WOMEN IN REALITY: A RHETORICAL ANALYSIS OF THREE OF HENRIK IBSEN’S PLAYS IN ORDER TO DETERMINE THE MOST PREVALENT FEMINIST THEMES

A Thesis by

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I have examined the final copy of this Thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts in Communication, with a major in Theatre and Drama.

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I would like to thank my family for all the support and love that they have given me throughout this whole process. They have been selfless and I have put them through quite an ordeal trying to accomplish my dreams. I love you all dearly. I would also like to thank my two dearest friends who encouraged and helped motivate me when things got tough and life threw obstacles in my way. I couldn’t get through it all without your support. Lastly, I would like to thank the faculty, staff, and students at WSU who made my time there so cherished and wonderful. Thank you all for believing in me.
I grew up loving to read, yearning to learn, and feeling that because I am a woman I shouldn’t feel that way. I am not the type of woman who is content with serving others in menial day-to-day chores. In fact, I hate doing all of those things. I am unique and unusual. My mother was extremely supportive of me and my father was extremely oppressive. I never fit into what he thought a woman should be. I am a woman but still I made straight A's in school, went on to college and now grad school. I love to teach as much as I love to learn. I want to grow and fill my mind with as much knowledge as will fit. That is what drew me so much to Henrik Ibsen. He has a unique ability to materialize my thoughts and feelings regarding society’s expectations of females in his plays. The women in Ibsen's plays embodied the struggles that I experienced while growing up. I have often felt that I am not normal because I am not happy doing the traditional things women throughout the years have done. That is one of the main reasons why Ibsen’s women characters are so very real to me. They are rebellious, outspoken, and unique in nature and problems. I immediately felt inspired by his works although they were written so long ago.

It was only much later in my life that I realized the motivating nature of Henrik Ibsen’s work on the women in Victorian times. The feminist movement was just beginning and he had a certain unique understanding about how women of his era were thinking and feeling. He is an amazing man for his time. Women were drawn to him and his plays for this very reason. A major argument goes on among scholars to this day about whether or not Henrik Ibsen was a feminist. By today’s standards he probably
wouldn’t have a problem with that label but because of the stigma of his time, he never considered himself such. That doesn’t mean that his plays weren’t feminist in nature. By taking a closer look at them individually we can determine if they are in fact feminist works. I am going to take an in-depth look at A Doll’s House, Ghosts, and Hedda Gabler. These plays were among the first to challenge women’s roles in society. I hope to clarify once and for all the idea that he just was creating women who were crazy or out of touch with reality and was in fact being more true to life with his women’s feelings, emotions, and day to day conflicts.

By taking a close look at these three plays, attention should be drawn to the significance of the women characters. These women that Ibsen created did things and acted in ways that were shocking to the society in which they lived in. These actions might seem normal today because women have come so far since the 1800’s, but for the society in which they lived, these women were so different, so daring, that even some women of the time were distressed over the characterizations. These plays challenged the cultural norms of the time in regards to women and Ibsen’s personal relationships with women in real life contributed to these characterizations. This gave him a different perspective on issues that women were facing and these same issues still effect women today. The feminist themes that I will be looking for include: (1) money: men have the money and give it to the women in the form of allowance or they must ask for more if they need it, making money on their own was considered scandalous, (2) dominance and power: the woman does what the man says and what he wants even if she disagrees because compliance is better than upsetting the man, (3) work: refers to a skill that the woman enjoys and wants to do but is not one of her duties, therefore it is considered
unimportant, (4) desires: refers to something that the woman wants for herself that is not one of her duties, (5) role: refers to all of the things that are expected of women; their duties according to society, (6) children: refers to woman’s feeling about reproduction and children, and the fact that women have no say in the matter, (7) body/image: refers to the way that men see women in that the body and a woman’s beauty are her most important traits and also women using this image to get what they need or want from men, (8) property: women are a man’s possession, (9) intellect: women are not smart therefore they have no need for knowledge or education and do not understand the things that men must deal with on a regular basis, (10) rebellion: refers to incidents in which women do not conform to the other nine categories and chose instead to rebel. While reading the plays and determining the motivation for the text, I looked at each sentence individually in order to code them into these ten categories if they applied.

By looking at the actual text in these plays and finding the prevalence of feminist themes in the dialogue of the sentences, it can be determined if Henrik Ibsen was intending to put feminist themes and issues in his plays and therefore whether or not he himself was a feminist becomes a mute point. The important thing to look at is whether the works themselves were feminist. Feminism is defined in the Websters Dictionary as: the theory of political, economic, and social equality of the sexes.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Most people today still believe the myth that the Victorian era was a period of a universally accepted value system; that most women lived leisurely, inactive lives, and that husbands and wives remained serenely together, both serving their separate functions in making life pleasant and meaningful. Such, however, was not the case, as recent scholarship has shown. The 1800’s were transitional years in the struggle for individual democratic human rights. As Walter Houghton has argued so forcefully in The Victorian Frame of Mind, the Victorian period could best be characterized by the word “doubts.”? The controversy surrounding the Women question is but one example of the shifting sands underlying the so-called firm foundation of the period’s attitudes toward faith, morality, and “every assertion [was] met with a counter-assertion.” Some wanted the preservation of society’s traditional values, some wanted reform, and some wanted a radical break with old customs and institutions. The debate over the Women question, what roles and jobs should be within society, provided a forum for every shade of Victorian opinion on faith and morality. Respectability was the watchword for conventional Victorian men and women. The conventional view that colored most middle class thinking was that women were physiologically, psychologically, and emotionally different from – if not inferior to – men. Therefore, women, because of these constitutional differences, could not be accorded equal opportunity with men in the world outside the home. Women were intended by nature to be mothers. That was their chief
and almost exclusive occupation. Anything that interfered with this domestic sphere was suspect. Women, according to conventional morality of the time, should be put on pedestals to protect them from the taint of worldly economic pursuits. If women were allowed to participate in the country’s political and industrial activities, they would undoubtedly be tarnished by being pulled down to the “brutish” level men were forced to live on. The respectable woman did not interest herself in their husband’s business; she regarded it as unladylike to show any knowledge of or interest in areas of life that were outside her domestic duties. She preferred – and was encouraged by her minister, her husband, her father, her friends, her reading, in short, by her entire society – to spend money rather than to make it. The respectable man was exposed to the evil in the world, but he was expected to resist it; the respectable woman, however, was protected from all appearance of evil. On the one hand, a woman was believed to be weak and frail, unable to handle the complexities of property or public life. On the other hand, a woman unfortunate enough to have a child out of wedlock was regarded as the responsible party in supporting the child. This frail, weak Victorian woman was supposed to resist male advances, but if she was physically over-powered, she was still to blame. Even a lower class woman who had, perhaps, worked in the fields for twelve hours was expected to take charge of hearth and home. The cultists of domesticity often castigated the poor woman, required to work by economic pressure, because her poor husband, who was also exhausted from physical labors, was forced to sit and wait for his dinner. The unmarried woman, the poor woman, the widow, or even the woman whose husband was incapacitated for some reason was simply ignored by the philosophical ideas publicly propagated and practiced by conventional middle class Victorians. They believed there
were two spheres of influence in human affairs: the woman’s situated in the home and the 
man’s in the public arena. The woman’s God-given function was to be an angel in her 
house. She was to provide a loving, relaxed environment that would give shelter and 
comfort to her tired, frustrated husband who had spend his days struggling to provide her 
with material wants. The man and woman could find happiness as long as they 
remembered, “That nuptial contrasts are the poles on which the heavenly spheres 
revolve.” The man’s role as authority figure was, of course, never questioned. He could, 
in essence, behave however he chose, but the good wife managed to get around him by 
making certain that nothing in the home would ruffle or upset him. She was to soothe 
him out of his moods and remove any obstacles or conflicts that might have caused his 
displeasure. No matter how her husband treated her, the woman was willing to forgive. 
Thus, in the conventional piety the woman’s role was a sacred one. The “perfect” 
relationship could be built only on the recognition that men and women had totally 
separate roles in life, predicated on differences in function. (Houghton, 1957; Altick, 
1973)

Publicly, the goal of a traditional woman in the nineteenth century was to be 
moved to a man of means, to have children, and to be protected from the vicissitudes of 
life by her husband. Only the lower class woman could be unrefined; the middle-class 
woman was supposed to avoid work outside the home unless there was extreme 
economic necessity. The test of any occupation for women was “uselessness.” Women 
were “decoratively futile”; they were to “cultivate fragility” because their very leisure 
was a sign of the financial prosperity of the family. Of course, the irony of this public 
standard for female behavior was that it offered no “position” for the woman who was
unable to find a husband who could support her in the accepted manner, and it offered no succor to the working class woman who was forced to spend her days in hard physical labor just to have enough food on the table to meet the survival needs of her family – even if she had a husband who was working also. Ibsen was a leader in the campaign for a modern radical and realistic literature in the cultural life of Scandinavia of this age, and challenged the values of middle-class society and formulated the basic rights and liberties of the individual. (Brandes, 1871; Letters, 1964)

Today modern feminism seems to have come in two waves. The first being the period of the 1860’s to the 1920’s, and the second being in the late 1960’s to the present. What both have in common is the production of feminist knowledge. Since access to colleges and universities was limited in the first wave, more feminist theory resulted from the second wave. Women were participating in the re-organization of knowledge production in greater numbers. Women’s Studies departments and other programs are now in almost all colleges and universities. The 1960’s and 1970’s produced a wide variety of texts which constitute the canon of classical feminist theory. These studies focused on definitions of women’s emancipation, women’s liberation, and women’s oppression. It is of interest that the family constituted the primary object of analysis in the studies. Descriptions of the structures of everyday life revealed that the family as an institution enacts a gendered division of labor, as it normatively relegates most women to the private sphere and most men to the public sphere. As long as women’s natural social role consisted in the private sphere, their access to the public sphere of work, decision making, law making, knowledge production, cultural production, and politics remained
minimal. Women nominally attained the ideal of a “good life” described in most constitutions.

Today, career structures are modeled on men and not women but women usually are still considered the child rearers. For example, if women take off working to care for children, when they return, they are often considered too old to establish a high profile career when most men are at the peak of theirs. This patriarchal establishment relegates women to secondary labor sectors of lower wages, fewer fringe benefits, and fewer skill development programs. Modern women are looking at all areas of life, all areas of study, and analyzing them. They are looking for ways to equalize the woman’s position, and to give the woman’s point of view. There are now so many areas of feminist theory and so many issues being researched that they are often overlapping and interdisciplinary, but they all are working to empower women. (Holub, 2006)

To more fully understand Ibsen’s influence on the feminist canon, it is necessary to explore the real-life women who influenced him as well as his work, the specific roles he created, the models that he used, and the public’s reaction from both males and females since responses were so different. Whether for or against, all agreed that these works were stimuli for broader discourse and increased communication. Ibsen’s background and the women in his life provide some insights into his characterizations.

We know that Ibsen (March 18, 1828-May 23, 1906) was the son of an alcoholic father who was very abusive toward his mother. Marichen Ibsen's pain would echo through her son’s work in unremitting portrayals of suffering women. Examples are Helene Alving of Ghosts and the protagonist of Hedda Gabler who were both trapped in
loveless marriages. Equally formative for Ibsen was his mother’s oppression. Ibsen’s sympathy with women came from his understanding of their powerlessness, and his education began at home. The life of Ibsen’s first love, Clara, seems a copy, even a parody, of his mother’s. Marichen Altenburg married her mother’s brother’s stepson, and Clara Ebbell married her mother’s brother. After marriage, Marichen Altenburg gave up her theatrical ambitions, and Clara Ebbell, who had had professional training, gave up her ambition to become a pianist. Marrying within their families, abandoning their vocational aims, devoting themselves to child bearing and child rearing, the two most important women in Ibsen’s early life were paragons of proper feminine behavior, models of selflessness and servitude. Marichen Ibsen endured her husband’s abuse, year in, year out, and Clara Ebbell, bowing to her family’s wishes, married and bore children to her own uncle. It is this paradigm of dutiful feminine submission that Ibsen would repeatedly subvert: Nora Helmer’s refusal of the servicing identities conferred on her by her husband (A Doll’s House); in Helene Alving’s fatal compliance with her Christian duty as wife (Ghosts); in Hedda’s rage against her powerless woman’s condition and in the self-denying servitude of her foils Julie and Thea (Hedda Gabler). (Templeton, 2001)

There were several other women throughout Ibsen’s life that influenced him as well. Miss Crawford was an “old-maid” who Ibsen greatly respected. He often borrowed literature from her extensive private library and he would write her poems. When he moved away from home to be an assistant apothecary and study for college entrance exams, he met and fell in love with Rikke Holst. Rikke Holst was attractive, intelligent, and uncommonly unrestrained; tradition has it that their acquaintance began when she tossed a bouquet of flowers in Ibsen’s face. One day, following tradition, they pledged
their troth by joining their rings and throwing them into the fjord. Unfortunately, the romantic idyll was broken when her father, Skipper Holst surprised them. Ibsen’s reaction exhibited a characteristic physical cowardice – he ran away – and that was the end of that. Not long afterwards, Rikke Holst, like Clara Ebbell, agreed to marry a more solid member of society, a respectable Bergen merchant, to whom she eventually presented eleven children. Later, Ibsen met his wife Suzannah Thoresen through her stepmother, his extraordinary colleague at the Bergen Theatre. Magdalene Thorensen was an authoress. Suzannah was a new woman, who was very advanced for the age. At nineteen, Suzannah Thoresen saw what Ibsen had in him and joined him in a battle of two against the world, a pledge she kept to the end. Suzannah Ibsen would serve her husband as cleaning woman, cook, beer-maker, nurse, seamstress, and housekeeper. But besides these conventional wifely occupations, she was also a voracious reader who served her writer husband as a clearinghouse of literary and intellectual news. And most importantly, she was and remained an essential example of the uncompromising mind. The Ibsen marriage was based on a particular kind of partnership. (Koht, 1971)

Ibsen was fond of saying that a writer needs models as much as a sculptor, and he drew on both women he knew and on fictional women. Ibsen’s models were starting points; “there is a big difference,” he said, “between the model and the portrait”. Ibsen was directly inspired to write A Doll’s House by the terrible events in the life of his protégé Laura Petersen Kieler, a Norwegian writer who had a long and successful career. When she was nineteen she wrote a sentimental sequel to Brand called Brand’s Daughters and sent it to Ibsen. Touched by her interest, and always ready to perform kindnesses for admiring young women, Ibsen replied with a letter in which he
encouraged her to continue writing. Thus began a long friendship that was to prove
momentous for both of them. (Letters, 1964; Templeton, 2001)

The Ibsens welcomed Laura Petersen in their home. They grew fond of her, and
it is hard not to resist the speculation that she was, for a time, the daughter they never
had. Ibsen was uncommonly affectionate with her, calling her pet names like “my sky-
lark,” which he would later put to good use. Laura Petersen married a Danish
schoolmaster called Victor Kieler. When he fell ill with tuberculosis, his doctors
prescribed a warmer climate. The Kielers could not afford to travel, so Laura secretly
took out a loan, afraid that her volatile husband, who had a phobia against owing money,
would refuse to go if he knew. They had their southern journey, and Victor Kieler’s
health returned, so splendidly, in fact, that he lived another forty years. On the way back
from Italy, the Kielers stopped off at the Ibsens’ in Munich and Laura confided her secret
to Suzannah. Laura thought she would be able to repay the debt with money earned from
newspaper articles once she returned home, but she badly miscalculated; pressed for
payment and desperate, she wrote Suzannah from Denmark early in 1878 to ask her to
ask Ibsen to read an enclosed manuscript and, if possible, to recommend it to his
publisher Hegel. Suzannah replied at once: “Believe me, I feel the deepest worry and
sympathy for you, who have to bear such a heavy burden on your poor shoulders, and
believe me, also that I have spoken on your behalf with all my power to Ibsen. God help
you!” (Kinck, “Henrik Ibsen og [and] Laura Kieler: 507). In fact, Suzannah had not only
spoken to Ibsen, but had shown him Laura Kieler’s letter, which, he tactfully noted at the
beginning of his reply, was “naturally…..meant to be read by me as well” (Kinck 507).
Ibsen’s letter is both protective and perplexed, like that of any father who cannot
understand his daughter’s loyalty to an undeserving man. He begins by saying forthrightly that he cannot recommend her book. But even if it were published, it would ruin her reputation, for it is plainly a rush job. He cannot understand what possible circumstances there could be in her marriage that force her to send out her material before it is finished. “In a family where the husband is still living, it can never be necessary for the wife to spill her heart’s blood as you are doing. I do not understand, either, how he can allow you to suffer this. There must be something you omitted from your letter that would change the whole story.” Ibsen ends his fatherly letter with this advice: “Whatever is troubling you, put everything in your husband’s hands. He must bear it”. Ibsen could not know how futile, even irrelevant, were his well-meaning words. Writing to her mentor had been Laura Kieler’s last, desperate measure to starve off disaster. Pregnant and ill, when she received Ibsen’s reply she became frantic, burned her manuscript, and forged a note to repay the loan. When the forgery was detected, she was forced to tell her husband what she had done. His reaction was proof that Ibsen had been right in guessing that Laura had omitted something important from her account: a description of her husband’s character. Victor Kieler demanded a legal separation on the grounds that his wife was an unfit mother, gained custody of the children, including the newborn baby, and had his wife committed to an asylum, where she was placed in the insane ward. The Ibsens learned this news from Victor Kieler himself in a brief note. Ibsen immediately wrote to his publisher to ask him to find out Laura’s circumstances. In the meantime, Laura had been released from the asylum, after a month. It was not until two years later that Victor Kieler agreed to take back his wife, who returned home to live with her children. (Kinck, 1935)
Laura Kieler’s story weighed greatly on Ibsen. He brooded on the harassed wife forced to sacrifice her “heart’s blood” to pay back the money she borrowed to save her husband’s life, and on the oblivious husband, allowing his wife to slave away on hackwork. Laura Kieler had done “all for love” and was treated monstrously for it by a husband obsessed with his standing in the eyes of the world. In Ibsen’s working notes, we find: “She had committed a crime, and she is proud of it; because she did it for love for her husband and to save his life. But the husband, with his conventional view of honor, stands on the side of the law and looks at the affair with male eyes”. (Oxford, 1960-77)

Ibsen softened the unusual and sensational aspects of the Kieler story to meet art’s demand for plausibility. His protagonist he made a housewife, not a writer, and the hack work not novels but mere copying; her antagonist is transformed from a cruel brute to a possessive guardian; rather than put her into an asylum, he denounces her as an unfit wife and mother, and then, once his reputation is safe, he forgives her and wants to take her back on the spot. The Helmers, in other words, are normal. But in the end, it was Ibsen’s stroke of genius to create in his little husfru a rebel who throws normality to the winds. Career woman Laura Kieler begged her husband to take her back, but housewife Nora Helmer is tired of begging; in A Doll’s House, it is the husband who pleads to be taken back and the wife who refuses. Women’s struggle for equal rights, it is claimed, is not a fit subject for tragedy or poetry because it is insufficiently representative to be generally and thus literarily human. Now if this is so, it can only be because those human beings who are not women, i.e., men, already possess the rights that women seek, and are thus excluded in the other sex’s struggle, which is, precisely, a struggle for equality with them.
In the spring of 1879, while Ibsen was planning his play, a scandalous incident occurred (easily available in the biographies), that proves not only Ibsen’s interest in, but also his passionate support of the women’s movement. Ibsen had made two proposals, filling over seven book-sized pages, to the Scandinavian Club in Rome: that the post of librarian be opened to women candidates, and that women be allowed to vote in club meetings. In the debate on the proposal, he made a long speech, part of which follows:

Is there anyone in this assembly who dare to claim that our women are inferior to us in culture, intelligence, knowledge, or artistic talent? I don’t think many men would dare to suggest that. Then what is it men are afraid of? I hear that it is accepted tradition here that women are such clever intriguers that we keep them out because of this. Well, I have met with a good bit of male intrigue in the course of my life…What I am afraid of is men with small ambitions and small thoughts, small scruples and small fears, those men who devote all their ideas and all their energies to obtain certain small advantages for their own small and servile selves. (Templeton, 2001)

After Ibsen established himself as a writer, he traveled quite a bit in order to learn all that he could from as many theatres as he could. During his travels, Ibsen met Emilie Bardach. Many believe this relationship was more than platonic. But that is neither here nor there. Although Emilie Bardach can hardly have been the first intelligent and bored female socialite with whom Ibsen was acquainted, she was the first with whom he had a close relation, and perhaps knowing her led him to think more deeply, as Zucker puts it, about “the parasitical position of young women in genteel circles” (Zucker, 1973) What Weigand found to be the irrelevance of Hedda Gabler to Emilie Bardach led him to conclude that writing the play was Ibsen’s way of clearing his mind of her. She has often been said to have influenced Ibsen’s portrait of Hedda, or even to have been Hedda’s model. (Weigand, 1925) Koht writes that Bardach “was fascinated by the idea of taking
a man from his wife. Ibsen understood both the naiveté’ and the demonic impulse revealed by this statement and was weary”. The young woman had unlocked Ibsen’s heart, and although he soon closed the door to her, it remained open for the concert pianist Hildur Andersen, whom he would meet upon his return to Norway. In Munich, Ibsen saw much of his second “princess,” Helene Raff, a twenty-four year-old German woman who would later enjoy a successful career as a novelist and painter. One of the plays Ibsen saw at the Royal and would later put on in Bergen was Bataille de Dames, a comedy by Scribe and Ernest Legouve that pled the feminist cause. Legouve, now virtually forgotten, was an important figure in French intellectual life; he gave lectures on feminism at the College de France and collected them as L’Histoire morale de la femme (1848), whose central argument was the necessity for women’s education. The book was an important influence on the feminist movement in Scandinavia. Legouve’s most ardent disciple was Ibsen’s friend Camilla Wergeland Collett, who launched both Norwegian feminism and the modern Norwegian novel with The District Governor’s Daughters. Collett brought out her novel anonymously but became widely known as the author and famous overnight. The book, she later said, was “the first swallow” (Aarnes, 1977), and this was true in several senses: the novel was the first attempt at realism in Norwegian literature, its author was a woman, and its theme was society’s systematic oppression of women. Collett’s novel pleads implicitly that women should have the right to educate themselves and to marry whom they please. Collett was one of the very few writers whose influence Ibsen would admit to.

Soon after his break with Bardach, he became acquainted with Helene Raff. Raff, who had been Bardach’s confidante, did not want Ibsen to regard her as her replacement.
He wrote to her that he wished – alas, “if I only had such a dear and lovely daughter” (Letters, 1964). Because Ibsen never let their relation develop beyond a warm friendship, Raff decided that all his relations with young women were the same as theirs. She said, “Ibsen’s relations with young girls had in them nothing whatever of infidelity in the usual sense of the term. But arose solely out of the needs of his imagination; as he himself said, he sought out youth because he needed it for his poetic production”. Then, he met Hildur Andersen. She was passionately interested in literature, art, and the theatre. Almost everyone, even Suzannah Ibsen, believed that they had a very passionate affair. The relation between the playwright and the pianist would last nine years, until Ibsen’s failing health confined him to his home, and he marked its importance for him and his gratitude to her by giving her a diamond ring engraved with the date of September 19. We can really only speculate at the importance of this date. Because their relation was not the only significant thing in her life, as it had been for Bardach, Andersen did not make Ibsen feel responsible for her well-being. Nor did she pursue him, like Raff, but rather left Oslo for Vienna six months after they met to pursue her music. Fellow artists who shared the same exacting tastes and the same commitment to their work, Ibsen and Andersen were kindred spirits who took great pleasure in each other’s company. Hildur Andersen would make a considerable contribution to Norwegian cultural. Her supple technique and her intelligent reading of the music caused quite a sensation. (Templeton, 2001)

Ibsen also spent many hours reading. Ibsen immersed himself in the bible’s literature and discovered in the sagas a type of woman after his own heart: forthright, intelligent, passionate, and imbued with a sense of honor.
All of these women and the personal issues of Ibsen’s childhood were incredible influences. They contributed to his feelings that a change was needed. Whatever particular meanings “modernism takes on when it is used to categorize different writers or genres, scholars of the diverse movement agree that its chief characteristic was a thoroughgoing revolt against the prevailing order: it was one of the “cataclysmic upheavals of culture”; it was “committed to everything human experience that militates against custom” (Ellmann, Feidelson, 1965). From the 1870’s to the end of the century, “Ibsenism” was synonymous with modernism because Ibsen was the most fearless debunker of the idols of Western culture during a time when “ideas, ideals, relationships unchanged since time out of mind were vulnerable to attack and open to amendment (Gay, 1984). Exhibiting what Koht has called Ibsen’s “characteristic habit of probing to the source of things: (Koht, 1971), Ibsen’s representation of women reflects the “mortal combat” between the old and the modern because it refuses one of history’s “true universals,” then centuries-old pan-cultural reality of woman’s subordination to man. Woman’s secondary status is an example of what sociologists call “permanent inequality,” in which a group of people is ascribed as naturally inferior to another because of race, class, sex, religion, nationality, or other characteristics ascribed at birth. Members of the group are said to be unable to perform the tasks that the dominant group prefers and assigned work that the dominant group does not want to perform. The unequal relation is legitimized by making it part of society’s “natural laws,” for example, woman’s place is the home, man’s is the world. Ibsen’s plays attack the ideology of woman as the servicing sex through direct satire, through disparaging portrayals of men who regard women’s servitude as part of the natural relation between the sexes, through
the woman’s victimization in the plays of the female-centered triangle, and through the valorization of the autonomous woman over the subservient woman in the plays of the male-center triangle. The patterns often inter-connect, appearing together in the same play. The simplest example of Ibsen’s refusal of dichotomous gender is the number of androgynous characters who people his plays. Traditionally, to be masculine is to be aggressive, adventurous, ambitious, analytical, decisive, knowledgeable, physical, self-confident, sexual, strong, successful, worldly; to be feminine is to be cooperative, expressive, focused on home and family, gentle, helpful, intuitive, naïve, nurturing, sensitive, sympathetic, tender, weak. Ibsen’s androgynous characters reflect his challenge to the sexual polarization that has characterized patriarchy since its inception. Gerder Lerner summarizes patriarchy’s major assumption about gender: Men are ‘naturally’ superior, stronger and more rational, therefore designed to be dominant. From this follows that men are political citizens and responsible for and representing the policy. Women are ‘naturally’ weaker, inferior in intellect and rational capacities, unstable emotionally and therefore incapable of political participation. They stand outside of the polity. Men, by their rational minds, explain and order the world. Women by their nurturing function sustain daily life and the continuity of the species. While both functions are essential, that of men is superior to that of women. (Lerner, 1993). Ibsen’s reoccurring paradigm of a woman’s conflict between her prescribed, gendered identity and her individual autonomy – what society tells her she must be and what she is free to become – embodies what Richard Ellmann and Charles Feidelson have called the “two faces, positive and negative, of the modern as the anti-traditional: freedom and deprivation, a living present and a dead past” (Ellmann, Feidelson, 1965). The struggles
of the rebellious female protagonist of Ibsen’s early plays prefigure those of Ibsen’s later,
more well-know female rebels.

James Huneker noted: “From the start, certain conceptions of woman took root in
[Ibsen’s] mind and reappear in nearly all his dramas. One is the eternal womanly, the
others [sic] the destructive feminine principle, woman the conqueror” (Huneker, 1917).
For Janko Lavrin, writing in 1950, Ibsen’s women neatly belong to one of two types: “the
self-reliant, aggressive and often destructive “Valkyrie,” on the one hand, and her
devoted, self-sacrificing opposite” (Lavrin, 1959)  Ibsen’s first fully developed
protagonist is a woman called upon to act like a man. Driven to distraction by keeping up
the pretense of a happy marriage, feeling such disgust for their husbands that any allusion
to sexual intimacy is unbearable, the women are pushed to violent acts by the return of
the “other man.” No other work illustrates as powerfully the truth rediscovered by recent
feminist scholarship that the conception of the two spheres reflected neither “natural”
competencies nor the reality of men’s and women’s lives, but was an ideological
construct that masked inequality and forced segregation on the basis of sex; no other
work insists so explicitly on the hypocrisy, waste, and sheer foolishness of isolating
women from rationale poetized for posterity by Ruskin: “[Man] is eminently the doer,
the creator, the discoverer, the defender….By [woman’s] office and place, she is
protected from all danger and temptation. The man, in his rough work in the open world,
must encounter all peril and trial.” (Templeton, 2001)

Because the psychology of permanently unequal relations demands that the
subordinates develop character traits pleasing to the dominant group – submissiveness,
passivity, lack of initiative – the subordinates are forced to act in hidden or indirect ways.
In *A Doll’s House*, Nora plays the fool and saves her husband’s life without his knowing it, in *Ghosts*, closet businesswoman Mrs. Alving runs her husband’s estate, in *Hedda Gabler*, Hedda plays the satisfied bourgeois and plots secretly to bring some meaning into her life. As long as the subordinates adapt or seem to adapt to the dominants’ view, they are considered well adjusted; when they do not, and rebel, they are considered abnormal: the judgment of Torvald on Nora’s leaving her family in *A Doll’s House*, and of Manders on Mrs. Alving’s leaving her husband in *Ghosts*. Subordinates often know more about the dominants than vice versa: Nora knows how to manage Torvald by flattering his ego, Mrs. Alving recognizes the insidiousness of Pastor Manders’ moral universe, Hedda recognizes and loathes the pettiness of the Tesmans. Torvald does not know his resourceful wife; Manders is shocked when Mrs. Alving confronts him with her liberal notions, and the Tesmans have no inkling of Hedda’s despair. The subordinates also know more about the dominants than themselves, for if one’s fate depends on pleasing others, there is little reason to know one’s self: what Nora has ignored, but wants to discover, what Mrs. Alving has refused to face, what Hedda has tried to repress. Implicit in the notion of woman’s permanent inequality is that she is instrumental rather than autonomous, that her purpose is not to be but to serve. George Bernard Shaw once stated that “Ibsen insists that there is no golden rule; that conduct must justify itself by its effect upon life and not by its conformity to any rule or ideal.” Modern drama is necessarily “the drama of individualism.” The woman as autonomous individual in Ibsen’s plays is an individual in Lukacs’ modernist sense: she revels against the inferior status assigned her. The Ibsenian male individualist revolts against a prevailing order, but his autonomy is a given. (Lukacs, 1968) While Ibsen’s male strivers seek to fulfill their masculine
role, his female strivers struggle against their feminine one. And in this, the female individual in Ibsen’s drama is a modern figure in a way that the male individual is not. Part of Ibsen’s genius is in how extensively and complexly he developed his characterization of women in terms of sexual identity. Ibsen’s refusal of Woman allowed him to discover the socialization of sexual identity we now call “gender” and to investigate women as full moral beings struggling against the cultural norms that define and limit them. Ibsen, for all his Victorian decorum about sex, also shows us women making sexual bargains for independence and power. ‘The sexual politics of bourgeois family life are here with a vengeance’ make the sole terms for establishing power and control. Ibsen’s refusal of a dichotomously gendered humanity makes him the herald of what was called the “sexual anarchy” that dominated the literature of the last two decades of the nineteenth century. That the questioning of what is “his” and what is “hers” has once again arisen with ferocity at the end of our own century makes Ibsen not only the forerunner of modernist sexual anarchy but of post-modernist as well.

