] Is that what it all means? You want to save your friend at any price. Say it out- is that your idea? MRS. LINDEN Nils, a woman who has once sold herself for the sake of others, does not do so again.

KROGSTAD I shall demand my letter back again.

MRS. LINDEN No, no.

KROGSTAD Yes, of course. I shall wait till Helmer comes; I shall tell him to give it back to me- that it's only about my dismissal- that I don't want it readMRS. LINDEN No, Nils, you must not recall the letter.

KROGSTAD But tell me, wasn't that just why you got me to come here? MRS. LINDEN Yes, in my first alarm. But a day has passed since then, and in that day I have seen incredible things in this house. Helmer must know everything; there must be an end to this unhappy secret. These two must come to a full understanding.

They must have done with all these shifts and subterfuges.

KROGSTAD Very well, if you like to risk it. But one thing I can do, and at once
MRS. LINDEN [Listening.] Make haste! Go, go! The dance is over; we're not safe another moment.

KROGSTAD I shall wait for you in the street.

MRS. LINDEN Yes, do; you must see me home.

KROGSTAD I never was so happy in all my life!

[KROGSTAD goes out by the outer door. The door between the room and the hall remains open.

MRS. LINDEN [Arranging the room and getting her outdoor things together.]

What a change! What a change! To have some one to work for, to live for; a home to make happy! Well, it shall not be my fault if I fail.- I wish they would come.

[Listens.]

Ah, here they are! I must get my things on.

[Takes bonnet and cloak. HELMER'S and NORA'S voices are heard outside, a key is turned in the lock, and HELMER drags NORA almost by force into the hall.

She wears the Italian costume with a large black shawl over it. He is in evening dress and wears a black domino, open.

NORA [Struggling with him in the doorway.] No, no, no! I won't go in! I want to go upstairs again; I don't want to leave so early!

HELMER But, my dearest girl!

NORA Oh, please, please, Torvald, I beseech you- only one hour more!

HELMER Not one minute more, Nora dear; you know what we agreed.

Come, come in; you're catching cold here.

[He leads her gently into the room in spite of her resistance.

MRS. LINDEN Good-evening.

NORA Christina!

HELMER What, Mrs. Linden! You here so late?

MRS. LINDEN Yes, I ought to apologise. I did so want to see Nora in her costume.

NORA Have you been sitting here waiting for me? MRS. LINDEN Yes; unfortunately I came too late. You had gone upstairs already, and I felt I couldn't go away without seeing you.

HELMER [Taking Nora's shawl off.] Well then, just look at her! I assure you she's worth it. isn't she lovely, Mrs. Linden? MRS. LINDEN Yes, I must say
HELMER Isn't she exquisite? Every one said so. But she's dreadfully obstinate, dear little creature. What's to be done with her? Just think, I had almost to force her away.

NORA Oh, Torvald, you'll be sorry some day that you didn't let me stay, if only for one half-hour more.

HELMER There! You hear her, Mrs. Linden? She dances her tarantella with wild applause, and well she deserved it, I must say- though there was, perhaps, a little too much nature in her rendering of the idea- more than was, strictly speaking, artistic. But never mind- the point is, she made a great success, a tremendous success. Was I to let her remain after that- to weaken the impression? Not if I know it. I took my sweet little Capri girl my capricious little Capri girl, I might say- under my arm; a rapid turn round the room, a curtsy to all sides, and- as they say in novels- the lovely apparition vanished! An exit should always be effective, Mrs. Linden; but I can't get Nora to see it.

By Jove! it's warm here.

[Throws his domino on a chair and opens the door to his room.]

What! No light there? Oh, of course.

Excuse me [Goes in and lights candle.]

NORA [Whispers breathlessly.] Well?

MRS. LINDEN [Softly.] I've spoken to him.

NORA And-? MRS. LINDEN Nora- you must tell your husband everything NORA [Tonelessly.] I knew it!

