

FIRST ACT

(A pleasant and tastefully, though not expensively, decorated and furnished living room. One door upstage right leads off to the vestibule; another upstage left leads off to Helmer's study. Between these doors there is a wind-up gramophone. Midway along the left wall there is a further door, and downstage on the same side, a window. Close by the window there is a round table with an armchair and small sofa. Alongside the wall to the right, slightly upstage, there is a door and, on the same wall, further downstage, a tiled stove with a couple of armchairs and a rocking chair in front. There are prints on the walls. An étagère with porcelain pieces and other small 'objets d'art'; a small book-case with expensively bound books. A carpet on the floor, fire in the stove. A winter's day.)

(A bell sounds in the vestibule; a little later the front door can be heard being opened. Nora enters the living room, humming and clearly pleased with herself; she is dressed in outdoor clothes and is carrying a large number of parcels which she off-loads on to the table to the right. She leaves the door to the vestibule open behind her and a messenger boy can be seen, carrying a Christmas tree and a basket which he gives to the housemaid who has opened the front door to them.)

Nora: Keep the Christmas tree well hidden, Helene. The children must on no account see it before this evening, after it has been decorated. *(To the messenger boy; taking her purse out.)* How much.....?

Boy: Fifty øre.

Nora: Here's a krone for you. No, keep the change. *(The messenger boy thanks her and leaves. Nora closes the door. She chuckles to herself with satisfied amusement while she removes her outer garments.)*

Nora: *(takes a paper cone containing bite-sized macaroons from her pocket and eats a couple; then she walks practically on tiptoe across to her husband's study and listens at the door.)* Yes! He's home. *(She hums again as she crosses to the table at the right.)*

Helmer *(from inside his study):* Is that a little skylark chirping out there?

Nora: *(as she starts to open some of the parcels):* Yes, it is.

Helmer: Is that a squirrel rummaging about out there?

Nora: Yes!

Helmer: And when did that squirrel come home?

Nora: Just this minute. *(Puts the paper cone with the macaroons back into her pockets and brushes her hand across her mouth.)* Come out here Torvald and take a look at what I've bought.

Helmer: Don't disturb me! *(shortly afterwards; he opens the door and looks into the room, a pen in his hand.)* Bought, did you say? All that? Has the little fritter-bird been out and frittered away lots of money again?

Nora: But Torvald, surely this year we can afford to splash out a little. After all this is the first Christmas we don't need to scrimp and scrape.

Helmer: That's as may be, but we can't afford to be extravagant either.

Nora: Yes we can, Torvald. Just a little bit extravagant. Can't we? Just a teeny weeny bit. Because you're getting a big salary and you're going to earn lots and lots of money.

Helmer: Yes. From the New Year; but my salary won't be paid until right at the end of the first quarter.

Nora: That's all right, we can borrow until then.

Helmer: Nora! I see that irresponsibility is out and about again. Just imagine if I were to borrow a thousand kroner today, and then you frittered it all away during Christmas week and then, on New Year's Eve a tile fell off the roof and hit me on the head, and I was left, just lying there.

Nora: Oh, shame on you. Don't say such horrible things.

Helmer: Very well, but just imagine if something like that were to happen, - what then?

Nora: If something as terrible as that happened, then it wouldn't make any difference at all whether I was in debt or not.

Helmer: That, too, is as may be, but what about the people I had borrowed from?

Nora: Oh, them? Who cares about them? They're only strangers.

Helmer: Nora, Nora, just like a woman! No, but seriously Nora; you know what my views are about that subject. No debt! Never borrow! There is something constrained, and therefore not wholesome, about a home that is founded upon loans and debts. The two of us have managed to hold out bravely right up until now; and that is what we shall continue to do during the short time it still remains necessary.

Nora: Yes, of course Torvald - just as you wish.

Helmer: There, there. What, has the little skylark got drooping wings? Hm? Is that naughty squirrel standing there sulking? *(takes his wallet out and opens it.)* Nora - what do you think I am holding here?

Nora: Money!

Helmer: Look here. (*holds out some banknotes towards her.*) Good Heavens, don't you think I realise what an expensive time Christmas is for a household?

Nora: (*counting*): Ten - twenty - thirty - forty. Oh, thank you, thank you, thank you Torvald, now I'll be able to manage.

Helmer: Yes, and you are really going to have to.

Nora: Oh, yes, yes, I shall - really. But come here and let me show you all the things I've bought. And so cheap as well! Look, here are some new clothes for Ivar - and a sword. Here are a horse and a trumpet for Bob. And here's a doll and a doll's bed for Emmy; it's a bit plain, but she'll only pull it to pieces in any case. And here are dress materials and scarves for the girls; Old Ann-Marie should really have had much, much more.

Helmer: And what is in that parcel there?

Nora (*shrieks*): No Torvald, you not allowed to see what's inside until this evening.

Helmer: There, there. So, tell me my little spendthrift, what have you bought for yourself?

Nora: For myself? Oh, stuff and nonsense. I don't worry about things like that.

Helmer: Of course you do. Tell me something that is not too expensive that you would really like to have.

Nora: I honestly can't think of anything. Actually, Torvald, there is something.

Helmer: Well?

Nora: If you really wanted to get me something, then you could - , you could -

Helmer: Come along now. Out with it.

Nora: You could give me money, Torvald. Only as much as you think you could spare; then I could buy something with it a bit later on.

Helmer: Now really Nora -

Nora: Oh please, dear Torvald. I beg of you. Then I would wrap the money up in some beautiful gold paper and hang it on the Christmas tree. Wouldn't that be lovely?

Helmer: What are those birds called that are always wasting their money?

Nora: Yes, yes, fritter-birds; of course I know what they are. But let's do what I said, Torvald; then I'll have enough time to think about what I actually need. Isn't that being very sensible, eh?

Helmer: Yes, of course it is. At least, it would be if you really were able to hold on to the money I gave you, and really did buy something for yourself with it. But it would only go on the house and on all kinds of useless things, and then I would have to fork out even more money.

Nora: No, but Torvald -

Helmer: You can't deny it, my dear little Nora. The fritter-bird is very sweet, but it uses up a great deal of money. It is quite incredible how expensive it is for a man to keep a little fritter-bird.

Nora: Oh shame on you - how can you say that? I really do save as much as I can.

Helmer: You never said a truer word. As much as you *can*. The only thing is - you quite simply can not.

Nora: Oh, if only you knew just how many expenses we skylarks and squirrels have, Torvald.

Helmer: You are a funny little one. Just like your father. You try every which way to get hold of money, but as soon as you get any, it all seems to slip straight through your fingers. No. I simply have to accept that that is the way you are. It's in the blood. Yes, I'm afraid such characteristics are hereditary, Nora.

Nora: Oh dear, I wish I hadn't inherited so many of Pappa's habits.

Helmer: And I wouldn't have you any different from just the way you are, my sweet little songbird. But listen - something occurs to me. You look so - so - how shall I put it? - so guilty today -

Nora: Do I?

Helmer: Yes, you most certainly do.

Nora: Well?

Helmer: My little sweet-tooth squirrel hasn't been indulging herself in town today, surely?

Nora: No - whatever made you think such a thing.

Helmer: My little sweet-tooth squirrel really hasn't taken a little side-step into the cake-shop, hm?

Nora: No, I assure you Torvald -

Helmer: Not sampled a little bit of jam?

Nora: No, not at all.

Helmer: Not even nibbled on a macaroon or two?

Nora: No, Torvald, I assure you - honestly -

Helmer: There, there, there; I was merely having my little joke, of course -

Nora: It would never occur to me to go against your word.

Helmer: No, I know that well enough; and you have given me your word. There now, keep your little Christmas secrets to yourself, my naughty little Nora. They will all be revealed this evening, when the Christmas tree is lit up, I expect.

Nora: Did you remember to invite Doctor Rank?

Helmer: No. But that is hardly necessary; he will dine with us as a matter of course. In any case, I can ask him when he comes here this morning. I have ordered some good wine. Nora, you can't imagine how much I'm looking forward to this evening.

Nora: Oh, me too. And the children are going to be just delighted, Torvald!

Helmer: Yes - well it's good to think that one has gained a safe, secure position; that one has one's comfortable means. Isn't it? There is great satisfaction in thinking about it.

Nora: Oh, yes. It's marvellous!

Helmer: Can you remember last Christmas? For three whole weeks before it, you locked yourself away every evening until well past midnight, making flowers for the Christmas tree and all those other wonderful things we were going to surprise everyone with. Aah, that was the most boring time I have ever experienced.

Nora: Well, *I* certainly wasn't bored.

Helmer: But the outcome was very disappointing, however, Nora.

Nora: Oh, are you going to bring that up again? How could I help it that the cat got in and tore everything to pieces?

Helmer: No, of course you couldn't, my poor little Nora. You had the best intentions in the world of amusing us, and that was the most important thing. But it is good that those difficult times are now behind us.

Nora: Oh yes, it's absolutely wonderful, it really is.

Helmer: I no longer have to sit here alone, bored; and you no longer need to strain your lovely eyes and your small, delicate, fine hands.

Nora: No, that's right, Torvald, we don't need to any longer, do we? Oh, how wonderful it is to hear those words! Let me tell you how I thought we would arrange things, Torvald. As soon as Christmas is over - *(the bell sounds in the vestibule.)* Oh, the bell's ringing. Somebody is coming. What a shame.

Helmer: I am not at home to visitors, remember that.

Housemaid: Madame, there is a lady -

Nora: Yes? Show her in.

Housemaid (to Helmer): And the doctor arrived at the same time.

Helmer: Did he go straight into my room?

Housemaid: Yes, sir, he did.
(Helmer goes into his room. The maid shows Mrs Linde into the room and closes the door behind her.)

Mrs Linde: Good morning, Nora.

Nora: Good morning -

Mrs Linde: You don't recognise me?

Nora: No; I don't know -; yes, of course, I believe I - *(with an outburst.)* What! Kristine! Is it really you?

Mrs Linde: Yes, it is me.

Nora: Kristine! And to think I didn't recognise you! But, then, how could I -. *(More slowly.)* How you've changed, Kristine!

Mrs Linde: Yes, I suppose I have. Over nine - ten long years -

Nora: Is it really that long since we last met? Why, yes, I suppose it must be. Oh these last eight years have been such happy ones, believe me. And now *you've* come to town. Undertaken that long journey in the winter. That was brave.

Mrs Linde: I just arrived with the steamer this morning.

Nora: In order to have a good time over Christmas, of course. Oh, how wonderful! Oh yes, we'll certainly have a good time. But take off your overcoat. You're not cold, are you? *(helps her.)* There we are; now we can sit down in comfort here by the stove. No, in the armchair there! I shall sit here in the rocking chair. *(clasps her hands.)* There, now you've got your old face back again; it was just that very first second -. But you've become a bit paler, however, Kristine, - and perhaps a little thinner.

Mrs Linde: And much, much older, Nora.

Nora: Yes, well, perhaps a *little* bit older, only a very, *very* little bit; not much at all. *(suddenly pulls herself together, serious.)* Oh, but what a thoughtless person I am, just sitting here and chatting! Sweet, dearest Kristine, can you forgive me?

Mrs Linde: What do you mean, Nora?

Nora: Poor Kristine, you were widowed.

Mrs Linde: Yes, three years ago.

Nora: Oh, I knew about it of course; I read about it in the newspapers. Oh, Kristine, you must believe me, I thought about writing to you so many times then, but I always put it off, and then something always got in the way.

Mrs Linde: Dear Nora, I understand perfectly.

Nora: No, it was bad of me, Kristine. Oh, you poor thing, what you must have gone through. - And he left you with nothing to live on?

Mrs Linde: No.

Nora: And no children?

Mrs Linde: No.

Nora: Nothing at all, then?

Mrs Linde: Not even sorrow or a sense of loss to dwell upon.

Nora: But, Kristine, how could that be possible?

Mrs Linde: Oh, it happens sometimes, Nora.

Nora: So, completely alone, then. That must be so terribly hard for you to bear. I have three lovely children. You can't see them right at this moment, because they are out with the girl. But, now you must tell me all about it -

Mrs Linde: No, no, no, I'd rather you told me all about yourself.

Nora: No, you first. Today I am not going to be selfish. Today you will have my full attention. But there's just *one* thing I must tell you about, however. Have you heard about the terribly exciting thing that has just happened to us?

Mrs Linde: No. What is *that* then?

Nora: Just think - my husband has been made the director of the Joint Stock Bank.

Mrs Linde: Your husband? How wonderful -!

Nora: Yes, incredible isn't it! Being a lawyer is such an unpredictable way of life, especially when you don't want to get involved in matters that aren't fashionable and refined. And Torvald, of course, has never wanted to do that, and I quite agree with him in that respect. Oh, you can imagine how much we are looking forward to it! He is taking up his appointment right at the beginning of the New Year, and then he's going to have a massive salary and lots of benefits. From now on we're going to be able to live in a completely different style than before - just the way we want. Oh, Kristine, I feel so relieved and happy! Because, after all, it's lovely to have lots of money and not have to worry about things. Don't you think?

Mrs Linde: Of course - at any rate it must be good to have everything you really need.

Nora: No, not just all the things you actually *need*, but lots and lots of money!

Mrs Linde: Nora, Nora, haven't you learned any sense yet? You were always a spendthrift at school.

Nora: Yes, Torvald still says the same. (*wags her finger admonishingly.*) But "Nora, Nora" is not as mad as you think. - Oh, we certainly haven't had enough for me to be a wastrel. We have both of us had to work.

Mrs Linde: You work?

Nora: Yes, with little things, with needlework, crocheting and embroidery, and such things; and with other things, too. You know that Torvald left the Ministry when we got married? There was no prospect of promotion in his office, and, of course, he had to earn more money than before. But during the first few years he overdid things terribly. He had to look for all kinds of extra income, as you can imagine, and to work from morning til night. But he couldn't sustain it, and then he became terribly ill. And then the doctors said that he would have to go down to the South.

Mrs Linde: Of course, you spent a whole year in Italy didn't you?

Nora: We certainly did. It wasn't easy making the move, I can tell you. Ivar had only just been born then. But off we had to go, come what may. Oh, it was a wonderful journey. And it saved Torvald's life. But it cost an enormous amount of money, Kristine.

Mrs Linde: I can well believe it.

Nora: Four thousand eight hundred kroner. That's a lot of money, you know.

Mrs Linde: Yes, but in a case like that, you were lucky that you had that much.

Nora: Well, to tell you the truth, we got it from Pappa.

Mrs Linde: Ah, so that's how you managed it. But that was just before your father died, if I remember correctly.

Nora: Yes, Kristine, that's exactly when it was. And just imagine, I wasn't able to go over there and take care of him. I was waiting here for little Ivar to make an appearance at any moment. And, of course, I had my poor really seriously ill Torvald to look after. My dear, kind Pappa! I never got to see him again, Kristine. Oh, that's the worst thing I've had to endure since I got married.

Mrs Linde: I know how very fond of him you were. And that's when you travelled to Italy?

Nora: Yes, since we had the money by then, and the doctors were urging us to go. So we left a month later.

Mrs Linde: And your husband came back completely cured?

Nora: As fit as a fiddle!

Mrs Linde: But - the doctor?

Nora: What do you mean?

Mrs Line: I thought I heard the maid say that the man who arrived at the same time as myself was the doctor.

Nora: Oh yes, that was Doctor Rank. But he wasn't here on a sick visit. He's our closest friend and he looks in here at least once a day. No, Torvald hasn't had even a minute's illness since then. And the children are healthy and fit, and so am I. Oh God, dear God, Kristine, it's just wonderful to be alive and to be so happy! -- Oh, but what am I thinking about? Here I am just talking about myself. Oh, please don't be angry with me! - Tell me, is it really true that you didn't like your husband? Why did you marry him then?

Mrs Linde: My mother was alive then and she was confined to her bed and totally helpless. And then I had my two younger brothers to care for. I didn't think it was right to turn him down when he kept on proposing.

Nora: No, you could be right there. He was very well off at that time?

Mrs Linde: He was quite comfortably off, I believe. But his business was insecure, Nora, and when he died everything fell apart at the seams and there was nothing left over at the end.