Many scholars deny that Ibsen was promoting equality in his work and on the other hand, many feminists simply take it for granted that Ibsen was a forefather of feminism. This study will simply analyze the content of his plays and make judgements based on facts. There are several examples of rhetorical analysis that have been done on Ibsen’s works, though two books are the most famous. Joan Templeton’s Ibsen’s Women looks at the true-life women in Ibsen’s life and makes some very compelling comparisons to the characters that are written in his plays. We see direct correlations established in his characters and this makes a person think that perhaps he was intentionally trying to raise real-life issues within his real-life women characters.
Templeton takes the stance that Ibsen was a feminist supporter as well as ahead of his time pertaining to his views and understanding of women and supports this pretty well in her book. George Bernard Shaw wrote *The Quintessence of Ibsenism* and takes the stance that Ibsen liked to raise ideas in his characters that would polarize the public in their opinions and encourage dialogue. Shaw was a close personal friend of Ibsen and gives us many examples of Ibsen promoting total equality for all people, especially women.

When looking at the material available on Ibsen, it seems that most scholars take it for granted that he either was or was not an advocate for women’s rights based solely on their own opinion or anecdotally from second hand sources. This study is different in that it will only look at the actual content of his plays and based on prevalence, decide which themes and issues are central in them. There has been numerous analysis of the content of other plays by other famous writers in order to discover how they treat women and which women’s issues and themes are prevalent within them. I chose to expand upon the work that has been done by Templeton and Shaw and take it in a new direction. Therefore this study should be highly innovative in its’ style and findings.

I chose to look at these three plays in particular because they are the ones that brought so much attention to women’s social standing in that time. According to various sources and personal letters and memos, the general conclusion after seeing or reading these plays is that many men were appalled at the subject matter as well as the characterization of women and many women understood these issues and even these women, even if they didn’t agree. A major polarization occurred among people according to how they felt about the woman question. Even drama critics of the time
seemed to judge the productions of these plays according to their opinion of the women characters in them instead of if the acting and production elements were well done.

These dramas created dialogue, arguments, censorship, and most importantly, a situation that people could look at and think about. People began to see things in a different light.
CHAPTER II

PREVALEING THEMES IN THREE OF IBSEN’S PLAYS

Ibsen placed fundamental political and social issues literally on the center of the stage. These issues included oppression of women, the hollowness of marriage, social reform, the power of money, and even social diseases. *A Doll’s House* and *Ghosts* coincided with the breakdown of the long mid-Victorian boom and a new mood of anxiety and disquiet in society. The country of Norway itself was miserable and dejected. Politically, the country was more or less subject to Sweden. It had been severed from Denmark in 1814 as part of the European settlement after the Napoleonic Wars and had tried to establish itself as a constitutional monarchy. However, the Swedes forced it to accept their king, although a separate constitution and parliament were allowed. Throughout the nineteenth century Norwegian nationalism ran high, and Ibsen was one of its foremost advocates. There were uprisings and revolt en masse. The entire country was looking for something better. (Driver, 1970)

There were a large number of authoresses and sufferagettes in all of the Scandinavian capitals by the 1890’s. Protestant religions were exploding, although Ibsen didn’t believe in religion. Ibsen kept contact with his contemporaries including George Brande, Bjornstjerne Bjornson, Leo Tolstoy, Bertolt Brecht, and William Archer. They all fed off of each other’s ideas and intellect, they read each other’s plays, critiqued each other’s ideas, and bounced new ideas off of each other through discourse. They were at the center of creating new dialogue and helping to bring about change. (Johnson, 1928)
In the next three sections, I will break down each sentence of *A Doll’s House*, *Ghosts*, and *Hedda Gabler* into ten feminist categories, if they apply, and prove the relevance of these themes to real women and modern feminism. This will help to explain much of the confusion and upheaval that was created by Ibsen’s female characters.

**Prevailing themes in *A Doll’s House***

When you look at (appendix A) *A Doll’s House*, there are 806 sentences that are coded as having feminist themes with the most prevalent women’s issue in this play being Rebellion (category 10). There are 172 sentences coded in this category. The women are very good at rebelling against the norms. Nora and Kristine both do things that they know would be “wrong” according to their society, their religion, and how they were raised but rather than comply, these women use their intelligence and their wits to hide the things that they have done in order to keep things appearing above board. Both of these women are strong and defy all those cultural norms in order to keep going and to survive in the world. Nora forges her father’s signature and borrows money in order to save her husband’s life, then she works secretly behind his back in order to make back the money that she borrowed. She doesn’t want him to find out what she has done because she thinks that he will claim responsibility and pay off the loan himself, thereby protecting her. When she sees what he really does, she is shocked into reality. The reality of what her marriage is and the things she is thinking and feeling upset and confuse her. She realizes that she must be on her own for awhile at least to figure out who she is, what she believes, and how she should go on with her life knowing what she knows now. This epiphany, in itself, is against the rules of society. A woman who leaves her husband becomes an outcast. Ibsen himself was once asked what he thought
happened to Nora after she left and he replied that she ended up broke and desolate, dying in a back alley somewhere. Unfortunately, this was reality for real life women and became one of those social issues that Ibsen tried to bring attention to.

A woman’s Role (category 5) was also a very prevalent issue, appearing 153 times in the play. Nora was expected to act in a certain way and fulfill her role as wife and mother. Her reputation and what other people think and feel about her are extremely important to her and to her husband. Because she has lived a fantasy for so long, she never even gets to know her husband. In fact, she is only her true self with Dr. Rank. With him she has honest, open, intelligent conversation and lets him get to know who she really is. She lets him get to know her in a way that her husband never could because of the strictures placed on her by society. When she comes to realize that Helmer is not the man that she had made up in her head, she realizes that she can’t stay with him anymore. She realizes that he is a stranger to her and suddenly she comprehends the magnitude of what society has done to her and millions of women in her shoes. Since these issues of a woman’s role are so apparent in this play, it is interesting to see the message that Ibsen seems to be sending. These roles should be changed because they do a disservice to the woman as well as to the man involved. He seems to be compelling society at large to take a good look at reality, take notice of what is happening and to change; do something about this problem because it simply is not right to go on in this way.

Money (Category 1) also plays a large role in this play. There are 98 sentences that were categorized as having to do with the way money is used in the Victorian society to keep women oppressed. Of course it was just the way of things then. Now we know how women are affected by monetary concerns and how it keeps them bound to
situations that would not be necessary if not for the money. We see how Nora uses and abuses the rules where it comes to money. How dare she take out a loan? How perfect of her to spend and spend and keep asking for more. She lets her husband think that she is totally relying on him monetarily, which is the “correct” way of things in this period but she is also hiding the truth about the money situation. She pretends to be too stupid to understand a budget or monetary concerns but in reality, she is fully aware and in charge in her own way. She manipulates the situation to keep up the appearance of being naïve and stupid when it comes to money. She knows her role well.

Dominance (category 2) appears 125 times in the play. These are all instances that the women lets the man decide because he is the man. Even when the woman knows better she simply backs off due to propriety. Today we find that stunning and insulting but in Victorian times it simply was the norm. Ibsen does show us that the women in his plays aren’t quite so willing to be dominated though. They have a tendency to rebel as seen above. Helmer tends to try to act as Nora’s master. He feels that his word is law and it is his right and even duty to demand what he wants and Nora complies of course, if only outwardly.

Intellect (Category 9) shows up 85 times in the play. The women are quite smart and instead of being open and proud of that fact, they use these characteristics as subterfuge and manipulate to get their way instead of being proud and openly intelligent. They work tirelessly to keep up a façade so that these qualities are hidden and all will still appear “proper” to society at large. It is quite sad. Helmer even makes reference to Nora’s lack of intelligence on numerous occasions and steps in to “help”.

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Helmer treats Nora as his property (category 8) in the same way that a small domesticated animal or a doll is a person’s property. He calls her little pet names and spends time trying to coax her into doing his bidding. He thinks of himself as the master and her as his to do with what he chooses. This happens 55 times in the play.

Children/child-rearing (category 6) occurs 43 times in this piece. Nora treats her children as a dilemma. I believe that she cares about them and what happens to them but is unsure of how to change their being treated as dolls. She doesn’t even know what to do with her own situation so she feels that leaving them with the Nurse will at least ensure that they feel loved and are taken care of. After all, the Nurse raised her. She may be having doubts as to her ability to be a good mother because she realizes that she is no longer “normal” and is unsure of herself. She wants what is best for them and no longer is certain that she is.

Body/image (category 7) with 57 occurrences shows that Nora cares very much about what she looks like. She knows that her appearance is pleasing to Helmer so it works to her advantage to look nice. She gets things on his whim after all. Women had to use what they had at their disposal and Nora knows that with Helmer her looks helped to great measure. She spends a lot of time catering to his preferences and tastes so that she would be most appealing to him.

Nora’s work (category 3), which occurs 29 times in the play, is very important to her. She finds it very stimulating and gratifying but it is something that she keeps hidden as if she is committing a crime. She doesn’t allow anyone except for Mrs. Linde to know about it because of the scandal it would cause and the perception it would create that
Helmer isn’t a good provider and that Nora isn’t normal to enjoy such beastly things. The truth is that her work gave her a measure of accomplishment and she liked it.

Helmer’s desires and that of society are the main focus of this piece of work. Nora’s desires (category 4) only shows up nine times and this shows me that she feels that her wants and her desires aren’t important. It isn’t until the end of the play that she realizes that she doesn’t even know what she wants in life. She was brought up never to think about that.

In short, it is obvious to me that Ibsen intended to include these feminist issues in this play. The number of times that these issues came up shows that he made a conscious effort to include them and place at least some of the focus on them. I think it is a myth to say that they occurred incidentally. A Doll’s House is most definitely a feminist themed play and should be heralded as such. It seems impossible to me to think that Ibsen didn’t mean to call a women’s role in society into question but then proceeded to have his Nora rebel and challenge that role over and over again so many times. He was simply relating to the plight of women before they realized that they themselves should be questioning it.
Prevailing themes in **GHOSTS**

(Appendix B) Ghosts had 406 sentences coded as being feminist in theme.

Rebellion (category 10) was the most prevalent issue to come up in this play as well. Regina and Mrs. Alving are most extremely rebellious toward the men in this story. Mrs. Alving does rebel quietly and not publicly for the most part. She has spent her whole life pretending that her husband had integrity and was smart and helpful in business and the community when in actuality she was behind it all. She simply let everyone believe it was her husband so as not to cause scandal and unrest among her peers. She didn’t take any credit for all of her accomplishments. She was a smart, sophisticated, businesswoman who doesn’t believe as she’s been raised to. She makes up her own mind and isn’t judgmental of the way other people live their lives. But she is not a proper Victorian lady and that is why Manders and her clash quite a bit.

Role (category 5) occurs 84 times in the play. Most of these happen when Regina and Mrs. Alving play their roles when trying to accommodate Reverend Manders or appease Osvald by doing their duty to the men present. It seems rather unnatural for them at times. They do, after all, lead their lives differently when they aren’t around others and seem a bit rusty when trying to do what is expected of them.

Dominance (category 2) occurs 64 times. Reverend Manders is the primary offender. He believes that he is in charge because Mrs. Alving is only a woman so he comes in and makes all sorts of decisions, like insurance, and because he is a bumbling idiot ruins everything for her. He even sends Regina to live with Engstrand, which will be her ruin. Mrs. Alving has never had a moment of happiness because of the dominance
of the men in her life. She stayed with a husband she abhorred because the man she loved, Mr. Manders, sent her back to him. She stayed only to find out that her son is dying of the same STD that his father died of. Because she let the men dominate her life and her decisions, she ended up losing everything that she held dear and had worked so hard for.

Property (category 8) occurs 36 times. Mr. Manders calls her my dear sweet…….. And other little pet names several times throughout the piece and she also knows that she was bought and paid for by her husband just like property. That is why she used her cunning business sense to save up the exact amount of her dowry to give to the orphanage. She was in essence buying herself back and trying to make sure Osvald was free from anything his father might have left him. She wanted to be the only person that he inherited anything from.

Intellect (category 9) was coded 28 times. Even after all of the cunning and intelligence that Mrs. Alving used secretly on a daily basis, the men in the story often call her intelligence into question. This is rather ironic since the men in the story are rather lacking in this area. Mrs. Alving simply questions things that they all consider to be absolute truths.

Desires (category 4) had 22 occurrences. There are few occasions in the play where either Regina or Mrs. Alving expresses their desires. The truth is, they have both secretly been working toward what they want from the beginning. It is rather sad that men who ultimately took over charge of their lives thwarted both of them in their efforts.
When left to their own devises, they were, although, secretly, both getting what they wanted.

Money (category 1) appeared 16 times in the play. Regina lives off of Mrs. Alving and Mrs. Alving has been in charge for years. When she tries to open the orphanage, the law and society step in and she loses control of everything. The men and their bad decisions lose both of these women their financial freedom. Now all of a sudden, they are forced to rely on men to support them – even the same men who lost them everything to begin with.

Children (category 6) occurred 14 times. Mrs. Alving refers to her duty and role as mother to Osvald a few times but mostly she talks about the guilt of sending him away and how she missed him because she was trying to keep the truth from him. She didn’t want him tainted with his father’s sins.

Body image (category 7) only occurs 11 times. All three men in the story make reference to Regina filling out or growing up or her maturing. All of these are blatantly sexist and degrading remarks.

Work (category 3) is mentioned only a mere 5 times. Regina worked out of necessity but Mrs. Alving provided a safe environment for her. Mrs. Alving may have started out working as a matter of necessity but became a master and she kept it all a secret. She was a cunning businesswoman who didn’t draw attention to the fact that she took care of the finances, the business, and everything else.
Ibsen is said to have written Mrs. Alving with the idea of what would have happened if Nora had returned home instead of leaving her husband and children. The fact that Mrs. Alving takes charge of the family, the finances, the business, and even goes so far as to send her son away shows that she is rebelling against what society expects of her. She has her own ideas of right and wrong but she still worries about society at large and her reputation as well as that of her family. The fact that she left her husband to go seek the man that she really loved shows great strength and character as well as her rebellion. Because she was turned away, she went home and tried to make the best of a bad situation. After all, she had no alternatives or any other place to go. Ibsen wants to show that this situation is worse than Nora’s in that in the end Mrs. Alving was unable to save her son from his father’s sins and everything from her past just came back to haunt her. Had she made a different choice before she got married, her life might have turned out alright, but she let her mother talk her into marriage when she didn’t know, much less love, the Captain. She also comes to some pretty amazing conclusions about life as a woman and what is considered right and wrong according to the Pastor. She reads material with different point of view and takes the position that she will come to her own conclusions about what she thinks concerning issues of importance. Once again, Ibsen uses his story and dialogue to make the audience think about social norms and their consequences to real life people and is trying to bring women’s issues to the forefront in order to bring about change. He dealt with the consequences of such relationships in his life and saw how wrong this arrangement was as well as the pain and suffering that was brought on by these societal norms.
Prevailing themes in Hedda Gabler

This play (appendix C) had a total of 350 sentences that were coded as having feminist themes. Rebellion (category 10) was by far the most prevalent issue in this play as well as the other two. There are 104 instances in this play. Hedda was constantly making retorts to the men who surrounded her as well as to the women who tried to behave as expected of them. She is a fiery, aggressive, dominant female and although she tries to hide it, her remarks often pinpoint those behaviors.

A woman’s role (category 5) occurred 66 times and ties into the rebellion of Hedda. Miss Tessman and Thea are perfect examples of how ladies should be......docile and timid and servile. Even the maid, Berta, is more refined than Hedda. The funny and ironic thing is that George has many feminine characteristics and does not take charge as is expected of men of the time. He is a bookworm, non-sexual in that he spent so much of their honeymoon in libraries, and he is often soft-spoken and complacent to the people around him. These are not what audiences expected of a man and Hedda definitely was not what was expected of a woman. These characterizations served Ibsen’s purpose – to get people talking.

Dominance (category 2) occurs 56 times in the feminist sense. When I was reading the play I felt as if I should change over and start categorizing all of the instances that Hedda dominated the men and made demands of them. She is the most dominant character in this piece and if she were a man there would be an ungodly number of occurrences in this category. The men do dominate a bit though. Judge Brack and Eilert try on several occasions to get Hedda to conform but there are a few instances of George
being assertive and telling someone to do something menial like put on their hat. Judge Brack is harsh in his demands while George is docile.

Money (category 2) occurs 26 times and is about how expensive the wedding trip was and how the marriage contract says to keep Hedda in style and so forth. Hedda is used to living a certain way and George intends to continue that.

Body/image (category 7) is brought up 24 times. Everyone makes comments on Hedda’s beauty and shape and starts speaking of her getting a little rounder and this contributes to Hedda losing her mind. The pregnancy thing is something she can’t even fathom, much less losing her shape and beauty along with the fact that she is aging.

The property (category 8) referenced in this play has to do with Hedda being her father’s daughter and her husband’s wife while Thea is her husband’s wife even though she had the courage to leave him. There are also references to George’s family and the mansion being his.

Intellect (category 9) occurs 21 times. George treats Julie as if she is a bit dim witted but he serves to remind Hedda of things that he believes her to have forgotten when in reality, Hedda is the one who knows the truth about the situation and all of the things that are going on behind the scenes. There are also references to Thea being stupid about some things and that is why Lovborg can only share certain things with Hedda. Hedda has the dominant traits of males when it comes to the way she sees the other women in this play. She feels she is above them and they are mindless.
Reproduction/ child rearing (category 6) occurs 14 times. This is mainly because Hedda can’t bring herself to acknowledge that she is pregnant much less talk about it. Julie knows and is thrilled but Hedda is extremely unhappy about it. This is yet another example of how Hedda is different than other women. She is disgusted with the idea of motherhood and children just as most men typically are. Ibsen again gives the male view to Hedda and makes her try and deal with that in the world she lives in.

Desires (category 4) only occur 12 times. Hedda expresses her desire for vitality in her life and is bored but cannot act on her true desires because of the scandal it would cause. She desires a goal to work toward without being an outcast. She desires the impossible and the forbidden. She wants to live but her terms are impossible.

Work (category 3) is only mentioned 5 times. Mrs. Elvstead was genuinely thrilled to be a part of something as important as Eilert’s work. She felt that the work was a part of her too and it was fulfilling. Then at the end she started working with George and those feelings came back full borne. She was only an assistant to both men though and as such was fulfilling her womanly purpose by serving others. Hedda didn’t serve others…..she is the total opposite of Thea.

It is again important to note that Ibsen did something unusual in this play. He gives many dominant characteristics to Hedda and many feminine traits to her husband. She wants so badly to live the life of a man in her generation that it drives her to insanity. She is bored with the role that she is expected to play and lashes out at others in her frustration and contempt. All of the women around her do their duty with pleasure and inferiority and even seem to rejoice in the servitude. The one thing that Hedda can’t
seem to do though is to outright defy society and do what she wants. She is so concerned with appearances and staying away from scandal that she sacrifices herself and her sanity. In the privacy of her own home, we see a gun toting, horse riding, sexual, intelligent, woman with interests in politics, money, and society at large. But she keeps all of those things hidden as best she can. She is trying to conform to something that she hates. She even hates the idea of having children and according to society, that is a woman’s most sacred job. She is expected to love this aspect of marriage and in reality she cannot even accept that she is pregnant. She doesn’t want to be a mother. She isn’t motherly. She even says herself that she doesn’t have the courage to do what she really wants to do. Ibsen shows her pain and suffering and the slow methodical losing of her mind before her suicide. He is trying to point out that all women are not the same; they have different interests and goals and that it is alright for women to chose what they want to do for themselves without society or men telling them what they should be interested in doing.
CHAPTER III

CONCLUSION

It is important to note again that in this study the repetition of certain issues or themes proves that Ibsen intended to focus on them. Therefore, this study proves that Ibsen was advocating women’s rights and his intent was to bring about awareness. Rebellion against society’s norms and the role that women were expected to play in their society are the primary focus of all three of these plays. This isn’t coincidental. Women identified with the characters in these plays and for many it did bring about a change in them. Many men understood the importance of the dialogue in regards to real life and spoke out for women. Many men and women refused to see that the issues in Ibsen’s plays had anything to do with them and were angry that someone was trying to change things. Because of the dialogue and controversy generated with these three plays, people took a stand and fought for whatever point of view that they believed in. People cared and were interested in the outcome, which shows the importance of the issues. It is important to note that repetition of certain issues or themes proves that Ibsen intended to focus on them. This study proves that Ibsen was advocating women’s rights and his intent was to bring about awareness. He focused on the role assigned to women by society and highlights women rebelling against those roles. A direct correlation between the feminist movement of the time and Ibsen’s plays has never been established and would be interesting future research.
Here is the final breakdown of the coded sentences into categories:

Table 1.

Number of coded sentences per play.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>A Doll’s House</th>
<th>Ghosts</th>
<th>Hedda Gabler</th>
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<tr>
<td>Money (1)</td>
<td>98 (12 %)</td>
<td>16 (4 %)</td>
<td>26 (7 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominance (2)</td>
<td>125 (15 %)</td>
<td>64 (16 %)</td>
<td>56 (16 %)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Work (3)</td>
<td>29 (4 %)</td>
<td>5 (1 %)</td>
<td>5 (1 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desires (4)</td>
<td>9 (1 %)</td>
<td>22 (5 %)</td>
<td>12 (3 %)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Role of Women</td>
<td>153 (19 %)</td>
<td>84 (21 %)</td>
<td>66 (19 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children (6)</td>
<td>43 (5 %)</td>
<td>14 (3 %)</td>
<td>14 (4 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body/image (7)</td>
<td>57 (7 %)</td>
<td>11 (3 %)</td>
<td>24 (7 %)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Property (8)</td>
<td>55 (7 %)</td>
<td>36 (9 %)</td>
<td>22 (6 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellect (9)</td>
<td>85 (10 %)</td>
<td>28 (7 %)</td>
<td>21 (6 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebellion (10)</td>
<td>172 (21 %)</td>
<td>126 (31 %)</td>
<td>104 (30 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals (+-1)</td>
<td>826</td>
<td>406</td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
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The primary problem with this study and the way in which it was conducted is that there was only one person coding the sentences, so many of them were open to the interpretation of only one. If a group had been doing the coding, then a consensus could have been reached at least about where to place questionable sentences. Also, the meaning of certain lines in a play is always open to interpretation. Different people
reading the same lines may get entirely different messages from the dialogue. There are also problems with the interpretation from Norwegian to English. Some of the context or the author’s intent could have been lost or altered. Last but not least is the fact that we are looking at these plays with postmodern eyes when they were written in the Victorian Era. Certain biases could sway the meaning from either time period. This is just the nature of plays and literature in general.

The major strength of this study is that the numbers are so high that even with a fairly large margin of error, the outcome is the same. The two primary categories identified were, without a doubt, the ones that occurred the most within the three plays. There is also the fact that Henrik Ibsen chose to focus on the lives of women in all three of these stories. He could have written about anything, yet he chose to write about women’s struggles. That is memorable.

This study concurred with what both Joan Templeton and George Bernard Shaw stated in their books. These plays did focus on the women characters and also on polarizing social issues in order to bring about change. In this case, the social issues were the rights of women and their role in society. Ibsen did bring about a polarization in his audiences. Most men could not understand why the women on stage acted as they did and were outraged and most women at least understood, even if they didn’t agree with what was being said. By building on the notion that Ibsen’s women were created based on real life women, it is interesting to see the progression that we have from Nora to Mrs. Alving and from Mrs. Alving to Hedda. These women seem to be related in their thoughts and deeds but simply chose different paths for their lives. The outcome for each of them seems to be doomed and with the obstacles that those first women reformers
faced, they probably felt doomed to fail as well. But at least we are making progress.

Little by little, if women continue to prove that their differences are as diverse as men’s and they keep fighting for their and all women’s choices, then eventually women will be seen as equal to men.
BIBLIOGRAPHY
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ACT I

(SCENE.--A room furnished comfortably and tastefully, but not extravagantly. At the back, a door to the right leads to the entrance-hall, another to the left leads to Helmer's study. Between the doors stands a piano. In the middle of the left-hand wall is a door, and beyond it a window. Near the window are a round table, arm-chairs and a small sofa. In the right-hand wall, at the farther end, another door; and on the same side, nearer the footlights, a stove, two easy chairs and a rocking-chair; between the stove and the door, a small table. Engravings on the walls; a cabinet with china and other small objects; a small book-case with well-bound books. The floors are carpeted, and a fire burns in the stove. It is winter.

A bell rings in the hall; shortly afterwards the door is heard to open. Enter NORA, humming a tune and in high spirits. She is in outdoor dress and carries a number of parcels; these she lays on the table to the right. She leaves the outer door open after her, and through it is seen a PORTER who is carrying a Christmas Tree and a basket, which he gives to the MAID who has opened the door.)

Nora. Hide the Christmas Tree carefully, Helen. Be sure the children do not see it until this evening, when it is dressed. (To the PORTER, taking out her purse.) How much?

Porter. Sixpence.

Nora. There is a shilling. No, keep the change. (The PORTER thanks her, and goes out. NORA shuts the door. She is laughing to herself, as she takes off her hat and coat. She takes a packet of macaroons from her pocket and eats one or two; then goes cautiously to her husband's door and listens.) Yes, he is in. (Still humming, she goes to the table on the right.)
Helmer (calls out from his room). (8) Is that my little lark twittering out there?

Nora. (busy opening some of the parcels). (5) Yes, it is!

Helmer. (8) Is it my little squirrel bustling about?

Nora. (5) Yes!

Helmer. (8) When did my squirrel come home?

Nora. Just now. (Puts the bag of macaroons into her pocket and wipes her mouth.) (1) Come in here, Torvald, and see what I have bought.

Helmer. (2) Don't disturb me. (A little later, he opens the door and looks into the room, pen in hand.) (1) Bought, did you say? All these things? (2) Has my little spendthrift been wasting money again?

Nora. (1) Yes but, Torvald, this year we really can let ourselves go a little. (1) This is the first Christmas that we have not needed to economise.

Helmer. (2) Still, you know, we can't spend money recklessly.

Nora. (5) Yes, Torvald, we may be a wee bit more reckless now, mayn't we? Just a tiny wee bit! (1) You are going to have a big salary and earn lots and lots of money.

Helmer. (1) Yes, after the New Year; but then it will be a whole quarter before the salary is due.

Nora. (10) Pooh! (10) We can borrow until then.

Helmer. (2) Nora! (Goes up to her and takes her playfully by the ear.) (8) The same little featherhead! Suppose, now, that I borrowed fifty pounds today, and (1) you spent it all in the Christmas week, and then on New Year's Eve a slate fell on my head and killed me, and--Nora (putting her hands over his mouth). Oh! don't say such horrid things.

Helmer. Still, suppose that happened,—what then?

Nora. If that were to happen, (10) I don't suppose I should care whether I owed money or not.
Helmer. Yes, but what about the people who had lent it?

Nora. They? (10) Who would bother about them? I should not know who they were.

Helmer. (2) That is like a woman! But seriously, Nora, (2) you know what I think about that. (2) No debt, no borrowing. (1) There can be no freedom or beauty about a home life that depends on borrowing and debt. We two have kept bravely on the straight road so far, and (2) we will go on the same way for the short time longer that there need be any struggle.

Nora (moving towards the stove). (5) As you please, Torvald.

Helmer (following her). Come, come, (8) my little skylark must not droop her wings. What is this? (8) Is my little squirrel out of temper? (Taking out his purse.) (1) Nora, what do you think I have got here?

Nora (turning round quickly). (1) Money!

Helmer. (1) There you are. (Gives her some money.) (1) Do you think I don't know what a lot is wanted for housekeeping at Christmas-time?

Nora (counting). (1) Ten shillings--a pound--two pounds! (5) Thank you, thank you, Torvald; (1) that will keep me going for a long time.

Helmer. (2) Indeed it must.

Nora. (5) Yes, yes, it will. But come here and let me show you what I have bought. (1) And all so cheap! Look, here is a new suit for Ivar, and a sword; and a horse and a trumpet for Bob; and a doll and dolly's bedstead for Emmy;--they are very plain, but anyway she will soon break them in pieces. And here are dress-lengths and handkerchiefs for the maids; old Anne ought really to have something better.

Helmer. And what is in this parcel?

Nora (crying out). No, no! you mustn't see that until this evening.

Helmer. Very well. But now tell me, (8) you extravagant little person, what would you like for yourself?
Nora. For myself? Oh, I am sure I don't want anything.

Helmer. Yes, but you must. (2)Tell me something reasonable that you would particularly like to have.

Nora. No, I really can't think of anything--unless, Torvald--

Helmer. Well?

Nora (playing with his coat buttons, and without raising her eyes to his). If you really want to give me something, you might--you might--

Helmer. (2)Well, out with it!

Nora (speaking quickly). (1)You might give me money, Torvald. Only just (1)as much as you can afford; and then one of these days I will buy something with it.

Helmer. But, Nora--

Nora. Oh, do! dear Torvald; please, please do! (1)Then I will wrap it up in beautiful gilt paper and hang it on the Christmas Tree. Wouldn't that be fun?

Helmer. What are (8)little people called that are (1)always wasting money?

Nora. (1)Spendthrifts--I know. (5)Let us do as you suggest, Torvald, and then I shall have time to think what I am most in want of. That is a very sensible plan, isn't it?

Helmer (smiling). Indeed it is--that is to say, (1)if you were really to save out of the money I give you, and then really buy something for yourself. (1)But if you spend it all on the housekeeping and any number of unnecessary things, then I merely have to pay up again.

Nora. Oh but, Torvald--

Helmer. You can't deny it, (8)my dear little Nora. (Puts his arm round her waist.) (8)It's a sweet little spendthrift, (1)but she uses up a deal of money. One would (1)hardly believe how expensive such (8)little persons are!

Nora. It's a shame to say that. (1)I do really save all I can.
Helmer (laughing). (2) That's very true,—all you can. (1) But you can't save anything!

Nora (smiling quietly and happily). (1) You haven't any idea how many expenses we (8) skylarks and squirrels have, Torvald.

Helmer. (8) You are an odd little soul. Very like your father. You (1) always find some new way of wheedling money out of me, and, as soon as you have got it, it seems to melt in your hands. (1) You never know where it has gone. Still, (2) one must take you as you are. It is in the blood; for indeed (5) it is true that you can inherit these things, Nora.

Nora. (4) Ah, I wish I had inherited many of papa's qualities.

Helmer. And (5) I would not wish you to be anything but just what you are, (8) my sweet little skylark. But, do you know, it strikes me that you are looking rather,—what shall I say,—rather uneasy today?

Nora. Do I?

Helmer. You do, really. (2) Look straight at me.

Nora (looks at him). Well?

Helmer (wagging his finger at her). (2) Hasn't Miss Sweet Tooth been breaking rules in town today?

Nora. No; what makes you think that?

Helmer. Hasn't she paid a visit to the confectioner's?

Nora. No, I assure you, Torvald--

Helmer. Not been nibbling sweets?

Nora. No, certainly not.

Helmer. Not even taken a bite at a macaroon or two?

Nora. No, Torvald, I assure you really--

Helmer. There, there, of course I was only joking.

Nora (going to the table on the right). (5) I should not think of going against your wishes.
**Helmer.** No, I am sure of that; besides, you gave me your word-- (Going up to her.) Keep your little Christmas secrets to yourself, my darling. They will all be revealed tonight when the Christmas Tree is lit, no doubt.

**Nora.** Did you remember to invite Doctor Rank?

**Helmer.** No. But there is no need; as a matter of course he will come to dinner with us. However, I will ask him when he comes in this morning. I have ordered some good wine. Nora, you can't think how I am looking forward to this evening.