MRS. LINDEN You have nothing to fear from Krogstad; but you must speak out.

NORA I shall not speak!

MRS. LINDEN Then the letter will.

NORA Thank you, Christina. Now I know what I have to do. Hush-!

HELMER [Coming back.] Well, Mrs. Linden, have you admired her?

MRS. LINDEN Yes; and now I must say good-night.

HELMER What, already? Does this knitting belong to you? MRS. LINDEN [Takes it.] Yes, thanks; I was nearly forgetting it.

HELMER Then you do knit? MRS. LINDEN Yes.

HELMER Do you know, you ought to embroider instead? MRS. LINDEN Indeed! Why? HELMER Because it's so much prettier. Look now! You hold the embroidery in the left hand, so, and then work the needle with the right hand, in a long, graceful curve- don't you?

MRS. LINDEN Yes, I suppose so.

HELMER But knitting is always ugly. Just look- your arms close to your sides, and the needles going up and down- there's something Chinese about it.- They really gave us splendid champagne to-night.

MRS. LINDEN Well, good-night, Nora, and don't be obstinate any more.

HELMER Well said, Mrs. Linden!

MRS. LINDEN Good-night, Mr. Helmer.

HELMER [Accompanying her to the door.] Good-night, good-night; I hope you'll get safely home. I should be glad to- but you have such a short way to go. Good-night, goodnight.

[She goes; HELMER shuts the door after her and comes forward again.]

At last we've got rid of her: she's a terrible bore.

NORA Aren't you very tired, Torvald? HELMER No, not in the least.

NORA Nor sleepy? HELMER Not a bit. I feel particularly lively. But you? You do look tired and sleepy.

NORA Yes, very tired. I shall soon sleep now.

HELMER There, you see. I was right after all not to let you stay longer.

NORA Oh, everything you do is right.

HELMER [Kissing her forehead.] Now my lark is speaking like a reasonable being. Did you notice how jolly Rank was this evening?

NORA Indeed? Was he? I had no chance of speaking to him.

HELMER Nor I, much; but, I haven't seen him in such good spirits for a long time.

[Looks at NORA a little, then comes nearer her.]

It's splendid to be back in our own home, to be quite alone together!- Oh, you enchanting creature!

NORA Don't look at me in that way, Torvald.

HELMER I am not to look at my dearest treasure?- at all the loveliness that is mine, mine only, wholly and entirely mine? NORA [Goes to the other side of the table.] You mustn't say these things to me this evening.

HELMER [Following.] I see you have the tarantella still in your blood- and that makes you all the more enticing. Listen! the other people are going now.

[More softly.]

Nora- soon the whole house will be still.

NORA Yes, I hope so.

HELMER Yes, don't you, Nora darling? When we are among strangers, do you know why I speak so little to you, and keep so far away, and only steal a glance at you now and then- do you know why I do it? Because I am fancying that we love each other in secret, that I am secretly betrothed to you, and that no one dreams that there is anything between us.

NORA Yes, yes, yes. I know all your thoughts are with me.

HELMER And then, when the time comes to go, and I put the shawl about your smooth, soft shoulders, and this glorious neck of yours, I imagine you are my bride, that our marriage is just over, that I am bringing you for the first time to my home- that

I am alone with you for the first time- quite alone with you, in your trembling loveliness! All this evening I have been longing for you, and you only.

When I watched you swaying and whirling in the tarantella- my blood boiled- I could endure it no longer; and that's why I made you come home with me so early
NORA Go now, Torvald! Go away from me. I won't have all this.

HELMER What do you mean? Ah, I see you're teasing me, little Nora!

Won't- won't! Am I not your husband-?

[A knock at the outer door.]

NORA [Starts.] Did you hear-? HELMER [Going towards the hall.] Who's there? RANK [Outside.] It is I; may I come in for a moment? HELMER [In a low tone, annoyed.] Oh, what can he want just now?

[Aloud.]