Nora: And so - ?

Mrs Linde: Yes, well I had to make ends meet by running a little shop and a bit of teaching, and whatever else I could put my hand to. The last three years have been one interminable working day without rest. But now it's at an end, Nora. My poor mother doesn't need me any more - she's no longer with us. Neither do the boys. They both have jobs and are able to look after themselves.

Nora: What a huge relief it must be for you -

Mrs Linde: No it's not, actually. My life is just indescribably empty. I simply couldn't stand it any more, out there in that little out-of-the-way place. It must surely be easier to find something here to occupy one's time and thoughts. If I could only be lucky enough to find a permanent job, some office work for example.

Nora: But, Kristine, that'd be so dreadfully tiring and you already look so worn out. It would be much better if you could just convalesce somewhere.

Mrs Linde: Except I don't have any wealthy Pappa who could pay for something like that, Nora.

Nora: Oh, don't be angry with me!

Mrs Linde: Dear Nora, don't *you* be angry with *me*. That is the worst thing about a situation like mine. One that generates so much bitterness in the way one looks at things. There's nothing and on-one to work for but, at the same time, you still have to look out for yourself in all respects. You have to live, after all; and then you become selfish. When you told me about the happy change in your circumstances then - would you believe it! - I was pleased not so much for your sake, but for my own.

Nora: How do you mean? Oh, I understand. You thought that Torvald might perhaps be able to do something for you?

Mrs Linde: Yes, that is exactly what I thought.

Nora: And so he shall, too, Kristine. Just leave it to me, I shall bring it up very delicately, so very delicately - I'll find a way of doing it that will really appeal to him. Oh, I so badly want to help you out.

Mrs Linde: That's really kind of you Nora, to take such trouble on my behalf - in fact, doubly kind of you, seeing that you know so little about life's problems and difficulties.

Nora: I - ? I know so little about - ?

Mrs Linde: But, Good God, Nora - that little bit of needlework and so on - . You're a child, Nora. How can you say that with such condescension?

Mrs Line: What?

Nora: You're just like all the others. You all think that I'm not to be taken seriously about anything -

Mrs Linde: But Nora....

Nora: - that I haven't shown what I'm capable of in this difficult world.

Mrs Linde: Dear Nora, you have only just this minute been telling me about all your hardships.

Nora: Pooh! - Those bagatelles! I haven't told you about the really big thing.

Mrs Linde: What really big thing? What do you mean?

Nora: You totally underestimate me, Kristine, but you shouldn't you know. You are proud about having worked so hard and for so long for your mother.

Mrs Linde: I certainly don't underestimate anyone. But it's true. I *am* both proud and happy when I think about how I was able to make my mother's last days virtually free of sorrow and worry.

Nora: And you are also proud when you think about what you have done for your brothers.

Mrs Linde: I think I have a right to be.

Nora: So do I. But now I'm going to tell you something, Kristine. I, too, have something to be proud and happy about.

Mrs Linde: I don't doubt it. But what do you mean?

Nora: Keep your voice down. Just think if Torvald were to hear! He must not, not at any price - ; no-one must ever hear about it, Kristine, no-one but you.

Mrs Linde: But what is it then?

Nora: Come here. Oh, yes, - I too have something to be proud and happy about. I was the one who saved Torvald's life.

Mrs Linde: Saved - ? How do you mean - saved?

Nora: I told you about our journey to Italy. Torvald would not have survived if we had not managed to get there -

Mrs Linde: Yes, but your father gave you the necessary money -

Nora: Ah, that's what Torvald and all the others believe, but -

Mrs Linde: But - ?

Nora: Pappa didn't give us a farthing. I was the one who got the money together.

Mrs Linde: You? That huge sum?

Nora: Four thousand eight hundred kroner. What do you say to that?

Mrs Linde: Yes, but, Nora - how was that possible? Did you win the lottery?

Nora: The lottery? What sort of achievement would *that* have been?

Mrs Linde: But where did you get it from then?

Nora: Hm, tra la la la!

Mrs Linde: Well, you couldn't have borrowed it.

Nora: Oh? Why not?

Mrs Linde: Because a wife cannot take out a loan without her husband's consent.

Nora: Ah, but when it's a wife who knows a bit about business, - a wife who knows how to use her brains a bit, well then -

Mrs Linde: But Nora - I simply don't understand -

Nora: You don't have to. It doesn't automatically follow that I have *borrowed* the money. I could, of course, have got hold of it in some other way. (*throws herself backwards into the sofa.*) I could have got it from some admirer or other. When one is as good-looking as I am -

Mrs Linde: You're mad.

Nora: Ah, now you're beside yourself with curiosity, aren't you Kristine?

Mrs Linde: But for heaven's sake my dear Nora. Don't tell me you've acted rashly!

Nora: Is it acting rashly to save your husband's life?

Mrs Linde: I think it is incredibly rash to act without his knowledge -

Nora: But that's exactly what I had to do – act without him knowing. Good God Kristine, can't you see? He couldn't be allowed to realise just how dangerously ill he was. I was the one the doctors came to and said that his life was in danger and that the only thing that could save him was a prolonged stay in the South. Don't you think that I tried all kinds of ways to persuade him first? I talked to him about how lovely it would be for me to be able to travel abroad like other young brides; I cried and I begged; I told him that he should bear in mind that I was going to have a baby, and that he should just be kind and give in to me. And then, finally, I suggested that he could just take out a loan. But then he became almost angry, Kristine. He said that I was feckless, and that it was his duty as a husband not to give in to such whims – which is what he called them. So that's when I told myself, now you really have to be saved; and that was when I found a way round it.

Mrs Linde: And didn't your husband find out from your father that the money hadn't come from him?

Nora: No, never. Pappa died just a few days later. I had thought about involving him in the secret and asking him not to reveal anything. But since he was so poorly -. Unfortunately, it became unnecessary.

Mrs Linde: And you've never since confessed this to your husband?

Nora: No! For heaven's sake, how could you think of such a thing? He, who was so strict about such things! And, besides - Torvald with his manly self-esteem - just think how painful and humiliating it would have been for him to realise that he was indebted to me. It would quite simply have destroyed our relationship; our lovely, happy home would no longer be what it is now.

Mrs Linde: Will you never tell him?

Nora: Yes - at some time, perhaps; - many years from now when I am no longer as good-looking. You mustn't laugh at it! I mean, of course, when Torvald no longer holds me in such high regard as now, when he no longer finds enjoyment in me dancing for him and dressing up and reciting for him. Then it might be good to have something in reserve - (*breaking off*). That's just nonsense of course! That day will never come. - Now, then. what do you have to say about my great secret, eh Kristine? Perhaps even I could amount to something, eh? – But, believe me, this whole business has caused me a great deal of worry. It certainly hasn't been easy for me to make all my repayment instalments on time. Let me explain. In the business world there are such things as quarterly interest, and such things as repayment instalments; and

then it's always so dreadfully difficult to meet the due-by dates. So I have had to save a little bit here and a little bit there, whenever I could, you see. I wasn't able to save very much out of my housekeeping allowance, because Torvald needed to live well, of course. And I couldn't let the children go about poorly dressed. Whatever money was earmarked for them, I felt that I just had to use it all. The sweet little darlings!

Mrs Linde: So it was always at the expense of your own needs then, my poor Nora.

Nora: Yes, of course. And I was the one in the best position to do it. Every time Torvald gave me money for new dresses and suchlike, I never used more than half of it. I always bought the plainest and cheapest things. Everything looks so good on me, thank goodness, so Torvald never noticed it. But it was often hard for me, Kristine; because, after all, it's good to feel well dressed, isn't it?

Mrs Linde: Oh, yes. It certainly is.

Nora: But then I have had other sources of income. Last winter I was fortunate enough to get a whole lot of copying work to do. So I locked myself in and sat and wrote every evening until far into the night. Aah, I was often so tired, so very tired. But it was great fun, all the same, to be sitting there, working and earning money. It was almost like being a man.

Mrs Linde: But how much have you been able to pay off in this way?

Nora: Well, I can't say exactly. You see, it is very difficult to keep a check on such business transactions. All I know is that I have paid everything I have been able to scrape together. Many a time I just haven't known where to turn. *(smiles.)* Then I have sat here and imagined that a rich old gentleman had fallen in love with me -

Mrs Linde: What! Which gentleman?

Nora: Oh, just make-believe! - that he was now dead, and when they read his will, there it stood in capital letters "All my money shall be paid out immediately, in cash, to the charming Mrs Nora Helmer".

Mrs Linde: But, my dear Nora, - who was this gentleman?

Nora: Oh, for heaven's sake! Don't you see? There was no old gentleman - it was just something that I used to daydream about sitting here, time after time, when I had no idea about how I was going to get hold of any money. But it doesn't matter in any case; the boring old man could be anyone you like, as far as I'm concerned. I couldn't care less about him or his will, because now I am without a care. *(leaps up.)* Oh, God, it is just wonderful to think about it, Kristine! Without a care! To be able to be totally and utterly without a care! To be able to play and romp about with the children; To be able to have everything beautiful and lovely about the house - everything just as Torvald likes it! And just think! Spring is coming soon, with wide blue skies. And then perhaps we can travel a little. Maybe I'll be able to see the sea again. Oh yes, yes, yes! It is really wonderful to be alive and to be happy!

(The bell is heard from the vestibule.)

Mrs Linde: There's the bell; perhaps it's best that I leave now.

Nora: No, stay here; I'm sure it's nobody for me; it will be someone for Torvald -

Maid: Excuse me Madame, - there is a gentleman wishing to speak with the master -

Nora: With the bank director, you mean.

Maid: Yes, with the bank director; But I wasn't sure - since the doctor is in there -

Krogstad: *(in the doorway)* It is me, Madame *(Mrs Linde, taken aback, startled, turns towards the window).*

Nora: *(takes a pace towards him, tense, with lowered voice.* You? What is it? What do you want to talk to my husband about?

Krogstad: Banking matters - in a manner of speaking. I have a modest position at the Joint Stock Bank and your husband is now to become our Managing Director, so I understand -

Nora: Then it's -

Krogstad: Just boring business, Madame; nothing else at all

Nora: Yes, well then, would you be so kind as to go in through the office door.

Mrs Linde: Nora, - who was that man?

Nora: It was a solicitor, called Krogstad.

Mrs Linde: So it really was him.

Nora: Do you know that person?

Mrs Linde: I have known him - a number of years ago. He used to be a solicitor's clerk over on our side of town.

Nora: Yes, that's right, he was.

Mrs Linde: How he has changed.

Nora: I believe he was very unhappily married.

Mrs Linde: He's a widower now?

Nora: With lots of children. There now; it's burning well.

Mrs Linde: They say he's involved in all kinds of business.

Nora: Really? Well, that's as may be; I really don't know -. But don't let us think about business; it's so boring.

(Doctor Rank comes out from Helmer's room.)

Doctor Rank: *(still in the doorway)* No, no - not at all. Don't let me be in the way. I much prefer to go in and talk to your wife a little. *(closes door and notices Mrs Linde.)* Oh, I beg your pardon; I see that I'm in the way here, too.

Nora: No, not at all. Doctor Rank. Mrs Linde.

Rank: Ah yes. A name which is often heard in this house. I believe I may have passed Madame on the steps as I arrived.

Mrs Linde: Yes, I climb steps very slowly; I am not very good at them.

Rank: Aha, a little bit out of sorts internally?

Mrs Linde: More a matter of being overworked, actually.

Rank: Is that all? So, you have come to town in order to regain your strength at all the parties?

Mrs Linde: I have come here to look for work.

Rank: Is that a suitable remedy for overwork?

Mrs Linde: One has to live, Doctor.

Rank: Yes, there is a generally held perception that such a thing is necessary.

Nora: But really, Doctor Rank, - you want to live as well, surely.

Rank: Yes I do, most assuredly. Ramshackle though I may be, I still want to be around to be tortured for as long as possible. All my patients hold the same view. And that is the way it is with those who are under moral assault. There is, right at this very moment, one such morally hospitalised soul in there with Helmer -

Mrs Linde: Ah!

Nora: What do you mean?

Rank: Well, there is a solicitor, by the name of Krogstad, a person about whom you know nothing. He is afflicted in terms of character, Madame, but even he began to talk, as though it was of some great importance, of having to be able to *live*.

Nora: Well, now. What was it he wanted to talk to Torvald about?

Rank: I really don't know; I merely heard that it was something to do with the Bank.

Nora: I didn't know that Krog - that this solicitor, Krogstad, had anything to do with the Joint Stock Bank.

Rank: Oh yes, he holds some sort of position down there. *(To Mrs Linde.)* I don't know if, where you come from, there are also to be found those kinds of people who fuss around breathlessly trying to unearth moral decay and, in order to do so, place the person concerned in some sort of advantageous position and thereby keep them under observation.. The healthy among us must simply come to terms with having to remain on the outside.

Mrs Linde: But it is surely the sick who have the greatest need of being kept inside.

Rank: Yes, well there we have it. That is the kind of consideration which transforms our society into a hospital.

Nora:*(deep in her own thoughts, breaks into soft laughter and claps her hands).*

Rank: Why are you laughing at that? Do you know what society is actually?

Nora: What do I care about boring old society? I was laughing about something entirely different, - something incredibly amusing, - Tell me, Doctor Rank, - all those who are employed at the Joint Stock Bank, - they'll all be dependent upon Torvald?

Rank: Is *that* what you find so incredibly amusing?

Nora: Leave me alone! Leave me alone! Yes, it really is incredibly enjoyable to think that we - that *Torvald* - has gained so much influence over so many people. *(takes the paper bag from her pocket.)* Doctor Rank, would you like a little macaroon?

Rank: There, now - macaroons. I thought they were forbidden fruits around here.

Nora: Yes, but these are some that Kristine gave me.

Mrs Linde: What? I -

Nora: Now, now - don't look so nervous. You were not to know that Torvald had banned them. He's just afraid I shall get bad teeth from eating them. But, so what, - just this once -! Isn't that right Doctor Rank? Here you are! *(puts a macaroon into his mouth.)* And you too, Kristine. And I'll have one, as well. Just one little one - or two, at the most. Yes, now I am incredibly happy, right enough. And now there is only one thing in the world which I want with all my heart.

Rank: Yes - and what is that?

Nora: There is something which I desperately want to say so that Torvald could hear it.

Rank: And why can't you say it then?

Nora: No, I daren't say it - it is too rude.

Mrs Linde: Rude?

Rank: Yes, well in that case, maybe it's not advisable. But you can say it to us, though -. What is it you have such a craving to say so that Helmer can hear it?

Nora: I have such an overpowering desire to say: Hell and damnation!

Rank: Are you mad!

Mrs Linde: But Good Heavens, Nora - !

Rank: Say it then. Here he comes.

Nora (*hiding the bag of macaroons*): Not a word!
(*Helmer, with his overcoat over his arm and his hat in his hand, comes out from his room.*)

Nora: Well, dear Torvald, have you finished with him?

Helmer: Yes, he left just now.

Nora: Allow me to introduce to you -; this is Kristine who has just arrived in town.

Helmer: Kristine - ? I'm sorry, but I don't know -

Nora: Mrs Linde, dear Torvald; Mrs Kristine Linde.

Helmer: Ah, yes. An old friend of my wife, I presume?

Mrs Linde: Yes, we knew each other in days gone by.

Nora: And, just imagine, she's made that long journey here in order to talk to you.

Helmer: What about?

Mrs Linde: Well, not exactly -

Nora: Kristine is actually extremely good at office work but she would dearly like to come under the wing of someone who is able to teach her still more than she already knows -

Helmer: Very sensible, Madame.

Nora: And then, when she heard that you had become the bank director - there was a news report about it - then she made her way here just as fast as she could, and - . Isn't that right, Torvald. For my sake, couldn't you do something for Kristine, couldn't you? Couldn't you?

Helmer: Yes, well, that is by no means impossible. Madame is a widow I presume?

Mrs Linde: Yes.

Helmer: And has experience of office routines?

Mrs Linde: Oh, indeed I do.

Helmer: Well, in that case it is quite likely that I will be able to secure you a position -

Nora: There, you see - you see!