**Nora.** So am I! And how the children will enjoy themselves, Torvald!

**Helmer.** (1)It is splendid to feel that one has a perfectly safe appointment, and a big enough income. It's delightful to think of, isn't it?

**Nora.** It's wonderful!

**Helmer.** Do you remember last Christmas? (5)For a full three weeks beforehand you shut yourself up every evening until long after midnight, making ornaments for the Christmas Tree, and all the other fine things that were to be a surprise to us. It was the dullest three weeks I ever spent!

**Nora.** (10)I didn't find it dull.

**Helmer** (smiling). But there was precious little result, Nora.

**Nora.** Oh, you shouldn't tease me about that again. How could I help the cat's going in and tearing everything to pieces?

**Helmer.** Of course you couldn't, (8)poor little girl. (5)You had the best of intentions to please us all, and that's the main thing. (1)But it is a good thing that our hard times are over.

**Nora.** Yes, it is really wonderful.

**Helmer.** This time I needn't sit here and be dull all alone, and (2)you needn't ruin your dear eyes and your pretty little hands--

**Nora** (clapping her hands). (5)No, Torvald, I needn't any longer, need I! It's wonderfully lovely to hear you say so! (Taking his arm.) Now I will tell you how I have been thinking we ought to arrange things, Torvald. As soon as Christmas is over--(A bell
rings in the hall.) There's the bell. (She tidies the room a little.) There's some one at the door. What a nuisance!

**Helmer.** (If it is a caller, remember I am not at home.

**Maid.** (in the doorway). A lady to see you, ma'am,—a stranger.

**Nora.** Ask her to come in.

**Maid.** (to HELMER). The doctor came at the same time, sir.

**Helmer.** Did he go straight into my room?

**Maid.** Yes, sir.

(HELMER goes into his room. The MAID ushers in Mrs. LINDE, who is in travelling dress, and shuts the door.) Mrs. Linde (in a dejected and timid voice). How do you do, Nora?


**Nora.** No, I don't know--yes, to be sure, I seem to--(Suddenly.) Yes! Christine! Is it really you?

**Mrs. Linde.** Yes, it is I.

**Nora.** Christine! To think of my not recognising you! And yet how could I--(In a gentle voice.) How you have altered, Christine!

**Mrs. Linde.** Yes, I have indeed. In nine, ten long years--

**Nora.** Is it so long since we met? I suppose it is. The last eight years have been a happy time for me, I can tell you. And so now you have come into the town, and have taken this long journey in winter—that was plucky of you.

**Mrs. Linde.** I arrived by steamer this morning.

**Nora.** To have some fun at Christmas-time, of course. How delightful! We will have such fun together! But take off your things. You are not cold, I hope. (Helps her.) Now we will sit down by the stove, and be cosy. No, take this armchair; I will sit here in the rocking-chair. (Takes her hands.) Now you look like your old self again; it was only the first moment--You are a little paler, Christine, and perhaps a little thinner.
Mrs. Linde. (7) And much, much older, Nora.

Nora. (7) Perhaps a little older; very, very little; certainly not much. (Stops suddenly and speaks seriously.) What a thoughtless creature I am, chattering away like this. My poor, dear Christine, do forgive me.

Mrs. Linde. What do you mean, Nora?

Nora. (gently). (5) Poor Christine, you are a widow.

Mrs. Linde. Yes; it is three years ago now.

Nora. Yes, I knew; I saw it in the papers. I assure you, Christine, I meant ever so often to write to you at the time, but I always put it off and something always prevented me.

Mrs. Linde. I quite understand, dear.

Nora. It was very bad of me, Christine. (5) Poor thing, how you must have suffered. (1) And he left you nothing?

Mrs. Linde. No.

Nora. (6) And no children?

Mrs. Linde. No.

Nora. (5) Nothing at all, then.

Mrs. Linde. Not even any sorrow or grief to live upon.

Nora (looking incredulously at her). But, Christine, is that possible?

Mrs. Linde (smiles sadly and strokes her hair). (10) It sometimes happens, Nora.

Nora. (5) So you are quite alone. How dreadfully sad that must be. (6) I have three lovely children. You can't see them just now, for they are out with their nurse. But now you must tell me all about it.

Mrs. Linde. No, no; I want to hear about you.

Nora. No, you must begin. I mustn't be selfish today; (5) today I must only think of your affairs. But there is one thing I must
tell you. Do you know we have just had a great piece of good luck?

Mrs. Linde. No, what is it?

Nora. Just fancy, (1) my husband has been made manager of the Bank!

Mrs. Linde. Your husband? What good luck!

Nora. Yes, tremendous! A barrister's profession is such an uncertain thing, especially if he won't undertake unsavoury cases; and naturally Torvald has never been willing to do that, and I quite agree with him. You may imagine how pleased we are! (1) He is to take up his work in the Bank at the New Year, and then he will have a big salary and lots of commissions. (1) For the future we can live quite differently—we can do just as we like. I feel so relieved and so happy, Christine! (1) It will be splendid to have heaps of money and not need to have any anxiety, won't it?

Mrs. Linde. (4) Yes, anyhow I think it would be delightful to have what one needs.

Nora. No, not only what one needs, (1) but heaps and heaps of money.

Mrs. Linde (smiling). Nora, Nora, (9) haven't you learned sense yet? (1) In our schooldays you were a great spendthrift.

Nora (laughing). Yes, that is what Torvald says now. (Wags her finger at her.) (10) But "Nora, Nora" is not so silly as you think. (1) We have not been in a position for me to waste money. (3) We have both had to work.

Mrs. Linde. (5) You too?

Nora. (3) Yes; odds and ends, needlework, crotchet-work, embroidery, and that kind of thing. (Dropping her voice.) (3) And other things as well. You know Torvald left his office when we were married? There was no prospect of promotion there, and (1) he had to try and earn more than before. But during the first year he over-worked himself dreadfully. You see, (1) he had to make money every way he could, and he worked early and late; but he couldn't stand it, and fell dreadfully ill, and the doctors said it was necessary for him to go south.

Mrs. Linde. You spent a whole year in Italy, didn't you?
Nora. Yes. It was no easy matter to get away, I can tell you. (6)It was just after Ivar was born; but naturally we had to go. It was a wonderfully beautiful journey, and it saved Torvald's life. (1)But it cost a tremendous lot of money, Christine.

Mrs. Linde. So I should think.

Nora. (1)It cost about two hundred and fifty pounds. (1)That's a lot, isn't it?

Mrs. Linde. Yes, and (1)in emergencies like that it is lucky to have the money.

Nora. (10)I ought to tell you that we had it from papa.

Mrs. Linde. Oh, I see. It was just about that time that he died, wasn't it?

Nora. Yes; and, just think of it, (5)I couldn't go and nurse him. (6)I was expecting little Ivar's birth every day and (5)I had my poor sick Torvald to look after. My dear, kind father--I never saw him again, Christine. That was the saddest time I have known since our marriage.

Mrs. Linde. I know how fond you were of him. And then you went off to Italy?

Nora. Yes; (1)you see we had money then, and the doctors insisted on our going, so we started a month later.

Mrs. Linde. And your husband came back quite well?

Nora. As sound as a bell!

Mrs. Linde. But--the doctor?

Nora. What doctor?

Mrs. Linde. I thought your maid said the gentleman who arrived here just as I did, was the doctor?

Nora. Yes, that was Doctor Rank, but he doesn't come here professionally. He is our greatest friend, and comes in at least once everyday. No, Torvald has not had an hour's illness since then, and (6)our children are strong and healthy and so am I. (Jumps up and claps her hands.) Christine! Christine! (5)it's good to be
alive and happy!—But how horrid of me; I am talking of nothing but my own affairs. (Sits on a stool near her, and rests her arms on her knees.) You mustn't be angry with me. (5) Tell me, is it really true that you did not love your husband? (5) Why did you marry him?

Mrs. Linde. (5) My mother was alive then, and was bedridden and helpless, and (1) I had to provide for my two younger brothers; so (5) I did not think I was justified in refusing his offer.

Nora. No, (5) perhaps you were quite right. (1) He was rich at that time, then?

Mrs. Linde. (1) I believe he was quite well off. But his business was a precarious one; and, (1) when he died, it all went to pieces and there was nothing left.

Nora. And then?--

Mrs. Linde. Well, (3) I had to turn my hand to anything I could find—first a small shop, then a small school, and so on. (3) The last three years have seemed like one long working-day, with no rest. (3) Now it is at an end, Nora. (5) My poor mother needs me no more, for she is gone; and (5) the boys do not need me either; they have got situations and (3) can shift for themselves.

Nora. (5) What a relief you must feel if—

Mrs. Linde. No, indeed; (10) I only feel my life unspeakably empty. (5) No one to live for anymore. (Gets up restlessly.) (10) That was why I could not stand the life in my little backwater any longer. I hope it may be (3) easier here to find something which will busy me and occupy my thoughts. (3) If only I could have the good luck to get some regular work—office work of some kind—

Nora. (5) But, Christine, that is so frightfully tiring, and you look tired out now. (5) You had far better go away to some watering-place.

Mrs. Linde. (walking to the window). (1) I have no father to give me money for a journey, Nora.

Nora (rising). Oh, don't be angry with me!

Mrs. Linde (going up to her). It is you that must not be angry with me, dear. (5) The worst of a position like mine is that it makes one so bitter. (5) No one to work for, and yet (1) obliged to be always
on the lookout for chances. (1) One must live, and so one becomes selfish. (1) When you told me of the happy turn your fortunes have taken--you will hardly believe it--I was delighted not so much on your account as on my own.

Nora. How do you mean?--Oh, I understand. (3) You mean that perhaps Torvald could get you something to do.

Mrs. Linde. (3) Yes, that was what I was thinking of.

Nora. He must, Christine. Just leave it to me; I will broach the subject very cleverly--(5) I will think of something that will please him very much. (5) It will make me so happy to be of some use to you.

Mrs. Linde. How kind you are, Nora, to be so anxious to help me! (9) It is doubly kind in you, for you know so little of the burdens and troubles of life.

Nora. I--? (9) I know so little of them?

Mrs. Linde. (smiling). My dear! (5) Small household cares and that sort of thing!-- (7) You are a child, Nora.

Nora. (tosses her head and crosses the stage). (10) You ought not to be so superior.

Mrs. Linde. No?

Nora. You are just like the others. (9) They all think that I am incapable of anything really serious--

Mrs. Linde. Come, come--

Nora.-- (7) that I have gone through nothing in this world of cares.

Mrs. Linde. But, my dear Nora, (5) you have just told me all your troubles.

Nora. (10) Pooh!--those were trifles. (Lowering her voice.) I have not told you the important thing.

Mrs. Linde. The important thing? What do you mean?

Nora. (7) You look down upon me altogether, Christine--but you ought not to. (3) You are proud, aren't you, of having worked so hard and so long for your mother?
Mrs. Linde. (7) Indeed, I don't look down on anyone. But it is true that I am both proud and glad to think that (3) I was privileged to make the end of my mother's life almost free from care.

Nora. (7) And you are proud to think of what you have done for your brothers?

Mrs. Linde. (7) I think I have the right to be.

Nora. (10) I think so, too. But now, listen to this; (10) I too have something to be proud and glad of.

Mrs. Linde. I have no doubt you have. (10) But what do you refer to?

Nora. Speak low. Suppose Torvald were to hear! He mustn't on any account-- (10) no one in the world must know, Christine, except you.

Mrs. Linde. But what is it?

Nora. Come here. (Pulls her down on the sofa beside her.) (7) Now I will show you that I too have something to be proud and glad of. (10) It was I who saved Torvald's life.

Mrs. Linde. "Saved"? How?

Nora. I told you about our trip to Italy. Torvald would never have recovered if he had not gone there--

Mrs. Linde. (1) Yes, but your father gave you the necessary funds.

Nora (smiling). (10) Yes, that is what Torvald and all the others think, but--

Mrs. Linde. But--

Nora. (1) Papa didn't give us a shilling. (10) It was I who procured the money.

Mrs. Linde. You? (1) All that large sum?

Nora. (1) Two hundred and fifty pounds. (7) What do you think of that?

Mrs. Linde. (5) But, Nora, how could you possibly do it? Did you win a prize in the Lottery?
Nora. (contemptuously). In the Lottery? There would have been no credit in that.

Mrs. Linde. (1) But where did you get it from, then?

Nora (humming and smiling with an air of mystery). Hm, hm! Aha!

Mrs. Linde. (5) Because you couldn't have borrowed it.

Nora. (10) Couldn't I? (10) Why not?

Mrs. Linde. (1) No, a wife cannot borrow without her husband's consent.

Nora (tossing her head). (9) Oh, if it is a wife who has any head for business-- (9) a wife who has the wit to be a little bit clever--

Mrs. Linde. (9) I don't understand it at all, Nora.

Nora. (9) There is no need you should. (1) I never said I had borrowed the money. (10) I may have got it some other way. (Lies back on the sofa.) (10) Perhaps I got it from some other admirer. (7) When anyone is as attractive as I am--

Mrs. Linde. (10) You are a mad creature.

Nora. Now, you know you're full of curiosity, Christine.

Mrs. Linde. Listen to me, Nora dear. (10) Haven't you been a little bit imprudent?

Nora (sits up straight). (10) Is it imprudent to save your husband's life?

Mrs. Linde. (10) It seems to me imprudent, without his knowledge, to--

Nora. (10) But it was absolutely necessary that he should not know! (9) My goodness, can't you understand that? (10) It was necessary he should have no idea what a dangerous condition he was in. It was to me that the doctors came and said that his life was in danger, and that the only thing to save him was to live in the south. (5) Do you suppose I didn't try, first of all, to get what I wanted as if it were for myself? I told him how much I should love to travel abroad like other young wives; (5) I tried tears and entreaties with him; (6) I told him that he ought to remember the condition I was in, (5) and that he ought to be kind and indulgent to me; (1) I even hinted
that he might raise a loan. That nearly made him angry, Christine.

(2) He said I was thoughtless, and that it was his duty as my husband not to indulge me in my whims and caprices—as I believe he called them. (10) Very well, I thought, you must be saved—and that was how I came to devise a way out of the difficulty—

Mrs. Linde. (1) And did your husband never get to know from your father that the money had not come from him?

Nora. No, never. Papa died just at that time. I had meant to let him into the secret and beg him never to reveal it. But he was so ill—alas, there never was any need to tell him.

Mrs. Linde. (5) And since then have you never told your secret to your husband?

Nora. (10) Good Heavens, no! How could you think so? (2) A man who has such strong opinions about these things! (2) And besides, how painful and humiliating it would be for Torvald, with his manly independence, to know that he owed me anything! It would upset our mutual relations altogether; (5) our beautiful happy home would no longer be what it is now.

Mrs. Linde. (10) Do you mean never to tell him about it?

Nora. (meditatively, and with a half smile). Yes—someday, perhaps, after many years, (7) when I am no longer as nice-looking as I am now. Don't laugh at me! I mean, of course, when Torvald is no longer as devoted to me as he is now; (7) when my dancing and dressing-up and reciting have palled on him; then it may be a good thing to have something in reserve—(Breaking off.) What nonsense! That time will never come. (10) Now, what do you think of my great secret, Christine? (9) Do you still think I am of no use? I can tell you, too, that this affair has caused me a lot of worry. It has been by no means easy for me to meet my engagements punctually. I may tell you that there is something that is called, (1) in business, quarterly interest, and another thing called payment in installments, and it is always so dreadfully difficult to manage them. (1) I have had to save a little here and there, where I could, you understand. (1) I have not been able to put aside much from my housekeeping money, for (5) Torvald must have a good table. I couldn't let my children be shabbily dressed; (6) I have felt obliged to use up all he gave me for them, the sweet little darlings!

Mrs. Linde. (1) So it has all had to come out of your own necessaries of life, poor Nora?
Nora. (10) Of course. Besides, (10) I was the one responsible for it. Whenever (1) Torvald has given me money for new dresses and such things, I have never spent more than half of it; I have always bought the simplest and cheapest things. Thank Heaven, (7) any clothes look well on me, and so Torvald has never noticed it. But it was often very hard on me, Christine--because (7) it is delightful to be really well dressed, isn't it?

Mrs. Linde. (7) Quite so.

Nora. Well, (1) then I have found other ways of earning money. (3) Last winter I was lucky enough to get a lot of copying to do; so I locked myself up and sat writing every evening until quite late at night. Many a time I was desperately tired; but all the same (3) it was a tremendous pleasure to sit there working and earning money. (10) It was like being a man.

Mrs. Linde. (1) How much have you been able to pay off in that way?

Nora. I can't tell you exactly. You see, (9) it is very difficult to keep an account of a business matter of that kind. (1) I only know that I have paid every penny that I could scrape together. (9) Many a time I was at my wits' end. (Smiles.) (4) Then I used to sit here and imagine that a rich old gentleman had fallen in love with me--

Mrs. Linde. What! Who was it?

Nora. Be quiet!--that he had died; and that when his will was opened it contained, written in big letters, the instruction: (1) "The lovely Mrs. Nora Helmer is to have all I possess paid over to her at once in cash."

Mrs. Linde. But, my dear Nora--who could the man be?

Nora. (9) Good gracious, can't you understand? There was no old gentleman at all; (4) it was only something that I used to sit here and imagine, when (1) I couldn't think of any way of procuring money. But it's all the same now; the tiresome old person can stay where he is, as far as I am concerned; (10) I don't care about him or his will either, for I am free from care now. (Jumps up.) My goodness, it's delightful to think of, Christine! (10) Free from care! (10) To be able to be free from care, quite free from care; to be able (6) to play and romp with the children; to be (5) able to keep the house beautifully and have everything just as Torvald likes it! And, think of it, soon the spring will come and the big blue sky! Perhaps we shall be able to take a little trip--perhaps I shall
see the sea again! Oh, it's a wonderful thing to be alive and be happy. (A bell is heard in the hall.)

Mrs. Linde. (rising). There is the bell; perhaps I had better go.

Nora. No, don't go; no one will come in here; it is sure to be for Torvald.

Servant (at the hall door). Excuse me, ma'am--there is a gentleman to see the master, and as the doctor is with him--

Nora. Who is it?

Krogstad (at the door). It is I, Mrs. Helmer. (Mrs. LINDE starts, trembles, and turns to the window.)

Nora (takes a step towards him, and speaks in a strained, low voice). You? What is it? What do you want to see my husband about?

Krogstad. Bank business--in a way. I have a small post in the Bank, and I hear your husband is to be our chief now--

Nora. Then it is--

Krogstad. Nothing but dry business matters, Mrs. Helmer; absolutely nothing else.

Nora. Be so good as to go into the study, then. (She bows indifferently to him and shuts the door into the hall; then comes back and makes up the fire in the stove.)

Mrs. Linde. Nora--who was that man?

Nora. A lawyer, of the name of Krogstad.

Mrs. Linde. Then it really was he.

Nora. Do you know the man?

Mrs. Linde. I used to--many years ago. At one time he was a solicitor's clerk in our town.

Nora. Yes, he was.

Mrs. Linde. He is greatly altered.
Nora. He made a very unhappy marriage.

Mrs. Linde. He is a widower now, isn't he?

Nora. With several children. There now, it is burning up. Shuts the door of the stove and moves the rocking-chair aside.)

Mrs. Linde. They say he carries on various kinds of business.

Nora. Really! Perhaps he does; I don't know anything about it. (9)But don't let us think of business; it is so tiresome.

Doctor Rank (comes out of HELMER'S study. Before he shuts the door he calls to him). No, my dear fellow, I won't disturb you; I would rather go in to your wife for a little while. (Shuts the door and sees Mrs. Linde.) I beg your pardon; I am afraid I am disturbing you too.

Nora. No, not at all. (Introducing him). Doctor Rank, Mrs. Linde.

Rank. I have often heard Mrs. Linde's name mentioned here. I think I passed you on the stairs when I arrived, Mrs. Linde?

Mrs. Linde. Yes, I go up very slowly; (7)I can't manage stairs well.

Rank. (7)Ah! some slight internal weakness?

Mrs. Linde. (3)No, the fact is I have been overworking myself.

Rank. Nothing more than that? (5)Then I suppose you have come to town to amuse yourself with our entertainments?

Mrs. Linde. (3)I have come to look for work.

Rank. (3)Is that a good cure for overwork?

Mrs. Linde. (1)One must live, Doctor Rank.

Rank. Yes, the general opinion seems to be that it is necessary.

Nora. (4)Look here, Doctor Rank--you know you want to live.

Rank. Certainly. However wretched I may feel, I want to prolong the agony as long as possible. All my patients are like that. And so are those who are morally diseased; one of them, and a bad case too, is at this very moment with Helmer--
Mrs. Linde. (sadly). Ah!

Nora. Whom do you mean?

Rank. A lawyer of the name of Krogstad, a fellow you don't know at all. He suffers from a diseased moral character, Mrs. Helmer; but even he began talking of its being highly important that he should live.

Nora. Did he? What did he want to speak to Torvald about?

Rank. I have no idea; (3) I only heard that it was something about the Bank.

Nora. (10) I didn't know this--what's his name--Krogstad had anything to do with the Bank.

Rank. (3) Yes, he has some sort of appointment there. (To Mrs. LINDE.) I don't know whether you find also in your part of the world that there are certain people who go zealously sniffing about to smell out moral corruption, and, as soon as they have found some, put the person concerned into some lucrative position where they can keep their eye on him. Healthy natures are left out in the cold.

Mrs. Linde. Still I think the sick are those who most need taking care of.

Rank. (shrugging his shoulders). Yes, there you are. (9) That is the sentiment that is turning Society into a sick-house.

(NORA, who has been absorbed in her thoughts, breaks out into smothered laughter and claps her hands.)

Rank. Why do you laugh at that? (9) Have you any notion what Society really is?

Nora. (10) What do I care about tiresome Society? I am laughing at something quite different, something extremely amusing. Tell me, Doctor Rank, (3) are all the people who are employed in the Bank dependent on Torvald now?

Rank. Is that what you find so extremely amusing?

Nora. (smiling and humming). (10) That's my affair! (Walking about the room.) It's perfectly glorious to think that we have--that
Torvald has so much power over so many people. (Takes the packet from her pocket.) Doctor Rank, what do you say to a macaroon?

**Rank.** What, macaroons? (I thought they were forbidden here.

**Nora.** Yes, but these are some Christine gave me.

**Mrs. Linde.** What! I?

**Nora.** Oh, well, don't be alarmed! You couldn't know that Torvald had forbidden them. I must tell you that he is afraid they will spoil my teeth. But, bah!--once in a way--That's so, isn't it, Doctor Rank? By your leave! (Puts a macaroon into his mouth.) You must have one too, Christine. And I shall have one, just a little one--or at most two. (Walking about.) I am tremendously happy. There is just one thing in the world now that I should dearly love to do.

**Rank.** Well, what is that?

**Nora.** It's something I should dearly love to say, if Torvald could hear me.

**Rank.** Well, why can't you say it?

**Nora.** No, I daren't; it's so shocking.

**Mrs. Linde.** Shocking?

**Rank.** Well, I should not advise you to say it. Still, with us you might. What is it you would so much like to say if Torvald could hear you?

**Nora.** I should just love to say--Well, I'm damned!

**Rank.** Are you mad?

**Mrs. Linde.** Nora, dear--!

**Rank.** Say it, here he is!

**Nora** (hiding the packet). Hush! Hush! Hush! (HELMER comes out of his room, with his coat over his arm and his hat in his hand.)

**Nora.** Well, Torvald dear, have you got rid of him?
Helmer. Yes, he has just gone.

Nora. Let me introduce you--this is Christine, who has come to town.

Helmer. Christine--? Excuse me, but I don't know--

Nora. Mrs. Linde, dear; Christine Linde.

Helmer. Of course. A school friend of my wife's, I presume?

Mrs. Linde. Yes, we have known each other since then.

Nora. And just think, she has taken a long journey in order to see you.

Helmer. What do you mean? Mrs. Linde. No, really, I--

Nora. (3)Christine is tremendously clever at book-keeping, and she is frightfully anxious to work under some clever man, so as to perfect herself--

Helmer. (9)Very sensible, Mrs. Linde.

Nora. And when she heard you had been appointed manager of the Bank--the news was telegraphed, you know--she travelled here as quick as she could. Torvald, I am sure you will be able to do something for Christine, for my sake, won't you?

Helmer. Well, it is not altogether impossible. (5)I presume you are a widow, Mrs. Linde?

Mrs. Linde. Yes.

Helmer. (3)And have had some experience of book-keeping?

Mrs. Linde. Yes, a fair amount.

Helmer. Ah! (2)well, it's very likely I may be able to find something for you--

Nora (clapping her hands). What did I tell you? What did I tell you?

Helmer. You have just come at a fortunate moment, Mrs. Linde.

Mrs. Linde. How am I to thank you?
Helmer. There is no need. (Puts on his coat.) But today you must excuse me--

Rank. Wait a minute; I will come with you. (Brings his fur coat from the hall and warms it at the fire.)

Nora. Don't be long away, Torvald dear.

Helmer. About an hour, not more.

Nora. Are you going too, Christine?

Mrs. Linde (putting on her cloak). Yes, I must go and look for a room.

Helmer. Oh, well then, we can walk down the street together.

Nora (helping her). What a pity it is we are so short of space here; I am afraid it is impossible for us--

Mrs. Linde. Please don't think of it! Goodbye, Nora dear, and many thanks.

Nora. Goodbye for the present. Of course you will come back this evening. And you too, Dr. Rank. What do you say? If you are well enough? Oh, you must be! Wrap yourself up well. (They go to the door all talking together. Children's voices are heard on the staircase.)

Nora. There they are! There they are! (She runs to open the door. The NURSE comes in with the children.) Come in! Come in! (Stoops and kisses them.) Oh, you sweet blessings! Look at them, Christine! Aren't they darlings?

Rank. Don't let us stand here in the draught.

Helmer. Come along, Mrs. Linde; the place will only be bearable for a mother now!

(RANK, HELMER, and Mrs. LINDE go downstairs. The NURSE comes forward with the children; NORA shuts the hall door.)

Nora. How fresh and well you look! Such red cheeks like apples and roses. (The children all talk at once while she speaks to them.) Have you had great fun? That's splendid! What, you pulled both Emmy and Bob along on the sledge? --both at once?--that was
good. (6) You are a clever boy, Ivar. Let me take her for a little, Anne. (6) My sweet little baby doll! (Takes the baby from the MAID and dances it up and down.) Yes, yes, (6) mother will dance with Bob too. What! Have you been snowballing? I wish I had been there too! No, no, I will take their things off, Anne; (5) please let me do it, it is such fun. Go in now, you look half frozen. There is some hot coffee for you on the stove.

(The NURSE goes into the room on the left. NORA takes off the children's things and throws them about, while they all talk to her at once.)

**Nora.** Really! Did a big dog run after you? But it didn't bite you? No, dogs don't bite (6) nice little dolly children. You mustn't look at the parcels, Ivar. What are they? Ah, I daresay you would like to know. No, no--it's something nasty! (6) Come, let us have a game! What shall we play at? Hide and Seek? Yes, we'll play Hide and Seek. Bob shall hide first. Must I hide? Very well, I'll hide first. (She and the children laugh and shout, and romp in and out of the room; at last NORA hides under the table, the children rush in and out for her, but do not see her; they hear her smothered laughter, run to the table, lift up the cloth and find her. Shouts of laughter. She crawls forward and pretends to frighten them. Fresh laughter. Meanwhile there has been a knock at the hall door, but none of them has noticed it. The door is half opened, and KROGSTAD appears, lie waits a little; the game goes on.)

**Krogstad.** Excuse me, Mrs. Helmer.

**Nora (with a stifled cry, turns round and gets up on to her knees).** Ah! what do you want?

**Krogstad.** Excuse me, the outer door was ajar; I suppose someone forgot to shut it.

**Nora (rising).** My husband is out, Mr. Krogstad.

**Krogstad.** I know that.

**Nora.** What do you want here, then?

**Krogstad.** A word with you.

**Nora.** With me?--(To the children, gently.) Go in to nurse. What? No, the strange man won't do mother any harm. When he has gone we
will have another game. (She takes the children into the room on the left, and shuts the door after them.) You want to speak to me?

**Krogstad.** Yes, I do.

**Nora.** (1) Today? It is not the first of the month yet.

**Krogstad.** (2) No, it is Christmas Eve, and it will depend on yourself what sort of a Christmas you will spend.

**Nora.** What do you mean? Today it is absolutely impossible for me--

**Krogstad.** (2) We won't talk about that until later on. This is something different. I presume you can give me a moment?

**Nora.** Yes--yes, I can--although--

**Krogstad.** Good. I was in Olsen's Restaurant and saw your husband going down the street--

**Nora.** Yes?

**Krogstad.** With a lady.

**Nora.** What then?

**Krogstad.** May I make so bold as to ask if it was a Mrs. Linde?

**Nora.** It was.

**Krogstad.** Just arrived in town?

**Nora.** Yes, today.

**Krogstad.** She is a great friend of yours, isn't she?

**Nora.** She is. But I don't see--

**Krogstad.** I knew her too, once upon a time.

**Nora.** I am aware of that.

**Krogstad.** Are you? So you know all about it; I thought as much. Then I can ask you, without beating about the bush--(3) is Mrs. Linde to have an appointment in the Bank?
Nora. (10) What right have you to question me, Mr. Krogstad?— (10) You, one of my husband's subordinates! But since you ask, you shall know. (3) Yes, Mrs. Linde is to have an appointment. And it was (5) I who pleaded her cause, Mr. Krogstad, let me tell you that.

Krogstad. I was right in what I thought, then.

Nora (walking up and down the stage). Sometimes one has a tiny little bit of influence, I should hope. (5) Because one is a woman, it does not necessarily follow that—. (10) When anyone is in a subordinate position, Mr. Krogstad, they should really be careful to avoid offending anyone who--who--

Krogstad. Who has influence?

Nora. Exactly.

Krogstad (changing his tone). (2) Mrs. Helmer, you will be so good as to use your influence on my behalf.

Nora. What? What do you mean?

Krogstad. (2) You will be so kind as to see that I am allowed to keep my subordinate position in the Bank.

Nora. What do you mean by that? Who proposes to take your post away from you?

Krogstad. Oh, (9) there is no necessity to keep up the pretence of ignorance. I can quite understand that your friend is not very anxious to expose herself to the chance of rubbing shoulders with me; and I quite understand, too, whom I have to thank for being turned off.

Nora. But I assure you--

Krogstad. Very likely; but, (2) to come to the point, the time has come when I should advise you to use your influence to prevent that.

Nora. But, Mr. Krogstad, I have no influence.

Krogstad. Haven't you? I thought you said yourself just now--
Nora. Naturally I did not mean you to put that construction on it. If (3) What should make you think I have any influence of that kind with my husband?

Krogstad. Oh, I have known your husband from our student days. I don't suppose he is any more unassailable than other husbands.

Nora. (10) If you speak slightingly of my husband, I shall turn you out of the house.

Krogstad. (2) You are bold, Mrs. Helmer.

Nora. (10) I am not afraid of you any longer. As soon as the New Year comes, (1) I shall in a very short time be free of the whole thing.

Krogstad (controlling himself). (2) Listen to me, Mrs. Helmer. If necessary) (2) I am prepared to fight for my small post in the Bank as if I were fighting for my life.

Nora. So it seems.

Krogstad. (1) It is not only for the sake of the money; indeed, that weighs least with me in the matter. There is another reason--well, I may as well tell you. My position is this. I daresay you know, like everybody else, that once, many years ago, I was guilty of an indiscretion.

Nora. I think I have heard something of the kind.