Wait a moment.

[Opens door.]

Come, it's nice of you to look in.

RANK I thought I heard your voice, and that put it into my head.

[Looks round.]

Ah, this dear old place! How cosy you two are here!

HELMER You seemed to find it pleasant enough upstairs, too.

RANK Exceedingly. Why not? Why shouldn't one take one's share of everything in this world? All one can, at least, and as long as one can. The wine was splendid
HELMER Especially the champagne.

RANK Did you notice it? It's incredible the quantity I contrived to get down.

NORA Torvald drank plenty of champagne, too.

RANK Did he? NORA Yes, and it always puts him in such spirits.

RANK Well, why shouldn't one have a jolly evening after a well-spent day? HELMER Well-spent! Well, I haven't much to boast of in that respect.

RANK [Slapping him on the shoulder.] But I have, don't you see? NORA I suppose you have been engaged in a scientific investigation, Doctor Rank? RANK Quite right.

HELMER Bless me! Little Nora talking about scientific investigations!

NORA Am I to congratulate you on the result? RANK By all means.

NORA It was good then? RANK The best possible, both for doctor and patient-certainty.

NORA [Quickly and searchingly.] Certainty? RANK Absolute certainty. Wasn't I right to enjoy myself after that? NORA Yes, quite right, Doctor Rank.

HELMER And so say I, provided you don't have to pay for it

to-morrow.

RANK Well, in this life nothing is to be had for nothing.

NORA Doctor Rank- I'm sure you are very fond of masquerades? RANK Yes, when there are plenty of amusing disguises NORA Tell me, what shall we two be at our next masquerade? HELMER Little featherbrain! Thinking of your next already!

RANK We two? I'll tell you. You must go as a good fairy.

HELMER Ah, but what costume would indicate that? RANK She has simply to wear her everyday dress.

HELMER Capital! But don't you know what you will be yourself?

RANK Yes, my dear friend, I am perfectly clear upon that point.

HELMER Well? RANK At the next masquerade I shall be invisible.

HELMER What a comical idea!

RANK There's a big black hat- haven't you heard of the invisible hat? It comes down all over you, and then no one can see you.

HELMER [With a suppressed smile.] No, you're right there.

RANK But I'm quite forgetting what I came for. Helmer, give me a cigar- one of the dark Havanas.

HELMER With the greatest pleasure.

[Hands cigar-case.

RANK [Takes one and cuts the end off.] Thank you.

NORA [Striking a wax match.] Let me give you a light.

RANK A thousand thanks.

[She holds the match. He lights his cigar at it.

RANK And now, good-bye!

HELMER Good-bye, good-bye, my dear fellow.

NORA Sleep well, Doctor Rank.

RANK Thanks for the wish.

NORA Wish me the same.

RANK You? Very well, since you ask me- Sleep well. And thanks for the light.

[He nods to them both and goes out.

HELMER [In an undertone.] He's been drinking a good deal.

NORA [Absently.] I daresay.

[HELMER takes his bunch of keys from his pocket and goes into the hall.]

Torvald, what are you doing there? HELMER I must empty the letter-box; it's quite full; there will be no room for the newspapers to-morrow morning.

NORA Are you going to work to-night? HELMER You know very well I am not.- Why, how is this? Some one has been at the lock.

NORA The lock-?

HELMER I'm sure of it. What does it mean? I can't think that the servants-? Here's a broken hair-pin. Nora, it's one of yours.

NORA [Quickly.] It must have been the childrenHELMER Then you must break them of such tricks.- There! At last I've got it open.

[Takes contents out and calls into the kitchen.]

Ellen!- Ellen, just put the hall door lamp out.

[He returns with letters in his hand, and shuts the inner door.

HELMER Just see how they've accumulated.

[Turning them over.]

Why, what's this? NORA[At the window.] The letter! Oh no, no, Torvald!

HELMER Two visiting-cards- from Rank.