Helmer: You have come at an opportune moment, Madame -

Mrs Linde: Oh, how can I ever thank you - ?

Helmer: That's not at all necessary (*puts on his overcoat.*) But today you will have to excuse me -

Rank: Wait; I'll come with you (*collects his fur coat from the vestibule and holds it up against the stove to warm.*)

Nora: Don't be out too long, dearest Torvald.

Helmer: Just for an hour - no longer.

Nora: Are you going too, Kristine?

Mrs Linde (*putting on her overcoat*): Yes, I must be off to look for a room for myself.

Helmer: Then perhaps we shall walk down the road together.

Nora: What a shame that our space here is so limited; but it would be impossible for us to -

Mrs Linde: You mustn't even think about it! Goodbye my dear Nora and - thank you for everything.

Nora: Goodbye for now. But you'll be coming back this evening, of course. And you, too, Doctor Rank. Yes? If you feel up to it. But of course you will.; wrap yourself up warm.
(*They exit talking normally, out into the vestibule. Then children's voices are heard out on the steps.*)

Nora: There they are! There they are! (*She stands in the doorway*) Oh, you sweet darlings ! Look at them Kristine? Aren't they lovely!

Rank: You must not stand here in a draft!

Helmer: Come, Mrs Linde; this place is becoming unbearable for anyone other than mothers.
(*Doctor Rank, Helmer and Mrs Linde exit.*)

Nora: (*Goes through the door and the following speech is all off-stage*) How healthy and bright you all look. My, what red cheeks you've got! Like apples and roses. Have you had such a good time? That was wonderful. Did you now - did you pull both Emmy and Bob along on the sledge? What, really, both at once! Yes, you are a clever boy, Ivar. Oh, let me hold her a little, Anne-Marie. My sweet little doll! (*tra-la-las as she dances*) Yes, yes - of course - Mamma's going to dance with Bob as well. What? You've been throwing snowballs? Oh, I wish I had been with you. No, don't. I'll undress them myself, Anne-Marie. Oh, yes - please - let me, it is such fun. Go on in Anne-Marie; you look absolutely frozen. There is hot coffee waiting for you on the stove. Is that right? So there was a huge dog chasing you? But it didn't bite, did it? No, dogs don't bite lovely little poppets. Don't look inside the parcels, Ivar! What are they? Ah, if only you knew! Oh no, no, - it's something awful. Well, then. Shall we play something? What shall we play? Yes, why don't we play hide and seek. Bob shall hide first.

Oh, I shall? Yes, all right then, let me hide first. (*Nora re-enters and hides under the table. Off-stage noises as children look for Nora. Knocking on front-door is heard. Seconds later Krogstad enters.*)

Krogstad: Excuse me Mrs Helmer -

Nora: (*Lets out a scream and emerges from the table.*) Oh, what is it you want?

Krogstad: I'm sorry, but the outer door was ajar; someone must have forgotten to close it -

Nora: My husband is not at home, Mr Krogstad.

Krogstad: Yes, I know.

Nora: Well, then - what do you want here?

Krogstad: To have a word with you.

Nora: With - ? (*Goes to door and talks to the children, slowly.*) Go on in to Anne-Marie. What? Oh, no - the strange man won't hurt Mamma. After he's gone, we'll play some more. (*She closes the door and turns to Krogstad.*) You wish to speak with me?

Krogstad: Yes, I do.

Nora: Today - ? But it's not the first of the month yet -

Krogstad: No, it is Christmas Eve - but it will be up to you how much seasonal joy you have.

Nora: What do you want? It is quite out of the question today -

Krogstad: We shall not discuss that for the time being. It is about something else. You will be able to spare me a minute, no doubt?

Nora: Oh, yes - of course, yes, I can do that, - although -

Krogstad: Good. I was sitting over at Olsen's café and saw your husband going down the street -

Nora: I see.

Krogstad: - with a lady.

Nora: What about it?

Krogstad: Might I be so bold as to ask if that lady happened to be a Mrs Linde?

Nora: Yes.

Krogstad: Just arrived in town?

Nora: Yes, today.

Krogstad: She is a good friend of yours then?

Nora: Yes, she is. But I don't see -

Krogstad: I also knew her - once.

Nora: Yes, I know.

Krogstad: Is that so? So you know about that? I thought as much. Well, in that case, I will ask you straight out. Is Mrs Linde to have an appointment at the Joint Stock Bank?

Nora: How can you presume to cross-examine *me*, Mr Krogstad, *you*, one of my husband's employees? But, since you ask, then you may as well know: Yes, Mrs Linde *is* to be given a post. And I am the one who has spoken on her behalf, Mr Krogstad. So, now you know.

Krogstad: Then I had clearly come to the correct conclusion.

Nora: Well, one is always able to exert a tiny bit of influence, I would say. Just because one is a woman doesn't necessarily mean to say that - . When one occupies an inferior position, Mr Krogstad, then one really should be very careful about offending somebody who - well -

Krogstad: Who possesses influence?

Nora: Yes, exactly.

Krogstad: Mrs Helmer, would you have the kindness to use your influence on my behalf?

Nora: What's that? What do you mean?

Krogstad: Would you be so kind as to ensure that I retain my inferior position at the bank?

Nora: What do you mean by that? Who is going to take your position away from you?

Krogstad: Oh, you don't need to play the innocent with me. I fully appreciate that it can't be very nice for your friend to have to encounter me; and I realise now who I must thank for the fact that I am to be pushed out.

Nora: But I assure you -

Krogstad: Yes, yes, yes - to sum up, then: there is still time, and I would advise you to use your influence in order to prevent this happening.

Nora: But Mr Krogstad, I simply don't have *any* influence at all.

Krogstad: No? I thought you just said yourself that -

Nora: But I didn't mean it like that - of course not. I? How could you even begin to think that I had any such influence over my husband?

Krogstad: Oh, I know your husband from old student days. I hardly think the revered bank director is any more impervious to influence than any other husband.

Nora: If you insist on talking about my husband with such contempt, I shall show you the door.

Krogstad: Madame is very brave.

Nora: I'm not afraid of you any more. After the New Year I shall soon be free of the whole affair.

Krogstad: Now listen to me, Madame. If it becomes necessary, I shall fight for my little position at the bank, tooth and nail.

Nora: Yes, it certainly looks that way.

Krogstad: It is not merely for the sake of the income; that is the least of my considerations. No, it is something else -. Well, I may as well say it! It is this, you see. You know, of course, like all the others, that some years ago I was guilty of an indiscretion.

Nora: I believe I may have heard something along those lines.

Krogstad: The matter was not brought before the courts; but all avenues were immediately barred to me. So I took up some other kinds of business as, of course, you know. I had to do something, and I believe that I have not been among the worst. But now I have got to get away from all this. My sons are growing up and, for their sake, I need to regain as much public respect as possible. This position at the bank was, so to speak, the first rung of the ladder for me. And now your husband wants to kick the ladder away from under my feet so that I fall back into the mire again.

Nora: But for God's sake Mr Krogstad, it simply isn't in my power to help you.

Krogstad: That is because you don't possess the will for it to be in your power; but I have the means to force you.

Nora: Surely you won't tell my husband that I owe you money?

Krogstad: Hm, and what if I were to tell him?

Nora: That would be unforgivable of you. This secret, which is my joy and my pride - that he should get to know of it in such an ugly and coarse manner, - get to know of it from *you*. You would expose me to the most dreadful unpleasantness -

Krogstad: Only unpleasantness?

Nora: Go ahead - do your worst. It will be the worst for yourself; because then my husband will see the kind of depraved person you really are, and then there's no way you will ever be able to keep that post.

Krogstad: I asked if it was merely domestic unpleasantness, you were afraid of?

Nora: If my husband were to find out about it, he would - of course - immediately pay whatever is outstanding; and then we would have nothing further to do with you.

Krogstad: Listen to me, Mrs Helmer - either your memory is not very good, or you have no understanding of business. I see that I will have to put you a bit more fully into the picture regarding this matter.

Nora: How do you mean?

Krogstad: When your husband was ill you came to me in order to borrow four thousand eight hundred kroner.

Nora: I knew of no-one else.

Krogstad: I promised to get you that sum -

Nora: And so you did.

Krogstad: I promised to get you that sum, subject to certain conditions. You were so preoccupied with your husband's illness at that time, and so eager to get hold of the money for your travels, that I don't think you gave any thought to all the other considerations. It is therefore not inappropriate for me to remind you of them. So - I promised to provide you with the money against a promissory note which I drew up.

Nora: Yes, and which I signed.

Krogstad: Good. But, underneath, I added a few lines whereby your father was to guarantee the debt. These lines should have been signed by your father.

Nora: Should have? But he did sign them.

Krogstad: I had left a blank space for the date; that is to say, your father was to insert the date himself when he signed the paper. Does Madame recall that?

Nora: Yes, I think so -

Krogstad: I handed the promissory note over to you, so that you could post it on to your father. Was that not the case?

Nora: Yes.

Krogstad: And, of course, you did so immediately since, only five or six days later, you brought the note back to me with your father's signature. And then you received the sum of money.

Nora: Yes, but - haven't I made the proper repayments?

Krogstad: Oh yes, absolutely. But - to revert to what we were discussing - it was a stressful time for you then, was it not Madame?

Nora: Yes, it was.

Krogstad: Your father was seriously ill, I believe?

Nora: He was at death's door.

Krogstad: And, in fact, did die shortly afterwards?

Nora: Yes.

Krogstad: Tell me, Mrs Helmer, do you by any chance remember the date of your father's death? The day of the month, I mean.

Nora: Pappa died on the 29th of September.

Krogstad: Yes, quite right; I have ascertained that. And that is why there is an inconsistency, (*produces a paper*) which I am completely unable to explain.

Nora: What kind of inconsistency? I don't know -

Krogstad: The inconsistency, Madame, exists in the fact that your father signed this promissory note three days after his death.

Nora: What do you mean? I don't understand -

Krogstad: Your father died on the 29th of September. But see here. Your father has dated his signature as being the 2nd of October. Is that not strange, Madame?
(*Nora remains silent*).

Krogstad: Are you able to explain that to me?
(*Nora still remains silent*).

Krogstad: Also remarkable is the fact that the words 2nd of October and the year, have not been written in your father's hand, but in a hand which I feel that I should know. Now there can be an explanation, of course. Your father may have forgotten to date his signature, and so somebody or other has done so without thinking, before that somebody had known of the death. There is nothing wrong in that. It is the writing of the signature which is involved here. And it *is* genuine, of course, Mrs Helmer? It really was your father who has himself signed his name here?

Nora: No, it was not. It was *I* who wrote Pappa's name.

Krogstad: Well, Madame - you realise of course that this is a serious admission?

Nora: But why? You shall soon get your money back.

Krogstad: I would just ask you one question - why did you not forward the paper on to your father?

Nora: It was impossible. Pappa was so very ill. If I had to ask him for his signature, then I would also have to tell him what the money was to be used for. But I couldn't say to him, as ill as he was, that my husband's life was in danger. It was quite impossible.

Krogstad: So it would have been better for you to have given up that overseas travel.

Nora: No, it was impossible. That journey was going to save my husband's life. I couldn't give it up.

Krogstad: But did it not occur to you that you had defrauded me ?

Nora: I simply couldn't pay any attention to that. I simply didn't care about you. I couldn't stand you because of all those callous difficulties you brought up, even though you knew how dangerous my husband's condition was.

Krogstad: Mrs Helmer, you clearly have not the slightest notion of what you have been guilty. But let me tell you that what I once did, which was no more and no worse, destroyed my whole social position.

Nora: You? Would you have me believe that you would ever have done anything courageous to save your wife's life?

Krogstad: The laws do not concern themselves with motives.

Nora: Then it must be a very bad law.

Krogstad: Bad or not - if I were to submit this paper in court, then you would be judged according to the laws.

Nora: I don't believe that at all. A daughter must surely be entitled to protect her old, dying father from anxieties and worries? Shouldn't a wife be entitled to save her husband's life? I don't know the laws that well, but I am certain that they must state somewhere that such things are allowed. And you know nothing about it, you, a solicitor? You must be a poor lawyer, Mr Krogstad.

Krogstad: That's as may be. But transactions - such transactions as we have had with each other, - I suspect that you know that I am fully acquainted with those. Good. You must now do whatever you like. But I will say *one* thing to you: if I am made an outcast once again, then you shall keep me company. (*He bows to her and exits through the vestibule.*)

Nora: What! - He just wants to scare me! But I'm not as naïve as he thinks, oh no.) But - ? - - No, no - that's impossible! I did it out of love.

The children: (*Offstage*) Mamma, that strange man has gone out through the gate.

Nora: Yes, yes - I know. But don't say anything to anybody about the strange man. Do you hear? Not even to Pappa!

The children: No Mamma. But aren't you going to play with us some more?

Nora: No, no; not right now.

The children: But Mamma, you promised!

Nora: Yes, I know. But I can't - not right now. Go on in. I have ever such a lot to do. Go in, go on in, my dear, sweet children. (*She sits down on the sofa, takes up some embroidery and makes a*

few stitches, but soon comes to a stop). No! *(Throws the embroidery down, rises and goes across to the door and calls out:)* Helene! Let me have the tree in here. No, - it, it's just totally impossible!

Maid *(with the fir tree):* Where shall I put it, Madame?

Nora: There, right in the middle of the floor.

Maid: Was there anything else you wanted bringing in?

Nora: No, thank you. I have everything I need.

(The girl, having put the tree down, exits)

Nora: *(decorating the Christmas tree)* Some candles here - and here, some flowers. - That disgusting person! It's just talk, talk, talk! There's nothing wrong. The Christmas tree is going to be lovely. I will do everything you want me to do, Torvald; - I shall sing for you, dance for you -

(Helmer, with a bundle of papers under his arm, enters.)

Nora: Oh, - are you back already?

Helmer: Has there been anyone here?

Nora: Here? No.

Helmer: That's strange. I saw Krogstad go out by the gate.

Nora: What? Oh, yes, of course, Krogstad was here just for a moment.

Helmer: Nora, I can see it in your face. He has been here to beg you to put in a good word for him.

Nora: Yes.

Helmer: And you were to do so as if it had been your own idea? You were not to tell me that he had been here. Did he not ask you to do that, as well?

Nora: Yes, Torvald, but -

Helmer: Nora, Nora - and you were prepared to go along with that? Conduct a conversation with that kind of person and promise him something! And then, on top of it all, to tell me an untruth!

Nora: An untruth?

Helmer: Did you not say that there had been nobody here? That is something my little songbird must never do again. A songbird must have a clean beak with which to chirp - never any false notes. Isn't that how it should be? Yes, of course, I knew as much. And now, not another word about it. Oh, how nice and peaceful it is here. *(leafs through some of the papers).*

Nora: *(busies herself with the Christmas tree then, after a little while).* Torvald!

Helmer: Yes.

Nora: I am so looking forward to the fancy-dress ball at the Stenborg's the day after tomorrow.

Helmer: And I am so curious to know what it is you are going to surprise me with.

Nora: Oh, dear - that silly idea.

Helmer: How do you mean?

Nora: I can't find anything that will do; everything is so stupid, so meaningless.

Helmer: Has little Nora arrived at *that* conclusion?

Nora: Are you very busy, Torvald?

Helmer: Well -

Nora: What are all those papers?

Helmer: They are banking matters.

Nora: Now, already?

Helmer: I have arranged for the departing management to provide me with authority to undertake the necessary changes to the personnel and the business structure. I will have to use Christmas week for that purpose. I wish to have everything in position by the New Year.

Nora: So that was why poor Krogstad -

Helmer: Hm.

Nora: If you hadn't been so terribly busy, I would have asked you for a really, really big favour, Torvald.

Helmer: Tell me, then. What would that be?

Nora: Nobody has such good taste as you. I really want to look my best at the fancy-dress ball. Torvald, couldn't you help me and decide what I am to go as, and what my costume should look like?

Helmer: Aha, is my little wilful one looking for someone to rescue her?

Nora: Yes Torvald, I don't seem to be able to get anywhere without your help.

Helmer: Good, good. I shall give the matter some thought; we shall find a solution.