Krogstad. The matter never came into court; but every way seemed to be closed to me after that. So I took to the business that you know of. I had to do something; and, honestly, I don't think I've been one of the worst. But now I must cut myself free from all that. My sons are growing up; for their sake I must try and win back as much respect as I can in the town. This post in the Bank was like the first step up for me--and now your husband is going to kick me downstairs again into the mud.

Nora. But you must believe me, Mr. Krogstad; (5) it is not in my power to help you at all.

Krogstad. (2) Then it is because you haven't the will; but I have means to compel you.

Nora. (1) You don't mean that you will tell my husband that I owe you money?
Krogstad. Hm!—(2)suppose I were to tell him?

Nora. It would be perfectly infamous of you. (Sobbing.) (1)To think of his learning my secret, which has been my joy and pride, in such an ugly, clumsy way— that he should learn it from you! And it would put me in a horribly disagreeable position—

Krogstad. Only disagreeable?

Nora. (impetuously). (10)Well, do it, then!—and it will be the worse for you. (10)My husband will see for himself what a blackguard you are, and you certainly won't keep your post then.

Krogstad. I asked you if it was only a disagreeable scene at home that you were afraid of?

Nora. (1)If my husband does get to know of it, of course he will at once pay you what is still owing, and we shall have nothing more to do with you.

Krogstad. (coming a step nearer). (2)Listen to me, Mrs. Helmer. (5)Either you have a very bad memory or you know very little of business. I shall be obliged to remind you of a few details.

Nora. (9)What do you mean?

Krogstad. (1)When your husband was ill, you came to me to borrow two hundred and fifty pounds.

Nora. (5)I didn't know anyone else to go to.

Krogstad. I promised to get you that amount—

Nora. Yes, and you did so.

Krogstad. (1)I promised to get you that amount, on certain conditions. (9)Your mind was so taken up with your husband's illness, and (1)you were so anxious to get the money for your journey, (9)that you seem to have paid no attention to the conditions of our bargain. Therefore it will not be amiss if I remind you of them. Now, (1)I promised to get the money on the security of a bond which I drew up.

Nora. Yes, and which I signed.
**Krogstad.** Good. But below your signature there were a few lines constituting your father a surety for the money; those lines your father should have signed.

**Nora.** Should? He did sign them.

**Krogstad.** I had left the date blank; that is to say, your father should himself have inserted the date on which he signed the paper. Do you remember that?

**Nora.** Yes, I think I remember--

**Krogstad.** Then I gave you the bond to send by post to your father. Is that not so?

**Nora.** Yes.

**Krogstad.** And you naturally did so at once, because five or six days afterwards you brought me the bond with your father's signature. And then I gave you the money.

**Nora.** Well, haven't I been paying it off regularly?

**Krogstad.** Fairly so, yes. But--to come back to the matter in hand--that must have been a very trying time for you, Mrs. Helmer?

**Nora.** It was, indeed.

**Krogstad.** Your father was very ill, wasn't he?

**Nora.** He was very near his end.

**Krogstad.** And died soon afterwards?

**Nora.** Yes.

**Krogstad.** Tell me, Mrs. Helmer, can you by any chance remember what day your father died?--on what day of the month, I mean.

**Nora.** Papa died on the 29th of September.

**Krogstad.** That is correct; I have ascertained it for myself. And, as that is so, there is a discrepancy (taking a paper from his pocket) which I cannot account for.
Nora. What discrepancy? I don't know--

Krogstad. The discrepancy consists, Mrs. Helmer, in the fact that your father signed this bond three days after his death.

Nora. (9)What do you mean? (9)I don't understand--

Krogstad. Your father died on the 29th of September. But, look here; your father has dated his signature the 2nd of October. It is a discrepancy, isn't it? (NORA is silent.) Can you explain it to me? (NORA is still silent.) It is a remarkable thing, too, that the words "2nd of October," as well as the year, are not written in your father's handwriting but in one that I think I know. Well, of course it can be explained; your father may have forgotten to date his signature, and someone else may have dated it haphazard before they knew of his death. There is no harm in that. It all depends on the signature of the name; and that is genuine, I suppose, Mrs. Helmer? It was your father himself who signed his name here?

Nora (after a short pause, throws her head up and looks defiantly at him). (10)No, it was not. (10)It was I that wrote papa's name.

Krogstad. (9)Are you aware that is a dangerous confession?

Nora. (10)In what way? (1)You shall have your money soon.

Krogstad. Let me ask you a question; why did you not send the paper to your father?

Nora. It was impossible; papa was so ill. (5)If I had asked him for his signature, I should have had to tell him what the money was to be used for; and when he was so ill himself I couldn't tell him that my husband's life was in danger--it was impossible.

Krogstad. It would have been better for you if you had given up your trip abroad.

Nora. (10)No, that was impossible. (10)That trip was to save my husband's life; I couldn't give that up.

Krogstad. (9)But did it never occur to you that you were committing a fraud on me?

Nora. (10)I couldn't take that into account; I didn't trouble myself about you at all. I couldn't bear you, (10)because you put so many
heartless difficulties in my way, although you knew what a dangerous condition my husband was in.

**Krogstad.** Mrs. Helmer, you evidently do not realise clearly what it is that you have been guilty of. But I can assure you that my one false step, which lost me all my reputation, was nothing more or nothing worse than what you have done.

**Nora.** You? Do you ask me to believe that you were brave enough to run a risk to save your wife's life?

**Krogstad.** The law cares nothing about motives.

**Nora.** Then it must be a very foolish law.

**Krogstad.** Foolish or not, it is the law by which you will be judged, if I produce this paper in court.

**Nora.** I don't believe it. Is a daughter not to be allowed to spare her dying father anxiety and care? Is a wife not to be allowed to save her husband's life? I don't know much about law; but I am certain that there must be laws permitting such things as that. Have you no knowledge of such laws—you who are a lawyer? You must be a very poor lawyer, Mr. Krogstad.

**Krogstad.** Maybe. But matters of business--such business as you and I have had together--do you think I don't understand that? Very well. Do as you please. But let me tell you this—if I lose my position a second time, you shall lose yours with me. (He bows, and goes out through the hall.)

**Nora.** (appears buried in thought for a short time, then tosses her head). Nonsense! Trying to frighten me like that!--I am not so silly as he thinks. (Begins to busy herself putting the children's things in order.) And yet--? No, it's impossible! I did it for love's sake.

**The Children** (in the doorway on the left). Mother, the stranger man has gone out through the gate.

**Nora.** Yes, dears, I know. But, don't tell anyone about the stranger man. Do you hear? Not even papa.

**Children**. No, mother; but will you come and play again?

**Nora.** No, no,--not now.
Children. But, mother, you promised us.

Nora. Yes, but I can't now. Run away in; I have such a lot to do. (Run away in, my sweet little darlings. (She gets them into the room by degrees and shuts the door on them; then sits down on the sofa, takes up a piece of needlework and sews a few stitches, but soon stops.) No! (Throws down the work, gets up, goes to the hall door and calls out.) Helen! bring the Tree in. (Goes to the table on the left, opens a drawer, and stops again.) No, no! it is quite impossible!

Maid (coming in with the Tree). Where shall I put it, ma'am?

Nora. Here, in the middle of the floor.

Maid. Shall I get you anything else?

Nora. No, thank you. I have all I want. [Exit MAID.]

Nora. (begins dressing the tree). A candle here-and flowers here--The horrible man! It's all nonsense--there's nothing wrong. The tree shall be splendid! (I will do everything I can think of to please you, Torvald!--I will sing for you, dance for you--(HELMER comes in with some papers under his arm.) Oh! are you back already?.

Helmer. Yes. Has anyone been here?

Nora. Here? No.

Helmer. That is strange. I saw Krogstad going out of the gate.

Nora. Did you? Oh yes, I forgot, Krogstad was here for a moment.

Helmer. Nora, I can see from your manner that he has been here begging you to say a good word for him.

Nora. Yes.

Helmer. And you were to appear to do it of your own accord; you were to conceal from me the fact of his having been here; didn't he beg that of you too?

Nora. Yes, Torvald, but--
Helmer. (9) Nora, Nora, and you would be a party to that sort of thing? To have any talk with a man like that, and give him any sort of promise? And to tell me a lie into the bargain?

Nora. A lie--?

Helmer. Didn't you tell me no one had been here? (Shakes his finger at her.) (8) My little songbird (2) must never do that again. (8) A songbird must have a clean beak to chirp with--no false notes! (Puts his arm round her waist.) That is so, isn't it? (8) Yes, I am sure it is. (Lets her go.) (2) We will say no more about it. (Sits down by the stove.) (5) How warm and snug it is here! (Turns over his papers.)

Nora (after a short pause, during which she busies herself with the Christmas Tree.) Torvald!

Helmer. Yes.

Nora. (5) I am looking forward tremendously to the fancy-dress ball at the Stenborgs' the day after tomorrow.

Helmer. And I am tremendously curious to see what you are going to surprise me with.

Nora. (7) It was very silly of me to want to do that.

Helmer. What do you mean?

Nora. I can't hit upon anything that will do; (7) everything I think of seems so silly and insignificant.

Helmer. (2) Does my little Nora acknowledge that at last?

Nora (standing behind his chair with her arms on the back of it). Are you very busy, Torvald?

Helmer. Well--

Nora. What are all those papers?


Nora. Already?
**Helmer.** I have got authority from the retiring manager to undertake the necessary changes in the staff and in the rearrangement of the work; and I must make use of the Christmas week for that, so as to have everything in order for the new year.

**Nora.** Then that was why this poor Krogstad--

**Helmer.** Hm!

**Nora** (leans against the back of his chair and strokes his hair). If you hadn't been so busy I should have asked you a tremendously big favour, Torvald.

**Helmer.** What is that? Tell me.

**Nora.** There is no one has such good taste as you. And I do so want to look nice at the fancy-dress ball. Torvald, couldn't you take me in hand and decide what I shall go as, and what sort of a dress I shall wear?

**Helmer.** Aha! so my obstinate little woman is obliged to get someone to come to her rescue?

**Nora.** Yes, Torvald, I can't get along a bit without your help.

**Helmer.** Very well, I will think it over, we shall manage to hit upon something.

**Nora.** That is nice of you. (Goes to the Christmas Tree. A short pause.) How pretty the red flowers look--. But, tell me, was it really something very bad that this Krogstad was guilty of?

**Helmer.** He forged someone's name. Have you any idea what that means?

**Nora.** Isn't it possible that he was driven to do it by necessity?

**Helmer.** Yes; or, as in so many cases, by imprudence. I am not so heartless as to condemn a man altogether because of a single false step of that kind.

**Nora.** No, you wouldn't, would you, Torvald?

**Helmer.** Many a man has been able to retrieve his character, if he has openly confessed his fault and taken his punishment.
Nora. Punishment--?

Helmer. But Krogstad did nothing of that sort; he got himself out of it by a cunning trick, and that is why he has gone under altogether.

Nora. But do you think it would--?

Helmer. Just think how a guilty man like that has to lie and play the hypocrite with every one, how he has to wear a mask in the presence of those near and dear to him, even before his own wife and children. And about the children--that is the most terrible part of it all, Nora.

Nora. How?

Helmer. Because such an atmosphere of lies infects and poisons the whole life of a home. Each breath the children take in such a house is full of the germs of evil.

Nora. (coming nearer him). Are you sure of that?

Helmer. My dear, I have often seen it in the course of my life as a lawyer. Almost everyone who has gone to the bad early in life has had a deceitful mother.

Nora. Why do you only say--mother?

Helmer. It seems most commonly to be the mother's influence, though naturally a bad father's would have the same result. Every lawyer is familiar with the fact. This Krogstad, now, has been persistently poisoning his own children with lies and dissimulation; that is why I say he has lost all moral character. (Holds out his hands to her.) That is why my sweet little Nora must promise me not to plead his cause. Give me your hand on it. Come, come, what is this? Give me your hand. There now, that's settled. I assure you it would be quite impossible for me to work with him; I literally feel physically ill when I am in the company of such people.

Nora. (takes her hand out of his and goes to the opposite side of the Christmas Tree). How hot it is in here; and I have such a lot to do.

Helmer. (getting up and putting his papers in order). Yes, and I must try and read through some of these before dinner; and I must think about your costume, too. And it is just possible I may have
something ready in gold paper to hang up on the Tree. (Puts his hand on her head.) (8) My precious little singing-bird! (He goes into his room and shuts the door after him.)

**Nora** (after a pause, whispers). No, no--it isn't true. It's impossible; it must be impossible.

(The NURSE opens the door on the left.)

**Nurse**. (6) The little ones are begging so hard to be allowed to come in to mamma.

**Nora**. (10) No, no, no! Don't let them come in to me! You stay with them, Anne.

**Nurse**. Very well, ma'am. (Shuts the door.)

**Nora**. (pale with terror). (6) Deprave my little children? (5) Poison my home? (A short pause. Then she tosses her head.) (10) It's not true. (10) It can't possibly be true.

**ACT II**

(THE SAME SCENE.--THE Christmas Tree is in the corner by the piano, stripped of its ornaments and with burnt-down candle-ends on its dishevelled branches. NORA'S cloak and hat are lying on the sofa. She is alone in the room, walking about uneasily. She stops by the sofa and takes up her cloak.)

**Nora** (drops her cloak). Someone is coming now! (Goes to the door and listens.) No--it is no one. Of course, no one will come today, Christmas Day--nor tomorrow either. But, perhaps--(opens the door and looks out). No, nothing in the letterbox; it is quite empty. (Comes forward.) What rubbish! of course he can't be in earnest about it. (10) Such a thing couldn't happen; it is impossible--I have three little children.

(Enter the NURSE from the room on the left, carrying a big cardboard box.)

**Nurse**. At last I have found the box with the fancy dress.
Nora. Thanks; put it on the table.

Nurse. (doing so). But it is very much in want of mending.

Nora. I should like to tear it into a hundred thousand pieces.

Nurse. What an idea! It can easily be put in order--just a little patience.

Nora. Yes, I will go and get Mrs. Linde to come and help me with it.

Nurse. (5) What, out again? (5) In this horrible weather? (5) You will catch cold, ma'am, and make yourself ill.

Nora. Well, worse than that might happen. How are the children?

Nurse. (6) The poor little souls are playing with their Christmas presents, but--

Nora. (6) Do they ask much for me?

Nurse. (5) You see, they are so accustomed to have their mamma with them.

Nora. (10) Yes, but, nurse, I shall not be able to be so much with them now as I was before.

Nurse. (6) Oh well, young children easily get accustomed to anything.

Nora. Do you think so? (6) Do you think they would forget their mother if she went away altogether?

Nurse. (10) Good heavens!-- (10) went away altogether?

Nora. Nurse, I want you to tell me something I have often wondered about-- (6) how could you have the heart to put your own child out among strangers?

Nurse. (5) I was obliged to, if I wanted to be little Nora's nurse.

Nora. (10) Yes, but how could you be willing to do it?

Nurse. (3) What, when I was going to get such a good place by it? A poor girl who has got into trouble should be glad to. Besides, (1) that wicked man didn't do a single thing for me.
Nora. But I suppose your daughter has quite forgotten you.

Nurse. No, indeed she hasn't. She wrote to me when she was confirmed, and when she was married.

Nora. (putting her arms round her neck). Dear old Anne, you were a good mother to me when I was little.

Nurse. Little Nora, poor dear, had no other mother but me.

Nora. And if my little ones had no other mother, I am sure you would-- What nonsense I am talking! (Opens the box.) Go in to them. Now I must--. You will see tomorrow how charming I shall look.

Nurse. I am sure there will be no one at the ball so charming as you, ma'am. (Goes into the room on the left.)

Nora (begins to unpack the box, but soon pushes it away from her). If only I dared go out. If only no one would come. If only I could be sure nothing would happen here in the meantime. Stuff and nonsense! No one will come. Only I mustn't think about it. I will brush my muff. What lovely, lovely gloves! Out of my thoughts, out of my thoughts! One, two, three, four, five, six-- (Screams.) Ah! there is someone coming--. (Makes a movement towards the door, but stands irresolute.)

(Enter MRS. LINDE from the hall, where she has taken off her cloak and hat.)

Nora. Oh, it's you, Christine. There is no one else out there, is there? How good of you to come!

Mrs. Linde. I heard you were up asking for me.

Nora. Yes, I was passing by. As a matter of fact, it is something you could help me with. Let us sit down here on the sofa. Look here. Tomorrow evening there is to be a fancy-dress ball at the Stenborgs', who live above us; and Torvald wants me to go as a Neapolitan fisher-girl, and dance the Tarantella that I learned at Capri.

Mrs. Linde. I see; you are going to keep up the character.

Nora. Yes, Torvald wants me to. Look, here is the dress; Torvald had it made for me there, but now it is all so torn, and I haven't any idea--
Mrs. Linde. We will easily put that right. It is only some of the trimming come unsewn here and there. Needle and thread? Now then, that's all we want.

Nora. It is nice of you.

Mrs. Linde. (sewing). (7) So you are going to be dressed up tomorrow.

Nora. I will tell you what--I shall come in for a moment and (7) see you in your fine feathers. But I have completely forgotten to thank you for a delightful evening yesterday.

Nora (gets up, and crosses the stage). Well, I don't think yesterday was as pleasant as usual. You ought to have come to town a little earlier, Christine. Certainly (5) Torvald does understand how to make a house dainty and attractive.

Mrs. Linde. (5) And so do you, it seems to me; you are not your father's daughter for nothing. But tell me, is Doctor Rank always as depressed as he was yesterday?

Nora. No; yesterday it was very noticeable. I must tell you that he suffers from a very dangerous disease. He has consumption of the spine, poor creature. His father was a horrible man who committed all sorts of excesses; and that is why his son was sickly from childhood, (9) do you understand?

Mrs. Linde. (dropping her sewing). But, my dearest (9) Nora, how do you know anything about such things?

Nora (walking about). Pooh! (6) When you have three children, you get visits now and then from-- (9) from married women, who know something of medical matters, and they talk about one thing and another.

Mrs. Linde. (goes on sewing. A short silence). Does Doctor Rank come here everyday?

Nora. Everyday regularly. He is Torvald's most intimate friend, and a great friend of mine too. He is just like one of the family.

Mrs. Linde. But tell me this--is he perfectly sincere? I mean, isn't he the kind of man that is very anxious to make himself agreeable?

Nora. Not in the least. What makes you think that?
Mrs. Linde. When you introduced him to me yesterday, he declared he had often heard my name mentioned in this house; but afterwards I noticed that your husband hadn't the slightest idea who I was. So how could Doctor Rank--?

Nora. That is quite right, Christine. Torvald is so absurdly fond of me that he wants me absolutely to himself, as he says. At first he used to seem almost jealous if I mentioned any of the dear folk at home, so naturally I gave up doing so. But I often talk about such things with Doctor Rank, because he likes hearing about them.

Mrs. Linde. Listen to me, Nora. You are still very like a child in many things, and I am older than you in many ways and have a little more experience. Let me tell you this--you ought to make an end of it with Doctor Rank.

Nora. What ought I to make an end of?

Mrs. Linde. Of two things, I think. Yesterday you talked some nonsense about a rich admirer who was to leave you money--

Nora. An admirer who doesn't exist, unfortunately! But what then?

Mrs. Linde. Is Doctor Rank a man of means?

Nora. Yes, he is.

Mrs. Linde. And has no one to provide for?

Nora. No, no one; but--

Mrs. Linde. And comes here everyday?

Nora. Yes, I told you so.

Mrs. Linde. But how can this well-bred man be so tactless?

Nora. I don't understand you at all.

Mrs. Linde. Don't prevaricate, Nora. Do you suppose I don't guess who lent you the two hundred and fifty pounds?

Nora. Are you out of your senses? How can you think of such a thing! A friend of ours, who comes here everyday! Do you realise what a horribly painful position that would be?
Mrs. Linde. Then it really isn't he?

Nora. No, certainly not. (9) It would never have entered into my head for a moment. Besides, (1) he had no money to lend then; he came into his money afterwards.

Mrs. Linde. Well, I think that was lucky for you, my dear Nora.

Nora. No, it would never have come into my head to ask Doctor Rank. Although I am quite sure that if I had asked him--

Mrs. Linde. But of course you won't.

Nora. Of course not. I have no reason to think it could possibly be necessary. But I am quite sure that if I told Doctor Rank--

Mrs. Linde. (5) Behind your husband's back?

Nora. (10) I must make an end of it with the other one, and that will be behind his back too. I must make an end of it with him.

Mrs. Linde. Yes, that is what I told you yesterday, but--

Nora. (walking up and down). (5) A man can put a thing like that straight much easier than a woman--

Mrs. Linde. (5) One's husband, yes.

Nora. (10) Nonsense! (Standing still.) (1) When you pay off a debt you get your bond back, don't you?

Mrs. Linde. Yes, as a matter of course.

Nora. And can tear it into a hundred thousand pieces, and burn it up--the nasty dirty paper!

Mrs. Linde. (looks hard at her, lays down her sewing and gets up slowly). Nora, you are concealing something from me.

Nora. (7) Do I look as if I were?

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

Nora (going nearer to her). Christine! (Listens.) Hush! there's Torvald come home. Do you mind going in to the children for the
present? Torvald can't bear to see dressmaking going on. Let Anne help you.

Mrs. Linde (gathering some of the things together). Certainly -- but I am not going away from here until we have had it out with one another. (She goes into the room on the left, as HELMER comes in from the hall.)

Nora. (going up to HELMER). I have wanted you so much, Torvald dear.

Helmer. Was that the dressmaker?

Nora. No, it was Christine; she is helping me to put my dress in order. You will see I shall look quite smart.

Helmer. Wasn't that a happy thought of mine, now?

Nora. Splendid! But don't you think it is nice of me, too, to do as you wish?

Helmer. Nice?-- because you do as your husband wishes? Well, well, you little rogue, I am sure you did not mean it in that way. But I am not going to disturb you; you will want to be trying on your dress, I expect.

Nora. I suppose you are going to work.

Helmer. Yes. ( Shows her a bundle of papers.) Look at that. I have just been into the bank. (Turns to go into his room.)

Nora. Torvald.

Helmer. Yes.

Nora. If your little squirrel were to ask you for something very, very prettily--?

Helmer. What then?

Nora. Would you do it?

Helmer. I should like to hear what it is, first.

Nora. Your squirrel would run about and do all her tricks if you would be nice, and do what she wants.
Helmer. (2) Speak plainly.

Nora. (8) Your skylark would chirp about in every room, with her song rising and falling--

Helmer. (8) Well, my skylark does that anyhow.

Nora. (8) I would play the fairy and dance for you in the moonlight, Torvald.

Helmer. Nora--you surely don't mean that request you made to me this morning?

Nora (going near him). Yes, Torvald, (5) I beg you so earnestly--

Helmer. Have you really the courage to open up that question again?

Nora. (5) Yes, dear, you must do as I ask; you must let Krogstad keep his post in the bank.

Helmer. (2) My dear Nora, it is his post that I have arranged Mrs. Linde shall have.

Nora. Yes, you have been awfully kind about that; but (2) you could just as well dismiss some other clerk instead of Krogstad.

Helmer. (2) This is simply incredible obstinacy! Because you chose to give him a (9) thoughtless promise that you would speak for him, I am expected to--

Nora. That isn't the reason, Torvald. It is for your own sake. This fellow writes in the most scurrilous newspapers; you have told me so yourself. He can do you an unspeakable amount of harm. (5) I am frightened to death of him--

Helmer. Ah, I understand; it is recollections of the past that scare you.

Nora. What do you mean?

Helmer. Naturally you are thinking of your father.

Nora. Yes--yes, of course. Just recall to your mind what these malicious creatures wrote in the papers about papa, and how horribly they slandered him. I believe they would have procured his dismissal if the Department had not sent you over to inquire
into it, and if you had not been so kindly disposed and helpful to him.

Helmer. (8)My little Nora, there is an important difference between your father and me. Your father's reputation as a public official was not above suspicion. Mine is, and I hope it will continue to be so, as long as I hold my office.

Nora. You never can tell what mischief these men may contrive. (5)We ought to be so well off, so snug and happy here in our peaceful home, and have no cares—you and I and the children, Torvald! (2)That is why I beg you so earnestly--

Helmer. And it is just by interceding for him that you make it impossible for me to keep him. It is already known at the Bank that I mean to dismiss Krogstad. (5)Is it to get about now that the new manager has changed his mind at his wife's bidding--

Nora. (10)And what if it did?

Helmer. Of course!—if only this (8)obstinate little person (10)can get her way! (2)Do you suppose I am going to make myself ridiculous before my whole staff, to let people think that I am a man to be swayed by all sorts of outside influence? I should very soon feel the consequences of it, I can tell you! And besides, there is one thing that makes it quite impossible for me to have Krogstad in the Bank as long as I am manager.

Nora. Whatever is that?

Helmer. His moral failings I might perhaps have overlooked, if necessary--

Nora. Yes, you could—couldn't you?

Helmer. And I hear he is a good worker, too. But I knew him when we were boys. It was one of those rash friendships that so often prove an incubus in afterlife. I may as well tell you plainly, we were once on very intimate terms with one another. But this tactless fellow lays no restraint on himself when other people are present. On the contrary, he thinks it gives him the right to adopt a familiar tone with me, and every minute it is "I say, Helmer, old fellow!" and that sort of thing. I assure you it is extremely painful for me. He would make my position in the Bank intolerable.
Nora. (10) Torvald, I don't believe you mean that.

Helmer. Don't you? Why not?

Nora. (10) Because it is such a narrow-minded way of looking at things.

Helmer. (2) What are you saying? Narrow-minded? Do you think I am narrow-minded?

Nora. No, just the opposite, dear--and it is exactly for that reason.

Helmer. It's the same thing. (9) You say my point of view is narrow-minded, so I must be so too. (9) Narrow-minded! Very well--I must put an end to this. (Goes to the hall door and calls.) Helen!

Nora. What are you going to do?

Helmer. (looking among his papers). Settle it. (Enter MAID.) (2) Look here; take this letter and go downstairs with it at once. (2) Find a messenger and tell him to deliver it, and be quick. The address is on it, and here is the money.

Maid. (5) Very well, sir. (Exit with the letter.)

Helmer (putting his papers together). Now then, (8) little Miss Obstinate.

Nora. (breathlessly). Torvald--what was that letter?

Helmer. Krogstad's dismissal.

Nora. (10) Call her back, Torvald! There is still time. Oh Torvald, call her back! (2) Do it for my sake--for your own sake--for the children's sake! (10) Do you hear me, Torvald? (10) Call her back! You don't know what that letter can bring upon us.

Helmer. It's too late.

Nora. Yes, it's too late.

Helmer. (2) My dear Nora, I can forgive the anxiety you are in, although really it is an insult to me. It is, indeed. Isn't it an insult to think that I should be afraid of a starving quill-driver's vengeance? (2) But I forgive you nevertheless,
because it is such eloquent witness to your great love for me. (Takes her in his arms.) And that is as it should be, my own darling Nora. Come what will, you may be sure I shall have both courage and strength if they be needed. You will see I am man enough to take everything upon myself.

Nora. (in a horror-stricken voice). What do you mean by that?

Helmer. Everything, I say--

Nora (recovering herself). You will never have to do that.

Helmer. That's right. Well, we will share it, Nora, as man and wife should. That is how it shall be. (Caressing her.) Are you content now? There! There!--not these frightened dove's eyes! The whole thing is only the wildest fancy!--Now, you must go and play through the Tarantella and practise with your tambourine. I shall go into the inner office and shut the door, and I shall hear nothing; you can make as much noise as you please. (Turns back at the door.) And when Rank comes, tell him where he will find me. (Nods to her, takes his papers and goes into his room, and shuts the door after him.)

Nora. (bewildered with anxiety, stands as if rooted to the spot, and whispers). He was capable of doing it. He will do it. He will do it in spite of everything.--No, not that! Never, never! Anything rather than that! Oh, for some help, some way out of it! (The door-bell rings.) Doctor Rank! Anything rather than that--anything, whatever it is! (She puts her hands over her face, pulls herself together, goes to the door and opens it. RANK is standing without, hanging up his coat. During the following dialogue it begins to grow dark.)

Nora. Good day, Doctor Rank. I knew your ring. But you mustn't go in to Torvald now; I think he is busy with something.

Rank. And you?

Nora (brings him in and shuts the door after him). Oh, you know very well I always have time for you.

Rank. Thank you. I shall make use of as much of it as I can.

Nora. What do you mean by that? As much of it as you can?

Rank. Well, does that alarm you?
Nora. It was such a strange way of putting it. Is anything likely to happen?

Rank. Nothing but what I have long been prepared for. But I certainly didn't expect it to happen so soon.

Nora. (gripping him by the arm). What have you found out? Doctor Rank, you must tell me.

Rank. (sitting down by the stove). It is all up with me. And it can't be helped.

Nora (with a sigh of relief). Is it about yourself?

Rank. Who else? It is no use lying to one's self. I am the most wretched of all my patients, Mrs. Helmer. Lately I have been taking stock of my internal economy. Bankrupt! Probably within a month I shall lie rotting in the churchyard.

Nora. What an ugly thing to say!

Rank. The thing itself is cursedly ugly, and the worst of it is that I shall have to face so much more that is ugly before that. I shall only make one more examination of myself; when I have done that, I shall know pretty certainly when it will be that the horrors of dissolution will begin. There is something I want to tell you. Helmer's refined nature gives him an unconquerable disgust at everything that is ugly; I won't have him in my sick-room.

Nora. Oh, but, Doctor Rank--

Rank. I won't have him there. Not on any account. I bar my door to him. As soon as I am quite certain that the worst has come, I shall send you my card with a black cross on it, and then you will know that the loathsome end has begun.

Nora. You are quite absurd today. And I wanted you so much to be in a really good humour.

Rank. With death stalking beside me?--To have to pay this penalty for another man's sin? Is there any justice in that? And in every single family, in one way or another, some such inexorable retribution is being exacted--
Nora (putting her hands over her ears). Rubbish! Do talk of something cheerful.

Rank. Oh, it's a mere laughing matter, the whole thing. My poor innocent spine has to suffer for my father's youthful amusements.

Nora. (sitting at the table on the left). I suppose you mean that he was too partial to asparagus and pate de foie gras, don't you?

Rank. Yes, and to truffles.

Nora. Truffles, yes. And oysters too, I suppose?

Rank. Oysters, of course, that goes without saying.

Nora. And heaps of port and champagne. It is sad that all these nice things should take their revenge on our bones.

Rank. Especially that they should revenge themselves on the unlucky bones of those who have not had the satisfaction of enjoying them.

Nora. Yes, that's the saddest part of it all.

Rank (with a searching look at her). Hm!--

Nora (after a short pause). Why did you smile?

Rank. No, it was you that laughed.

Nora. No, it was you that smiled, Doctor Rank!

Rank (rising). You are a greater rascal than I thought.

Nora. I am in a silly mood today.

Rank. So it seems.

Nora (putting her hands on his shoulders). Dear, dear Doctor Rank, death mustn't take you away from Torvald and me.

Rank. It is a loss you would easily recover from. Those who are gone are soon forgotten.

Nora (looking at him anxiously). Do you believe that?

Rank. People form new ties, and then--
Nora. Who will form new ties?

Rank. Both you and Helmer, when I am gone. You yourself are already on the high road to it, I think. What did that Mrs. Linde want here last night?

Nora. Oho!--you don't mean to say you are jealous of poor Christine?

Rank. Yes, I am. She will be my successor in this house. When I am done for, this woman will--

Nora. Hush! don't speak so loud. She is in that room.