NORA From Doctor Rank? HELMER [Looking at them.] Doctor Rank. They were on the top. He must just have put them in.

NORA Is there anything on them? HELMER There's a black cross over the name. Look at it. What an unpleasant idea! It looks just as if he were announcing his own death.

NORA So he is.

HELMER What! Do you know anything? Has he told you anything? NORA Yes. These cards mean that he has taken his last leave of us.

He is going to shut himself up and die.

HELMER Poor fellow! Of course I knew we couldn't hope to keep him long. But so soon-! And to go and creep into his lair like a wounded animalNORA When we must go, it is best to go silently. Don't you think so, Torvald? HELMER [Walking up and down.] He had so grown into our lives, I can't realise that he is gone. He and his sufferings and his loneliness formed a sort of cloudy background to the sunshine of our happiness.

Well, perhaps it's best as it is- at any rate for him.

[Stands still.]

And perhaps for us too, Nora. Now we two are thrown entirely upon each other. [Takes her in his arms.] My darling wife! I feel as if I could never hold you close enough.

Do you know, Nora, I often wish some danger might threaten you, that I might risk body and soul, and everything, everything, for your dear sake.

NORA [Tears herself from him and says firmly.] Now you shall read your letters, Torvald.

HELMER No, no; not to-night. I want to be with you, my sweet wife.

NORA With the thought of your dying friend-? HELMER You are right. This has shaken us both. Unloveliness has come between us- thoughts of death and decay. We must seek to cast them off. Till then- we will remain apart.

NORA [Her arms round his neck.] Torvald! Good-night! good-night!

HELMER [Kissing her forehead.] Good-night, my little song-bird.

Sleep well, Nora. Now I shall go and read my letters.

[He goes with the letters in his hand into his room and shuts the door.]

NORA [With wild eyes, gropes about her, seizes HELMER'S domino, throws it round her, and whispers quickly, hoarsely, and brokenly.]

Never to see him again. Never, never, never.

[Throws her shawl over her head.]

Never to see the children again. Never, never.- Oh that black, icy water! Oh that bottomless-! If it were only over! Now he has it; he's reading it. Oh, no, no, no, not yet. Torvald, good-bye-! Good-bye, my little ones-!

[She is rushing out by the hall; at the same moment HELMER flings his door open, and stands there with an open letter in his hand.]

HELMER Nora!

NORA [Shrieks.] Ah-!

HELMER What is this? Do you know what is in this letter? NORA Yes, I know. Let me go! Let me pass!

HELMER [Holds her back.] Where do you want to go?

NORA [Tries to break away from him.] You shall not save me, Torvald.

HELMER [Falling back.] True! Is what he writes true? No, no, it is impossible that this can be true.

NORA It is true. I have loved you beyond all else in the world.

HELMER Pshaw- no silly evasions!

NORA [A step nearer him.] Torvald-!

HELMER Wretched woman- what have you done!

NORA Let me go- you shall not save me! You shall not take my guilt upon yourself!

HELMER I don't want any melodramatic airs.

[Locks the outer door.]

Here you shall stay and give an account of yourself. Do you understand what you have done? Answer! Do you understand it? NORA [Looks at him fixedly, and says with a stiffening expression.]

Yes; now I begin fully to understand it.

HELMER [Walking up and down.] Oh! what an awful awakening! During all these eight years- she who was my pride and my joy- a hypocrite, a liar- worse, worse- a criminal. Oh, the unfathomable hideousness of it all! Ugh! Ugh!

[NORA says nothing, and continues to look fixedly at him.]

HELMER I ought to have known how it would be. I ought to have foreseen it. All your father's want of principle- be silent!- all your father's want of principle you have inherited- no religion, no morality, no sense of duty. How I am punished for screening him! I did it for your sake; and you reward me like this.

NORA Yes- like this.