Nora: Oh, how kind of you. How lovely the red flowers look. But tell me, is it something really bad that this man Krogstad has done?

Helmer: He has forged names. Do you have any idea what that can mean?

Nora: Couldn't he have done it out of necessity?

Helmer: Of course, or - as with so many others - out of sheer rashness. I am not so heartless that I would automatically condemn a man for the sake of just one such isolated incident.

Nora: No, of course not. Torvald!

Helmer: There are many of those who can redeem themselves morally if they would but openly acknowledge their offence and take their punishment.

Nora: Punishment?

Helmer: But Krogstad did not choose to follow that road; he chose to help himself by means of trickery and deception; and that is what has degraded him morally.

Nora: Do you think it should . ?

Helmer: Just imagine how such a guilty person would have to lie and pretend and behave in all respects; would have to mask his true self in front of all those nearest to him - even in front of his own wife and children. And to do so in front of the children is the most terrible thing of all, Nora.

Nora: Why?

Helmer: Because such a web of deceit brings pestilence and disease into the very life of a home. Every breath of air which the children inhale in such a house is contaminated with the germs of something ugly.

Nora: Are you certain about that?

Helmer: Oh my dear, I have witnessed it often enough as a lawyer. Almost all of those who are corrupted at an early age have had dishonest mothers.

Nora: Why only - mothers?

Helmer: It derives most frequently from the mothers; but fathers have an effect in the same direction, of course; any lawyer knows that all too well. And then this man, Krogstad, has been poisoning his children at home for years with his lies and deceit. That is why I refer to him as being morally corrupt. That is why my sweet little Nora is going to promise not to plead on his behalf. Give me your hand on it. Come, come - what's all this? Give me your hand. There, now. So - it is done. I assure you, it would have been impossible for me to have worked with him; I literally feel physically ill in the vicinity of such people.

Nora: How hot it is here. And I have so much to do.

Helmer: Yes, I too need to think about reading through some of these before we dine. And I shall also give some thought to your costume. And perhaps I can also find something to put inside the gold paper to hang from the Christmas tree (*places his hand upon her head.*) Oh you - my own sweet little songbird. (*He goes into his room and closes the door behind him.*)

Nora: No! It can't be. It's impossible. It *has* to be impossible.

Nursemaid: The little ones are asking very politely if they may be allowed to come in to see Mamma.

Nora: No, no, no! Don't let them come in here! Stay with them, Anne-Marie.

Nursemaid: Yes, of course Madame. (*closes the door.*)

Nora: Corrupt my little ones! Poison my home? This is simply not true. Never in a million years is this true.

SECOND ACT

(The same room. Up in the corner by the gramophone stands the Christmas tree, dishevelled and with burnt-out stumps of candles. Nora's outdoor clothes are lying on the sofa.)

(Nora, alone in the room, walks about agitatedly; finally she stops next to the sofa and picks up her coat.)

Nora *(letting the coat fall again)*. Somebody's coming! No, there's nobody there. Of course - nobody would come today, Christmas Day; - and not tomorrow either. - But perhaps - *(opens the door and looks out.)* No, nothing in the letter box; completely empty. Oh, what nonsense! Of course he isn't seriously going to do anything about it. It simply can't happen. After all, I've got three small children.

(The nursemaid comes in, carrying a large cardboard box.)

Nursemaid: There, I finally found the box with all the fancy dress clothes.

Nora: Thank you Anne-Marie; put it down on the table.

Nursemaid: But I must say, they're in a terrible mess.

Nora: I feel like tearing them up into tiny, tiny shreds!

Nursemaid: Good gracious me! They can be sorted out; all it needs is a little patience.

Nora: Yes, of course. I think I'll go and get Mrs Linde to give me a hand.

Nursemaid: What, out again? In this awful weather? Miss Nora will catch a chill - be ill.

Nora: And that's not the worst thing that could happen. - How are the children?

Nursemaid: The poor little things are playing with their Christmas presents, but -

Nora: Do they keep on asking for me?

Nursemaid: They're so used to having their Mamma around them.

Nora: Yes, but Anne-Marie, I *can't* spend so much time with them from now on - not as much as I used to.

Nursemaid: Yes, well - small children get used to all kinds of things.

Nora: Do you think so? Do you think they would completely forget their mother if she were to go away - for good?

Nursemaid: What on earth...! Away for good?

Nora: Listen, - tell me something, Anne-Marie - I have thought about this so many times - how could you find it in your heart to give your child away to strangers?

Nursemaid: But I had to if I was going to nurse my little Nora.

Nora: Yes, but to *want* to do it?

Nursemaid: What - when I could get myself such a secure position? Any girl who had fallen on hard times would have given their right arm for such an opportunity. Because that spineless so-and-so certainly never did anything to help me.

Nora: But now your daughter will have completely forgotten you.

Nursemaid: Oh, but she hasn't. She wrote to me, both when she was confirmed and then again when she got married.

Nora: Dear old Anne-Marie, you were a good mother to me when I was little.

Nursemaid: My poor little Nora had no other Mamma but me.

Nora: And if my little ones had nobody else, then I know that you would - . But, what am I talking about, eh! *(opens the box.)* Go on in to them. Now I have to -. Tomorrow, just you wait and see how lovely I shall be.

Nursemaid: Oh yes, there won't be a single person at the ball half as pretty as my Miss Nora. *(exits)*

Nora: If only I was brave enough to go out. If only nobody were to come here. If only nothing were to happen here in the meantime. I'm just being silly, aren't I? Nobody's going to come. Just don't think about it. These things need a brushing. Look at these beautiful gloves. *(Knocking)* He's knocking, he's knocking! One, two, three, four, five, six - *(screams:)* Oh, here he comes.

(Mrs Linde enters)

Nora: Oh, it's you Kristine. There's nobody else out there, is there? - Oh, I'm so glad you came.

Mrs Linde: I heard you'd been over to my place asking after me.

Nora: Yes, I was just passing by and I thought I would just pop in to see you. There's something you just have to help me with. Let's sit here on the sofa. Now, look. There's going to be a fancy-dress ball tomorrow, upstairs in Consul Stenborg's big flat, and Torvald wants me to go as a Neapolitan fishing girl and to dance the tarantella, which I learned to do on Capri.

Mrs Linde: My goodness. So you're going to give a real performance then?

Nora: Yes, Torvald says that I absolutely must. Look, here is the costume; Torvald had it made for me when we were in Italy; but now it's all in tatters, and I just don't know what to do -

Mrs Linde: Oh, we'll soon fix that; it's just the trim which has come apart in a few places. Needle and thread? There, now we have everything we need.

Nora: Oh, it's really good of you.

Mrs Linde: So, you're going to go all dressed up tomorrow, eh Nora? You know what, - I'll just call by for a moment to see you in all your finery. But what am I thinking of? I completely forgot to thank you for such a pleasant evening yesterday.

Nora: Oh, I don't think yesterday was nearly as nice as it usually is. - You should have moved here a bit sooner, Kristine. - Oh yes, Torvald certainly knows how to make a home *really* nice and welcoming.

Mrs Linde: And so do you, too, I shouldn't wonder; after all you're not your father's daughter for nothing. But tell me, is Doctor Rank always as depressed as he was yesterday?

Nora: No, it was particularly noticeable yesterday. But, you know, he is suffering from a very serious illness. He has tuberculosis of the spine, poor man. His father was such an unpleasant man, let me tell you. He kept mistresses and so on; that's why his son was sick right from childhood, you see.

Mrs Linde: But my dear, dear Nora - how could you know of such things?

Nora: Oh, well, you know - when you have had three children, you occasionally have visits from - well, women who know a bit about medical matters; and they tell you a thing or two.

Mrs Linde: Does Doctor Rank come here every day?

Nora: Yes, every single day. He's Torvald's very best friend from when they were both young, and he is *my* very good friend as well. Doctor Rank is more or less part of the house.

Mrs Linde: But tell me. Is he completely sincere? I mean, doesn't he just make a point of saying nice things to people?

Nora: No, on the contrary. Whatever made you think that?

Mrs Linde: Yesterday, when you introduced me to him, he said that he had often heard my name mentioned about the house; but then I noticed that your husband hadn't the faintest idea who I actually was. How, then, could Doctor Rank?

Nora: Oh yes, that's absolutely right, Kristine. Torvald loves me so incredibly much that he wants to keep me just to himself, as he puts it. To begin with he got so jealous if I even mentioned the name of any of the people from home who were dear to me. So, naturally, I just let things be. But with Doctor Rank I tend to talk about such things from time to time; because he is very keen to hear about them, you see.

Mrs Linde: Now, listen to me Nora. You are, in many respects, still a child; I am very much older and have had somewhat more experience. I must say something to you: you need to bring this thing with Doctor Rank to an end.

Nora: What do you mean? What sort of thing do I need to bring to an end?

Mrs Linde: There are one or two things as far as I can see. Yesterday, for example, you talked about a rich admirer who was going to give you money -

Nora: Yes, but that was someone who doesn't exist, unfortunately. But so what?

Mrs Linde: Is Doctor Rank wealthy?

Nora: Yes, he is.

Mrs Linde: And nobody dependent upon him?

Nora: No, nobody; but - ?

Mrs Linde: And he comes here every single day?

Nora: Yes, I told you he did.

Mrs Linde: But how could such a fine man be so persistent?

Nora: I haven't the faintest idea what you mean, Kristine.

Mrs Linde: Don't deceive yourself, Nora. Do you think I don't realise who you borrowed all that money from?

Nora: *What?* Have you gone out of your mind? How could you even think such a thing! One of our very best friends, who comes here every single day! What a terribly embarrassing situation that would have been!

Mrs Linde: So, it really wasn't him?

Nora: No, I give you my word. It wouldn't have occurred to me for a second -. Anyway, he didn't even have money to lend at that time; he didn't inherit it until later.

Mrs Linde: Well in that case I think that was just as well for you Nora.

Nora: No, it would never have occurred to me to ask Doctor Rank. On the other hand I am quite sure that if I *were* to ask him -

Mrs Linde: But, of course, you wouldn't.

Nora: No, of course not. I don't even think it would be necessary. But I am quite sure that if I talked to Doctor Rank...

Mrs Linde: Behind your husband's back?

Nora: I have to free myself from that other situation, and *that* is also behind his back. I've just got to get out of this.

Mrs Linde: Yes, I know. That's what I said yesterday; but -

Nora: A man is much better able to deal with things like that than a woman is.

Mrs Linde: A husband can, yes.

Nora: Nonsense. (*stops.*) Tell me something Kristine. When you repay everything you owe, then your promissory note is returned to you, isn't it?

Mrs Linde: I believe so, yes

Nora: And then you can tear it up into a hundred thousand little pieces and burn it - the horrid, dirty paper!

Mrs Linde: Nora, you are hiding something from me.

Nora: Can you tell that just by looking at me?

Mrs Linde: Something has happened to you since yesterday morning. Nora, what is it?

Nora: Kristine! (*listens*) Sssh! Torvald's coming home. Look; go and join the children for a while. Torvald can't stand to see sewing things lying about the place. Let Anne-Marie give you a hand.

Mrs Linde: Yes, all right. But I'm not leaving here until we've had a proper honest talk together. (*She exits and, at the same time, Torvald enters from the vestibule.*)

Nora: Oh, how I've waited for you, dear *dear* Torvald.

Helmer: Was that the seamstress?

Nora: No, it was just Kristine; she's been helping me to get my costume sorted out. I'm going to look really lovely in it, I promise you.

Helmer: Yes. That was rather a good idea of mine, wasn't it?

Nora: Marvellous! But isn't it good of me to do what you say?

Helmer: Good? Because you obey your husband? You funny little thing, I know you didn't mean it like that. But don't let me disturb you; you'll be wanting to try things on, I shouldn't wonder.

Nora: And you're going to do some work, I suppose?

Helmer: Yes. (*shows her papers.*) See here. I've been down to the bank to get these - (*about to exit.*)

Nora: Torvald.

Helmer: Yes.

Nora: If your little squirrel were to ask you really, *really* nicely, to do something?

Helmer: Well?

Nora: Would you do it?

Helmer: Well first of all, of course, I would need to know what it was.

Nora: Your little squirrel would run about and do all kinds of tricks for you if you were so kind and agreeable.

Helmer: Out with it then.

Nora: Your little skylark would go around chirruping in all the rooms, high and low -

Helmer: But that is what my little skylark does in any case.

Nora: I shall be a little fairy and dance for you in the moonlight, Torvald.

Helmer: Just a moment Nora - I hope you're not referring to what you brought up this morning?

Nora: Yes, Torvald, please - I *implore* you!

Helmer: And you really have the temerity to bring that matter up again?

Nora: Yes, yes, you must do it for me, you *must* let Krogstad keep his position at the bank.

Helmer: My dear Nora, I have already given his position to Mrs Linde.

Nora: Yes, of course - that's incredibly good of you; but - surely - you could just dismiss some other clerk instead of Krogstad.

Helmer: But this is nothing more than the most dreadful wilfulness and obstinacy! Just because you gave him a completely ill-conceived promise to speak on his behalf, I am supposed to - !

Nora: That's not the reason why, Torvald. It's for your own sake. This man writes in the worst kind of newspapers; you've said so yourself. He could do you such an enormous amount of harm. I am so deadly afraid of him.

Helmer: Ah of course. I understand now. It's all those old stories that are upsetting you.

Nora: What do you mean by that?

Helmer: You're thinking about your father, of course.

Nora: My father? Oh, yes - of course. I mean just remember how spitefully people wrote about him in the papers and spoke so ill of him. I think they would have ended up getting him dismissed if the Ministry hadn't sent you there to investigate, and if you hadn't been so friendly and helpful towards him.

Helmer: My dear little Nora, there is a significant difference between your father and me. Your father was no blameless public servant. But I am; and I am determined to remain so for as long as I hold my position, and beyond.

Nora: Nobody knows what spiteful people are capable of doing. It could be so good here, now; so nice and happy in our peaceful and carefree home, - you and me and the children, Torvald! That is why I beg of you -

Helmer: And just by pleading his cause you make it impossible for me to retain him. It is already known in the bank that I intend dismissing Krogstad. If there were now to be rumours that the new bank director had allowed his mind to be changed by his wife -

Nora: What would happen?

Helmer: What would happen? If my little obstinate wife were to have her own way I would be made a laughing stock in front of my entire staff. I would have people think that I was susceptible to all kinds of outside influences. You may be absolutely certain that I would soon suffer the consequences! And, in any case - there is one circumstance which makes it totally impossible for Krogstad to remain in the bank as long as I am the director.

Nora: What is that?

Helmer: I might, if absolutely necessary, have been able to overlook his moral lapse -

Nora: Yes, couldn't you, Torvald? Couldn't you?

Helmer: And I hear that he is quite capable as well. But he was someone I knew when I was young. It is from these rash acquaintanceships that such embarrassment is so often caused later on in life. Yes, I might as well be open and frank about it: we were on a familiar footing. And this tactless person is at pains not to conceal this fact when other people are present. On the contrary, - he considers that it entitles him to employ a familiar manner with me; and so he persists with his: Helmer, this, and Helmer that. I don't mind telling you - I find such familiarity quite unbearable. He wants to make my position at the bank intolerable.

Nora: Torvald, you don't mean anything by all this.

Helmer: What do you mean? Why not?

Nora: No, because all this is just petty-mindedness.

Helmer: What did you say? Petty-minded? You think I'm being petty-minded?

Nora: No, quite the opposite, dearest Torvald; and that's exactly why -

Helmer: Nevertheless; you certainly seem to think I am. So that is what I must be, then. Petty-minded! I see! - Right - this matter is now being finally and irrevocably resolved. (*calls*) Helene!

Nora: What do you want?

Helmer: (*searching through his papers*): A decision. (*The maid enter*) Here. Take this letter and go on down with it straight away. Get hold of a messenger boy and get him to deliver it. But quickly. The address is written on the outside. Here is some money.

Maid: Very good Sir. (*she leaves with the letter.*)

Helmer: (*gathers his papers together*) Well, there you are, my little Mrs Headstrong. It's done.

Nora: Torvald, - what, what was that letter?

Helmer: Krogstad's dismissal notice.