Rank. Today again. There, you see.

Nora. She has only come to sew my dress for me. Bless my soul, how unreasonable you are! (Sits down on the sofa.) Be nice now, Doctor Rank, and tomorrow you will see how beautifully I shall dance, and you can imagine I am doing it all for you--and for Torvald too, of course. (Takes various things out of the box.) Doctor Rank, come and sit down here, and I will show you something.

Rank (sitting down). What is it?

Nora. Just look at those!

Rank. Silk stockings.

Nora. Flesh-coloured. Aren't they lovely? It is so dark here now, but tomorrow--. No, no, no! you must only look at the feet. Oh well, you may have leave to look at the legs too.

Rank. Hm!--Nora. Why are you looking so critical? (7)Don't you think they will fit me?

Rank. I have no means of forming an opinion about that.

Nora (looks at him for a moment). For shame! (Hits him lightly on the ear with the stockings.) That's to punish you. (Folds them up again.)

Rank. And what other nice things am I to be allowed to see?

Nora. Not a single thing more, for being so naughty. (She looks among the things, humming to herself.)
Rank (after a short silence). When I am sitting here, talking to you as intimately as this, I cannot imagine for a moment what would have become of me if I had never come into this house.

Nora (smiling). I believe you do feel thoroughly at home with us.

Rank. (in a lower voice, looking straight in front of him). And to be obliged to leave it all--

Nora. Nonsense, you are not going to leave it.

Rank. (as before). And not be able to leave behind one the slightest token of one's gratitude, scarcely even a fleeting regret--nothing but an empty place which the first comer can fill as well as any other.

Nora. And if I asked you now for a--? No!

Rank. For what?

Nora. For a big proof of your friendship--

Rank. Yes, yes!

Nora. I mean a tremendously big favour--

Rank. Would you really make me so happy for once?

Nora. Ah, but you don't know what it is yet.

Rank. No--but tell me.

Nora. I really can't, Doctor Rank. It is something out of all reason; it means advice, and help, and a favour--

Rank. The bigger a thing it is the better. I can't conceive what it is you mean. Do tell me. Haven't I your confidence?

Nora. More than anyone else. I know you are my truest and best friend, and so I will tell you what it is. Well, Doctor Rank, it is something you must help me to prevent. You know how devotedly, how inexpressibly deeply Torvald loves me; he would never for a moment hesitate to give his life for me.

Rank. (leaning towards her). Nora--do you think he is the only one--?
Nora. (with a slight start). The only one--?

Rank. The only one who would gladly give his life for your sake.

Nora (sadly). Is that it?

Rank. I was determined you should know it before I went away, and there will never be a better opportunity than this. Now you know it, Nora. And now you know, too, that you can trust me as you would trust no one else.

Nora (rises, deliberately and quietly). Let me pass.

Rank (makes room for her to pass him, but sits still). Nora!

Nora (at the hall door). Helen, bring in the lamp. (Goes over to the stove.) Dear Doctor Rank, that was really horrid of you.

Rank. To have loved you as much as anyone else does? Was that horrid?

Nora. No, but to go and tell me so. There was really no need--

Rank. What do you mean? Did you know--? (MAID enters with lamp, puts it down on the table, and goes out.) Nora--Mrs. Helmer--tell me, had you any idea of this?

Nora. Oh, how do I know whether I had or whether I hadn't? I really can't tell you--To think you could be so clumsy, Doctor Rank! We were getting on so nicely.

Rank. Well, at all events you know now that you can command me, body and soul. So won't you speak out?

Nora (looking at him). After what happened?

Rank. (2)I beg you to let me know what it is.

Nora. (10)I can't tell you anything now.

Rank. Yes, yes. You mustn't punish me in that way. Let me have permission to do for you whatever a man may do.

Nora. You can do nothing for me now. Besides, (10)I really don't need any help at all. (9)You will find that the whole thing is merely fancy on my part. It really is so--of course it is! (Sits down in the
rocking-chair, and looks at him with a smile.) You are a nice sort of man, Doctor Rank!--don't you feel ashamed of yourself, now the lamp has come?

**Rank.** Not a bit. But perhaps I had better go--for ever?

**Nora.** No, indeed, you shall not. Of course you must come here just as before. You know very well Torvald can't do without you.

**Rank.** Yes, but you?

**Nora.** Oh, I am always tremendously pleased when you come.

**Rank.** It is just that, that put me on the wrong track. You are a riddle to me. I have often thought that you would almost as soon be in my company as in Helmer's.

**Nora.** Yes--(4) you see there are some people one loves best, and others whom one would almost always rather have as companions.

**Rank.** Yes, there is something in that.

**Nora.** When I was at home, of course I loved papa best. But I always thought it tremendous fun if I could steal down into the maids' room, because they never moralised at all, and talked to each other about such entertaining things.

**Rank.** I see--it is their place I have taken.

**Nora (jumping up and going to him).** Oh, dear, nice Doctor Rank, I never meant that at all. (5) But surely you can understand that being with Torvald is a little like being with papa--(Enter MAID from the hall.)

**Maid.** If you please, ma'am. (Whispers and hands her a card.)

**Nora.** (glancing at the card). Oh! (Puts it in her pocket.)

**Rank.** Is there anything wrong?

**Nora.** No, no, not in the least. It is only something--it is my new dress--

**Rank.** What? Your dress is lying there.
Nora. Oh, yes, that one; but this is another. I ordered it.\footnote{Torvald mustn't know about it--}

Rank. Oho! Then that was the great secret.

Nora. Of course. Just go in to him; he is sitting in the inner room. Keep him as long as--

Rank. Make your mind easy; I won't let him escape.

(Goes into HELMER'S room.)

Nora (to the MAID). And he is standing waiting in the kitchen?

Maid. Yes; he came up the back stairs.

Nora. But didn't you tell him no one was in?

Maid. Yes, but it was no good.

Nora. He won't go away?

Maid. No; he says he won't until he has seen you, ma'am.

Nora. Well, let him come in--but quietly. Helen, you mustn't say anything about it to anyone. It is a surprise for my husband.

Maid. Yes, ma'am, I quite understand. (Exit.)

Nora. This dreadful thing is going to happen! It will happen in spite of me! No, no, no, it can't happen--it shan't happen! (She bolts the door of HELMER'S room. The MAID opens the hall door for KROGSTAD and shuts it after him. He is wearing a fur coat, high boots and a fur cap.)

Nora (advancing towards him). Speak low--my husband is at home.

Krogstad. No matter about that.

Nora. What do you want of me?

Krogstad. An explanation of something.

Nora. Make haste then. What is it?

Krogstad. You know, I suppose, that I have got my dismissal.
Nora. (5) I couldn't prevent it, Mr. Krogstad. I fought as hard as I could on your side, but it was no good.

Krogstad. Does your husband love you so little, then? (5) He knows what I can expose you to, and yet he ventures--

Nora. (10) How can you suppose that he has any knowledge of the sort?

Krogstad. I didn't suppose so at all. It would not be the least like our dear Torvald Helmer to show so much courage--

Nora. (10) Mr. Krogstad, a little respect for my husband, please.

Krogstad. Certainly--all the respect he deserves. But since you have kept the matter so carefully to yourself, (9) I make bold to suppose that you have a little clearer idea, than you had yesterday, of what it actually is that you have done?

Nora. (10) More than you could ever teach me.

Krogstad. Yes, such a bad lawyer as I am.

Nora. What is it you want of me?

Krogstad. Only to see how you were, Mrs. Helmer. I have been thinking about you all day long. A mere cashier, a quill-driver, a--well, a man like me--even he has a little of what is called feeling, you know.

Nora. (6) Show it, then; think of my little children.

Krogstad. Have you and your husband thought of mine? But never mind about that. I only wanted to tell you that you need not take this matter too seriously. (2) In the first place there will be no accusation made on my part.

Nora. (10) No, of course not; I was sure of that.

Krogstad. The whole thing can be arranged amicably; there is no reason why anyone should know anything about it. (2) It will remain a secret between us three.

Nora. (10) My husband must never get to know anything about it.

Krogstad. (5) How will you be able to prevent it? (1) Am I to understand that you can pay the balance that is owing?
Nora. No, not just at present.

Krogstad. (1) Or perhaps that you have some expedient for raising the money soon?

Nora. No expedient that I mean to make use of.

Krogstad. Well, in any case, it would have been of no use to you now. (2) If you stood there with ever so much money in your hand, I would never part with your bond.

Nora. (10) Tell me what purpose you mean to put it to.

Krogstad. (2) I shall only preserve it--keep it in my possession. No one who is not concerned in the matter shall have the slightest hint of it. (9) So that if the thought of it has driven you to any desperate resolution--

Nora. It has.

Krogstad. (9) If you had it in your mind to run away from your home--

Nora. I had.

Krogstad. Or even something worse--

Nora. How could you know that?

Krogstad. (2) Give up the idea.

Nora. How did you know I had thought of that?

Krogstad. Most of us think of that at first. I did, too--but I hadn't the courage.

Nora (faintly). No more had I.

Krogstad. (in a tone of relief). No, that's it, isn't it--you hadn't the courage either?

Nora. No, I haven't--I haven't.

Krogstad. (5) Besides, it would have been a great piece of folly. Once the first storm at home is over--. I have a letter for your husband in my pocket.
Nora. Telling him everything?

Krogstad. In as lenient a manner as I possibly could.

Nora (quickly). He mustn't get the letter. Tear it up. I will find some means of getting money.

Krogstad. Excuse me, Mrs. Helmer, but I think I told you just now--

Nora. I am not speaking of what I owe you. Tell me what sum you are asking my husband for, and I will get the money.

Krogstad. I am not asking your husband for a penny.

Nora. What do you want, then?

Krogstad. I will tell you. I want to rehabilitate myself, Mrs. Helmer; I want to get on; and in that your husband must help me. For the last year and a half I have not had a hand in anything dishonourable, amid all that time I have been struggling in most restricted circumstances. I was content to work my way up step by step. Now I am turned out, and I am not going to be satisfied with merely being taken into favour again. I want to get on, I tell you. I want to get into the Bank again, in a higher position. Your husband must make a place for me--

Nora. That he will never do!

Krogstad. He will; I know him; he dare not protest. And as soon as I am in there again with him, then you will see! Within a year I shall be the manager's right hand. It will be Nils Krogstad and not Torvald Helmer who manages the Bank.

Nora. That's a thing you will never see!

Krogstad. Do you mean that you will--?

Nora. I have courage enough for it now.

Krogstad. Oh, you can't frighten me. A fine, spoilt lady like you--

Nora. You will see, you will see.
Krogstad. Under the ice, perhaps? Down into the cold, coal-black water? And then, in the spring, to float up to the surface, all horrible and unrecognisable, with your hair fallen out--

Nora. 

Krogstad. Nor you me. 

Nora. 

Krogstad. 

Nora. Afterwards? When I am no longer--

Nora (goes to the hall door, opens it slightly and listens.) He is going. He is not putting the letter in the box. Oh no, no! that's impossible! (Opens the door by degrees.) What is that? He is standing outside. He is not going downstairs. Is he hesitating? Can he--? (A letter drops into the box; then KROGSTAD'S footsteps are heard, until they die away as he goes downstairs. NORA utters a stifled cry, and runs across the room to the table by the sofa. A short pause.)

Nora. In the letter-box. (Steals across to the hall door.) There it lies--Torvald, Torvald, 

(Mrs. Linde. comes in from the room on the left, carrying the dress.)

Mrs. Linde. There, I can't see anything more to mend now. Would you like to try it on--?

Nora (in a hoarse whisper). Christine, come here.

Mrs. Linde (throwing the dress down on the sofa). What is the matter with you? You look so agitated!

Nora. Come here. Do you see that letter? There, look--you can see it through the glass in the letter-box.
Mrs. Linde. Yes, I see it.

Nora. That letter is from Krogstad.

Mrs. Linde. (1)Nora--it was Krogstad who lent you the money!

Nora. Yes, and now Torvald will know all about it.

Mrs. Linde. Believe me, Nora, that's the best thing for both of you.

Nora. You don't know all. I forged a name.

Mrs. Linde. Good heavens--!

Nora. I only want to say this to you, Christine--you must be my witness.

Mrs. Linde. Your witness? What do you mean? What am I to--?

Nora. (9)If I should go out of my mind--and it might easily happen--

Mrs. Linde. Nora!

Nora. Or if anything else should happen to me--anything, for instance, that might prevent my being here--

Mrs. Linde. Nora! Nora! (9)you are quite out of your mind.

Nora. And if it should happen that there were some one who wanted to take all the responsibility, all the blame, you understand--

Mrs. Linde. Yes, yes--but how can you suppose--?

Nora. (10)Then you must be my witness, that it is not true, Christine. (9)I am not out of my mind at all; I am in my right senses now, and I tell you no one else has known anything about it; I, and I alone, did the whole thing. Remember that.

Mrs. Linde. I will, indeed. (9)But I don't understand all this.

Nora. (9)How should you understand it? A wonderful thing is going to happen!

Mrs. Linde. A wonderful thing?
Nora. Yes, a wonderful thing!--But it is so terrible, Christine; it mustn't happen, not for all the world.

Mrs. Linde. I will go at once and see Krogstad.

Nora. Don't go to him; he will do you some harm.

Mrs. Linde. There was a time when he would gladly do anything for my sake.

Nora. He?

Mrs. Linde. Where does he live?

Nora. How should I know--? Yes (feeling in her pocket), here is his card. But the letter, the letter--!

Helmer. (calls from his room, knocking at the door). Nora! Nora (cries out anxiously). Oh, what's that? What do you want?

Helmer. (2) Don't be so frightened. We are not coming in; you have locked the door. (7) Are you trying on your dress?

Nora. Yes, that's it. (7) I look so nice, Torvald.

Mrs. Linde. (who has read the card). I see he lives at the corner here.

Nora. Yes, but it's no use. It is hopeless. The letter is lying there in the box.

Mrs. Linde. (2) And your husband keeps the key?

Nora. Yes, always.

Mrs. Linde. Krogstad must ask for his letter back unread, he must find some pretence--

Nora. But it is just at this time that Torvald generally--

Mrs. Linde. You must delay him. Go in to him in the meantime. I will come back as soon as I can. (She goes out hurriedly through the hall door.)

Nora (goes to HELMER'S door, opens it and peeps in). Torvald!
Helmer (from the inner room). Well? May I venture at last to come into my own room again? Come along, Rank, now you will see—(Halting in the doorway.) But what is this?

Nora. What is what, dear?

Helmer. Rank led me to expect a splendid transformation.

Rank (in the doorway). I understood so, but evidently I was mistaken.

Nora. Yes, nobody is to have the chance of admiring me in my dress until tomorrow.

Helmer. But, my dear Nora, you look so worn out. Have you been practising too much?

Nora. No, I have not practised at all.

Helmer. But you will need to--

Nora. Yes, indeed I shall, Torvald. But I can't get on a bit without you to help me; I have absolutely forgotten the whole thing.

Helmer. Oh, we will soon work it up again.

Nora. Yes, help me, Torvald. Promise that you will! I am so nervous about it—all the people—. You must give yourself up to me entirely this evening. Not the tiniest bit of business—you mustn't even take a pen in your hand. Will you promise, Torvald dear?

Helmer. I promise. This evening I will be wholly and absolutely at your service, you helpless little mortal. Ah, by the way, first of all I will just—(Goes towards the hall door.)

Nora. What are you going to do there?

Helmer. Only see if any letters have come.

Nora. No, no! don't do that, Torvald!

Helmer. Why not?

Nora. Torvald, please don't. There is nothing there.
Helmer. Well, let me look. (Turns to go to the letter-box. NORA, at the piano, plays the first bars of the Tarantella. HELMER stops in the doorway.) Aha!

Nora. (10) I can't dance tomorrow if I don't practise with you.

Helmer (going up to her). Are you really so afraid of it, dear?

Nora. Yes, so dreadfully afraid of it. Let me practise at once; there is time now, before we go to dinner. (2) Sit down and play for me, Torvald dear; criticise me, and correct me as you play.

Helmer. With great pleasure, if you wish me to. (Sits down at the piano.)

Nora (takes out of the box a tambourine and a long variegated shawl. She hastily drapes the shawl round her. Then she springs to the front of the stage and calls out). (5) Now play for me! (5) I am going to dance!

(HELMER plays and NORA dances. RANK stands by the piano behind HELMER, and looks on.)

Helmer. (as he plays). (2) Slower, slower!

Nora. (10) I can't do it any other way.

Helmer. (2) Not so violently, Nora!

Nora. (10) This is the way.

Helmer. (stops playing). (2) No, no--that is not a bit right.

Nora. (laughing and swinging the tambourine). Didn't I tell you so?

Rank. Let me play for her.

Helmer (getting up). Yes, do. (2) I can correct her better then.

(RANK sits down at the piano and plays. NORA dances more and more wildly. HELMER has taken up a position beside the stove, and during her dance gives her frequent instructions. She does not seem to hear him; her hair comes down and falls over her shoulders; she pays no attention to it, but goes on dancing. Enter Mrs. LINDE.)
Mrs. Linde (standing as if spell-bound in the doorway). Oh!--

Nora (as she dances). Such fun, Christine!

Helmer. My dear darling Nora, you are dancing as if your life depended on it.

Nora. So it does.

Helmer. Stop, Rank; this is sheer madness. Stop, I tell you! (RANK stops playing, and NORA suddenly stands still. HELMER goes up to her.) I could never have believed it. You have forgotten everything I taught you.

Nora (throwing away the tambourine). There, you see.

Helmer. You will want a lot of coaching.

Nora. Yes, you see how much I need it. You must coach me up to the last minute. Promise me that, Torvald!

Helmer. You can depend on me.

Nora. You must not think of anything but me, either today or tomorrow; you mustn't open a single letter--not even open the letter-box--

Helmer. Ah, you are still afraid of that fellow--

Nora. Yes, indeed I am.

Helmer. Nora, I can tell from your looks that there is a letter from him lying there.

Nora. I don't know; I think there is; but you must not read anything of that kind now. Nothing horrid must come between us until this is all over.

Rank (whispers to HELMER). You mustn't contradict her.

Helmer (taking her in his arms). The child shall have her way. But tomorrow night, after you have danced--

Nora. Then you will be free. (The MAID appears in the doorway to the right.)
Maid. Dinner is served, ma'am.

Nora. We will have champagne, Helen.

Maid. Very good, ma'am. [Exit.

Helmer. Hullo!--are we going to have a banquet?

Nora. Yes, a champagne banquet until the small hours. (Calls out.) And a few macaroons, Helen--lots, just for once!

Helmer. (2)Come, come, don't be so wild and nervous. (9)Be my own little skylark, as you used.

Nora. Yes, dear, I will. But go in now and you too, Doctor Rank. (7)Christine, you must help me to do up my hair.

Rank (whispers to HELMER as they go out). I suppose there is nothing--she is not expecting anything?

Helmer. Far from it, my dear fellow; it is simply nothing more than this (2)childish nervousness I was telling you of. (They go into the right-hand room.)

Nora. Well!

Mrs. Linde. Gone out of town.

Nora. I could tell from your face.

Mrs. Linde. He is coming home tomorrow evening. I wrote a note for him.

Nora. You should have let it alone; you must prevent nothing. After all, it is splendid to be waiting for a wonderful thing to happen.

Mrs. Linde. What is it that you are waiting for?

Nora. (9)Oh, you wouldn't understand. Go in to them, I will come in a moment. (Mrs. LINDE goes into the dining-room. NORA stands still for a little while, as if to compose herself. Then she looks at her watch.) Five o'clock. Seven hours until midnight; and then four-and-twenty hours until the next midnight. Then the Tarantella will be over. Twenty-four and seven? Thirty-one hours to live.
Helmer (from the doorway on the right). *(8)* Where's my little skylark?

Nora. (going to him with her arms outstretched). *(5)* Here she is!

(THE SAME SCENE.--The table has been placed in the middle of the stage, with chairs around it. A lamp is burning on the table. The door into the hall stands open. Dance music is heard in the room above. Mrs. LINDE is sitting at the table idly turning over the leaves of a book; she tries to read, but does not seem able to collect her thoughts. Every now and then she listens intently for a sound at the outer door.)

Mrs. Linde. (looking at her watch). Not yet--and the time is nearly up. If only he does not--. (Listens again.) Ah, there he is. (Goes into the hall and opens the outer door carefully. Light footsteps are heard on the stairs. She whispers.) Come in. There is no one here.

Krogstad (in the doorway). I found a note from you at home. What does this mean?

Mrs. Linde. It is absolutely necessary that I should have a talk with you.

Krogstad. Really? And is it absolutely necessary that it should be here?

Mrs. Linde. It is impossible where I live; *(5)* there is no private entrance to my rooms. Come in; we are quite alone. The maid is asleep, and the Helmers are at the dance upstairs.

Krogstad (coming into the room). Are the Helmers really at a dance tonight?

Mrs. Linde. Yes, why not?

Krogstad. Certainly--why not?

Mrs. Linde. Now, Nils, let us have a talk.

Krogstad. Can we two have anything to talk about?

Mrs. Linde. We have a great deal to talk about.

Krogstad. I shouldn't have thought so.
Mrs. Linde. (9) No, you have never properly understood me.

Krogstad. Was there anything else to understand except what was obvious to all the world--(1) a heartless woman jilts a man when a more lucrative chance turns up?

Mrs. Linde. Do you believe I am as absolutely heartless as all that? And do you believe that I did it with a light heart?

Krogstad. Didn't you?

Mrs. Linde. Nils, did you really think that?

Krogstad. If it were as you say, why did you write to me as you did at the time?

Mrs. Linde. I could do nothing else. (5) As I had to break with you, it was my duty also to put an end to all that you felt for me.

Krogstad (wringing his hands). So that was it. (1) And all this--only for the sake of money!

Mrs. Linde. (1) You must not forget that I had a helpless mother and two little brothers. We couldn't wait for you, Nils; (1) your prospects seemed hopeless then.

Krogstad. That may be so, but you had no right to throw me over for anyone else's sake.

Mrs. Linde. Indeed I don't know. Many a time did I ask myself if I had the right to do it.

Krogstad (more gently). When I lost you, it was as if all the solid ground went from under my feet. Look at me now--I am a shipwrecked man clinging to a bit of wreckage.

Mrs. Linde. But help may be near.

Krogstad. It was near; but then you came and stood in my way.

Mrs. Linde. Unintentionally, Nils. It was only today that I learned it was your place I was going to take in the Bank.

Krogstad. I believe you, if you say so. (2) But now that you know it, are you not going to give it up to me?
Mrs. Linde. No, because that would not benefit you in the least.

Krogstad. Oh, benefit, benefit—I would have done it whether or no.

Mrs. Linde. I have learned to act prudently. Life, and hard, bitter necessity have taught me that.

Krogstad. And life has taught me not to believe in fine speeches.

Mrs. Linde. Then life has taught you something very reasonable. But deeds you must believe in?

Krogstad. What do you mean by that?

Mrs. Linde. You said you were like a shipwrecked man clinging to some wreckage.

Krogstad. I had good reason to say so.

Mrs. Linde. Well, I am like a shipwrecked woman clinging to some wreckage—no one to mourn for, no one to care for.

Krogstad. It was your own choice.

Mrs. Linde. There was no other choice—then.

Krogstad. Well, what now?

Mrs. Linde. Nils, how would it be if we two shipwrecked people could join forces?

Krogstad. What are you saying?

Mrs. Linde. Two on the same piece of wreckage would stand a better chance than each on their own.

Krogstad. Christine I...

Mrs. Linde. What do you suppose brought me to town?

Krogstad. Do you mean that you gave me a thought?

Mrs. Linde. I could not endure life without work. All my life, as long as I can remember, I have worked, and it has been my greatest and only pleasure. But now I am quite alone in the world—my life is so dreadfully empty and I feel so forsaken. There is not the
least pleasure in working for one's self. Nils, give me someone and something to work for.

Krogstad. I don't trust that. (5)It is nothing but a woman's overstrained sense of generosity that prompts you to make such an offer of yourself.

Mrs. Linde. Have you ever noticed anything of the sort in me?

Krogstad. Could you really do it? Tell me--do you know all about my past life?

Mrs. Linde. Yes.

Krogstad. And do you know what they think of me here?

Mrs. Linde. (5)You seemed to me to imply that with me you might have been quite another man.

Krogstad. I am certain of it.

Mrs. Linde. Is it too late now?

Krogstad. Christine, are you saying this deliberately? Yes, I am sure you are. I see it in your face. Have you really the courage, then--?

Mrs. Linde. (6)I want to be a mother to someone, and your children need a mother. We two need each other. Nils, I have faith in your real character--I can dare anything together with you.

Krogstad. (grasps her hands). Thanks, thanks, Christine! (5)Now I shall find a way to clear myself in the eyes of the world. Ah, but I forgot--

Mrs. Linde (listening). Hush! The Tarantella! Go, go!

Krogstad. Why? What is it?

Mrs. Linde. Do you hear them up there? When that is over, we may expect them back.

Krogstad. Yes, yes--I will go. But it is all no use. Of course you are not aware what steps I have taken in the matter of the Helmers.
Mrs. Linde. Yes, I know all about that.

Krogstad. (5) And in spite of that have you the courage to--?

Mrs. Linde. I understand very well to what lengths a man like you might be driven by despair.

Krogstad. If I could only undo what I have done!

Mrs. Linde. You cannot. Your letter is lying in the letter-box now.

Krogstad. Are you sure of that?

Mrs. Linde. Quite sure, but--

Krogstad (with a searching look at her). Is that what it all means?--that you want to save your friend at any cost? Tell me frankly. Is that it?

Mrs. Linde. (8) Nils, a woman who has once sold herself for another's sake, doesn't do it a second time.

Krogstad. I will ask for my letter back.

Mrs. Linde. No, no.

Krogstad. Yes, of course I will. I will wait here until Helmer comes; I will tell him he must give me my letter back--that it only concerns my dismissal--that he is not to read it--

Mrs. Linde. No, Nils, you must not recall your letter.

Krogstad. But, tell me, wasn't it for that very purpose that you asked me to meet you here?

Mrs. Linde. In my first moment of fright, it was. But twenty-four hours have elapsed since then, and in that time I have witnessed incredible things in this house. Helmer must know all about it. This unhappy secret must be disclosed; they must have a complete understanding between them, which is impossible with all this concealment and falsehood going on.

Krogstad. Very well, if you will take the responsibility. But there is one thing I can do in any case, and I shall do it at once.
Mrs. Linde (listening). You must be quick and go! The dance is over; we are not safe a moment longer.

Krogstad. I will wait for you below.

Mrs. Linde. Yes, do. You must see me back to my door...

Krogstad. I have never had such an amazing piece of good fortune in my life! (Goes out through the outer door. The door between the room and the hall remains open.)

Mrs. Linde (tidying up the room and laying her hat and cloak ready). What a difference! what a difference! (Someone to work for and live for--a home to bring comfort into. That I will do, indeed. I wish they would be quick and come--(Listens.) Ah, there they are now. I must put on my things. (Takes up her hat and cloak. HELMER'S and NORA'S voices are heard outside; a key is turned, and HELMER brings NORA almost by force into the hall. She is in an Italian costume with a large black shawl around her; he is in evening dress, and a black domino which is flying open.)

Nora (hanging back in the doorway, and struggling with him). No, no, no!--don't take me in. I want to go upstairs again; I don't want to leave so early.

Helmer. But, my dearest Nora--

Nora. Please, Torvald dear--please, please--only an hour more.

Helmer. Not a single minute, my sweet Nora. You know that was our agreement. Come along into the room; you are catching cold standing there. (He brings her gently into the room, in spite of her resistance.)

Mrs. Linde. Good evening.

Nora. Christine!

Helmer. You here, so late, Mrs. Linde?

Mrs. Linde. Yes, you must excuse me; I was so anxious to see Nora in her dress.

Nora. Have you been sitting here waiting for me?
Mrs. Linde. Yes, unfortunately I came too late, you had already
gone upstairs; (7) and I thought I couldn't go away again without
having seen you.

Helmer (taking off NORA'S shawl). (7) Yes, take a good look at her. I
think she is worth looking at. (7) Isn't she charming, Mrs. Linde?

Mrs. Linde. Yes, indeed she is.

Helmer. (7) Doesn't she look remarkably pretty? Everyone thought so
at the dance. (2) But she is terribly self-willed, this sweet little
person. What are we to do with her? (2) You will hardly believe that
I had almost to bring her away by force.

Nora. (10) Torvald, you will repent not having let me stay, even if it
were only for half an hour.

Helmer. Listen to her, Mrs. Linde! She had danced her Tarantella,
and it had been a tremendous success, as it deserved--although
possibly the performance was a trifle too realistic--a little
more so, I mean, than was strictly compatible with the limitations
of art. But never mind about that! The chief thing is, she had made
a success--she had made a tremendous success. (2) Do you think I was going
to let her remain there after that, and spoil the effect? No, indeed!
(2) I took my charming little Capri maiden-- (8) my capricious little
Capri maiden, I should say--on my arm; took one quick turn
round the room; a curtsey on either side, and, as they say in
novels, (8) the beautiful apparition disappeared. An exit ought always
to be effective, Mrs. Linde; but that is what I cannot make Nora
understand. Pooh! this room is hot. (Throws his domino on a
chair, and opens the door of his room.) Hullo! it's all dark
in here. Oh, of course--excuse me--. (He goes in, and lights
some candles.)

Nora (in a hurried and breathless whisper). Well?

Mrs. Linde (in a low voice). I have had a talk with him.

Nora. Yes, and--

Mrs. Linde. Nora, you must tell your husband all about it.

Nora. (in an expressionless voice). I knew it.

Mrs. Linde. You have nothing to be afraid of as far as Krogstad
is concerned; but you must tell him.
Nora. (10) I won't tell him.

Mrs. Linde. Then the letter will.

Nora. Thank you, Christine. Now I know what I must do. Hush--!

Helmer (coming in again). (7) Well, Mrs. Linde, have you admired her?

Mrs. Linde. Yes, and now I will say goodnight.

Helmer. What, already? Is this yours, this knitting?

Mrs. Linde. (taking it). Yes, thank you, I had very nearly forgotten it.

Helmer. So you knit?

Mrs. Linde. Of course.

Helmer. (2) Do you know, you ought to embroider.

Mrs. Linde. Really? Why?

Helmer. (5) Yes, it's far more becoming. (2) Let me show you. (2) You hold the embroidery thus in your left hand, and use the needle with the right--like this--with a long, easy sweep. Do you see?

Mrs. Linde. Yes, perhaps--

Helmer. But in the case of knitting--that can never be anything but ungraceful; look here--the arms close together, the knitting-needles going up and down--it has a sort of Chinese effect--.

That was really excellent champagne they gave us.

Mrs. Linde. Well,--goodnight, Nora, (10) and don't be self-willed any more.

Helmer. That's right, Mrs. Linde.

Mrs. Linde. Goodnight, Mr. Helmer.

Helmer (accompanying her to the door). Goodnight, goodnight. I hope you will get home all right. I should be very happy to--but you haven't any great distance to go. Goodnight, goodnight. (She goes out; he shuts the door after her, and comes in again.) Ah!--at last we have got rid of her. She is a frightful bore, that woman.
Nora. Aren't you very tired, Torvald?

Helmer. No, not in the least.

Nora. Nor sleepy?

Helmer. Not a bit. On the contrary, I feel extraordinarily lively. And you?—(7) you really look both tired and sleepy.

Nora. Yes, I am very tired. I want to go to sleep at once.

Helmer. (2) There, you see it was quite right of me not to let you stay there any longer.