HELMER You have destroyed my whole happiness. You have ruined my future. Oh, it's frightful to think of! I am in the power of a scoundrel; he can do whatever he pleases with me, demand whatever he chooses; he can domineer over me as much as he likes, and I must submit. And all this disaster and ruin is brought upon me by an unprincipled woman!

NORA When I am out of the world, you will be free.

HELMER Oh, no fine phrases. Your father, too, was always ready with them. What good would it do me, if you were "out of the world," as you say? No good whatever! He can publish the story all the same; I might even be suspected of collusion. People will think I was at the bottom of it all and egged you on. And for all this I have you to thank- you whom I have done nothing but pet and spoil during our whole married life. Do you understand now what you have done to me? NORA [With cold calmness.] Yes.

HELMER The thing is so incredible, I can't grasp it. But we must come to an understanding. Take that shawl off. Take it off, I say! I must try to pacify him in one way or another- the matter must be hushed up, cost what it may.- As for you and me, we must make no outward change in our way of life- no outward change, you understand. Of course, you will continue to live here. But the children cannot be left in your care. I dare not trust them to you.- Oh, to have to say this to one I have loved so tenderly- whom I still-! But that must be a thing of the past. Henceforward there can be no question of happiness, but merely of saving the ruins, the shreds, the show [A ring; HELMER starts.] What's that? So late! Can it be the worst? Can he-? Hide yourself, Nora; say you are ill.

[NORA stands motionless. HELMER goes to the door and opens it.]

ELLEN [Half dressed, in the hall.] Here is a letter for you, ma'am.

HELMER Give it to me.

[Seizes the letter and shuts the door.]

Yes, from him. You shall not have it. I shall read it.

NORA Read it? HELMER [By the lamp.] I have hardly the courage to. We may both be lost, both you and I.

Ah! I must know.

[Hastily tears the letter open; reads a few lines, looks at an enclosure; with a cry of joy.]

Nora!

[Nora looks inquiringly at him.]

HELMER Nora!- Oh! I must read it again.- Yes, yes, it is so. I am saved! Nora, I am saved!

NORA And I?

HELMER You too, of course; we are both saved, both of us. Look here- he sends you back your promissory note. He writes that he regrets and apologises, that a happy turn in his life- Oh, what matter what he writes. We are saved, Nora! No one can harm you. Oh, Nora, Nora;- but first to get rid of this hateful thing. I'll just see [Glances at the I.O.U.] No, I will not look at it; the whole thing shall be nothing but a dream to me.

[Tears the I.O.U. and both letters in pieces. Throws them into the fire and watches them burn.] There! it's gone!- He said that ever since Christmas Eve- Oh, Nora, they must have been three terrible days for you!

NORA I have fought a hard fight for the last three days.

HELMER And in your agony you saw no other outlet but- No; we won't think of that horror. We will only rejoice and repeat- it's over, all over! Don't you hear, Nora? You don't seem able to grasp it.

Yes, it's over. What is this set look on your face? Oh, my poor Nora, I understand; you cannot believe that I have forgiven you.

But I have, Nora; I swear it. I have forgiven everything. I know that what you did was all for love of me.

NORA That is true.

HELMER You loved me as a wife should love her husband. It was only the means that, in your inexperience, you misjudged. But do you think I love you the less because you cannot do without guidance? No, no. Only lean on me; I will counsel you, and guide you. I should be no true man if this very womanly helplessness did not make you doubly dear in my eyes. You mustn't dwell upon the hard things I said in my first moment of terror, when the world seemed to be tumbling about my ears. I have forgiven you, Nora- I swear I have forgiven you.

NORA I thank you for your forgiveness.

[Goes out, to the right.]

HELMER No, stay-!

[Looking through the doorway.]

What are you going to do? NORA [Inside.] To take off my masquerade dress.

HELMER [In the doorway.] Yes, do, dear. Try to calm down, and recover your balance, my scared little song-bird. You may rest secure. I have broad wings to shield you.

[Walking up and down near the door.]