Nora: Call her back, Torvald! There's still time. Oh, Torvald, call it back! Do it for my sake; - for your own sake; for the children's sake! Do you hear, Torvald; do it! You don't know what this could do to us all.

Helmer: Too late.

Nora: Yes, - too late.

Helmer: My dear Nora. Don't look so desperate. Believe me, I have already forgiven you for this dreadful lack of judgement even though it was basically an affront directed at me. Yes, it was! Or do you perhaps think I shouldn't have taken offence at your belief that I would be afraid of a dissolute legal hack's vengeance? But even if that were the case I still forgive you all the same because, after all, it is really nothing more than proof of your great love for me. (*takes her in his arms.*) That is the way it should be, my own darling Nora. Come what may, when it really comes down to it, you must understand that I possess both sufficient courage and strength. You shall see that I am man enough to take everything upon myself.

Nora: What do you mean by that?

Helmer: Everything, I say -

Nora: No, you shall never do that - not in a million years.

Helmer: Good. So that's settled then. We shall divide everything, Nora - as man and wife. And that is exactly how it should be. Are you satisfied now? There, there now. No need for those frightened doves eyes. The whole thing is nothing but the emptiest of illusions. Now then, why don't you go through your tarantella and practice with the tambourine, eh? I am going to sit myself down in the inner office, and close the dividing door, so you won't disturb me. You can make as much noise as you like. And when Rank arrives, tell him where he can find me. (*He waves to her and takes his papers into his room, closing the door behind him.*)

Nora: He was able to do it. He's done it. He's done it - in spite of everything. Everything. Everything in the world. No, not this - not ever, ever this! Anything else but this! Rescue! A way out! (*The bell rings*) Doctor Rank! Anything else! Anything else, whatever it may be!

Nora: *(She opens the door)* Good afternoon, Doctor Rank. I recognised you by the way you rang the bell. Helmer's in his office but don't go in to him just yet. He's very busy with something.

Rank: And you?

Nora: Oh, you know the answer to that - I always have some time to spare for you.

Rank: Thank you for that. I shall exploit that *(pause)* for as long as I am able.

Nora: What do you mean by that? As long as you are able?

Rank: Yes. Did that frighten you?

Nora: No. It was just such a strange expression. Is something going to happen then?

Rank: Only what I have long since been prepared for. Although, to be sure, I had not expected it to come quite so soon.

Nora: What have you found out? Doctor Rank, you must tell me!

Rank: It is all downhill with me now. There is nothing to be done about it.

Nora: Oh, you mean it's *you*?

Rank: Who else? There is no point in lying to oneself. I am the most wretched of all my patients, Mrs Helmer. I have just recently undertaken a general review of my internal status. Bankrupt. Perhaps in a month's time I shall be rotting up at the churchyard.

Nora: Oh shame on you, what ugly things you're saying.

Rank: But this thing is so damnably ugly. But the worst thing is that it will become even uglier. Uglier than just about anything else. There is only one last thing that needs to be investigated, and when I have finished with that, then I will know approximately when that final disintegration will commence. There is something I would like to say to you. Helmer's fine sensitivity makes him unable to contemplate anything which is hideous in its nature. I do not wish him, on any account, to come to visit me when I am confined to my bed -

Nora: But surely, Doctor Rank -

Rank: I do not want him there. Not under any circumstance. I shall have my door closed to him. As soon as I have found out the worst, I shall send you my calling card with a discreet black cross on it, and then you will know that the process of disintegration has begun.

Nora: No, Doctor Rank, today you are being impossible, quite impossible. And just when I so badly wanted you to be in a really good mood.

Rank: What, with death in my hands? And paying the penalty for someone else's guilt? Is there any justice in that? And in every single family there exists, in one way or another, a similar implacable spirit of retribution -

Nora: No, no! That's just nonsense! Be happy! Happy!

Rank: Of course. My inner self can do nothing but laugh at the whole thing. My poor, innocent spine must suffer for my father's, how can I describe it? His self-indulgent junior officer days.

Nora: Didn't you tell me once that he was addicted to asparagus and pâté de foie and things like that?

Rank: Oh, yes. And to truffles.

Nora: Yes, truffles, of course. And also to oysters, I believe?

Rank: Yes, oysters, oysters; so I believe.

Nora: And then all that port and champagne on top of it all. But it's terrible to think that all these lovely things should affect the spine.

Rank: Especially when they affect a poor spine which has not derived the least benefit from them whatever.

Nora: Ah, yes. That really is the most tragic thing of all.

Rank: Hm -

Nora: Why did you smile?

Rank: No, it was you who laughed.

Nora: No, it was you who smiled, Doctor Rank!

Rank: You are even more of a joker than I thought.

Nora: I am intent on all kinds of madness today.

Rank: So it would appear.

Nora: Dear, dear Doctor Rank, you shall not die and leave Torvald and me.

Rank: Oh that sense of loss will disappear, so very easily. Those who die are soon forgotten.

Nora: Do you believe that?

Rank: One soon makes new friends, and so -

Nora: Who will make new friends?

Rank: You and Helmer shall, when I am gone. You're already well on the way, by all appearances. What was that Mrs Linde hoping to find here yesterday evening?

Nora: Aha! - Surely you're not jealous of poor Kristine?

Rank: Yes, I am. She will be my successor here in this house. When my time has come, then perhaps this female -

Nora: Sssh! Not so loud; she's in there.

Rank: Ah, today as well. There, you see.

Nora: Only to sew my costume. Good God, how unreasonable you are. Behave yourself now, Doctor Rank. Tomorrow you will be able to see how nicely I dance; and then you will imagine that I am doing it just for you, - well, for Torvald as well, of course. (*takes various things out of the box.*) Doctor Rank, sit yourself down here, and I'll show you something.

Rank: What is it?

Nora: See here. See!

Rank: Well now, silk stockings.

Nora: Flesh coloured. Aren't they gorgeous? Of course, it's so dark here now, but tomorrow -. No, no, no. You may only see the foot. Oh, alright - why not? Of course you can see further up as well.

Rank: Hm -

Nora: Why do you look so critical? Do you think they're unsuitable perhaps?

Rank: That is something about which I cannot possibly have any qualified opinion.

Nora: Shame on you! (*hits him lightly on the ear with the stockings.*) There, take that! (*folds them together again.*)

Rank: And what other wonderful things am I going to be able to see?

Nora: You will not see anything else at all, because you are being just too awful.

Rank: When I am sitting here with you like this, so very much at ease, I just cannot grasp - no, I simply cannot comprehend - what would have happened to me if I had never entered this house.

Nora: Yes, I think you quite enjoy being here with us.

Rank: And to have to leave all this behind -

Nora: Stuff and nonsense; you're not going to leave us.

Rank: - and not to be able to leave even a small token of gratitude; barely a fleeting sense of loss, - nothing more than an empty space, which can be filled by the first person to come by.

Nora: And if I were now to ask you for -? No -

Rank: For what?

Nora: For a very big token of your friendship -

Rank: Yes, yes?

Nora: No, I mean - for an incredibly big favour -

Rank: Would you really, for just *once* in a while, make me so happy?

Nora: Oh, but you have no idea what it is.

Rank: Very well. So, tell me.

Nora: But I can't, Doctor Rank; it is just so impossibly much, - it is both advice, help and a favour -

Rank: So much the better. I cannot begin to think what you mean - but tell me about it, then. Do I not enjoy your confidence?

Nora: Oh yes, - more than anyone else. You are my truest and best friend, - you know that well enough. And that is why I shall say it to you. So, then, Doctor Rank; there is something which you must help me to prevent. You know how dearly, how incredibly much Torvald loves me; he wouldn't hesitate for a moment to give his life for my sake.

Rank: Nora, - do you think that he is the only one - ?

Nora: Who -?

Rank: Who would gladly give his life for your sake.

Nora: I see.

Rank: I swore to myself that you would know of it before I died. I could never have found a better opportunity. - Yes, Nora, know you know. And now you know, too, that you can confide in me as you can in no-one else.

Nora: Let me get past.

Rank: Nora -

Nora: Helene, bring the lamp in. Well, dear Doctor Rank, this was really too awful of you.

Rank: That I have loved you as intensely as anyone else. Was *that* awful?

Nora: No. But the fact that you came out and told me about it. That wasn't at all necessary -

Rank: What do you mean? Did you know, then - ?
(*The maid comes in with the lamp, sets it down on the table and exits.*)

Rank: Nora - Mrs Helmer - I ask you again. Have you known anything of this?

Nora: How do I know what I've known or not known? I really can't tell you. - That you could have been so, - so *clumsy*, Doctor Rank! Just when everything was so good.

Rank: But now, in any event, you know with certainty that I put my life and soul at your disposal. So will you now tell me?

Nora: After this?

Rank: I beg of you, let me know what it is.

Nora: You cannot know anything now.

Rank: Yes, yes. You must not punish me in this way. Allow me to do for you whatever is humanly possible.

Nora: There is nothing you can do for me now. - In any case, I don't actually need any help. It was all imagination, the whole thing - you'll see. Yes, that's what it was. Imagination. Of course! Yes, you really are a fine one, Doctor Rank. Aren't you ashamed, now that the lamp has been brought in?

Rank: Not really, no. But perhaps I should go - for good?

Nora: No, no most definitely not. Of course you must continue to come here, just as before. You know very well that Torvald cannot do without you.

Rank: Yes, but *you*?

Nora: Oh, me? I always think it is so terribly amusing when you come.

Rank: That is precisely what set me on the wrong track. You are a mystery to me. It has seemed to me on many occasions that you could almost wish to be together with me as much as with Helmer.

Nora: Yes, well there you are. There are some people you are the most fond of, and others you would almost prefer to be together with.

Rank: Yes, well - there is something in that.

Nora: When I lived at home, of course, it was Pappa I was most fond of. But I always found it so terribly amusing to creep down into the maids' room; because they never minded me a bit; and they always had such funny things to talk about among themselves.

Rank: Aha, so *they* are the ones I have replaced.

Nora: Oh, dear, kind Doctor Rank, I didn't mean that at all. But you must know that it is the same with Torvald as it was with Pappa -
(*The maid enters from the vestibule.*)

Maid: Madame! (*whispers and gives her a card.*)

Nora: Oh!

Rank: Is there anything wrong?

Nora: No, no - not at all; it was just - just... It's my new costume -

Rank: How do you mean? Your costume is lying over there.

Nora: Oh, yes - that one; but this is another one; one that I ordered. Torvald must not know about it -

Rank: Aha, so that is the big secret.

Nora: Yes, of course. Now, just go straight on in to him; he's sitting in the inner room; keep him occupied -

Rank: Never fear, he won't escape from me. (*he goes into Helmer's room.*)

Nora (to the maid): And he's waiting out in the kitchen?

Maid: Yes, he came up the back stairs -

Nora: But didn't you tell him that there was someone here?

Maid: Yes, but he didn't take any notice.

Nora: He wouldn't leave?

Maid: No, he says he won't go until he's spoken to you. Madame.

Nora: Very well, show him in. But quietly Helene. You mustn't say anything to anyone. It's - it's a surprise for my husband.

Maid: Yes, yes - I understand - (*she goes out.*)

Nora: The horrible thing is happening. It's happening after all. No, no, no - it can't happen, it can't happen. It *shall* not happen. (*she moves across and lock's Helmer's door. Krogstad enters*)

Nora: Talk quietly; my husband is at home, he might hear.

Krogstad: So let him.

Nora: What do you want from me?

Krogstad: I want to find something out.

Nora: Hurry, then. What is it?

Krogstad: You know, of course, that I have been dismissed.

Nora: I couldn't prevent it, Mr Krogstad. I have argued all I could on your behalf, but it was no use.

Krogstad: Has your husband so little love for you? He knows what I can expose you to, and yet he nevertheless dares -

Nora: Whatever makes you think that he knows about.....?

Krogstad: Well, no, I didn't really think he did. It certainly wouldn't be like good old Torvald Helmer to show such manly courage -

Nora: Mr Krogstad, I demand some respect for my husband.

Krogstad: But of course. He shall have all the respect he deserves. But since Madame is keeping all this so frightfully secret, then I may assume that you have also acquired rather better information than you had yesterday with regard to what you have actually done?

Nora: More than *you* could ever teach me.

Krogstad: Naturally, such a poor lawyer as I -

Nora: What do you want from me?

Krogstad: I just wanted to see how things were with you, Mrs Helmer. I have thought about you the whole day. A debt collector, a small-time lawyer, a - well, someone like me for instance, can also have a little - what you might term - compassion, you see.

Nora: So, show some then. Think of my little children.

Krogstad: Have you and your husband thought about mine? But, be that as it may. All I wanted to say was that you didn't need to take this matter too seriously. In the first place, there will be no prosecution on my part.

Nora: No? There won't? Really? There, I knew it.

Krogstad: The whole affair can be sorted out quite amicably; people don't need to hear about it at all. It will just be between the three of us.

Nora: My husband must never get to know anything about this.

Krogstad: How are you going to be able to prevent him? Are you perhaps in a position to pay the outstanding amount?

Nora: No, not now. Not straight away.

Krogstad: I see. Well perhaps there is some other way in which you are able to raise the money in the next few days?

Nora: No way that I am prepared to make use of.

Krogstad: I see. Well it would not have helped you in any case. Because if you were standing here with all the money and more in your hands, you would not get your pledge back from me.

Nora: Why? What would you do with it?

Krogstad: I would just.... keep it. Have it under my protection. No outsider would ever have to know about it. But if, on the other hand, you were considering any desperate action -

Nora: Yes, I am.

Krogstad: If you were thinking about running away from house and home -

Nora: Yes, I am!

Krogstad: - or if you were considering something even worse -

Nora: How could you know that?

Krogstad: - then go ahead.

Nora: How could you know that I was thinking about *that*?

Krogstad: Most of us think about *that* to begin with. I, too, thought about *that*; but I didn't have the stomach for it -

Nora: Neither do I.

Krogstad: No, isn't that so? *You* don't have the courage to do it, either?

Nora: No, I don't. No. I don't.

Krogstad: It would also be extremely stupid. After the initial domestic storm has blown over -. I have a letter here in my pocket, addressed to your husband -

Nora: And it contains everything ?

Krogstad: Expressed as gently as possible.

Nora: He must not get that letter. Tear it up. I will use another means to get the money after all.

Krogstad: Excuse me, Madame, but I thought you just said -

Nora: Oh, I'm not talking about the money I owe you. Just let me know how much money you are demanding from my husband, and I will get it for you.

Krogstad: I am not demanding any money from your husband.

Nora: What are you demanding, then?

Krogstad: I shall tell you. I want to advance, Madame. I want to rise up in the world, and your husband is going to help me. For a year and a half now, I have been guilty of nothing dishonourable. I have struggled under the most severe conditions. I was prepared to work my way up, step by step. Now I have been shown the door, and I shall not be satisfied with merely being restored to favour again. I want to rise up in the world, let me tell you. I want to be taken back into the bank again, - and have a higher position; Your husband shall create a post for me -

Nora: He will never do such a thing!

Krogstad: He'll do it; I know him; he would not dare to raise his voice in protest. And once I am in with him, then - just wait and see! Within a year I shall be the director's right hand. It will be Nils Krogstad and not Torvald Helmer who manages the Joint Stock Bank.

Nora: That will never happen!

Krogstad: Do you perhaps want -

Nora: Now I have the courage to do it.

Krogstad: You don't frighten me. A fine, pampered lady like you -

Nora: You'll see. You'll see!

Krogstad: Beneath the ice, perhaps? Deep down in the cold, coal-black water? And then in the spring, you'll float up to the surface, ugly, unrecognisable, with your hair fallen out -

Nora: You don't scare me.

Krogstad: You don't scare me, either. People don't do things like that, Mrs Helmer. Besides, what purpose would it serve? I have got him in my pocket, just the same.

Nora: Afterwards? When I no longer -?

Krogstad: Have you forgotten that *I* will then control your posthumous reputation?

Nora (*stands speechless, looking at him*).