Nora. (5) Everything you do is quite right, Torvald.

Helmer (kissing her on the forehead). Now (8) my little skylark is speaking reasonably. Did you notice what good spirits Rank was in this evening?

Nora. Really? Was he? I didn't speak to him at all.

Helmer. And I very little, but I have not for a long time seen him in such good form. (Looks for a while at her and then goes nearer to her.) It is delightful to be at home by ourselves again, to be all alone with you—(8) you fascinating, charming little darling!

Nora. (10) Don't look at me like that, Torvald.

Helmer. (8) Why shouldn't I look at my dearest treasure?—(9) at all the beauty that is mine, all my very own?

Nora. (going to the other side of the table). (10) You mustn't say things like that to me tonight.

Helmer (following her). You have still got the Tarantella in your blood, I see. And it makes you more captivating than ever. Listen— the guests are beginning to go now. (In a lower voice.) Nora—soon the whole house will be quiet.

Nora. Yes, I hope so.

Helmer. Yes, my own darling Nora. Do you know, when I am out at a party with you like this, why I speak so little to you, keep away from you, and only send a stolen glance in your direction now and then?— do you know why I do that? It is because I make believe to
myself that we are secretly in love, and you are my secretly promised bride, and that no one suspects there is anything between us.

**Nora.** Yes, yes--I know very well your thoughts are with me all the time.

**Helmer.** And when we are leaving, and I am putting the shawl over your beautiful young shoulders--on your lovely neck--then I imagine that you are my young bride and that we have just come from the wedding, and I am bringing you for the first time into our home--to be alone with you for the first time--quite alone with my shy little darling! All this evening I have longed for nothing but you. When I watched the seductive figures of the Tarantella, my blood was on fire; I could endure it no longer, and that was why I brought you down so early--

**Nora.** Go away, Torvald! You must let me go. I won't--

**Helmer.** What's that? You're joking, my little Nora! You won't--you won't? Am I not your husband--? (A knock is heard at the outer door.)

**Nora** (starting). Did you hear--?

**Helmer** (going into the hall). Who is it?

**Rank** (outside). It is I. May I come in for a moment?

**Helmer.** (in a fretful whisper). Oh, what does he want now? (Aloud.) Wait a minute! (Unlocks the door.) Come, that's kind of you not to pass by our door.

**Rank.** I thought I heard your voice, and felt as if I should like to look in. (With a swift glance round.) Ah, yes!--these dear familiar rooms. You are very happy and cosy in here, you two.

**Helmer.** It seems to me that you looked after yourself pretty well upstairs too.

**Rank.** Excellently. Why shouldn't I? Why shouldn't one enjoy everything in this world?--at any rate as much as one can, and as long as one can. The wine was capital--

**Helmer.** Especially the champagne.
Rank. So you noticed that too? It is almost incredible how much I managed to put away!

Nora. Torvald drank a great deal of champagne tonight too.

Rank. Did he?

Nora. Yes, and he is always in such good spirits afterwards.

Rank. Well, why should one not enjoy a merry evening after a well-spent day?

Helmer. Well spent? I am afraid I can't take credit for that.

Rank (clapping him on the back). But I can, you know!

Nora. Doctor Rank, you must have been occupied with some scientific investigation today.

Rank. Exactly.

Helmer. Just listen!--(9)little Nora talking about scientific investigations!

Nora. And may I congratulate you on the result?

Rank. Indeed you may.

Nora. Was it favourable, then?

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

Nora (quickly and searchingly). Certainty?

Rank. Absolute certainty. So wasn't I entitled to make a merry evening of it after that?

Nora. Yes, you certainly were, Doctor Rank.

Helmer. I think so too, so long as you don't have to pay for it in the morning.

Rank. Oh well, one can't have anything in this life without paying for it.

Nora. Doctor Rank--are you fond of fancy-dress balls?
Rank. Yes, if there is a fine lot of pretty costumes.

Nora. Tell me--what shall we two wear at the next?

Helmer. (9) Little featherbrain!--are you thinking of the next already?

Rank. We two? Yes, I can tell you. You shall go as a good fairy--

Helmer. Yes, but what do you suggest as an appropriate costume for that?

Rank. (7) Let your wife go dressed just as she is in everyday life.

Helmer. That was really very prettily turned. But can't you tell us what you will be?

Rank. Yes, my dear friend, I have quite made up my mind about that.

Helmer. Well?

Rank. At the next fancy-dress ball I shall be invisible.

Helmer. That's a good joke!

Rank. There is a big black hat--have you never heard of hats that make you invisible? If you put one on, no one can see you.

Helmer (suppressing a smile). Yes, you are quite right.

Rank. But I am clean forgetting what I came for. Helmer, give me a cigar--one of the dark Havanas.

Helmer. With the greatest pleasure. (Offers him his case.)

Rank (takes a cigar and cuts off the end). Thanks.

Nora (striking a match). Let me give you a light.

Rank. Thank you. (She holds the match for him to light his cigar.) And now goodbye!

Helmer. Goodbye, goodbye, dear old man!

Nora. Sleep well, Doctor Rank.
Rank. Thank you for that wish.

Nora. Wish me the same.

Rank. You? Well, if you want me to sleep well! And thanks for the light. (He nods to them both and goes out.)

Helmer. (in a subdued voice). He has drunk more than he ought.

Nora (absently). Maybe. (HELMER takes a bunch of keys out of his pocket and goes into the hall.) Torvald! what are you going to do there?

Helmer. Emptying the letter-box; it is quite full; there will be no room to put the newspaper in tomorrow morning.

Nora. Are you going to work tonight?

Helmer. You know quite well I'm not. What is this? Someone has been at the lock.

Nora. At the lock--?

Helmer. Yes, someone has. What can it mean? I should never have thought the maid--. Here is a broken hairpin. Nora, it is one of yours.

Nora (quickly). Then it must have been the children--

Helmer. Then you must get them out of those ways. There, at last I have got it open. (Takes out the contents of the letter-box, and calls to the kitchen.) Helen!--Helen, put out the light over the front door. (Goes back into the room and shuts the door into the hall. He holds out his hand full of letters.) Look at that--look what a heap of them there are. (Turning them over.) What on earth is that?

Nora (at the window). The letter--No! Torvald, no!

Helmer. Two cards--of Rank's.

Nora. Of Doctor Rank's?

Helmer. (looking at them). Doctor Rank. They were on the top. He must have put them in when he went out.
Nora. Is there anything written on them?

Helmer. There is a black cross over the name. Look there--what an uncomfortable idea! It looks as if he were announcing his own death.

Nora. It is just what he is doing.

Helmer. What? Do you know anything about it? Has he said anything to you?

Nora. Yes. He told me that when the cards came it would be his leave-taking from us. He means to shut himself up and die.

Helmer. My poor old friend! Certainly I knew we should not have him very long with us. But so soon! And so he hides himself away like a wounded animal.

Nora. If it has to happen, it is best it should be without a word--don't you think so, Torvald?

Helmer (walking up and down). He had so grown into our lives. I can't think of him as having gone out of them. He, with his sufferings and his loneliness, was like a cloudy background to our sunlit happiness. Well, perhaps it is best so. For him, anyway. (Standing still.) And perhaps for us too, Nora. We two are thrown quite upon each other now. (Puts his arms round her.) My darling wife, I don't feel as if I could hold you tight enough. Do you know, Nora, I have often wished that you might be threatened by some great danger, so that I might risk my life's blood, and everything, for your sake.

Nora (disengages herself, and says firmly and decidedly). Now you must read your letters, Torvald.

Helmer. No, no; not tonight. I want to be with you, my darling wife.

Nora. With the thought of your friend's death--

Helmer. You are right, it has affected us both. Something ugly has come between us--the thought of the horrors of death. We must try and rid our minds of that. Until then--(2)we will each go to our own room.

Nora. (hanging on his neck). Goodnight, Torvald--Goodnight!
**Helmer.** (kissing her on the forehead). Goodnight, my little singing-bird. Sleep sound, Nora. Now I will read my letters through. (He takes his letters and goes into his room, shutting the door after him.)

**Nora** (gropes distractedly about, seizes HELMER'S domino, throws it round her, while she says in quick, hoarse, spasmodic whispers). Never to see him again. Never! Never! (Puts her shawl over her head.) Never to see my children again either--never again. Never! Never!--Ah! the icy, black water--the unfathomable depths--If only it were over! He has got it now--now he is reading it. Goodbye, Torvald and my children! (She is about to rush out through the hall, when HELMER opens his door hurriedly and stands with an open letter in his hand.)

**Helmer.** Nora!

**Nora.** Ah!--

**Helmer.** What is this? Do you know what is in this letter?

**Nora.** Yes, I know. Let me go! Let me get out!

**Helmer.** (holding her back). Where are you going?

**Nora.** (trying to get free). You shan't save me, Torvald!

**Helmer** (reeling). True? Is this true, that I read here? Horrible! No, no--it is impossible that it can be true.

**Nora.** It is true. I have loved you above everything else in the world.

**Helmer.** Oh, don't let us have any silly excuses.

**Nora.** (taking a step towards him). Torvald--!

**Helmer.** Miserable creature--what have you done?

**Nora.** Let me go. You shall not suffer for my sake. You shall not take it upon yourself.

**Helmer.** No tragic airs, please. (Locks the hall door.) Here you shall stay and give me an explanation. Do you understand what you have done? Answer me! Do you understand what you have done?
Nora. (looks steadily at him and says with a growing look of coldness in her face). (9) Yes, now I am beginning to understand thoroughly.

Helmer. (walking about the room). What a horrible awakening! All these eight years--she who was my joy and pride--a hypocrite, a liar--worse, worse--a criminal! The unutterable ugliness of it all!--For shame! For shame! (NORA is silent and looks steadily at him. He stops in front of her.) I ought to have suspected that something of the sort would happen. I ought to have foreseen it. All your father's want of principle--(2) be silent!--all your father's want of principle has come out in you. (5) No religion, no morality, no sense of duty--. How I am punished for having winked at what he did! I did it for your sake, and this is how you repay me.

Nora. (10) Yes, that's just it.

Helmer. (5) Now you have destroyed all my happiness. (5) You have ruined all my future. It is horrible to think of! I am in the power of an unscrupulous man; he can do what he likes with me, ask anything he likes of me, give me any orders he pleases--I dare not refuse. (9) And I must sink to such miserable depths because of a thoughtless woman!

Nora. When I am out of the way, you will be free.

Helmer. (2) No fine speeches, please. Your father had always plenty of those ready, too. What good would it be to me if you were out of the way, as you say? Not the slightest. He can make the affair known everywhere; and if he does, I may be falsely suspected of having been a party to your criminal action. (9) Very likely people will think I was behind it all--that it was I who prompted you! And I have to thank you for all this--you whom I have cherished during the whole of our married life. Do you understand now what it is you have done for me?

Nora (coldly and quietly). Yes.

Helmer. It is so incredible that I can't take it in. But we must come to some understanding. (2) Take off that shawl. (2) Take it off, I tell you. I must try and appease him some way or another. The matter must be hushed up at any cost. And as for you and me, (5) it must appear as if everything between us were just as before--but naturally only in the eyes of the world. (2) You will still remain in my house, that is a matter of course. (6) But I shall not allow you to bring up the children; I dare not trust them to you. To think that I should be obliged to say so to one whom I have loved so
dearly, and whom I still--. No, that is all over. From this moment happiness is not the question; all that concerns us is to save the remains, the fragments, the appearance--

(A ring is heard at the front-door bell.)

**Helmer.** (with a start). What is that? So late! Can the worst--? Can he--? (2)Hide yourself, Nora. Say you are ill.

(NORA stands motionless. HELMER goes and unlocks the hall door.)

**Maid** (half-dressed, comes to the door). A letter for the mistress.

**Helmer.** (2)Give it to me. (Takes the letter, and shuts the door.) Yes, it is from him. (2)You shall not have it; I will read it myself.

**Nora.** Yes, read it.

**Helmer** (standing by the lamp). I scarcely have the courage to do it. It may mean ruin for both of us. No, I must know. (Tears open the letter, runs his eye over a few lines, looks at a paper enclosed, and gives a shout of joy.) Nora! (She looks at him questioningly.) Nora!--No, I must read it once again--. Yes, it is true! I am saved! Nora, I am saved!

**Nora.** And I?

**Helmer.** You too, of course; we are both saved, both you and I. Look, he sends you your bond back. He says he regrets and repents--that a happy change in his life--never mind what he says! We are saved, Nora! No one can do anything to you. Oh, Nora, Nora!--no, first I must destroy these hateful things. Let me see--. (Takes a look at the bond.) No, no, I won't look at it. The whole thing shall be nothing but a bad dream to me. (Tears up the bond and both letters, throws them all into the stove, and watches them burn.) There--now it doesn't exist any longer. He says that since Christmas Eve you--. These must have been three dreadful days for you, Nora.

**Nora.** I have fought a hard fight these three days.

**Helmer.** And suffered agonies, and seen no way out but--. No, we won't call any of the horrors to mind. We will only shout with joy, and keep saying, "It's all over! It's all over!" (2)Listen to me, Nora. You don't seem to realise that it is all over. What is this?--(7)such a cold, set face! (9)My poor little Nora, I quite
understand; you don't feel as if you could believe that I have forgiven you. But it is true, Nora, I swear it; I have forgiven you everything. "I know that what you did, you did out of love for me.

Nora. That is true.

Helmer. "You have loved me as a wife ought to love her husband. Only you had not sufficient knowledge to judge of the means you used. But do you suppose you are any the less dear to me, because you don't understand how to act on your own responsibility? No, no; only lean on me; I will advise you and direct you. I should not be a man if this womanly helplessness did not just give you a double attractiveness in my eyes. You must not think anymore about the hard things I said in my first moment of consternation, when I thought everything was going to overwhelm me. I have forgiven you, Nora; I swear to you I have forgiven you.

Nora. Thank you for your forgiveness. (She goes out through the door to the right.)

Helmer. No, don't go--. (Looks in.) What are you doing in there?

Nora. (from within). Taking off my fancy dress.

Helmer (standing at the open door). Yes, do. Try and calm yourself, and make your mind easy again, my frightened little singing-bird. Be at rest, and feel secure; I have broad wings to shelter you under. (Walks up and down by the door.) How warm and cosy our home is, Nora. Here is shelter for you; here I will protect you like a hunted dove that I have saved from a hawk's claws; I will bring peace to your poor beating heart. It will come, little by little, Nora, believe me. Tomorrow morning you will look upon it all quite differently; soon everything will be just as it was before. Very soon you won't need me to assure you that I have forgiven you; you will yourself feel the certainty that I have done so. Can you suppose I should ever think of such a thing as repudiating you, or even reproaching you? You have no idea what a true man's heart is like, Nora. There is something so indescribably sweet and satisfying, to a man, in the knowledge that he has forgiven his wife--forgiven her freely, and with all his heart. It seems as if that had made her, as it were, doubly his own; he has given her a new life, so to speak; and she has in a way become both wife and child to him. So you shall be for me after this, my little scared, helpless darling. Have no anxiety about anything, Nora; only be frank and open with me,
and I will serve as will and conscience both to you--. What is this? Not gone to bed? Have you changed your things?

Nora (in everyday dress). Yes, Torvald, I have changed my things now.

Helmer. But what for?--so late as this.

Nora. I shall not sleep tonight.

Helmer. But, my dear Nora--

Nora (looking at her watch). It is not so very late. Sit down here, Torvald. You and I have much to say to one another. (She sits down at one side of the table.)

Helmer. Nora--what is this?--this cold, set face?

Nora. Sit down. It will take some time; I have a lot to talk over with you.

Helmer (sits down at the opposite side of the table). You alarm me, Nora!--and I don't understand you.

Nora. No, that is just it. You don't understand me, and I have never understood you either--before tonight. No, you mustn't interrupt me. You must simply listen to what I say. Torvald, this is a settling of accounts.

Helmer. What do you mean by that?

Nora (after a short silence). Isn't there one thing that strikes you as strange in our sitting here like this?

Helmer. What is that?

Nora. We have been married now eight years. Does it not occur to you that this is the first time we two, you and I, husband and wife, have had a serious conversation?

Helmer. What do you mean by serious?

Nora. In all these eight years--longer than that--from the very beginning of our acquaintance, we have never exchanged a word on any serious subject.
**Helmer.** (5) Was it likely that I would be continually and forever telling you about worries that you could not help me to bear?

**Nora.** I am not speaking about business matters. I say that we have never sat down in earnest together to try and get at the bottom of anything.

**Helmer.** (9) But, dearest Nora, would it have been any good to you?

**Nora.** That is just it; you have never understood me. (10) I have been greatly wronged, Torvald--first by papa and then by you.

**Helmer.** What! (5) By us two--by us two, who have loved you better than anyone else in the world?

**Nora (shaking her head).** (10) You have never loved me. (10) You have only thought it pleasant to be in love with me.

**Helmer.** Nora, what do I hear you saying?

**Nora.** (10) It is perfectly true, Torvald. (9) When I was at home with papa, he told me his opinion about everything, and so I had the same opinions; (5) and if I differed from him I concealed the fact, because he would not have liked it. (8) He called me his doll-child, and he played with me just as I used to play with my dolls. (8) And when I came to live with you--

**Helmer.** What sort of an expression is that to use about our marriage?

**Nora (undisturbed).** (8) I mean that I was simply transferred from papa's hands into yours. (5) You arranged everything according to your own taste, and so I got the same tastes as your else I pretended to, I am really not quite sure which--I think sometimes the one and sometimes the other. When I look back on it, it seems to me as if (1) I had been living here like a poor woman--just from hand to mouth. (8) I have existed merely to perform tricks for you, Torvald. But you would have it so. (10) You and papa have committed a great sin against me. (10) It is your fault that I have made nothing of my life.

**Helmer.** How unreasonable and how ungrateful you are, Nora! Have you not been happy here?

**Nora.** (10) No, I have never been happy. (10) I thought I was, but it has never really been so.
**Helmer.** Not--not happy!

**Nora.** No, only merry. And you have always been so kind to me. But our home has been nothing but a playroom. I have been your doll-wife, just as at home I was papa's doll-child; and here the children have been my dolls. I thought it great fun when you played with me, just as they thought it great fun when I played with them. That is what our marriage has been, Torvald.

**Helmer.** There is some truth in what you say--exaggerated and strained as your view of it is. But for the future it shall be different. Playtime shall be over, and lesson-time shall begin.

**Nora.** Whose lessons? Mine, or the children's?

**Helmer.** Both yours and the children's, my darling Nora.

**Nora.** Alas, Torvald, you are not the man to educate me into being a proper wife for you.

**Helmer.** And you can say that!

**Nora.** And I--how am I fitted to bring up the children?

**Helmer.** Nora!

**Nora.** Didn't you say so yourself a little while ago--that you dare not trust me to bring them up?

**Helmer.** In a moment of anger! Why do you pay any heed to that?

**Nora.** Indeed, you were perfectly right. I am not fit for the task. There is another task I must undertake first. I must try and educate myself--you are not the man to help me in that. I must do that for myself. And that is why I am going to leave you now.

**Helmer** (springing up). What do you say?

**Nora.** I must stand quite alone, if I am to understand myself and everything about me. It is for that reason that I cannot remain with you any longer.

**Helmer.** Nora, Nora!
Nora. (10) I am going away from here now, at once. I am sure Christine will take me in for the night--

Helmer. (9) You are out of your mind! (2) I won't allow it! (2) I forbid you!

Nora. (10) It is no use forbidding me anything any longer. (10) I will take with me what belongs to myself. (10) I will take nothing from you, either now or later.

Helmer. (9) What sort of madness is this!

Nora. (4) Tomorrow I shall go home--I mean, to my old home. (3) It will be easiest for me to find something to do there.

Helmer. (9) You blind, foolish woman!

Nora. (9) I must try and get some sense, Torvald.

Helmer. (5) To desert your home, your husband and your children! (5) And you don't consider what people will say!

Nora. (10) I cannot consider that at all. (10) I only know that it is necessary for me.

Helmer. (5) It's shocking. (5) This is how you would neglect your most sacred duties.

Nora. (5) What do you consider my most sacred duties?

Helmer. Do I need to tell you that? (5) Are they not your duties to your husband and your children?

Nora. (10) I have other duties just as sacred.

Helmer. (2) That you have not. What duties could those be?

Nora. (10) Duties to myself.

Helmer. (5) Before all else, you are a wife and a mother.

Nora. (10) I don't believe that any longer. (9) I believe that before all else I am a reasonable human being, just as you are--or, at all events, that I must try and become one. I know quite well, Torvald, (5) that most people would think you right, and that views of that kind are to be found in books; but (10) I can no longer content myself with what most people say, or with
what is found in books. (4) I must think over things for myself and get to understand them.

**Helmer.** (9) Can you not understand your place in your own home? (5) Have you not a reliable guide in such matters as that?--have you no religion?

**Nora.** (10) I am afraid, Torvald, I do not exactly know what religion is.

**Helmer.** What are you saying?

**Nora.** I know nothing but what the clergyman said, when I went to be confirmed. He told us that religion was this, and that, and the other. When I am away from all this, and am alone, I will look into that matter too. I will see if what the clergyman said is true, or at all events if it is true for me.

**Helmer.** (5) This is unheard of in a girl of your age! But if religion cannot lead you aright, (2) let me try and awaken your conscience. (9) I suppose you have some moral sense? (9) Or--answer me--am I to think you have none?

**Nora.** I assure you, Torvald, that is not an easy question to answer. I really don't know. The thing perplexes me altogether. (10) I only know that you and I look at it in quite a different light. I am learning, too, that the law is quite another thing from what I supposed; but (10) I find it impossible to convince myself that the law is right. According to it (10) a woman has no right to spare her old dying father, or to save her husband's life. (10) I can't believe that.

**Helmer.** (2) You talk like a child. (9) You don't understand the conditions of the world in which you live.

**Nora.** (10) No, I don't. (10) But now I am going to try. (4) I am going to see if I can make out who is right, the world or I.

**Helmer.** (9) You are ill, Nora; you are delirious; I almost think you are out of your mind.

**Nora.** (10) I have never felt my mind so clear and certain as tonight.

**Helmer.** (5) And is it with a clear and certain mind that you forsake your husband and your children?

**Nora.** (10) Yes, it is.
Helmer. (2) Then there is only one possible explanation.

Nora. What is that?

Helmer. (5) You do not love me anymore.

Nora. (10) No, that is just it.

Helmer. Nora! -- and you can say that?

Nora. It gives me great pain, Torvald, for you have always been so kind to me, but I cannot help it. I do not love you any more.

Helmer (regaining his composure). (9) Is that a clear and certain conviction too?

Nora. (9) Yes, absolutely clear and certain. (10) That is the reason why I will not stay here any longer.

Helmer. And can you tell me what I have done to forfeit your love?

Nora. Yes, indeed I can. It was tonight, when the wonderful thing did not happen; then (10) I saw you were not the man I had thought you were.

Helmer. (2) Explain yourself better. (9) I don't understand you.

Nora. I have waited so patiently for eight years; for, goodness knows, I knew very well that wonderful things don't happen every day. Then this horrible misfortune came upon me; and then I felt quite certain that the wonderful thing was going to happen at last. When Krogstad's letter was lying out there, never for a moment did I imagine that you would consent to accept this man's conditions. I was so absolutely certain that you would say to him: Publish the thing to the whole world. And when that was done--

Helmer. Yes, what then? -- (5) when I had exposed my wife to shame and disgrace?

Nora. When that was done, (5) I was so absolutely certain, you would come forward and take everything upon yourself, and say: I am the guilty one.

Helmer. Nora--!

Nora. You mean that I would never have accepted such a sacrifice on your part? No, of course not. But what would my assurances have
been worth against yours? That was the wonderful thing which I hoped for and feared; and it was to prevent that, that I wanted to kill myself.

Helmer. \(5\) I would gladly work night and day for you, Nora--bear sorrow and want for your sake. \(5\) But no man would sacrifice his honour for the one he loves.

Nora. \(10\) It is a thing hundreds of thousands of women have done.

Helmer. \(9\) Oh, you think and talk like a heedless child.

Nora. \(10\) Maybe. \(10\) But you neither think nor talk like the man I could bind myself to. As soon as your fear was over--and it was not fear for what threatened me, but for what might happen to you--when the whole thing was past, as far as you were concerned it was exactly as if nothing at all had happened. Exactly as before. \(8\) I was your little skylark, your doll, which you would in future treat with doubly gentle care, because it was so brittle and fragile. (Getting up.) Torvald-- \(9\) it was then it dawned upon me that for eight years I had been living here with a strange man, \(6\) and had borne him three children--. \(10\) Oh, I can't bear to think of it! \(10\) I could tear myself into little bits!

Helmer (sadly). I see, I see. An abyss has opened between us--there is no denying it. But, Nora, would it not be possible to fill it up?

Nora. \(10\) As I am now, I am no wife for you.

Helmer. I have it in me to become a different man.

Nora. \(8\) Perhaps--if your doll is taken away from you.

Helmer. But to part!--to part from you! No, no, \(9\) Nora, I can't understand that idea.

Nora. (going out to the right). \(10\) That makes it all the more certain that it must be done. (She comes back with her cloak and hat and a small bag which she puts on a chair by the table.)

Helmer. \(2\) Nora, Nora, not now! \(2\) Wait until tomorrow.

Nora (putting on her cloak). \(10\) I cannot spend the night in a strange man's room.
Helmer. But can't we live here like brother and sister--?

Nora (putting on her hat). You know very well that would not last long. (Puts the shawl round her.) Goodbye, Torvald. I won't see the little ones. I know they are in better hands than mine. As I am now, I can be of no use to them.

Helmer. But some day, Nora--some day?

Nora. How can I tell? I have no idea what is going to become of me.

Helmer. But you are my wife, whatever becomes of you.

Nora. Listen, Torvald. I have heard that when a wife deserts her husband's house, as I am doing now, he is legally freed from all obligations towards her. In any case, I set you free from all your obligations. You are not to feel yourself bound in the slightest way, any more than I shall. There must be perfect freedom on both sides. See, here is your ring back. Give me mine.

Helmer. That too?

Nora. That too.

Helmer. Here it is.

Nora. That's right. Now it is all over. I have put the keys here. The maids know all about everything in the house--better than I do. Tomorrow, after I have left her, Christine will come here and pack up my own things that I brought with me from home. I will have them sent after me.

Helmer. All over! All over!--Nora, shall you never think of me again?

Nora. I know I shall often think of you, the children, and this house.

Helmer. May I write to you, Nora?

Nora. No--never. You must not do that.

Helmer. But at least let me send you--

Nora. Nothing--nothing--

Helmer. Let me help you if you are in want.
Nora. (10) No. (10) I can receive nothing from a stranger.

Helmer. Nora--can I never be anything more than a stranger to you?

Nora (taking her bag). Ah, Torvald, the most wonderful thing of all would have to happen.

Helmer. Tell me what that would be!

Nora. Both you and I would have to be so changed that--. Oh, Torvald, I don't believe any longer in wonderful things happening.

Helmer. But I will believe in it. (2) Tell me! So changed that--?

Nora. That our life together would be a real wedlock. Goodbye. (She goes out through the hall.)

Helmer (sinks down on a chair at the door and buries his face in his hands). Nora! Nora! (Looks round, and rises.) Empty. She is gone. (A hope flashes across his mind.) The most wonderful thing of all--?

(The sound of a door shutting is heard from below.)
ACT I

(SCENE.--A large room looking upon a garden door in the left-hand wall, and two in the right. In the middle of the room, a round table with chairs set about it, and books, magazines and newspapers upon it. In the foreground on the left, a window, by which is a small sofa with a work-table in front of it. At the back the room opens into a conservatory rather smaller than the room. From the right-hand side of this, a door leads to the garden. Through the large panes of glass that form the outer wall of the conservatory, a gloomy fjord landscape can be discerned, half-obscured by steady rain.

ENGSTRAND is standing close to the garden door. His left leg is slightly deformed, and he wears a boot with a clump of wood under the sole. REGINA, with an empty garden-syringe in her hand, is trying to prevent his coming in.)

Regina (below her breath). What is it you want? Stay where you are. The rain is dripping off you,

Engstrand. God's good rain, (8)my girl.

Regina. (10)The Devil's own rain, that's what it is!

Engstrand. Lord, how you talk, Regina. (Takes a few limping steps forward.) What I wanted to tell you was this--

Regina. (10)Don't clump about like that, stupid! The young master is lying asleep upstairs.

Engstrand. Asleep still? In the middle of the day?

Regina. (10)Well, it's no business of yours.

Engstrand. I was out on a spree last night--

Regina. I don't doubt it.

Engstrand. Yes, we are poor weak mortals, (8)my girl--
Regina. We are indeed.

Engstrand. --and the temptations of the world are manifold, you know--but, for all that, here I was at my work at half-past five this morning.

Regina. (10)Yes, yes, but make yourself scarce now. (10)I am not going to stand here as if I had a rendezvous with you.

Engstrand. As if you had a what?

Regina. (5)I am not going to have anyone find you here; (10)so now you know, and you can go.

Engstrand (coming a few steps nearer). Not a bit of it! (2)Not before we have had a little chat. This afternoon I shall have finished my job down at the school house, and I shall be off home to town by tonight's boat.

Regina (mutters). Pleasant journey to you!

Engstrand. Thanks, my girl. Tomorrow is the opening of the Orphanage, and I expect there will be a fine kick-up here and plenty of good strong drink, don't you know. And no one shall say of Jacob Engstrand that be can't hold off when temptation comes in his way.

Regina. (10)Oho!

Engstrand. Yes, because there will be a lot of fine folk here tomorrow. Parson Manders is expected from town, too.

Regina: What's more, he's coming today.

Engstrand. There you are! And I'm going to be precious careful he doesn't have anything to say against me, do you see?

Regina. Oh, that's your game, is it?

Engstrand. What do you mean?

Regina (with a significant look at him). What is it you want to humbug Mr. Manders out of this time?

Engstrand. Sh! Sh! (9)Are you crazy? Do you suppose I would want to humbug Mr. Manders? No, no--Mr. Manders has always been too kind
a friend for me to do that. But what I wanted to talk to you about, was my going back home tonight.

Regina. (10) The sooner you go, the better I shall be pleased.

Engstrand. (2) Yes, only I want to take you with me, Regina.

Regina (open-mouthed). You want to take me--? What did you say?

Engstrand. (2) I want to take you home with me, I said.

Regina (contemptuously). (10) You will never get me home with you.

Engstrand. Ah, (2) we shall see about that.

Regina. (10) Yes, you can be quite certain we shall see about that. (5) I, who have been brought up by a lady like Mrs. Alving?--I, who have been treated almost as if I were her own child?-- (10) do you suppose I am going home with you?--to such a house as yours? Not likely!

Engstrand. What the devil do you mean? (8) Are you setting yourself up against your father, you hussy?

Regina (mutters, without looking at him). (10) You have often told me I was none of yours.

Engstrand. Bah!--why do you want to pay any attention to that?

Regina. Haven't you many and many a time abused me and called me a --? For shame?

Engstrand. I'll swear I never used such an ugly word.

Regina. (10) Oh, it doesn't matter what word you used.

Engstrand. Besides, that was only when I was a bit fuddled...hm! Temptations are manifold in this world, Regina.

Regina. Ugh!

Engstrand. (5) And it was when your mother was in a nasty temper. I had to find some way of getting my knife into her, my girl. (9) She was always so precious gentile. (Mimicking her.) (10) Let go, Jacob! Let me be! (5) Please to remember that I was three years with the Alvings at Rosenvold, and they were people who went to Court!
(Laughs.) Bless my soul, she never could forget that Captain Alving got a Court appointment while she was in service here.