Oh, how lovely- how cosy our home is, Nora! Here you are safe; here I can shelter you like a hunted dove whom I have saved from the claws of the hawk. I shall soon bring your poor beating heart to rest; believe me, Nora, very soon. To-morrow all this will seem quite different- everything will be as before. I shall not need to tell you again that I forgive you; you will feel for yourself that it is true. How could you think I could find it in my heart to drive you away, or even so much as to reproach you? Oh, you don't know a true man's heart, Nora. There is something indescribably sweet and soothing to a man in having forgiven his wife- honestly forgiven her, from the bottom of his heart. She becomes his property in a double sense. She is as though born again; she has become, so to speak, at once his wife and his child. That is what you shall henceforth be to me, my bewildered, helpless darling. Don't be troubled about anything, Nora; only open your heart to me, and I will be both will and conscience to you.

[NORA enters in everyday dress.]

Why, what's this? Not gone to bed You have changed your dress? NORA Yes, Torvald; now I have changed my dress.

HELMER But why now, so late-? NORA I shall not sleep to-night.

HELMER But, Nora dear-

NORA [Looking at her watch.] It's not so late yet. Sit down, Torvald; you and I have much to say to each other.

[She sits at one side of the table.]

HELMER Nora- what does this mean? Your cold, set faceNORA Sit down. It will take some time. I have much to talk over with you.

[HELMER sits at the other side of the table.]

HELMER You alarm me, Nora. I don't understand you.

NORA No, that is just it. You don't understand me; and I have never understood you- till to-night. No, don't interrupt. Only listen to what I say.- We must come to a final settlement, Torvald.

HELMER How do you mean?

NORA [After a short silence.] Does not one thing strike you as we sit here? HELMER What should strike me? NORA We have been married eight years. Does it not strike you that this is the first time we two, you and I, man and wife, have talked together seriously? HELMER Seriously! What do you call seriously? NORA During eight whole years, and more- ever since the day we first met- we have never exchanged one serious word about serious things.

HELMER Was I always to trouble you with the cares you could not help me to bear?
NORA I am not talking of cares. I say that we have never yet set ourselves seriously to get to the bottom of anything.

HELMER Why, my dearest Nora, what have you to do with serious things? NORA There we have it! You have never understood me.- I have had great injustice done me, Torvald; first by father, and then by you.

HELMER What! By your father and me?- By us, who have loved you more than all the world? NORA[Shaking her head.] You have never loved me. You only thought it amusing to be in love with me.

HELMER Why, Nora, what a thing to say!

NORA Yes, it is so, Torvald. While I was at home with father, he used to tell me all his opinions, and I held the same opinions.

If I had others I said nothing about them, because he wouldn't

have liked it. He used to call me his doll-child, and played with me as I played with my dolls. Then I came to live in your houseHELMER What an expression to use about our marriage!

NORA [Undisturbed.] I mean I passed from father's hands into yours. You arranged everything according to your taste; and I got the same tastes as you; or I pretended to- I don't know which- both ways, perhaps; sometimes one and sometimes the other. When I look back on it now, I seem to have been living here like a beggar, from hand to mouth. I lived by performing tricks for you, Torvald. But you would have it so. You and father have done me a great wrong. It is your fault that my life has come to nothing.

HELMER Why, Nora, how unreasonable and ungrateful you are! Have you not been happy here? NORA No, never. I thought I was; but I never was.

HELMER Not- not happy!

NORA No; only merry. And you have always been so kind to me. But our house has been nothing but a play-room. Here I have been your doll-wife, just as at home I used to be papa's doll-child. And the children, in their turn, have been my dolls. I thought it fun when you played with me, just as the children did when I played with them. That has been our marriage, Torvald.

HELMER There is some truth in what you say, exaggerated and overstrained though it be. But henceforth it shall be different.

Play-time is over; now comes the time for education.

NORA Whose education? Mine, or the children's? HELMER Both, my dear Nora.