Krogstad: Yes. Well, now I have prepared you. Don't do anything silly. When Helmer has received my letter, I shall be waiting for a message from him. And, remember, it is your husband who has himself forced me to go down this path once again. I shall never forgive him for that. Goodbye, Madame. (*he exits*)

Nora: (*crosses to door, opens it slightly and listens*) Go. Don't leave the letter now. Oh, no, that would be impossible! (*opens the door more and more.*) What's happening? He's standing outside. He's not going down the steps. Is he thinking it over - Should he - ? (*A letter falls into the letter box, Krogstad's footsteps are then heard, diminishing as they proceed down the steps.*)

Nora: In the letter box. There it is. Torvald, Torvald, - now nothing can save us!

Mrs Linde: Well, I cannot find anything more that needs repairing. Perhaps you'd like to try - ?

Nora: Kristine, come here.

Mrs Linde: What is the matter with you? You look really upset.

Nora: Come here. You see that letter? *There;* look, - through the window of the letter box.

Mrs Linde: Yes, yes - I can see it all right.

Nora: That letter is from Krogstad -

Mrs Linde: Nora - it was Krogstad who lent you the money!

Nora: Yes, and now Torvald will find out everything.

Mrs Linde: Believe me, Nora, it will be the best for both of you.

Nora: There's more than you know about. I have forged a name -

Mrs Linde: But for Pity's sake - ?

Nora: All I want to say to you Kristine, is that I want you to be my witness.

Mrs Linde: How do you mean - witness? What shall I - ?

Nora: If I were to lose my reason, - and that could easily happen -

Mrs Linde: Nora!

Nora: Or something should happen to me, something which meant that I couldn't be here -

Mrs Linde: Nora, Nora, have you lost your senses!

Nora: If there is someone who would want to assume responsibility, to take all the blame, you understand -

Mrs Linde: Yes, yes: but how can you think - ?

Nora: I want you to be a witness to the fact that it is not true, Kristine. I certainly haven't lost my mind; I am in full control of myself; and I say to you that nobody else has known about this; I alone have done everything. Remember that.

Mrs Linde: Yes, of course I shall. But I don't understand any of this.

Nora: How would you be able to understand? What is about to happen is marvellous.

Mrs Linde: Marvellous?

Nora: Yes, marvellous. But it is so terrible, Kristine; - it must *not* happen, not at any cost.

Mrs Linde: I'm going to go over and talk to Krogstad.

Nora: No, don't go to him. He will do something bad to you.

Mrs Linde: There was a time when he could have done anything he liked as far as I was concerned.

Nora: Him?

Mrs Linde: Where does he live?

Nora: What, - how should I know - ? Oh, yes, (*puts her hand in her pocket.*) here is his card. But the letter, the letter - !

Helmer: (*knocking on the door*): Nora!

Nora: Oh, what is it. What do you want of me?

Helmer: There, there, don't be so afraid. It's just that we cannot get through. You have locked the door. Are you rehearsing perhaps?

Nora: Yes, yes - I'm rehearsing. I shall be so pretty, Torvald.

Mrs Linde: He lives just around the corner from here.

Nora: Yes, but it's no use. We are lost. The letter is lying in the letter box, you see.

Mrs Linde: And your husband keeps the key?

Nora: Yes, always.

Mrs Linde: Krogstad must ask for his letter back, unread - he must think of some reason or other -

Nora: But this is just the time that Torvald normally -

Mrs Linde: Delay him. Go on in to him and keep him there. I'll get back as soon as I can. (*she exits*)

Nora: Torvald!

Helmer: At last, one can finally gain access to one's own living room again? Come, Rank, now we shall see - *(they enter)* But what is this.

Nora: What, dearest Torvald?

Helmer: Rank had prepared me for a major dressing up scene.

Rank: That is what I understood. But I must have been mistaken.

Nora: That's right. Nobody is going to see me in all my glory before tomorrow.

Helmer: But dearest Nora, you looked so exhausted. Have you been practising too much?

Nora: No, I haven't practised at all yet.

Helmer: But you will have to, however -

Nora: Yes, of course. I'll have to Torvald. But I can't do anything without your help. I've completely forgotten everything.

Helmer: Oh, we'll soon refresh your memory.

Nora: Yes, you must take complete care of me, Torvald. Will you promise me that. Oh, I'm, so nervous. Such a big party. You must give me all of your time and attention this evening. Not a whiff of business; not a pen in your hand. Well? Isn't that right, dear Torvald?

Helmer: I promise. This evening I shall be wholly and completely at your service, - you poor little helpless creature, you. - Hm, that's right, one thing I need to do first, though - *(moves towards the door.)*

Nora: What do you want out there?

Helmer: Just to see if any letters have arrived.

Nora: No, no - don't do it Torvald!

Helmer: What's all this?

Nora: Torvald, I beg you, there aren't any.

Helmer: Let me have a look all the same. *(makes as though to go.)*
Nora (at the gramophone, starts to play the record of the tarantella).

Helmer: Aha!

Nora: I can't dance tomorrow if I cannot rehearse with you.

Helmer: Are you really so nervous, my dear Nora?

Nora: Yes, dreadfully nervous. Let me practice straight away: there's still time before we sit down to dinner. Oh, play the record for me, dear Torvald; correct me; give me guidance like you always do.

Helmer: With pleasure, with great pleasure, since you wish it. *(he moves across to the gramophone.)*

Nora: *(takes the tambourine out of its box and also a long gaudy shawl, which she flings around herself; then she leaps forward across the floor and cries):* Now, play for me! Now I shall dance! *(Helmer plays and Nora dances; Doctor Rank stands by the gramophone behind Helmer, and looks on.)*

Helmer: Slower, - slower.

Nora: I can't do it any other way.

Helmer: Not so violent, Nora!

Nora: That's how it must be.

Helmer: *(stops the record):* No, no, this isn't right at all.

Nora: Didn't I tell you so?

Rank: Let me play for her.

Helmer: Yes, do; then I can advise her better.
(Rank goes across to the gramophone and starts the record. Nora dances with increasing abandon. Helmer has stopped by the stove and, during the playing, gives her a constant stream of directions and comments; she does not appear to hear him; her hair loosens and cascades over her shoulders; she takes no notice, but continues to dance. Mrs Linde enters.)

Mrs Linde: Oh -!

Nora: *(while dancing)* We're having such fun here, Kristine.

Helmer: But my own dearest, sweet Nora, you are dancing as though your life depended upon it.

Nora: But it does, you see.

Helmer: Rank, stop playing; this is complete madness. Stop playing, I say.
(Rank ceases to play, and Nora stops dancing suddenly.)

Helmer: I simply cannot believe it. You have forgotten absolutely everything I ever taught you.

Nora: *(throws the tambourine away from her)* There - see for yourself.

Helmer: Well, there is certainly a lot of instruction needed here.

Nora: Yes, you see how necessary it is. You must give me guidance right up to the very last moment. Promise me you'll do that Torvald?

Helmer: Oh yes, you may be sure of that.

Nora: For the whole of today and tomorrow, you shall think of nothing else but me; you shall not open any letters, - not open the letter box -

Helmer: I see. You are still fearful of that - person...

Nora: Oh, yes. That too.

Helmer: I can read it in your face that there is already a letter there from him.

Nora: I don't know; I think so, but you mustn't read things like that now; nothing nasty must be allowed to come between us before it is too late.

Rank: You must not deny her this.

Helmer: The little headstrong child shall have her way. But, tomorrow, after you have danced -

Nora: Then you are released from your promise.

Maid: Madame, dinner is served.

Nora: We're going to have champagne, Helene.

Maid: Very good, Madame. *(exits)*

Helmer: Well now, - a big celebration, eh?

Nora: A champagne celebration for the bright tomorrow. *(calls out:)* And a few macaroons, Helene, no - a lot - just this once.

Helmer: There, there, there - no more of this frightened violence. Be my own little skylark again, like you always are.

Nora: Oh, yes, of course I will. But go on in ahead of me; and you, too, Doctor Rank. Kristine, you must help me to fix my hair up again.

Rank: I don't suppose that she is - well, you know, that there is going to be - ?

Helmer: Oh, no - far from it my dear friend; it is nothing more than this childish fear that I was telling you about. *(exit)*

Nora: And?

Mrs Linde: He wasn't there.

Nora: I could tell from your face.

Mrs Linde: But I was told he'll be back tomorrow evening. I left a note for him.

Nora: You shouldn't have bothered. You cannot prevent anything. In fact, it is a kind of joy - this waiting for something marvellous to happen.

Mrs Linde: What are you waiting for?

Nora: Oh, you wouldn't understand. Go on in to them; I'll be there in a moment.

(Mrs Linde exits.)

Nora: *(looks at her watch)*. Five. Seven hours until midnight. Then twenty-four hours to the next midnight. Then the tarantella will be over. Twenty-four and seven? Thirty one hours in which to live.

Helmer: *(In the doorway)* But what has become of my little skylark, then?

Nora: Here is your skylark!

THIRD ACT

(The same room. The sofa table with chairs around it, has been moved forwards to the centre of the floor. A lamp burns on the table. The door to the vestibule is open. There is dance music heard from the floor above.)

(Mrs Linde sits at the table, leafing distractedly through a book; tries to read, but does not appear to be able to maintain her concentration; once or twice she listens tensely in the direction of the outer door.)

Mrs Linde: *(looks at her watch).* Still not here. And there is no more time to be lost. Oh, if only he doesn't - *(listens again.)* Ah, there he is. *(She goes out into the vestibule and opens the outer door very carefully; slow steps are heard on the stairs; she whispers:)* Come in. There's nobody here.

Krogstad: I found a note from you at home. What is all this about?

Mrs Linde: I simply have to talk to you.

Krogstad: I see. And that - simply - has to be done in this house?

Mrs Linde: It is absolutely impossible where I am staying; my room has no separate entrance. Come in; we are quite alone; the nursemaid is asleep and the Helmers are upstairs at the ball.

Krogstad: Well, well, what do you know? The Helmers are dancing this evening, eh? Really?

Mrs Linde: Yes, and why not?

Krogstad: Oh, indeed - why not? Why not indeed?.

Mrs Linde: Yes. *(pause)* Well now, Krogstad. We need to talk.

Krogstad: Do you and I have anything more to discuss?

Mrs Linde: We have a great deal to discuss.

Krogstad: I wouldn't have thought so.

Mrs Linde: No. But that's because you have never really understood me.

Krogstad: Was there anything else to understand apart from what was staring me in the face? A heartless woman who gives a man his marching orders when something more to her advantage turns up.

Mrs Linde: Did you really think that I was so completely heartless? And did you really think that I found it easy to break it off?

Krogstad: Well, didn't you?

Mrs Linde: Krogstad, look at me. Did you honestly believe that?

Krogstad: If that wasn't the case then why how were you able to write to me that time in the way you did?

Mrs Linde: I had no choice. When I realised that I had to break up with you, then, in all fairness, I had to erase from your mind everything you had ever felt for me.

Krogstad: Oh, so that's how it was eh? And now this - just for the sake of the money I presume.

Mrs Linde: That's not fair! You mustn't forget that I had a bedridden mother and two small brothers to look after. I couldn't just wait for you, Krogstad. Be honest with yourself. Your prospects at that time weren't very promising were they?.

Krogstad: That's as may be, but all the same you had no right to turn me down for someone else.

Mrs Linde: Perhaps I didn't. I don't know. I have often asked myself if I had that right.

Krogstad: When I lost you, it was as though the very ground had slipped away from under my feet. Look at what I am now - nothing but a pathetic survivor clinging on to some floating wreckage.

Mrs Linde: Rescue may well be at hand.

Krogstad: It was already at hand. But then you came along and got in the way.

Mrs Linde: Not knowingly. Krogstad. Never knowingly. I didn't find out until today that you were the one I was going to replace at the bank.

Krogstad: I think I believe you when you say that. But now that you do know, will you refuse the position?

Mrs Linde: No; because that wouldn't benefit you in the slightest.

Krogstad: Benefit me - benefit! Oh, I shall manage that on my own. Don't you worry..

Mrs Linde: I have learned to be practical. That is something which life and hard and bitter necessity have taught me.

Krogstad: And life has taught me not to believe in platitudes.

Mrs Linde: Then life has taught you something very sensible. But surely you must believe in actions?

Krogstad: How do you mean?

Mrs Linde: You said just now that you were like a survivor clinging on to a piece of wreckage.

Krogstad: I had every reason to say that.

Mrs Linde: I, too, am like a survivor clinging on to a wreck. Nobody to mourn for, and nobody to care for.

Krogstad: That was your own choice.

Mrs Linde: There was no other choice at that time.

Krogstad: Alright - but so what?

Mrs Linde: Krogstad, if we two survivors were now able to move across to each other.

Krogstad: What are you saying?

Mrs Linde: Two people clinging to *one* piece of wreckage would have a far better chance of survival than each on their own.

Krogstad: Kristine!

Mrs Linde: Why do you think I came back to this town?

Krogstad: Because you still had some feelings for me?

Mrs Linde: I have to work and work, if I am to survive. All my life, for as long as I can remember, I have worked, and it has been my best and only source of pleasure. But now I am alone in the world, - completely alone and, frankly, desolate. There is no pleasure in working for just yourself. Give me someone and something to work for. Will you - Nils?

Krogstad: I'm sorry - but I just don't believe this. It's nothing more than overwrought feminine hysteria that leads to nothing but debasing self-sacrifice.

Mrs Linde: Have you ever known me to be overwrought?

Krogstad: Could you really do this? Tell me - do you know everything about my past? I mean *everything*?

Mrs Linde: Yes.

Krogstad: And do you know what I am regarded as here?

Mrs Linde: Yes - but I also got the impression that you believed that, with me, you might have turned out differently. That things might have turned out differently.

Krogstad: I know I would - that my life would - without any doubt.

Mrs Linde: And - couldn't that still be the case?

Krogstad: Kristine; - do you really mean what you are saying! Yes, you do. I can see it in your face. Do you really have the courage - ?

Mrs Linde: I need to be a mother to someone - and your children need a mother. We need each other, Nils; I have faith in what you are, deep down inside and I am prepared to take on anything, anything together with you.

Krogstad: Thank you, oh, thank you, Kristine; - oh, now I will be able to lift my head up in front of everyone. Ah, but I forgot -

Mrs Linde: Sshhh! The tarantella! You must go - go!

Krogstad: Why? What is it?

Mrs Linde: Do you hear that dance upstairs? When it is over they will be coming down.

Krogstad: Ah, yes - I'll go. But it's no good - it won't work. It *can't* work. You don't know what steps I have already taken against the Helmers.

Mrs Linde: Yes, Krogstad, I know all about them.

Krogstad: You do?! And yet you would still have the courage to - ?

Mrs Linde: I know only too well what desperation can do to a man like you.

Krogstad: Oh, if only I could undo it all.

Mrs Linde: But you can; your letter is still in the letter box.

Krogstad: Are you sure?

Mrs Linde: Quite sure; but -

Krogstad: Ah, I see. That's what all this is about, isn't it?? You would save your friend whatever the cost. Well - come on. You might as well say it straight out. Isn't that what all this is about?

Mrs Linde: Nils; the person who sells herself for someone else's sake *once*, will not do so again.

Krogstad: I shall demand to have my letter returned.

Mrs Linde: No, no!

Krogstad: But of course I must; I shall stay here until Helmer comes down; and then I shall say to him that he must give me my letter back, - that it is only about my dismissal, - that he shall not read it -

Mrs Linde: No, Krogstad - Nils. You must not ask for your letter back.

Krogstad: But, surely - wasn't that why you arranged to meet me here?

Mrs Linde: Yes, in that first moment of panic; but a whole day has passed since then, and I have been witness to some remarkable things in this house during that time. Helmer must be made to know everything; this unpleasant secret must be brought out into the light of day and there must be a complete understanding between the two of them. They simply mustn't be allowed to persist in all this concealment and evasion.

Krogstad: Alright then - if you're prepared to risk it - . But there's *one* thing I can do, however, and that straight away.

Mrs Linde: Hurry! Go, go! The dance has finished - go, go! There isn't a second to lose..

Krogstad: I shall wait for you down there.

Mrs Linde: Yes, do; Walk with me as far as the gate.