Regina. (10) Poor mother--you worried her into her grave pretty soon.

Engstrand (shrugging his shoulders). Of course, of course; I have got to take the blame for everything.

Regina (beneath her breath, as she turns away). Ugh--that leg, too! Engstrand. What are you saying, my girl?

Regina. Pied de mouton.

Engstrand. Is that English?

Regina. Yes.

Engstrand. (9) You have had a good education out here, and no mistake; and it may stand you in good stead now, Regina.

Regina (after a short silence). (8) And what was it you wanted me to come to town for?

Engstrand. (8) Need you ask why a father wants his only child? Ain't I a poor lonely widower?

Regina. Oh, don't come to me with that tale. Why do you want me to go?

Engstrand. Well, I must tell you I am thinking of taking up a new line now.

Regina (whistles). (10) You have tried that so often--but it has always proved a fool's errand.

Engstrand. Ah, but this time you will just see, Regina! Strike me dead if--

Regina (stamping her foot). Stop swearing!

Engstrand. Sh! Sh!--you're quite right, (8) my girl, quite right! What I wanted to say was only this, that I have put by a tidy penny out of what I have made by working at this new Orphanage up here.

Regina. Have you? All the better for you.
Engstrand. What is there for a man to spend his money on, out here in the country?

Regina. Well, what then?

Engstrand. Well, you see, I thought of putting the money into something that would pay. I thought of some kind of an eating-house for seafaring folk--

Regina. Heavens!

Engstrand. Oh, a high-class eating-house, of course--not a pigsty for common sailors. Damn it, no; it would be a place ships' captains and first mates would come to; really good sort of people, you know.

Regina. And what should I--?

Engstrand. You would help there: But only to make show, you know. You wouldn't find it hard work, I can promise you, my girl. You should do exactly as you liked.

Regina. Oh, yes, quite so!

Engstrand. But we must have some women in the house; that is as clear as daylight. Because in the evening we must make the place a little attractive-- some singing and dancing, and that sort of thing. Remember they are seafolk-- wayfarers on the waters of life! (Coming nearer to her.) Now don't be a fool and stand in your own way, Regina. What good are you going to do here? Will this education, that your mistress has paid for, be of any use? You are to look after the children in the new Home, I hear. Is that the sort of work for you? Are you so frightfully anxious to go and wear out your health and strength for the sake of these dirty brats?

Regina. No, if things were to go as I want them to, then--. Well, it may happen; who knows? It may happen!

Engstrand. What may happen?

Regina. Never you mind. Is it much that you have put by, up here?

Engstrand. Taking it all round, I should say about forty or fifty pounds.
**Regina.** That's not so bad.

**Engstrand.** It's enough to make a start with, my girl.

**Regina.** (1) Don't you mean to give me any of the money?

**Engstrand.** No, I'm hanged if I do.

**Regina.** (1) Don't you mean to send me as much as a dress-length of stuff, just for once?

**Engstrand.** (2) Come and live in the town with me and you shall have plenty of dresses.

**Regina:** Pooh!—(4) I can get that much for myself, if I have a mind to.

**Engstrand.** (2) But it's far better to have a father's guiding hand, Regina. Just now I can get a nice house in Little Harbour Street. They don't want much money down for it— and we could make it like a sort of seamen's home, don't you know.

**Regina.** (4) But I have no intention of living with you! I'll have nothing whatever to do with you: (10) So now, be off!

**Engstrand.** (2) You wouldn't be living with me long, my girl. No such luck— not if you knew how to play your cards. (7) Such a fine wench as you have grown this last year or two...

**Regina.** Well—?

**Engstrand.** It wouldn't be very long before some first mate came along— or perhaps a captain.

**Regina.** (4) I don't mean to marry a man of that sort. Sailors have no savoir-vivre.

**Engstrand.** What haven't they got?

**Regina.** I know what sailors are, I tell you. They aren't the sort of people to marry.

**Engstrand.** (2) Well, don't bother about marrying them. You can make it pay just as well. (More confidentially.) (7) That fellow— the Englishman— the one with the yacht— he gave seventy pounds, he did; (10) and she wasn't a bit prettier than you.
**Regina** (advancing towards him). Get out!

**Engstrand** (stepping back). Here! here!--you're not going to hit me, I suppose?

**Regina.** Yes! If you talk like that of mother, I will hit you. Get out, I tell. You! (Pushes him up to the garden door.) And don't bang the doors. Young Mr. Alving--

**Engstrand.** Is asleep--I know. It's funny how anxious you are about young Mr. Alving. (In a lower tone.) Oho! is it possible that it is he that--?

**Regina.** Get out, and be quick about it! Your wits are wandering, my good man. No, don't go that way; Mr. Manders is just coming along. (Be off down the kitchen stairs.)

**Engstrand** (moving towards the right). Yes, yes--all right. But have a bit of a chat with him that's coming along. He's the chap to tell you what a child owes to its father. For I am your father, anyway, you know, I can prove it by the Register. (He goes out through the farther door which REGINA has opened. She shuts it after him, looks hastily at herself in the mirror, fans herself with her handkerchief and sets her collar straight; then busies herself with the flowers. MANDERS enters the conservatory through the garden door. He wears an overcoat, carries an umbrella, and has a small travelling-bag slung over his shoulder on a strap.)

**Manders.** Good morning, Miss Engstrand.

**Regina** (turning round with a look of pleased surprise), Oh, Mr. Manders, good morning. The boat is in, then?

**Manders.** Just in. (Comes into the room.) It is most tiresome, this rain every day.

**Regina** (following him in). It's a splendid rain for the farmers, Mr. Manders.

**Manders.** Yes, you are quite right. We townfolk think so little about that. (Begins to take off his overcoat.)

**Regina.** Oh, let me help you. That's it. Why, how wet it is! I will hang it up in the hall. Give me your umbrella, too; I will leave it open, so that it will dry.
(She goes out with the things by the farther door on the right. MANDERS lays his bag and his hat down on a chair. REGINA re- enters.)

MANDERS. Ah, it's very pleasant to get indoors. Well, is everything going on well here?

REGINA. Yes, thanks.

MANDERS. Properly busy, though, I expect, getting ready for tomorrow?

REGINA. Oh, yes, there is plenty to do.

MANDERS. And Mrs. Alving is at home, I hope?

REGINA. Yes, she is. She has just gone upstairs to take the young master his chocolate.

MANDERS. Tell me--I heard down at the pier that Oswald had come back.

REGINA. Yes, he came the day before yesterday. We didn't expect him until today.

MANDERS. Strong and well, I hope?

REGINA. Yes, thank you, well enough. But dreadfully tired after his journey. He came straight from Paris without a stop--I mean, he came all the way without breaking his journey. I fancy he is having a sleep now, so we must talk a little bit more quietly, if you don't mind.

MANDERS. All right, we will be very quiet.

REGINA (while she moves an armchair up to the table), (5)Please sit down, Mr. Manders, and make yourself at home. (He sits down; she puts a footstool under his feet.) There! Is that comfortable?

MANDERS. Thank you, thank you. That is most comfortable; (Looks at her.) I'll tell you what, Miss Engstrand, I certainly think you have grown since I saw you last.

REGINA. Do you think so? (7)Mrs. Alving says, too-- that I have developed.
Manders. Developed? Well, perhaps a little--just suitably. (A short pause.)

Regina. Shall I tell Mrs. Alving you are here?

Manders. Thanks, there is no hurry, my dear child. Now tell me, Regina my dear, how has your father been getting on here?

Regina. Thank you, Mr. Manders, he is getting on pretty well.

Manders. He came to see me the last time he was in town.

Regina. Did he? He is always so glad when he can have a chat with you.

Manders. And I suppose you have seen him pretty regularly every day?

Regina. I? Oh, yes, I do--whenever I have time, that is to say.

Manders. Your father has not a very strong character, Miss Engstrand. He sadly needs a guiding hand.

Regina. Yes, I can quite believe that.

Manders. He needs someone with him that he can cling to, someone whose judgment he can rely on. He acknowledged that freely himself, the last time he came up to see me.

Regina. Yes, he has said something of the same sort to me. But I don't know whether Mrs. Alving could do without me--most of all just now, when we have the new Orphanage to see about. And I should be dreadfully unwilling to leave Mrs. Alving, too; she has always been so good to me.

Manders. But a daughter's duty, my good child--. Naturally we should have to get your mistress' consent first.

Regina. Still I don't know whether it would be quite the thing, at my age, to keep house for a single man.

Manders. What! My dear Miss Engstrand, it is your own father we are speaking of!

Regina. Yes, I dare say, but still--. Now, if it were in a good house and with a real gentleman--
Manders. (8) But, my dear Regina!

Regina. -- (4) One whom I could feel an affection for, and really feel in the position of a daughter to...

Manders. (8) Come, come--my dear good child--

Regina. (4) I should like very much to live in town. Out here it is terribly lonely; and you know yourself, Mr. Manders, what it is to be alone in the world. And, though I say it, (4) I really am both capable and willing. (5) Don't you know any place that would be suitable for me, Mr. Manders?

Manders. I? (2) No, indeed I don't.

Regina. But, dear Mr. Manders--at any rate don't forget me, in case--

Manders (getting up). No, I won't forget you, Miss Engstrand.

Regina. Because, if I--

Manders. (2) Perhaps you will be so kind as to let Mrs. Alving know I am here?

Regina. (5) I will fetch her at once, Mr. Manders. (Goes out to the left. MANDERS walks up and down the room once or twice, stands for a moment at the farther end of the room with his hands behind his back and looks out into the garden. Then he comes back to the table, takes up a book and looks at the title page, gives a start, and looks at some of the others.)

Manders. Hm!--Really!

(MRS. ALVING comes in by the door on the left. She is followed by REGINA, who goes out again at once through the nearer door on the right.)

Mrs. Alving (holding out her hand). I am very glad to see you, Mr. Manders.

Manders. How do you do, Mrs. Alving. Here I am, as I promised.

Mrs. Alving. Always punctual!
Manders. Indeed, I was hard put to it to get away. What with vestry meetings and committees.

Mrs. Alving. It was all the kinder of you to come in such good time; we can settle our business before dinner. But where is your luggage?

Manders (quickly). My things are down at the village shop. I am going to sleep there tonight.

Mrs. Alving (repressing a smile). Can't I really persuade you to stay the night here this time?

Manders. No, no; many thanks all the same; I will put up there, as usual. It is so handy for getting on board the boat again.

Mrs. Alving. Of course, you shall do as you please. But it seems to me quite another thing, now we are two old people--

Manders. (5)Ha! ha! You will have your joke! And it's natural you should be in high spirits today--first of all there is the great event tomorrow, and also you have got Oswald home.

Mrs. Alving. Yes, am I not a lucky woman! It is more than two years since he was home last, and he has promised to stay the whole winter with me.

Manders. Has he, really? That is very nice and filial of him; because there must be many more attractions in his life in Rome or in Paris, I should think.

Mrs. Alving. Yes, but he has his mother here, you see. (6)Bless the dear boy, he has got a corner in his heart for his mother still.

Manders. Oh, it would be very sad if absence and preoccupation with (5)such a thing as Art were to dull the natural affections.

Mrs. Alving. It would, indeed. But (10)there is no fear of that with him, I am glad to say. I am quite curious to see if you recognise him again. He will be down directly; he is just lying down for a little on the sofa upstairs. But do sit down, my dear friend.

Manders. Thank you. You are sure I am not disturbing you?

Mrs. Alving. Of course not. (She sits down at the table.)
Manders. Good. Then I will show you--. (He goes to the chair where his bag is lying and takes a packet of papers from it; then sits down at the opposite side of the table and looks for a clear space to put the papers down.) Now first of all, here is--(breaks off). (9)Tell me, Mrs. Alving, what are these books doing here?

Mrs. Alving. These books? (4)I am reading them,

Manders. (5)Do you read this sort of thing?

Mrs. Alving. (10)Certainly I do.

Manders. (5)Do you feel any the better or the happier for reading books of this kind?

Mrs. Alving. (10)I think it makes me, as it were, more self-reliant.

Manders. That is remarkable. But why?

Mrs. Alving. (10)Well, they give me an explanation or a confirmation of lots of different ideas that have come into my own mind. But what surprises me, Mr. Manders, is that, properly speaking, there is nothing at all new in these books. (10)There is nothing more in them than what most people think and believe. (10)The only thing is, that most people either take no account of it or won't admit it to themselves.

Manders. (5)But, good heavens, do you seriously think that most people--?

Mrs. Alving. (10)Yes, indeed, I do.

Manders. (5)But not here in the country at any rate? (5)Not here amongst people like ourselves?

Mrs. Alving. (10)Yes, amongst people like ourselves too.

Manders. Well, really, I must say--!

Mrs. Alving. (10)But what is the particular objection that you have to these books?

Manders. What objection? (5)You surely don't suppose that I take any particular interest in such productions?
Mrs. Alving. (10) In fact, you don't know anything about what you are denouncing?

Manders. I have read quite enough about these books to disapprove of them:

Mrs. Alving. Yes, but your own opinion--

Manders. (8) My dear Mrs. Alving, (2) there are many occasions in life when one has to rely on the opinion of others. That is the way in this world, and it is quite right that it should be so. What would become of society, otherwise?

Mrs. Alving. Well, you may be right.

Manders. Apart from that, naturally I don't deny that literature of this kind may have a considerable attraction. (9) And I cannot blame you, either, for wishing to make yourself acquainted with the intellectual tendencies which I am told are at work in the wider world in which you have allowed your son to wander for so long but--

Mrs. Alving. But--?

Manders (lowering his voice). (5) But one doesn't talk about it, Mrs. Alving. (5) One certainly is not called upon to account to everyone for what one reads or thinks in the privacy of one's own room.

Mrs. Alving. Certainly not. I quite agree with you.

Manders. Just think of the consideration (9) you owe to this Orphanage, which you decided to build at a time when your thoughts on such subjects were very different from what they are now--as far as I am able to judge.

Mrs. Alving. Yes, I freely admit that. But it was about the Orphanage...

Manders. It was about the Orphanage we were going to talk; quite so. (5) Well--walk warily, (8) dear Mrs. Alving! And now let us turn to the business in hand. (Opens an envelope and takes out some papers.) You see these?

Mrs. Alving. The deeds?
Manders. Yes, the whole lot--and everything in order; I can tell you it has been no easy matter to get them in time. I had positively to put pressure on the authorities; they are almost painfully conscientious when it is a question of settling property. But here they are at last. (Turns over the papers.) Here is the deed of conveyance of that part of the Rosenvold estate known as the Solvik property, together with the buildings newly erected thereon--the school, the masters' houses and the chapel. And here is the legal sanction for the statutes of the institution. Here, you see--(reads) "Statutes for the Captain Alving Orphanage."

Mrs. Alving (after a long look at the papers). That seems all in order.

Manders. (2) I thought "Captain " was the better title to use, rather than your husband's Court title of "Chamberlain." "Captain " seems less ostentatious.

Mrs. Alving. (5) Yes, yes; just as you think best.

Manders. (1) And here is the certificate for the investment of the capital in the bank, the interest being earmarked for the current expenses of the Orphanage.

Mrs. Alving. (1) Many thanks; but I think it will be most convenient if you will kindly take charge of them.

Manders. (1) With pleasure. (2) I think it will be best to leave the money in the bank for the present. The interest is not very high, it is true; four per cent at six months' call; (1) later on, if we can find some good mortgage--of course it must be a first mortgage and on unexceptionable security--(2) we can consider the matter further.

Mrs. Alving. (5) Yes, yes, my dear Mr. Manders, you know best about all that.

Manders. I will keep my eye on it, anyway. But there is one thing in connection with it that I have often meant to ask you about.

Mrs. Alving. What is that?

Manders. Shall we insure the buildings, or not?

Mrs. Alving. (4) Of course we must insure them.
Manders. Ah, but wait a moment, dear lady. Let us look into the matter a little more closely.

Mrs. Alving. Everything of mine is insured--the house and its contents, my livestock--everything.

Manders. Naturally. They are your own property. I do exactly the same, of course. But this, you see, is quite a different case. The Orphanage is, so to speak, dedicated to higher uses.

Mrs. Alving. Certainly, but--

Manders. As far as I am personally concerned, I can conscientiously say that I don't see the smallest objection to our insuring ourselves against all risks.

Mrs. Alving. That is exactly what I think.

Manders. But what about the opinion of the people hereabouts?

Mrs. Alving. Their opinion--?

Manders. Is there any considerable body of opinion here--opinion of some account, I mean--that might take exception to it?

Mrs. Alving. What, exactly, do you mean by opinion of some account?

Manders. Well, I was thinking particularly of persons of such independent and influential position that one could hardly refuse to attach weight to their opinion.

Mrs. Alving. There are a certain number of such people here, who might perhaps take exception to it if we--

Manders. That's just it, you see. In town there are lots of them. All my fellow-clergymen's congregations, for instance! It would be so extremely easy for them to interpret it as meaning that neither you nor I had a proper reliance on Divine protection.

Mrs. Alving. But as far as you are concerned, my dear friend, you have at all events the consciousness that--

Manders. Yes I know I know; my own mind is quite easy about it, it is true. But we should not be able to prevent a wrong and injurious interpretation of our action. And that sort of thing,
moreover, might very easily end in exercising a hampering influence on the work of the Orphanage.

Mrs. Alving. (2) Oh, well, if that is likely to be the effect of it--

Manders. Nor can I entirely overlook the difficult--indeed, I may say, painful--position I might possibly be placed in. In the best circles in town the matter of this Orphanage is attracting a great deal of attention. Indeed the Orphanage is to some extent built for the benefit of the town too, and it is to be hoped that it may result in the lowering of our poor-rate by a considerable amount. (2) But as I have been your adviser in the matter and have taken charge of the business side of it, I should be afraid that it would be I that spiteful persons would attack first of all.

Mrs. Alving. Yes, you ought not to expose yourself to that.

Manders. Not to mention the attacks that would undoubtedly be made upon me in certain newspapers and reviews.

Mrs. Alving. Say no more about it, dear Mr. Manders; that quite decides it.

Manders. (2) Then you don't wish it to be insured?

Mrs. Alving. No, we will give up the idea.

Manders (leaning back in his chair). But suppose, now, that some accident happened?--one can never tell--(1) would you be prepared to make good the damage?

Mrs. Alving. No; I tell you quite plainly I would not do so under any circumstances.

Manders. Still, you know, Mrs. Alving--after all, it is a serious responsibility that we are taking upon ourselves.

Mrs. Alving. But do you think we can do otherwise?

Manders. No, that's just it. We really can't do otherwise. (5) We ought not to expose ourselves to a mistaken judgment; and we have no right to do anything that will scandalise the community.

Mrs. Alving. You ought not to, as a clergyman, at any rate.
Manders. And, what is more, I certainly think that we may count upon our enterprise being attended by good fortune--indeed, that it will be under a special protection.

Mrs. Alving. Let us hope so, Mr. Manders.

Manders. Then we will leave it alone?

Mrs. Alving. Certainly.

Manders. Very good. As you wish. (Makes a note.) No insurance, then.

Mrs. Alving. It's a funny thing that you should just have happened to speak about that today--

Manders. I have often meant to ask you about it.

Mrs. Alving. --because yesterday we very nearly had a fire up there.

Manders. Do you mean it!

Mrs. Alving. Oh, as a matter of fact it was nothing of any consequence. Some shavings in the carpenter's shop caught fire.

Manders. Where Engstrand works?

Mrs. Alving. Yes. They say he is often so careless with matches.

Manders. He has so many things on his mind, poor fellow--so many anxieties. Heaven be thanked, I am told he is really making an effort to live a blameless life,

Mrs. Alving. Really? Who told you so?

Manders. He assured me himself that it is so. He's good workman, too.

Mrs. Alving. Oh, yes, when he is sober.

Manders. Ah, that sad weakness of his! But the pain in his poor leg often drives him to it, he tells me. The last time he was in town, I was really quite touched by him. He came to my house and thanked me so gratefully for getting him work here, where he could have the chance of being with Regina.
Mrs. Alving. He doesn't see very much of her.

Manders. But he assured me that he saw her every day.

Mrs. Alving. Oh well, perhaps he does.

Manders. He feels so strongly that he needs someone who can keep a hold on him when temptations assail him. That is the most winning thing about Jacob Engstrand; he comes to one like a helpless child and accuses himself and confesses his frailty. The last time he came and had a talk with me... Suppose now, Mrs. Alving, that it were really a necessity of his existence to have Regina at home with him again--

Mrs. Alving (standing up suddenly). Regina!

Manders. --you ought not to set yourself against him.

Mrs. Alving. Indeed, I set myself very definitely against that. And, besides, you know Regina is to have a post in the Orphanage.

Manders. But consider, after all he is her father--

Mrs. Alving. I know best what sort of a father he has been to her. No, she shall never go to him with my consent.

Manders (getting up). My dear lady, don't judge so hastily. It is very sad how you misjudge poor Engstrand. One would really think you were afraid...

Mrs. Alving (more calmly). That is not the question. I have taken Regina into my charge, and in my charge she remains. (Listens.) Hush, dear. Mr. Manders, don't say any more about it. (Her face brightens with pleasure.) Listen! Oswald is coming downstairs. We will only think about him now.

(OSWALD ALVING, in a light overcoat, hat in hand and smoking a big meerschaum pipe, comes in by the door on the left.)

Oswald (standing in the doorway). Oh, I beg your pardon, I thought you were in the office. (Comes in.) Good morning, Mr. Manders.

Manders (staring at him). Well! It's most extraordinary.

Mrs. Alving. Yes, what do you think of him, Mr. Manders?
Manders. I-I-no, can it possibly be--?

Oswald. Yes, it really is the prodigal son, Mr. Manders.

Manders. Oh, my dear young friend--

Oswald. Well, the son came home, then.

Mrs. Alving. Oswald is thinking of the time when you were so opposed to the idea of his being a painter.

Manders. We are only fallible, and many steps seem to us hazardous at first, that afterwards--(grasps his hand). Welcome, welcome! Really, my dear Oswald--may I still call you Oswald?

Oswald. What else would you think of calling me?

Manders. Thank you. What I mean, my dear Oswald, is that you must not imagine that I have any unqualified disapproval of the artist's life. I admit that there are many who, even in that career, can keep the inner man free from harm.

Oswald. Let us hope so.

Mrs. Alving (beaming with pleasure). I know one who has kept both the inner and the outer man free from harm. Just take a look at him, Mr. Manders.

Oswald (walks across the room). Yes, yes, mother dear, of course.

Manders. Undoubtedly--no one can deny it. And I hear you have begun to make a name for yourself. I have often seen mention of you in the papers--and extremely favourable mention, too. Although, I must admit, lately I have not seen your name so often.

Oswald (going towards the conservatory). I haven't done so much painting just lately.

Mrs. Alving. An artist must take a rest sometimes, like other people.

Manders. Of course, of course. At those times the artist is preparing and strengthening himself for a greater effort.

Oswald. (5)Yes. Mother, will dinner soon be ready?
Mrs. Alving. In half an hour. He has a fine appetite, thank goodness.

Manders. And a liking for tobacco too.

Oswald. I found father's pipe in the room upstairs, and--

Manders. Ah, that is what it was!

Mrs. Alving. What?

Manders. When Oswald came in at that door with the pipe in his mouth, I thought for the moment it was his father in the flesh.

Oswald. Really?

Mrs. Alving. How can you say so! Oswald takes after me.

Manders. Yes, but there is an expression about the corners of his mouth--something about the lips--that reminds me so exactly of Mr. Alving--especially when he smokes.

Mrs. Alving. I don't think so at all. To my mind, Oswald has much more of a clergyman's mouth.

>Manders. Well, yes--a good many of my colleagues in the church have a similar expression.

Mrs. Alving. But put your pipe down, my dear boy. I don't allow any smoking in here.

Oswald (puts down his pipe). All right, I only wanted to try it, because I smoked it once when I was a child.

Mrs. Alving. You?

Oswald. Yes; it was when I was quite a little chap. And I can remember going upstairs to father's room one evening when he was in very good spirits.

Mrs. Alving. Oh, you can't remember anything about those days.

Oswald. Yes, I remember plainly that he took me on his knee and let me smoke his pipe. "Smoke, my boy," he said, "have a good smoke, boy!" And I smoked as hard as I could, until I felt I was
turning quite pale and the perspiration was standing in great drops on my forehead. Then he laughed—such a hearty laugh.

**Manders.** It was an extremely odd thing to do.

**Mrs. Alving.** Dear Mr. Manders, Oswald only dreamt it.

**Oswald.** No indeed, mother, it was no dream. Because—don't you remember—you came into the room and carried me off to the nursery, where I was sick, and I saw that you were crying. Did father often play such tricks?

**Manders.** In his young days he was full of fun—

**Oswald.** And, for all that, he did so much with his life—so much that was good and useful, I mean—short as his life was.

**Manders.** Yes, my dear Oswald Alving, you have inherited the name of a man who undoubtedly was both energetic and worthy. Let us hope it will be a spur to your energies.

**Oswald.** It ought to be, certainly.

**Manders.** In any case it was nice of you to come home for the day that is to honour his memory.

**Oswald.** I could do no less for my father.

**Mrs. Alving.** And to let me keep him so long here—that's the nicest part of what he has done.

**Manders.** Yes, I hear you are going to spend the winter at home.

**Oswald.** I am here for an indefinite time, Mr. Manders.—Oh, it's good to be at home again!

**Mrs. Alving** (beaming). Yes, isn't it?

**Manders** (looking sympathetically at him). You went out into the world very young, my dear Oswald.

**Oswald.** I did. Sometimes I wonder if I wasn't too young.

**Mrs. Alving.** (10)Not a bit of it. It is the best thing for an active boy, and especially for an only child. It's a pity when they are kept at home with their parents and get spoiled.
Manders. That is a very debatable question, Mrs. Alving. (2) A child's own home is, and always must be, his proper place.

Oswald. There I agree entirely with Mr. Manders.

Manders. Take the case of your own son. Oh yes, we can talk about it before him. What has the result been in his case? He is six or seven and twenty, and has never yet had the opportunity of learning what a well-regulated home means.

Oswald. Excuse me, Mr. Manders, you are quite wrong there.

Manders. Indeed? I imagined that your life abroad had practically been spent entirely in artistic circles.

Oswald. So it has.

Manders. And chiefly amongst the younger artists.

Oswald. Certainly.

Manders. But I imagined that those gentry, as a rule, had not the means necessary for family life and the support of a home.

Oswald. There are a considerable number of them who have not the means to marry, Mr. Manders.

Manders. That is exactly my point.

Oswald. But they can have a home of their own, all the same; a good many of them have. And they are very well-regulated and very comfortable homes, too.

(Mrs. Alving, who has listened to him attentively, nods assent, but says nothing.)

Manders. Oh, but I am not talking of bachelor establishments. By a home (5) I mean family life--the life a man lives with his wife and children.

Oswald. (6) Exactly, or with his children and his children's mother.

Manders (starts and clasps his hands). Good heavens!

Oswald. What is the matter?
Manders. (6) Lives with his children's mother.

Oswald. (6) Well, would you rather he should repudiate his children's mother?

Manders. Then what you are speaking of are those unprincipled conditions known as irregular unions!

Oswald. I have never noticed anything particularly unprincipled about these people's lives.

Manders. (5) But do you mean to say that it is possible for a man of any sort of bringing up, and a young woman, to reconcile themselves to such a way of living—and to make no secret of it, either!

Oswald. What else are they to do? A poor artist, and a poor girl—it costs a good deal to get married. What else are they to do?

Manders. What are they to do? Well, Mr. Alving, I will tell you what they ought to do. (5) They ought to keep away from each other from the very beginning—that is what they ought to do!

Oswald. That advice wouldn't have much effect upon hot-blooded young folk who are in love.

Mrs. Alving. No, indeed it wouldn't.

Manders (persistently). And to think that the authorities tolerate such things! That they are allowed to go on, openly! (Turns to MRS. ALVING.) Had I so little reason, then, to be sadly concerned about your son? In circles where open immorality is rampant—where, one may say, it is honoured—

Oswald. Let me tell you this, Mr. Manders. I have been a constant Sunday guest at one or two of these "irregular" households.

Manders. On Sunday, too!

Oswald. Yes, that is the day of leisure. But never have I heard one objectionable word there, still less have I ever seen anything that could be called immoral. No; but do you know when and where I have met with immorality in artists' circles?

Manders. No, thank heaven, I don't!
Oswald. Well, then, I shall have the pleasure of telling you. I have met with it when someone or other of your model husbands and fathers have come out there to have a bit of a look round on their own account, and have done the artists the honour of looking them up in their humble quarters. Then we had a chance of learning something, I can tell you. These gentlemen were able to instruct us about places and things that we had never so much as dreamt of.

Manders. What? Do you want me to believe that honourable men when they get away from home will--

Oswald. Have you never, when these same honourable men come home again, heard them deliver themselves on the subject of the prevalence of immorality abroad?

Manders. Yes, of course, but--

Mrs. Alving. I have heard them, too.

Oswald. Well, you can take their word for it, unhesitatingly. Some of them are experts in the matter. (Putting his hands to his head.) To think that the glorious freedom of the beautiful life over there should be so besmirched!

Mrs. Alving. You mustn't get too heated, Oswald; you gain nothing by that.

Oswald. No, you are quite right, mother. Besides, it isn't good for me. It's because I am so infernally tired, you know. I will go out and take a turn before dinner. I beg your pardon, Mr. Manders. It is impossible for you to realise the feeling; but it takes me that way (Goes out by the farther door on the right.)

Mrs. Alving. My poor boy!

Manders. You may well say so. This is what it has brought him to! (MRS. ALVING looks at him, but does not speak.) He called himself the prodigal son. It's only too true, alas--only too true! (MRS. ALVING looks steadily at him.) And what do you say to all this?

Mrs. Alving. (10)I say that Oswald was right in every single word he said.

Manders. Right? Right? To hold such principles as that?
Mrs. Alving. (10) In my loneliness here I have come to just the same opinions as he, Mr. Manders. But I have never presumed to venture upon such topics in conversation. Now there is no need; my boy shall speak for me.

Manders. (9) You deserve the deepest pity, Mrs. Alving. It is my duty to say an earnest word to you. (1) It is no longer your businessman and adviser, no longer your old friend and your dead husband's old friend, that stands before you now. It is your priest that stands before you, just as he did once at the most critical moment of your life.

Mrs. Alving. (10) And what is it that my priest has to say to me?

Manders. (9) First of all I must stir your memory. The moment is well chosen. Tomorrow is the tenth anniversary of your husband's death; tomorrow the memorial to the departed will be unveiled; tomorrow I shall speak to the whole assembly that will be met together, But today I want to speak to you alone.

Mrs. Alving. Very well, Mr. Manders, speak!

Manders. Have you forgotten that after barely a year of married life you were standing at the very edge of a precipice?-- that you forsook your house and home? (10) that you ran away from your husband--yes, Mrs. Alving, ran away, ran away--and refused to return to him in spite of his requests and entreaties?

Mrs. Alving. (10) Have you forgotten how unspeakably unhappy I was during that first year?

Manders. To crave for happiness in this world is simply to be possessed by a spirit of revolt. (5) What right have we to happiness? No! we must do our duty, Mrs. Alving. (5) And your duty was to cleave to the man you had chosen and to whom you were bound by a sacred bond.

Mrs. Alving. (10) You know quite well what sort of a life my husband was living at that time--what excesses he was guilty of.