NORA Oh, Torvald, you are not the man to teach me to be a fit wife for you.

HELMER And you can say that?

NORA And I- how have I prepared myself to educate the children? HELMER Nora!

NORA Did you not say yourself, a few minutes ago, you dared not trust them to me?

HELMER In the excitement of the moment! Why should you dwell upon that? NORA No- you were perfectly right. That problem is beyond me.

There is another to be solved first- I must try to educate myself. You are not the man to help me in that. I must set about it alone. And that is why I am leaving you.

HELMER [Jumping up.] What- do you mean to say-? NORA I must stand quite alone if I am ever to know myself and my surroundings; so I cannot stay with you.

HELMER Nora! Nora!

NORA I am going at once. I daresay Christina will take me in for to-night HELMER You are mad! I shall not allow it! I forbid it!

NORA It is of no use your forbidding me anything now. I shall take with me what belongs to me. From you I will accept nothing, either now or afterwards.

HELMER What madness this is!

NORA To-morrow I shall go home- I mean to what was my home. It will be easier for me to find some opening there.

HELMER Oh, in your blind inexperience NORA I must try to gain experience, Torvald.

HELMER To forsake your home, your husband, and your children! And you don't consider what the world will say.

NORA I can pay no heed to that. I only know that I must do it.

HELMER This is monstrous! Can you forsake your holiest duties in this way? NORA What do you consider my holiest duties? HELMER Do I need to tell you that? Your duties to your husband and your children.

NORA I have other duties equally sacred.

HELMER Impossible! What duties do you mean? NORA My duties towards myself.

HELMER Before all else you are a wife and a mother.

NORA That I no longer believe. I believe that before all else I am a human being, just as much as you are- or at least that I should try to become one. I know that most people agree with you, Torvald, and that they say so in books. But henceforth I can't be satisfied with what most people say, and what is in books. I must think things out for myself, and try to get clear about them.

HELMER Are you not clear about your place in your own home? Have you not an infallible guide in questions like these? Have you not religion? NORA Oh, Torvald, I don't really know what religion is.

HELMER What do you mean? NORA I know nothing but what Pastor Hansen told me when I was confirmed. He explained that religion was this and that. When I get away from all this and stand alone, I will look into that matter too. I will see whether what he taught me is right, or, at any rate, whether it is right for me.

HELMER Oh, this is unheard of! And from so young a woman! But if religion cannot keep you right, let me appeal to your conscience for I suppose you have some moral feeling? Or, answer me: perhaps you have none? NORA Well, Torvald, it's not easy to say. I really don't know- I am all at sea about these things. I only know that I think quite differently from you about them. I hear, too, that the laws are different from what I thought: but I can't believe that they can be right. It appears that a woman has no right to spare her dying father, or to save her husband's life! I don't believe that.

HELMER You talk like a child. You don't understand the society in which you live.

NORA No, I do not. But now I shall try to learn. I must make up my mind which is right- society or I.

HELMER Nora, you are ill; you are feverish; I almost think you are out of your senses.

NORA I have never felt so much clearness and certainty as to-night.

HELMER You are clear and certain enough to forsake husband and children? NORA Yes, I am.

HELMER Then there is only one explanation possible.

NORA What is that? HELMER You no longer love me.

NORA No; that is just it.

HELMER Nora!- Can you say so!

NORA Oh, I'm so sorry, Torvald; for you've always been so kind to me. But I can't help it. I do not love you any longer.

HELMER [Mastering himself with difficulty.] Are you clear and certain on this point too? NORA Yes, quite. That is why I will not stay here any longer.

HELMER And can you also make clear to me how I have forfeited your love? NORA Yes, I can. It was this evening, when the miracle did not happen; for then I saw you were not the man I had imagined.