Krogstad: I, - Kristine. I don't... I don't think I have ever been as happy as this before. (*exits.*)

Mrs Linde: Well – *that's* a turnaround, isn't it! A real turnaround. A family to work for - to live for. A home to bring some joy into. But it's not going to be easy - there'll be a lot that needs to be done. Oh, hurry! Hurry! (*listens.*) Ah, there they are. Right, on with my things.

(*Helmer's and Nora's voices can be heard outside; a key is turned and Helmer almost forces Nora into the vestibule. She is dressed in the Italian costume with a large black shawl over her shoulders; he is in evening dress.*)

Nora: No, no no! Not in here! I want to go upstairs again. I didn't want to leave so early.

Helmer: But my dearest Nora -

Nora: Oh *please*, Torvald; *please!* I beg of you. Look – on bended knee. - just one more hour!

Helmer: Not a single minute more, my own sweet Nora. You know we had an agreement. So then; in you go. Come on - you need to calm down a little.

Mrs Linde: Good evening.

Nora: Kristine!

Helmer: Mrs Linde, what are you doing here so late?

Mrs Linde: Yes, I know. Please excuse me, but I so wanted to see Nora all dressed up.

Nora: Have you been sitting here, waiting for me?

Mrs Linde: Yes. I'm afraid I didn't get here early enough though. You had already gone upstairs, so I thought I'd wait. I simply couldn't leave until I had seen you in all your finery.

Helmer: Yes, of course. Well take a good look at her Mrs Linde. Isn't she simply a sight to behold? Don't you think she is lovely?

Mrs Linde: Yes, absolutely.

Helmer: Quite remarkably lovely? That, at any rate, was certainly the general opinion at the party. But, you know, she is so incredibly self-willed, - behind that sweet veneer. What are we going to do with her, eh? Imagine, I practically had to use force to get her away.

Nora: Oh Torvald, you will come to regret that you didn't let me stay. Let me stay for just another half an hour even.

Helmer: Just listen to her, Madame. She dances her tarantella, - it is, of course, a tremendous success, - which she fully deserves, - despite there being what I might call rather a lot of unsophisticated naturalness; I mean, - rather more than what might normally be associated with the demands of that particular art form. But so what! The main thing is, - it was a triumph, a huge triumph. Should I then let her stay on after that? Detract from the cathartic effect? Oh no, thank you very much; I take my lovely little Capri maiden - my capricious little Capri nymph, as I might describe her - under my arm. A rapid turn around the hall; a bow in every direction, and - as they say in the best romantic novels - the beautiful vision disappears from sight. An exit should always be full of impact and drama, Mrs Linde; but do you think that I can get Nora to understand *that*? Phew, it is very warm in here. What? But it is dark in there. Oh but of course it is. Please excuse me. (*exits.*)

Nora: Well?!

Mrs Linde: I have spoken to him.

Nora: And - ?

Mrs Linde: Nora, - you must tell your husband everything.

Nora: Ah - I knew it.

Mrs Linde: You have nothing to fear from Krogstad's side; but you must tell him everything.

Nora: No - I shall not tell him..

Mrs Linde: Then the letter will do it for you.

Nora: Thank you Kristine; I know what I must do now. Sshhh - !

Helmer (re-enters): Well Madame, have you finished admiring her then?

Mrs Linde: Yes; and now I shall bid you goodnight.

Helmer: What, so soon? Oh, is that your knitting?

Mrs Linde: Yes, thank you - I had almost forgotten it.

Helmer: So you knit then?

Mrs Linde: Oh yes.

Helmer: You know, you really would be better off doing embroidery.

Mrs Linde: Would I? Why is that?

Helmer: Because it is so much more.... refined. You see; one holds the embroidery like so, with the left hand, and then you guide the needle with the right one - thus - across in a light, elegant arc; don't you think - ?

Mrs Linde: Well, yes – I suppose so -

Helmer: Whereas knitting on the other hand - that can never be anything other than inelegant; like this, your arms all squeezed together, - the knitting needles going up and down; - there is something ... something *Chinese* about it. - Ah, that really was an excellent champagne we had up there!

Mrs Linde: Yes, well - goodnight Nora. And mind you stop being so self-willed.

Helmer: Well said, Madame.

Mrs Linde: Goodnight, Mr Director.

Helmer: Goodnight, goodnight. I hope you will get home all right? I would be pleased to have - but it is not such a long way to walk. Goodnight, goodnight. There, we finally got her to go. She really is most dreadfully tiresome, that woman.

Nora: Aren't you very tired Torvald?

Helmer: No, not in the least.

Nora: Not sleepy, either?

Helmer: Not at all. On the contrary, I feel remarkably refreshed. But what about you? You really do look both tired and sleepy.

Nora: Yes, I am very tired. I shall go to sleep soon.

Helmer: There, you see - you see! So I was right not to let us stay longer.

Nora: Oh yes, of course. Everything you do is right.

Helmer: Now my little skylark is talking like a real person. But did you notice how lively Rank was this evening?

Nora: Really? Was he? I didn't get to speak to him.

Helmer: I hardly managed to myself; but I haven't seen him in such good form for a very long time. Hm, - but it's so good to be home again. To have you all to myself alone. Oh, you bewitchingly lovely young woman!

Nora: Don't look at me like that Torvald!

Helmer: Aren't I allowed to gaze at my dearest possession? At all that peerless beauty which is mine, and mine alone, wholly and completely mine.

Nora: Please don't talk to me in that way tonight Torvald.

Helmer: Ah, so you've still got the tarantella coursing in your blood, I see. But that simply makes you all the more desirable. Listen! The guests are beginning to leave. Nora, - soon the whole house will be quiet again.

Nora: Yes, I hope so.

Helmer: Yes, isn't that right, my own beloved Nora? Shall I tell you something? When I am out with you in company - like tonight, - do you know why I say so little to you? Why I keep so far away from you and just send you an occasional stolen glance from time to time? Do you know why I do that? I'll tell you. It's because I'm imagining that you are my secret lover - my young secret fiancée -and that nobody has any idea at all that there is anything between the two of us.

Nora: Yes, yes - of course. I know your thoughts are all directed at me.

Helmer: And when we are about to leave, and I place the shawl around your graceful, young shoulders, - around that beautiful arch of your neck, - then I'm imagining that you are my young bride. That we have just returned from our wedding. That I am leading you into *my* home for the very first time. That I am alone with you for the very first time. Completely alone with you - you young, trembling vision of loveliness! Throughout the entire evening I have been longing for you. And when I saw you stalk and entice in the tarantella, then my blood raced and I could hold out no longer. That is why I brought you back down here so early -

Nora: Stop now, Torvald. Leave me alone. I do not want any of this.

Helmer: What do you mean? Oh - you're teasing me, aren't you my little Nora. What do you mean - want? Am I not your husband - ?

(there is a knock at the outer door.)

Nora: Didn't you hear - ?

Helmer: Who is it?

Doctor Rank: It is me. Might I come in - for just a moment?

Helmer: Oh, what does he want now? *(aloud.)* Just a moment. *(opens outer door)* Well now, Rank. How good of you not to pass by without calling in.

Rank: I thought I heard your voice, and so I just wanted to look in. Ah, yes - these dear, familiar surroundings. It is all so snug and cosy in here.

Helmer: It looked as though you were really enjoying yourself upstairs.

Rank: A splendid time. And why shouldn't I? Why shouldn't one take everything in this world; at any rate, as much as one can, for as long as one can. The wine was superb -

Helmer: The champagne in particular.

Rank: Ah, so you noticed that, too? It is almost incredible how much I was able to get down me.

Nora: Torvald also drank a lot of champagne this evening.

Rank: So?

Nora: Yes, well he is always so amusing afterwards.

Rank: But of course - why shouldn't one enjoy a good evening after a day well spent?

Helmer: Well spent? I am afraid I cannot claim that to be the case.

Rank: But I can - you see!

Nora: Doctor Rank, I believe you may have conducted a scientific investigation today.

Rank: Yes, precisely.

Helmer: Well, well. My little Nora talking of scientific investigations!

Nora: And may I ask if you were happy with the outcome?

Rank: You most certainly may.

Nora: It was a good one then?

Rank: The best possible, both for the doctor and the patient - certainty.

Nora: Certainty?

Rank: Complete certainty. Why should I not then permit myself an enjoyable evening afterwards?

Nora: Yes, yes indeed. You were absolutely right to do so, Doctor Rank.

Helmer: I quite agree - as long as you don't regret it in the morning.

Rank: You don't get anything for nothing in this life.

Nora: Doctor Rank, I believe you set great store by masquerades, is that right?

Rank: Yes, when there are a good many amusing disguises -

Nora: So, what do you think? What do you think we two should be disguised as at the next masquerade?

Helmer: You frivolous little thing, you - already thinking about the next one!

Rank: The two of *us*? Yes, well now - I'll tell you. You shall be the Child of Joy -

Helmer: All very well, but how do you find a costume which expresses *that*?

Rank: Just let your wife appear as she is, and present herself to the world -

Helmer: That was a very profound remark. But do you know how *you* will be disguised?

Rank: Oh yes, my dear friend, I know exactly how *I* shall be disguised. At the next masquerade, I shall be quite invisible.

Helmer: That's a weird notion.

Rank: There is a large black hat - ; have you not heard of the invisibility hat? You put it on, and nobody can see you.

Helmer: No, of course they can't.

Rank: But I am quite forgetting what I actually came for, Helmer. Give me a cigar will you - one of **your dark Havanas.**

Helmer: With the greatest of pleasure. (*he offers the cigar case.*)

Rank: Thank you.

Nora: (*striking a match for him*) Here, let me give you a light.

Rank: Thank you - but no. I shall enjoy it a little later. (*he takes her gently by the wrist and blows out the match.*) And so, goodbye!

Helmer: Goodbye, goodbye, my dear friend!

Nora: Sleep well, Doctor Rank.

Rank: Thank you for that kind wish.

Nora: Wish the same for me.

Rank: For you? Very well, if you wish it - . Sleep well. And thank you for the light. (*exits*)

Helmer: He had a lot to drink.

Nora: Yes, perhaps.
(*Helmer takes his key-ring out of his pocket and goes out into the vestibule*)

Nora: *Torvald* - what are you doing?

Helmer: I need to empty the letter-box. It's quite full. There won't be room for the early morning newspapers -

Nora: Are you going to work tonight?

Helmer: You know very well I don't want to do that. - What's this? Has somebody been tampering with the lock.

Nora: The lock - ?

Helmer: Well someone certainly has. But who could it be? I can't imagine that the maid - ? There is a broken hairpin here. Nora, it is yours -

Nora: So, it must have been the children -

Helmer: In that case that is something you will certainly have to put a stop to. Hm, hm; - there, I managed to open it all the same. (*removes the contents and calls out*) Helene? (*voice replies: Yes Sir?*) Helene, turn out the lamp in the hallway. (*he re-enters*)

Helmer: Look how they have mounted up. (*leafs through them.*) Hello, what is this?

Nora: The letter! Oh no, no, *Torvald*!

Helmer: Two calling cards - from Rank.

Nora: From Doctor Rank?

Helmer: Dr. Rank - Medical Practitioner. They lay on top; he must have pushed them through as he was leaving.

Nora: Is there anything on them?

Helmer: There is a black cross above his name. Look, here. But what an unpleasant discovery. Why, it is almost as though he were announcing his own death.

Nora: Yes – that’s exactly what he is doing.

Helmer: What? Do you know something about this? Has he said anything to you?

Nora: Yes. When the cards come, then he will have said his farewells to us. He is going to lock himself away and die.

Helmer: Oh my poor old friend. I knew that I was not going to be able to keep him much longer. But so soon - . And to hide himself away like a wounded animal.

Nora: What *that* happens, then it is best it happens without a word. Isn’t it, Torvald?

Helmer: He was such a part of us. I just cannot conceive of him being gone. With all his suffering and his loneliness he, - he provided a kind of sombre background to our sunny happiness. - Well, perhaps it is for the best this way. For him, at any rate. And perhaps for us, too, Nora. Now we only have each other to fall back on. Oh, you - my beloved wife; I don’t think I can ever hold on to you tightly enough. Do you know, Nora – many’s the time I have almost wished for you to be threatened by some terrible danger, so that I would be able to risk everything - yes - absolutely everything – even my life - for your sake.

Nora: You must read your letters now, Torvald.

Helmer: No, no - not tonight. I just want to be with you, my beloved wife.

Nora: And with the thoughts of your friend’s death - ?

Helmer: You are right of course. This news has shaken us both; something ugly has come between us - thoughts of death and decay. We must try to free ourselves thoughts like this. Until then – I shall go to my room and you to yours.

Nora: Torvald - Goodnight! Goodnight!

Helmer: Goodnight, my own little songbird. Sleep well, Nora. Now I am going to read through my letters. (*exits*)

Nora: Never to see him again. Never. Never. Never. Never to see my children again, either. Never. Never. - Oh, that ice-cold black water. Oh, the bottomless - ; this - . Oh, if only it were all over. - Now he has it in his hands; now he is reading it. Oh, no, no; not yet. Torvald, goodbye - goodbye to you and the children - (*Helmer re-enters.*)

Helmer: Nora!

Nora: Ah - !

Helmer: What on earth is this? Do you know what it says in this letter?

Nora: Yes, I know. Let me go! Let me go away!

Helmer: Where are you going?

Nora: You are not going to save me, Torvald!

Helmer: The truth! Is what he writes the truth! Oh, how appalling! No, no; it simply isn’t possible. This can’t be true. None of it!

Nora: But it is true. I have loved you more than anything in the entire world.

Helmer: Don’t insult me with such pathetic excuses.

Nora: Torvald - !

Helmer: You, you – what *are* you? You wretched woman - what have you done!

Nora: Let me go away. You shall not bear any of this for my sake. You shall not, - you must not – cannot - take it upon yourself.

Helmer: Stop it! You needn’t play-act with me. (*goes out and locks vestibule door and re-enters*) You will stay right here and give an account of yourself. Do you have the slightest idea what you have done? Answer me! Do you any idea – any idea at all?

Nora: Yes, I do - now I am beginning to understand *exactly* what I have done.

Helmer: Oh, what a dreadful way to be brought to my senses. For each and every one of these eight years, - she, who was my light and my pride, my most precious possession - a hypocrite, a liar, - worse, worse than that even, - a criminal! - Oh this bottomless pit of iniquity! Shame, shame! I should have known that something like this would happen. I should have anticipated it. All your father’s total lack of principles. - There, you see. You have inherited all your father’s total lack of principles. No religion, no morals, no sense of duty - . My God how I have been punished for looking the other way where he was concerned. I did it for your sake; and this is how I am rewarded.

Nora: Yes, this is how.

Helmer: And now you have destroyed all my happiness. You have ruined my whole future. It’s just too awful, too terrible to contemplate. I am now at the mercy of someone who is totally devoid of conscience. He can do whatever he wants with me, demand from me whatever takes his fancy, order me about exactly as he wishes; - and I dare not say a word in protest. And I have to cower and grovel, and hide myself away all because of a totally dissolute woman!

Nora: When I am out of the way, then you will be free.

Helmer: Oh, spare me these theatrical gestures. That was just the way your father used to speak at the drop of a hat. How in God's name would it benefit me if you were 'out of the way', as you put it? Not in the slightest, not the slightest. He could make the whole matter public; and then – oh my God, then! Then people would think that I must have been aware - aware of your criminal action. They might even think I was behind it all, - that I had actually been the one to encourage you! You – yes you are the one I can thank for all this. You – the one I have borne on my shoulders throughout the eight years of our marriage, Do you begin to understand now what you have done to me?

Nora: Yes.

Helmer: This is just so unbelievable that I simply cannot take it all in. But we must find a way out of this. Take your shawl off. Take it off, I say! I must find some way of keeping him quiet. It must all be hushed up in some way – whatever the cost. And as far as you and I are concerned, we must act as though everything is just as it always was between us. But only where the outside world is concerned, of course. You shall remain here in the house, that goes without saying. But you will not be allowed to bring up the children. That is totally out of the question. Oh, to have to say this to her. To someone I have loved so much, and who I still.... No, that must belong to the past. From now on we are no longer concerned about happiness. Now all we can do is to salvage what little we can – whatever might be left over. The appearance of normality. (*the doorbell rings.*) What's that? This late? No – he wouldn't! Would he - ? Hide yourself, Nora! Say you are ill.