HELMER Explain yourself more clearly; I don't understand NORA I have waited so patiently all these eight years. for of course I saw clearly enough that miracles don't happen every day. When this crushing blow threatened me, I said to myself so confidently, "Now comes the miracle!" When Krogstad's letter lay in the box, it never for a moment occurred to me that you would think of submitting to that man's conditions. I was convinced that you would say to him, "Make it known to all the world"; and that then HELMER Well? When I had given my own wife's name up to disgrace and shame?- NORA Then I firmly believed that you would come forward, take everything upon yourself, and say, "I am the guilty one." HELMER Nora!

NORA You mean I would never have accepted such a sacrifice? No, certainly not. But what would my assertions have been worth in opposition to yours?- That was the miracle that I hoped for and dreaded. And it was to hinder that that I wanted to die.

HELMER I would gladly work for you day and night, Nora- bear sorrow and want for your sake. But no man sacrifices his honour, even for one he loves.

NORA Millions of women have done so.

HELMER Oh, you think and talk like a silly child.

NORA Very likely. But you neither think nor talk like the man I can share my life with. When your terror was over- not for what threatened me, but for yourself- when there was nothing more to fear- then it seemed to you as though nothing had happened. I was your lark again, your doll, just as before- whom you would take twice as much care of in future, because she was so weak and fragile.

[Stands up.]

Torvald- in that moment it burst upon me that I had been living here these eight years with a strange man, and had borne him three children.- Oh, I can't bear to think of it! I could tear myself to pieces!

HELMER [Sadly.] I see it, I see it; an abyss has opened between us.- But, Nora, can it never be filled up?

NORA As I now am, I am no wife for you.

HELMER I have strength to become another man.

NORA Perhaps- when your doll is taken away from you.

HELMER To part- to part from you! No, Nora, no; I can't grasp the thought.

NORA [Going into room on the right.] The more reason for the thing to happen.

[She comes back with out-door things and a small travelling-bag, which she places on a chair.

HELMER Nora, Nora, not now! Wait till to-morrow.

NORA [Putting on cloak.] I can't spend the night in a strange man's house.

HELMER But can we not live here, as brother and sister-? NORA [Fastening her hat.] You know very well that wouldn't last long.

[Puts on the shawl.]

Good-bye, Torvald. No. I won't go to the children. I know they are in better hands than mine. As I now am, I can be nothing to them.

HELMER But some time, Nora- some time-? NORA How can I tell? I have no idea what will become of me.

HELMER But you are my wife, now and always!

NORA Listen, Torvald- when a wife leaves her husband's house, as I am doing, I have heard that in the eyes of the law he is free from all duties towards her. At any rate, I release you from all duties. You must not feel yourself bound, any more than I shall.

There must be perfect freedom on both sides. There, I give you back your ring. Give me mine.

HELMER That too? NORA That too.

HELMER Here it is.

NORA Very well. Now it is all over. I lay the keys here. The servants know about everything in the house- better than I do. To-morrow, when I have started, Christina will come to pack up the things I brought with me from home. I will have them sent after me.

HELMER All over! all over! Nora, will you never think of me again? NORA Oh, I shall often think of you, and the children, and this house.

HELMER May I write to you, Nora?

NORA No- never. You must not.

HELMER But I must send you NORA Nothing, nothing.

HELMER I must help you if you need it.

NORA No, I say. I take nothing from strangers.

HELMER Nora- can I never be more than a stranger to you? NORA [Taking her travelling-bag.] Oh, Torvald, then the miracle of miracles would have to happen

HELMER What is the miracle of miracles? NORA Both of us would have to change so that- Oh, Torvald, I no longer believe in miracles.

HELMER But I will believe. Tell me! We must so change that-? NORA That communion between us shall be a marriage. Good-bye.

[She goes out by the hall door.]

HELMER [Sinks into a chair by the door with his face in his hands.]

Nora! Nora!

[He looks round and rises.]

Empty. She is gone.

[A hope springs up in him.]

Ah! The miracle of miracles-?!

[From below is heard the reverberation of a heavy door closing.]

THE END