(*Helmer unlocks the door and goes out into the vestibule.*)

Maid: (*offstage*) A letter has arrived for Madame.

Helmer: Give me that. (*re-enters*). Yes, it's from him. No, stay where you are! I shall read it myself.

Nora: Then read it.

Helmer: I can barely bring myself to do it. Perhaps we are already lost – both of us. No; I *must* know. (*tears open the letter; skims through a few lines; looks at a paper which is enclosed.*) Nora!

Nora! - No; I must read it through again. - Yes, yes; it's there. I am saved! Nora, I am saved!

Nora: And I?

Helmer: And you, too - of course; *we* are saved, both of us, both you and I. Look - here. He has returned your promissory note. He writes that he is (*reads from the letter*) sorry and regrets -; that there has been a happy change of fortune in his life -; oh, what does it matter *what* he writes. We are saved, Nora! Nobody can harm you. Oh, Nora, Nora - ; no, first of all, let us be rid of all this unpleasantness. Let me see - (*casts a glance at the contract.*) No, I do not wish to see it; it shall be nothing but a bad dream for me - all of it. A nightmare. (*tears the contract and both of the letters into pieces, and throws all of them into the stove and watches them while they burn.*) You see? There is nothing left now – nothing. He wrote that since Christmas Eve you - . Oh, they must have been three terrible days for you, Nora.

Nora: I have certainly struggled with myself during these three days.

Helmer: And you must have been in anguish with nowhere else to turn to, but - . No, don't let's think any more about all this terrible unpleasantness. All that concerns us is that it is over. It is over! Don't you hear what I'm saying Nora? You don't seem to understand. *It is over!* What is the matter with you? Why this downcast expression? Oh, my poor little Nora. Of course - I understand. Of course I do. You simply cannot believe that I have forgiven you. But I have, Nora; I swear to you that I have forgiven you everything. I realise, of course, that you did what you did out of love for me.

Nora: That is certainly true.

Helmer: You have loved me as a wife should love her husband. It was just the means you employed. You lacked sufficient insight to be able to assess them correctly. But do you really believe that you are any less dear to me simply because you did not know how to act without my guidance? No, no - just lean on me for support. Always. I shall guide you, I shall advise you. I would be less than a man if this very same womanly helplessness did not make you twice as desirable in my eyes. You must just forget those hard words I said to you during those first terrible moments when I thought that my whole life was collapsing around me. I have forgiven you, Nora; I swear it - I have forgiven you.

Nora: I thank you for your forgiveness. (*she exits to her room*)

Helmer: No, stay - (*looks in through the door.*) What are you doing in there?

Nora: I am throwing off my fancy dress disguise.

Helmer: Yes, do that; calm yourself down and regain your balance, my poor little frightened songbird. Rest secure; I have broad wings enough with which to protect you. (*looks around the room*) Oh, how snug and cosy our home is, Nora. There is shelter here for you. And I shall protect you. I shall protect you, my little frightened songbird. Protect you from the very clutches of the hawk. I shall soothe your poor little trembling heart. Gradually, bit by bit, Nora - believe me. Tomorrow all of this will look so different to you; and soon everything will be back to how it

was. Soon I shall no longer have to repeat that I have forgiven you; - soon you will realise - with complete certainty - that I have done so. How could you even think that I would ever want to reject you, or even to reproach you. Oh, you don't understand a real man's kind-heartedness, Nora. For a man it is something so indescribably sweet and satisfying to know, in his heart of hearts, that he has forgiven his wife, - that he has forgiven her with all his being. In that way she becomes his property in a *double* sense of the word. He has, in a way, brought about her rebirth. She has become - in a way - both his wife and his child at one and the same time. And that is how you will be for me after this - you tiny, bewildered, helpless little creature. You will never need to be afraid of anything, Nora. Just be open with me, and then I shall be both your protector and your conscience. (*he moves back towards the door and peers in*) - What's this. Not getting ready for bed? Have you changed your clothes?

Nora (*re-enters*): Yes, Torvald, I have changed.

Helmer: But why now - when it is so late - ?

Nora: I shall not be sleeping tonight.

Helmer: But, my dear Nora -

Nora (*looks at her watch*): It is not that late. Sit down here, Torvald; we have a lot to talk about. (*she sits at one side of the table.*)

Helmer: Nora - what is all this. This stern expression -

Nora: Sit down. This will take a long time. I have a lot to talk to you about.

Helmer: (*sits down at the table, immediately opposite her*) You worry me, Nora. And I don't understand you.

Nora: No, that's it exactly. You don't understand me. And neither have I understood you - before this evening. No, don't interrupt me. You must listen to what I have to say. - This is a time of reckoning, Torvald.

Helmer: How do you mean?

Nora: Isn't there *one* single thing that strikes you, about the way we are sitting here?

Helmer: What would that be?

Nora: We have now been married for eight years. Does it not occur to you that this is the very first time that the two of us, you and I, are talking seriously together?

Helmer: Seriously - why, what does that mean?

Nora: For eight whole years, - no, longer, - from the first time we met, we have never exchanged a serious word about serious things.

Helmer: But why should I have involved you in things that worried me and which you were never in any position to help me with in any case?

Nora: I am not talking about worries. I am saying that we have never sat down together in order, seriously, to get to the bottom of anything.

Helmer: But my dearest Nora, what would that have meant for you?

Nora: Ah, there we are at the very core of the matter. You have never understood me. - Great injustices have been made against me, Torvald. First by my father, and then by you.

Helmer: What, - by both of us, - by the two of us who have loved you more than any other person?

Nora: You have never really loved me. You have only ever felt that it was enjoyable being *in* love with me.

Helmer: But, Nora, what on earth do you mean?

Nora: Yes, Torvald, that is how it has been. When I was at home with my father, he made me aware of all his opinions, and so I usually adopted the same opinions. If I ever had any different ones, then I concealed them, because he would not have liked that. He called me his little doll, and he played with me in the same way that I played with my dolls. And then I came into *your* house.

Helmer: How can you say things like this to describe our marriage?

Nora: I mean, I was passed over from my father's hands and into yours. You arranged everything according to your taste, and then I acquired the same taste as yours; or I pretended to; I don't really know -; I think it was a bit of both; first one and then the other. When I look back on it now, I feel as though I have lived here like a pauper - just living from hand to mouth. I have lived by doing tricks for you, Torvald. Because that's the way you wanted it. You and my father have been guilty of a great wrong against me. It is down to the two of you that I have never amounted to anything.

Helmer: Nora, how can you be so unreasonable and ungrateful? Have you not been happy here?

Nora: No, I never have. I thought I had been, but I never was.

Helmer: Not - not happy!

Nora: No, just obedient. And, of course, you have always been so kind to me. But our home has never been anything more than a playroom. I have been your little doll-like wife, just like I was my father's little doll-like daughter. And the children, they - in turn - have been my little dolls. I thought it was so lovely when you came and played with me, in exactly the same way

that I thought it was lovely when I went and played with them. That is what our marriage has been, Torvald.

Helmer: There may have been some truth in what you are saying - exaggerated and hysterical though it may be. But things will be different from now on, you'll see. The time for games is over now - now it is the time for education.

Nora: Education. Whose education? Mine - or the children's?

Helmer: Both yours and the children's, my dear, *dear* Nora.

Nora: Unfortunately, Torvald - you are not the man to educate me into being the right kind of wife for you.

Helmer: But how are you in a position to say something like that?

Nora: And I, - how could I be ready to educate the children?

Helmer: Nora!

Nora: You said yourself, just a moment ago, - you could not entrust me with that task.

Helmer: That was just in the heat of the moment! Why pay any attention to that?

Nora: But I must. What you said was perfectly right. I am not capable of that task. There is another task which needs to be dealt with first. I must see about educating myself. And you are not the man to help me with that. It is something I must do by myself. And that is why I am leaving you now.

Helmer: What did you say?

Nora: I am going to have to stand on my own two feet if I am to really find out things about myself and about all those things outside of myself. That is why I cannot stay with you any longer.

Helmer: Nora, Nora!

Nora: I shall leave here straight away. Kristine will no doubt take me in for the night -

Helmer: You are out of your mind! I won't allow it! I forbid it!

Nora: There is no point in forbidding me anything from now on. I shall only take with me what is mine. I want nothing from you - not now, not ever.

Helmer: But this is insane!

Nora: Tomorrow I shall return home, - I mean to my old home. It will be easier for me to find something or other to do there.

Helmer: Oh, you blind inexperienced creature!

Nora: Then I must see about gaining some experience, mustn't I Torvald?

Helmer: To leave your home, your husband - your children! And you don't give a thought to what people will say.

Nora: I can't afford to worry about things like that. I just know that this is what I have to do.

Helmer: Oh, this is just appalling. To simply walk away from your most sacred duties like this.

Nora: What do you consider to be my most sacred duties?

Helmer: Do I really have to spell them out for you? Aren't they your duties towards your children and your husband?

Nora: I have other duties - just as sacred.

Helmer: Of course you don't! What sort of duties might *they* be then?

Nora: My duties to myself.

Helmer: You are, first and foremost, a wife and mother.

Nora: I don't believe that any longer. I believe that, first and foremost, I am a person, yes - I, just as much as you, - or, at any rate, I shall try to become one. Oh, I know that most people will say that you are right, Torvald, that it is there in black and white in all the books. But I can no longer be satisfied with what the majority of people say, and what it says in all the books. I have to think about things for myself, and try and understand them.

Helmer: But don't you realise what your position is in your own home? In matters like these, don't you have an unfailing guide? Don't you have your religion?

Nora: I am afraid, Torvald, that I don't really know what religion is.

Helmer: What are you saying!

Nora: I know nothing other than what pastor Hansen told me when I prepared for confirmation. He told me that religion was *this* and he told me it was *that*. So, when I get myself away from all this here and I am on my own, then I will examine those matters as well. I will try and find out if what pastor Hansen was right or, at the very least, if it is right for *me*.

Helmer: Good God - such things are unheard of from such a young woman! But if religion is not able to put you right, then let me at least appeal to your conscience. For you must have some sort of moral awareness? Or, tell me, - perhaps you don't?

Nora: You are right, Torvald, that is not an easy question to answer. I simply don't know. I am totally confused by these things. All I know is that my opinion about such things is totally different from yours. I now see that the laws are not how I thought them to be; but as to whether those laws are right or not, it is impossible to get clear in my head. It would appear

that a woman shall not have the right to protect her old dying father, or to save her husband's life! I cannot believe that to be the case.

Helmer: You are talking just like a child. You don't understand the society in which you are living.

Nora: No, I don't. But that is something I am going to find out about now. I must find out who is right, - society or me.

Helmer: You are ill, Nora; you are feverish. I think you have simply taken leave of your senses.

Nora: No Torvald. I have never felt myself to be so clear and so certain as I do tonight.

Helmer: And so then - clear and certain - you will walk away from your husband and your children?

Nora: Yes, that is exactly what I shall do.

Helmer: Very well then, there is only *one* possible explanation.

Nora: What is that?

Helmer: You no longer love me.

Nora: No, I don't. That's exactly it.

Helmer: Nora! - how can you say that!

Nora: Oh, it hurts me to say it, Torvald; because you have always been so very kind towards me. But I can't do anything about it. I don't love you any more.

Helmer: Is this, then, a clear and certain conclusion?

Nora: Yes, totally clear and totally certain. That is why I no longer wish to be here.

Helmer: And will you be able to tell me how I managed to lose your love?

Nora: Yes, I can do that. It was this evening, when the miracle failed to happen; because then I saw that you were not the man I thought you were.

Helmer: I need more explanation than that; I can't believe what you're saying.

Nora: I have waited very patiently now for eight year. Patiently because, Good God, I realised that miracles didn't happen every day. And then, suddenly, it dawned on me like some enormous revelation; and then I was so absolutely certain that *now* the miracle was about to happen. When Krogstad's letter lay out there, - it never entered my head that you would ever agree to that man's conditions. I was so absolutely certain that you would say to him; let the whole world know about it. And when it happened.....'

Helmer: And so what? When I had exposed my own wife to shame and disgrace - !

Nora: When it happened, then I believed beyond any doubt whatever that you would step forward and take it all upon yourself and say: I am the guilty one.

Helmer: Nora!

Nora: You think I would never have accepted such a sacrifice from you? No, of course I wouldn't. But what would *my* assurances count for when compared with yours? - *That* was the miracle which I hoped for when consumed by fear. And, in order to prevent *that*, I wanted to end my life.

Helmer: I would willingly work night and day for you, Nora, - bear all the sorrow and deprivation, for your sake. But there is nobody who sacrifices their *honour* for the one they love.

Nora: That is what hundreds of thousands of women have done.

Helmer: Oh come now! You are just thinking and talking like some silly child.

Nora: Never mind that. But you neither think nor talk like the man I should have been able to live side by side with. When your initial terror passed, - not because of what was threatening *me*, but because of what you yourself were faced with, - and when all the danger was over, - it was as though nothing whatever had happened as far as you were concerned. I remained just as before - your little songbird, your doll, who would now have to be handled with twice the care seeing that it was so fragile and so delicate. Torvald, that was the moment when I suddenly realised that for eight years I had been living with a stranger, by whom I had had three children - . I just can't bear to think about it! I feel like tearing myself into tiny pieces.

Helmer: I see it now. Yes, I see it. An abyss really has opened up between us. - But Nora - surely it can be bridged?

Nora: The way I am now, I would be no wife to you.

Helmer: I have what it takes to change myself.

Nora: Perhaps, - but only if your doll is taken away from you.

Helmer: To be parted - parted from you! No, no, Nora, I just can't bear the thought of it.

Nora: (*goes out to the vestibule*) All the more reason why it has to happen. (*she returns with her outdoor clothes on and a small valise*)

Helmer: Nora, Nora, not now! Wait until tomorrow.

Nora: I cannot spend the night in the rooms of a man who is a stranger.

Helmer: But can't we just continue to live here, like brother and sister - ?

Nora: You know very well that it would not last long. Goodbye, Torvald. I don't want to see the children. I know that they are in better hands than mine. The way I am now, I cannot be anything for them.

Helmer: But at some time, Nora - at some time - ?

Nora: How can I know that. I don't have even the slightest idea what is to become of me.

Helmer: But you are my wife - both as you are, and as whatever you will become.

Nora: Listen, Torvald; - when a wife leaves her husband's house, just as I am leaving yours, then - according to the law as I understand it - he is freed of any obligations towards her. You must not feel obliged in any way, just as I shall not. There must be complete freedom on both sides. I am returning your ring, - please give me mine.

Helmer: That too?

Nora: That too.

Helmer: Here it is.

Nora: So. Yes, well - now that is done then. Here are the keys. The maids know all there is to know about the house - better than I do, in fact. Tomorrow, after I have left, Kristine will come here to pack together those things which I brought with me from my own home. They shall be forwarded on to me.

Helmer: But the past, Nora; the past! Will you never think of me any more?

Nora: Oh yes, to be sure - I shall often think of you, and of the children and of this house here.

Helmer: May I write to you, Nora?

Nora: No, never. You may never do that.

Helmer: But, I may send you things, surely -

Nora: Nothing. Nothing.

Helmer: Help you if ever you should need it.

Nora: No, I say. I do not accept things from strangers.

Helmer: Nora, - can I never be more than a stranger to you?

Nora: Ah, Torvald. Then the miracle would have to happen.

Helmer: But what is this miracle, tell me!

Nora: That you and I would be able to change ourselves in such a way that - . Oh, Torvald, I no longer believe there will be any miracle.

Helmer: But I shall believe in it. Tell me what it is! Change ourselves so that - ?

Nora: So that life together, between the two of us, could become a marriage. Goodbye. *(she goes out through the vestibule.)*

Helmer: Nora ! Nora! *(he looks about him and stands up.)* Empty. She is not here any more. *(hope suddenly wells up in him.)* The miracle - ?!

(from downstairs is heard the heavy sound of the front-door being slammed shut)