Manders. I know only too well what rumour used to say of him; and I should be the last person to approve of his conduct as a young man, supposing that rumour spoke the truth. (5) But it is not a wife's part to be her husband's judge. (5) You should have considered it your bounden duty humbly to have borne the cross that a higher will had laid upon you. (10) But, instead of that, you rebelliously
cast off your cross, you deserted the man whose stumbling
footsteps you should have supported, you did what was bound to
imperil your good name and reputation, and came very near to
imperilling the reputation of others into the bargain.

Mrs. Alving. Of others? Of one other, you mean.

Manders. (2) It was the height of imprudence, your seeking refuge
with me.

Mrs. Alving. (10) With our priest? (10) With our intimate friend?

Manders. All the more on that account; you should thank God that
(2) I possessed the necessary strength of mind--that I was able to
turn you from your outrageous intention, and that it was
vouchsafed to me to succeed in leading you back into the path of
duty, and back to your lawful husband.

Mrs. Alving. (10) Yes, Mr. Manders, that certainly was your doing.

Manders. I was but the humble instrument of a higher power. (5) And
is it not true that my having been able to bring you again under
the yoke of duty and obedience sowed the seeds of a rich blessing
on all the rest of your life? Did things not turn out as I
foretold to you? Did not your husband turn from straying in the
wrong path, as a man should? (5) Did he not, after that, live a life
of love and good report with you all his days? (1) Did he not become
a benefactor to the neighbourhood? (1) Did he not so raise you up to
his level, so that by degree you became his fellow-worker in all
his undertakings--and a noble fellow-worker, too. (5) I know, Mrs.
Alving; that praise I will give you. But now I come to the second
serious false step in your life.

Mrs. Alving. What do you mean?

Manders. (5) Just as once you forsook your duty as a wife, so, since
then, you have forsaken your duty as a mother.

Mrs. Alving. Oh--!

Manders. (5) You have been overmastered all your life by a disastrous
spirit of willfulness. All your impulses have led you towards what
is undisciplined and lawless. You have never been willing to
submit to any restraint. Anything in life that has seemed irksome
to you, you have thrown aside (9) recklessly and unscrupulously, as
if it were a burden that you were free to rid yourself of if you
would. (5) It did not please you to be a wife any longer, and so you left your husband. (6) Your duties as a mother were irksome to you, so you sent your child away among strangers.

**Mrs. Alving.** (10) Yes, that is true; I did that.

**Manders.** And that is why you have become a stranger to him.

**Mrs. Alving.** (10) No, no, I am not that!

**Manders.** You are; you must be. And what sort of a son is it that you have got back? Think over it seriously, Mrs. Alving. (5) You erred grievously in your husband's case—you acknowledge as much, by erecting this memorial to him. Now you are bound to acknowledge how much you have erred in your son's case; possibly there may still be time to reclaim him from the path of wickedness. (5) Turn over a new leaf, and set yourself to reform what there may still be that is capable of reformation in him. Because (with uplifted forefinger) in very truth, Mrs. Alving, (6) you are a guilty mother!—That is what I have thought it my duty to say to you.

(A short silence.)

**Mrs. Alving** (speaking slowly and with self-control). You have had your say, Mr. Manders, and tomorrow you will be making a public speech in memory of my husband. I shall not speak tomorrow. But now I wish to speak to you for a little, just as you have been speaking to me.

**Manders.** By all means; no doubt you wish to bring forward some excuses for your behaviour.

**Mrs. Alving.** No. I only want to tell you something--

**Manders.** Well?

**Mrs. Alving.** (10) In all that you said just now about me and my husband, and about our life together after you had, as you put it, led me back into the path of duty—there was nothing that you knew at first hand. From that moment you never again set foot in our house—you, who had been our daily companion before that.

**Manders.** Remember that you and your husband moved out of town immediately afterwards.
Mrs. Alving. Yes, and you never once came out here to see us in my husband's lifetime. It was only the business in connection with the Orphanage that obliged you to come and see me.

Manders (in a low and uncertain voice). Helen--if that is a reproach, I can only beg you to consider--

Mrs. Alving. --the respect you owed by your calling?--yes. All the more as I was a wife who had tried to run away from her husband. One can never be too careful to have nothing to do with such reckless women.

Manders. My dear--Mrs. Alving, you are exaggerating dreadfully.

Mrs. Alving. Yes, yes,--very well. What I mean is this, that when you condemn my conduct as a wife you have nothing more to go upon than ordinary public opinion.

Manders. I admit it. What then?

Mrs. Alving. Well now, Mr. Manders, now I am going to tell you the truth. I had sworn to myself that you should know it one day--you, and you only!

Manders. And what may the truth be?

Mrs. Alving. The truth is this, that my husband died just as great a profligate as he had been all his life.

Manders (feeling for a chair). What are you saying?

Mrs. Alving. After nineteen years of married life, just as profligate--in his desires at all events--as he was before you married us.

Manders. And can you talk of his youthful indiscretions--his irregularities--his excesses, if you like--as a profligate life!

Mrs. Alving. That was what the doctor who attended him called it.

Manders. I don't understand what you mean.

Mrs. Alving. It is not necessary that you should.
Manders. It makes my brain reel. To think that your marriage--all the years of wedded life you spent with your husband--were nothing but a hidden abyss of misery.

Mrs. Alving. That and nothing else. Now you know.

Manders. This--this bewilders me. I can't understand it! I can't grasp it! (9) How in the world was it possible? (5) How could such a state of things remain concealed?

Mrs. Alving. That was just what I had to fight for incessantly, day after day. When Oswald was born, I thought I saw a slight improvement. But it didn't last long. (5) And after that I had to fight doubly hard--fight a desperate fight so that no one should know what sort of a man my child's father was. You know quite well what an attractive manner he had; it seemed as if people could believe nothing but good of him. He was one of those men whose mode of life seems to have no effect upon their reputations. But at last, Mr. Manders--you must hear this too--at last something happened more abominable than everything else.

Manders. More abominable than what you have told me!

Mrs. Alving. I had borne with it all, though I knew only too well what he indulged in in secret, when he was out of the house. (10) But when it came to the point of the scandal coming within our four walls--

Manders. Can you mean it! Here?

Mrs. Alving. Yes, here, in our own home. It was in there (pointing to the nearer door on the right) in the dining-room that I got the first hint of it. I had something to do in there and the door was standing ajar. I heard our maid come up from the garden with water for the flowers in the conservatory.

Manders. Well--?

Mrs. Alving. Shortly afterwards I heard my husband come in too. I heard him say something to her in a low voice. And then I heard--(with a short laugh)--oh, it rings in my ears still, with its mixture of what was heartbreaking and what was so ridiculous--I heard my own servant whisper: "Let me go, Mr. Alving! Let me be!"

Manders. What unseemly levity on his part! But surely nothing more than levity, Mrs. Alving, believe me.
Mrs. Alving. (10) I soon knew what to believe. (10) My husband had his will of the girl--and that intimacy had consequences, Mr. Manders.

Manders (as if turned to stone). And all that in this house! In this house!

Mrs. Alving. (10) I have suffered a good deal in this house. (5) To keep him at home in the evening--and at night--I have had to play the part of boon companion in his secret drinking-bouts in his room up there. (5) I have had to sit there alone with him, have had to hobnob and drink with him, have had to listen to his ribald senseless talk, have had to fight with brute force to get him to bed--

Manders (trembling). And you were able to endure all this!

Mrs. Alving. I had my little boy, and endured it for his sake. But when the crowning insult came--when my own servant--(10) then I made up my mind that there should be an end of it. (1) I took the upper hand in the house, absolutely--both with him and all the others. I had a weapon to use against him, you see; he didn't dare to speak. (10) It was then that Oswald was sent away. He was about seven then, and was beginning to notice things and ask questions as children will. I could endure all that, my friend. (10) It seemed to me that the child would be poisoned if he breathed the air of this polluted house. (10) That was why I sent him away. (10) And now you understand, too, why he never set foot here as long as his father was alive. No one knows what it meant to me.

Manders. You have indeed had a pitiable experience.

Mrs. Alving. (3) I could never have gone through with it, if I had not had my work. (3) Indeed, I can boast that I have worked: all the increase in the value of the property, all the improvements, all the useful arrangements that my husband got the honour and glory of--do you suppose that he troubled himself about any of them? He, who used to lie the whole day on the sofa reading old official lists! No, you may as well know that too. (3) It was I that kept him up to the mark when he had his lucid intervals; it was I that had to bear the whole burden of it when he began his excesses again or took to whining about his miserable condition.

Manders. And this is the man you are building a memorial to!

Mrs. Alving. There you see the power of an uneasy conscience.
Manders. An uneasy conscience? What do you mean?

Mrs. Alving. I had always before me the fear that it was impossible that the truth should not come out and be believed. (9) That is why the Orphanage is to exist, to silence all rumours and clear away all doubt.

Manders. You certainly have not fallen short of the mark in that, Mrs. Alving.

Mrs. Alving. I had another very good reason. I did not wish Oswald, my own son, to inherit a penny that belonged to his father.

Manders. Then it is with Mr. Alving's property.

Mrs. Alving. Yes. (1) The sums of money that, year after year, I have given towards this Orphanage, make up the amount of property--I have reckoned it carefully--which in the old days made Lieutenant Alving a catch.

Manders. I understand.

Mrs. Alving. (8) That was my purchase money. I don't wish it to pass into Oswald's hands. (3) My son shall have everything from me, I am determined.

(OSWALD comes in by the farther door on the right. He has left his hat and coat outside.)

Mrs. Alving. Back again, my own dear boy?

Oswald. Yes, what can one do outside in this everlasting rain? I hear dinner is nearly ready. That's good!

(REGINA comes in front the dining-room, carrying a parcel.)

Regina. This parcel has come for you, ma'am. (Gives it to her.)

Mrs. Alving (glancing at MANDERS). The ode to be sung tomorrow, I expect.

Manders. Hm--!

Regina. And dinner is ready.
Mrs. Alving. Good. We will come in a moment. I will just--(begins to open the parcel).

Regina (to OSWALD). Will you drink white or red wine, sir?

Oswald. Both, Miss Engstrand.

Regina. Bien--very good, Mr. Alving. (Goes into the dining-room.)

Oswald. I may as well help you to uncork it--. (Follows her into the dining-room, leaving the door ajar after him.)

Mrs. Alving. Yes, I thought so. Here is the ode, Mr Manders.

Manders (clasping his hands). How shall I ever have the courage tomorrow to speak the address that--

Mrs. Alving. Oh, you will get through it.

Manders (in a low voice, fearing to be heard in the dining room). Yes, we must raise no suspicions.

Mrs. Alving (quietly but firmly). No; and then this long dreadful comedy will be at an end. After tomorrow, I shall feel as if my dead husband had never lived in this house. There will be no one else here then but my boy and his mother.

(From the dining-room is heard the noise of a chair falling; then REGINA'S voice is heard in a loud whisper: Oswald! Are you mad? Let me go!)

Mrs. Alving (starting in horror). Oh--!

(She stares wildly at the half-open door. OSWALD is heard coughing and humming, then the sound of a bottle being uncorked.)

Manders (in an agitated manner). What's the matter? What is it, Mrs. Alving?

Mrs. Alving (hoarsely). Ghosts. The couple in the conservatory--over again.

Manders. What are you saying! Regina--? Is SHE--!

Mrs. Alving. Yes, Come. Not a word--!
(Grips MANDERS by the arm and walks unsteadily with him into the dining-room.)

ACT II

(The same scene. The landscape is still obscured by Mist. MANDERS and MRS. ALVING come in from the dining-room.)

Mrs. Alving (calls into the dining-room from the doorway). Aren't you coming in here, Oswald?

Oswald. No, thanks; I think I will go out for a bit.

Mrs. Alving. Yes, do; the weather is clearing a little. (She shuts the dining-room door, then goes to the hall door and calls.) Regina!

Regina (from without). Yes, ma'am?

Mrs. Alving. Go down into the laundry and help with the garlands.

Regina. Yes, ma'am.

(MRS. ALVING satisfies herself that she has gone, then shuts the door.)

Manders. I suppose he can't hear us?

Mrs. Alving. Not when the door is shut. Besides, he is going out.

Manders. I am still quite bewildered. I don't know how I managed to swallow a mouthful of your excellent dinner.

Mrs. Alving (walking up and down, and trying to control her agitation). Nor I. But, what are we to do?

Manders. Yes, what are we to do? Upon my word I don't know; I am so completely unaccustomed to things of this kind.

Mrs. Alving. I am convinced that nothing serious has happened yet.
Manders. Heaven forbid! But it is most unseemly behaviour, for all that.

Mrs. Alving. It is nothing more than a foolish jest of Oswald's, you may be sure.

Manders. Well, of course, as I said, I am quite inexperienced in such matters; but it certainly seems to me--

Mrs. Alving. Out of the house she shall go--and at once. That part of it is as clear as daylight--

Manders. Yes, that is quite clear.

Mrs. Alving. But where is she to go? We should not be justified in--

Manders. Where to? Home to her father, of course.

Mrs. Alving. To whom, did you say?

Manders. To her--. No, of course Engstrand isn't--. But, great heavens, Mrs. Alving, how is such a thing possible? You surely may have been mistaken, in spite of everything.

Mrs. Alving. There was no chance of mistake, more's the pity. Joanna was obliged to confess it to me--and my husband couldn't deny it. So there was nothing else to do but to hush it up.

Manders. No, that was the only thing to do.

Mrs. Alving. The girl was sent away at once, and was given a tolerably liberal sum to hold her tongue. She looked after the rest herself when she got to town. She renewed an old acquaintance with the carpenter Engstrand; gave him a hint, I suppose, of how much money she had got, and told him some fairy tale about a foreigner who had been here in his yacht in the summer. So she and Engstrand were married in a great hurry. Why, you married them yourself!

Manders. I can't understand it--. I remember clearly Engstrand's coming to arrange about the marriage. He was full of contrition, and accused himself bitterly for the light conduct he and his fiancee had been guilty of.

Mrs. Alving. Of course he had to take the blame on himself.
Manders. But the deceitfulness of it! And with me, too! I positively would not have believed it of Jacob Engstrand. I shall most certainly give him a serious talking to. And the immorality of such a marriage! Simply for the sake of the money--! (1) What sum was it that the girl had?

Mrs. Alving. (1) It was seventy pounds.

Manders. Just think of it--(5) for a paltry seventy pounds to let yourself be bound in marriage to a fallen woman!

Mrs. Alving. (10) What about myself, then?-- (10) I let myself be bound in marriage to a fallen man.

Manders. Heaven forgive you! What are you saying? A fallen man?

Mrs. Alving. (10) Do you suppose my husband was any purer, when I went with him to the altar, than Joanna was when Engstrand agreed to marry her?

Manders. (5) The two cases are as different as day from night.

Mrs. Alving. (10) Not so very different, after all. (1) It is true there was a great difference in the price paid, between a paltry seventy pounds and a whole fortune.

Manders. (5) How can you compare such totally different things! (5) I presume you consulted your own heart--and your relations.

Mrs. Alving (looking away from him). (4) I thought you understood where what you call my heart had strayed to at that time.

Manders (in a constrained voice). If I had understood anything of the kind, I would not have been a daily guest in your husband's house.

Mrs. Alving. Well, at any rate this much is certain-- (9) I didn't consult myself in the matter at all.

Manders. Still you consulted those nearest to you, as was only right--your mother, your two aunts.

Mrs. Alving. (5) Yes, that is true. (5) The three of them settled the whole matter for me. (9) It seems incredible to me now, how clearly they made out that it would be sheer folly to reject such an
offer. If my mother could only see what all that fine prospect has led to!

Manders. No one can be responsible for the result of it. Anyway there is this to be said, that the match was made in complete conformity with law and order.

Mrs. Alving (going to the window). Oh, law and order! I often think it is that that is at the bottom of all the misery in the world,

Manders. Mrs. Alving, it is very wicked of you to say that.

Mrs. Alving. That may be so; but I don't attach importance to those obligations and considerations any longer. I cannot! I must struggle for my freedom.

Manders. What do you mean?

Mrs. Alving (taping on the window panes). I ought never to have concealed what sort of a life my husband led. But I had not the courage to do otherwise then--for my own sake, either. I was too much of a coward.

Manders. A coward?

Mrs. Alving. If others had known anything of what happened, they would have said: "Poor man, it is natural enough that he should go astray, when he has a wife that has run away from him."

Manders. They would have had a certain amount of justification for saying so.

Mrs. Alving (looking fixedly at him). If I had been the woman I ought, I would have taken Oswald into my confidence and said to him: "Listen, my son, your father was a dissolute man"--

Manders. Miserable woman.

Mrs. Alving. -- and I would have told him all I have told you, from beginning to end.

Manders. I am almost shocked at you, Mrs. Alving.
Mrs. Alving. (10) I know. I know quite well! (10) I am shocked at myself when I think of it. (Comes away from the window.) (10) I am coward enough for that.

Manders. (5) Can you call it cowardice that you simply did your duty? Have you forgotten that a child should love and honour his father and mother?

Mrs. Alving. Don't let us talk in such general terms. (10) Suppose we say: "Ought Oswald to love and honour Mr. Alving?"

Manders. (5) You are a mother--isn't there a voice in your heart that forbids you to shatter your son's ideals?

Mrs. Alving. (10) And what about the truth?

Manders. (5) What about his ideals?

Mrs. Alving. (10) Oh--ideals, ideals! If only I were not such a coward as I am!

Manders. (5) Do not spurn ideals, Mrs. Alving--they have a way of avenging themselves cruelly. Take Oswald's own case, now. He hasn't many ideals, more's the pity. But this much I have seen, that his father is something of an ideal to him.

Mrs. Alving. (2) You are right there.

Manders. And his conception of his father is what you inspired and encouraged by your letters.

Mrs. Alving. (10) Yes, I was swayed by duty and consideration for others; that was why I lied to my son, year in and year out. (10) Oh, what a coward--what a coward I have been!

Manders. You have built up a happy illusion in your son's mind, Mrs. Alving--and that is a thing you certainly ought not to undervalue.

Mrs. Alving. (10) Ah, who knows if that is such a desirable thing after all!-- (4) But anyway I don't intend to put up with any goings on with Regina. I am not going to let him get the poor girl into trouble.

Manders. Good heavens, no--that would be a frightful thing!
Mrs. Alving. If only I knew whether he meant it seriously, and whether it would mean happiness for him.

Manders. In what way? I don't understand.

Mrs. Alving. But that is impossible; Regina is not equal to it, unfortunately.

Manders. I don't understand: What do you mean?

Mrs. Alving. If I were not such a miserable coward, I would say to him: "Marry her, or make any arrangement you like with her--only let there be no deceit in the matter."

Manders. Heaven forgive you! Are you actually suggesting anything so abominable, so unheard of, as a marriage between them!

Mrs. Alving. Unheard of, do you call it? Tell me honestly, Mr. Manders, don't you suppose there are plenty of married couples out here in the country that are just as nearly related as they are?

Manders. I am sure I don't understand you.

Mrs. Alving. Indeed you do.

Manders. I suppose you are thinking of cases where possibly--. It is only too true, unfortunately, that family life is not always as stainless as it should be. But as for the sort of thing you hint at--well, it's impossible to tell, at all events, with any certainty. Here on the other hand--for you, a mother, to be willing to allow your--

Mrs. Alving. But I am not willing to allow it; I would not allow it for anything in the world; that is just what I was saying.

Manders. No, because you are a coward, as you put it. But, supposing you were not a coward--! Great heavens--such a revolting union!

Mrs. Alving. Well, for the matter of that, we are all descended from a union of that description, so we are told. And who was it that was responsible for this state of things, Mr. Manders?
Manders. I can't discuss such questions with you, Mrs. Alving; you are by no means in the right frame of mind for that. But for you to dare to say that it is cowardly of you--!

Mrs. Alving. I will tell you what I mean by that. I am frightened and timid, because I am obsessed by the presence of ghosts that I never can get rid of,

Manders. The presence of what?

Mrs. Alving. Ghosts. When I heard Regina and Oswald in there, it was just like seeing ghosts before my eyes. I am half inclined to think we are all ghosts, Mr. Manders. It is not only what we have inherited from our fathers and mothers that exists again in us, but all sorts of old dead ideas and all kinds of old dead beliefs and things of that kind. They are not actually alive in us; but there they are dormant, all the same, and we can never be rid of them. Whenever I take up a newspaper and read it, I fancy I see ghosts creeping between the lines. There must be ghosts all over the world. They must be as countless as the grains of the sands, it seems to me. And we are so miserably afraid of the light, all of us.

Manders. Ah!--there we have the outcome of your reading. Fine fruit it has borne--this abominable, subversive, free-thinking literature!

Mrs. Alving. You are wrong there, my friend. You are the one who made me begin to think; and I owe you my best thanks for it.

Manders. I!

Mrs. Alving. Yes, by forcing me to submit to what you called my duty and my obligations; by praising as right and lust what my whole soul revolted against, as it would against something abominable. That was what led me to examine your teachings critically. I only wanted to unravel one point in them; but as soon as I had got that unravelled, the whole fabric came to pieces. And then I realised that it was only machine-made.

Manders (softly, and with emotion). Is that all I accomplished by the hardest struggle of my life?

Mrs. Alving. Call it rather the most ignominious defeat of your life.
Manders. It was the greatest victory of my life, Helen; victory over myself.

Mrs. Alving. It was a wrong done to both of us.

Manders. A wrong?--wrong for me to entreat you as a wife to go back to your lawful husband, when you came to me half distracted and crying: "Here I am, take me!" Was that a wrong?

Mrs. Alving. I think it was.

Manders. We two do not understand one another.

Mrs. Alving. Not now, at all events.

Manders. Never--even in my most secret thoughts--have I for a moment regarded you as anything but the wife of another.

Mrs. Alving. Do you believe what you say?

Manders. Helen--!

Mrs. Alving. One so easily forgets one's own feelings. Manders. Not I. I am the same as I always was.

Mrs. Alving. Yes, yes--don't let us talk any more about the old days. You are buried up to your eyes now in committees and all sorts of business; and I am here, fighting with ghosts both without and within me.

Manders. I can at all events help you to get the better of those without you. After all that I have been horrified to hear you from today, I cannot conscientiously allow a young defenceless girl to remain in your house.

Mrs. Alving. Don't you think it would be best if we could get her settled?--by some suitable marriage, I mean.

Manders. Undoubtedly. I think, in any case, it would have been desirable for her. Regina is at an age now that--well, I don't know much about these things, but--

Mrs. Alving. Regina developed very early.

Manders. Yes, didn't she? I fancy I remember thinking she was remarkably well developed, bodily, at the time I prepared her for
Confirmation. But, for the time being, she must in any case go home. Under her father's care—no, but of course Engstrand is not. To think that he, of all men, could so conceal the truth from me! (A knock is heard at the hall door.)

Mrs. Alving. Who can that be? Come in!

(ENGSTRAND, dressed in his Sunday clothes, appears in the doorway.)

Engstrand. I humbly beg pardon, but—

Manders. Aha! Hm!

Mrs. Alving. Oh, it's you, Engstrand!

Engstrand. There were none of the maids about, so I took the great liberty of knocking.

Mrs. Alving. That's all right. Come in. Do you want to speak to me?

Engstrand (coming in). No, thank you very much, ma'am. It was Mr. Manders I wanted to speak to for a moment.

Manders (walking up and down). Hm!—do you. You want to speak to me, do you?

Engstrand. Yes, sir, I wanted so very much to—

Manders (stopping in front of him). Well, may I ask what it is you want?

Engstrand. It's this way, Mr. Manders. We are being paid off now. And many thanks to you, Mrs. Alving. And now the work is quite finished, I thought it would be so nice and suitable if all of us, who have worked so honestly together all this time, were to finish up with a few prayers this evening.

Manders. Prayers? Up at the Orphanage?

Engstrand. Yes, sir, but if it isn't agreeable to you, then—

Manders. Oh, certainly—but—hm!—
Engstrand. I have made a practice of saying a few prayers there myself each evening.

Mrs: Alving. Have you?

Engstrand. Yes, ma'am, now-- and then--just as a little edification, so to speak. But I am only a poor common man, and haven't rightly the gift, alas--and so I thought that as Mr, Manders happened to be here, perhaps--

Manders. Look here, Engstrand! First of all I must ask you a question. Are you in a proper frame of mind for such a thing? Is your conscience free and untroubled?

Engstrand. Heaven have mercy on me a sinner! My conscience isn't worth our speaking about, Mr. Manders.

Manders. But it is just what we must speak about. What do you say to my question?

Engstrand. My conscience? Well--it's uneasy sometimes, of course.

Manders. Ah, you admit that at all events. Now will you tell me, without any concealment-- what is your relationship to Regina?

Mrs. Alving (hastily). Mr. Manders!

Manders (calming her).--Leave it to me!

Engstrand. With Regina? Good Lord, how you frightened me! (Looks at MRS ALVING.) There is nothing wrong with Regina, is there?

Manders. Let us hope not. What I want to know is, what is your relationship to her? You pass as her father, don't you?

Engstrand (unsteadily): Well--hm!--you know, sir, what happened between me and my poor Joanna.

Manders. No more distortion of the truth! (5)Your late wife made a full confession to Mrs. Alving, before she left her service...

Engstrand. What!--do you mean to say--? Did she do that after all?

Manders. You see it has all come out, Engstrand.
Engstrand. Do you mean to say that she, who gave me her promise and solemn oath--

Manders. Did she take an oath?

Engstrand. Well, no--she only gave me her word, but as seriously as a woman could.

Manders. And all these years you have been hiding the truth from me--from me, who have had such complete and absolute faith in you.

Engstrand. I am sorry to say I have, sir.

Manders. Did I deserve that from you, Engstrand? Haven't I been always ready to help you in word and deed as far as lay in my power? Answer me! Is it not so?

Engstrand. Indeed there's many a time I should have been very badly off without you, sir.

Manders. And this is the way you repay me--by causing me to make false entries in the church registers, and afterwards keeping back from me for years the information which you owed it both to me and to your sense of the truth to divulge. Your conduct has been absolutely inexcusable, Engstrand, and from today everything is at an end between us.

Engstrand (with a sigh). Yes, I can see that's what it means.

Manders. Yes, because how can you possibly justify what you did?

Engstrand. Was the poor girl to go and increase her load of shame by talking about it? Just suppose, sir, for a moment that your reverence was in the same predicament as my poor Joanna.

Manders. I!

Engstrand. Good Lord, sir, I don't mean the same predicament. I mean, suppose there were something your reverence was ashamed of in the eyes of the world, so to speak. We men ought not judge a poor woman too hardly, Mr. Manders.

Manders. But I am not doing so at all. It is you I am blaming.

Engstrand. Will your reverence grant me leave to ask you a small question?
Manders. Ask away.

Engstrand. Shouldn't you say it was right for a man to raise up the fallen?

Manders. Of course it is.

Engstrand. And isn't a man bound to keep his word of honour?

Manders. Certainly he is; but--

Engstrand. At the time when Joanna had her misfortune with this Englishman—or maybe he was an American or a Russian, as they call 'em—well, sir, then she came to town. Poor thing, she had refused me once or twice before; she only had eyes for good-looking men in those days, and I had this crooked leg then. Your reverence will remember how I had ventured up into a dancing-saloon where seafaring men were revelling in drunkenness and intoxication, as they say. And when I tried to exhort them to turn from their evil ways--

Mrs. Alving (coughs from the window). (10) Ahem!

Manders. I know, Engstrand, I know—the rough brutes threw you downstairs. You have told me about that incident before. The affliction to your leg is a credit to you.

Engstrand. I don't want to claim credit for it, your reverence. But what I wanted to tell you was that she came then and confided in me with tears and gnashing of teeth. I can tell you, sir, it went to my heart to hear her.

Manders. Did it, indeed, Engstrand? Well, what then?

Engstrand. Well, then I said to her: "The American is roaming about on the high seas, he is. And you, (5) Joanna," I said, "you have committed a sin and are a fallen woman. But here stands Jacob Engstrand," I said, "on two strong legs"—of course that was only speaking in a kind of metaphor, as it were, your reverence.

Manders. I quite understand. Go on.

Engstrand. Well, sir, that was how I rescued her and made her my lawful wife, so that no one should know how recklessly she had carried on with the stranger.
Manders. That was all very kindly done. (1) The only thing I cannot justify was your bringing yourself to accept the money.


Manders (to MRS. ALVING, in a questioning tare). But--

Engstrand. Ah, yes! --wait a bit; I remember now. (1) Joanna did have a trifle of money, you are quite right. But I didn't want to know anything about that. "Fie," I said, "on the mammon of unrighteousness, it's the price of your sin; (2) as for this tainted gold"--or notes, or whatever it was--"we will throw it back in the American's face," I said. But he had gone away and disappeared on the stormy seas, your reverence.

Manders. Was that how it was, my good fellow?

Engstrand. It was, sir. (1) So then Joanna and I decided that the money should go towards the child's bringing-up, and that's what became of it; and I can give a faithful account of every single penny of it.

Manders. This alters the complexion of the affair very considerably.

Engstrand. That's how it was, your reverence. And I make bold to say that I have been a good father to Regina--as far as was in my power--for I am a poor erring mortal, alas!

Manders. There, there, my dear Engstrand.

Engstrand. Yes, I do make bold to say that I brought up the child, and made my poor Joanna a loving and careful husband, as the Bible says we ought. But it never occurred to me to go to your reverence and claim credit for it or boast about it because I had done one good deed in this world. No; when Jacob Engstrand does a thing like that, he holds his tongue about it. Unfortunately it doesn't often happen, I know that only too well. And whenever I do come to see your reverence, I never seem to have anything but trouble and wickedness to talk about. Because, as I said just now--and I say it again--conscience can be very hard on us sometimes.

Manders. Give me your hand, Jacob Engstrand,

Engstrand. Oh, sir, I don't like--
Manders. No nonsense, (Grasps his hand.) That's it!

Engstrand. And may I make bold humbly to beg your reverence's pardon--

Manders. You? On the contrary it is for me to beg your pardon--

Engstrand. Oh no, sir.

Manders. Yes, certainly it is, and I do it with my whole heart. Forgive me for having so much misjudged you. And I assure you that if I can do anything for you to prove my sincere regret and my goodwill towards you--

Engstrand. Do you mean it, sir?

Manders. It would give me the greatest pleasure.

Engstrand. As a matter of fact, sir, you could do it now. I am thinking of using the honest money I have put away out of my wages up here, in establishing a sort of Sailors' Home in the town.

Mrs. Alving. (10) You?

Engstrand. Yes, to be a sort of Refuge, as it were, There are such manifold temptations lying in wait for sailor men when they are roaming about on shore. But my idea is that in this house of mine they should have a sort of parental care looking after them.

Manders. What do you say to that, Mrs. Alving!

Engstrand. I haven't much to begin such a work with, I know; but Heaven might prosper it, and if I found any helping hand stretched out to me, then--

Manders. Quite so; we will talk over the matter further. Your project attracts me enormously. But in the meantime go back to the Orphanage and put everything tidy and light the lights, so that the occasion may seem a little solemn. And then we will spend a little edifying time together, my dear Engstrand, for now I am sure you are in a suitable frame of mind.

Engstrand. I believe I am, sir, truly. Goodbye, then, Mrs. Alving, and thank you for all your kindness; (8) and take good care of Regina for me. (Wipes a tear from his eye.) Poor Joanna's
child— it is an extraordinary thing, but she seems to have grown into my life and to hold me by the heartstrings. That's how I feel about it, truly. (Bows, and goes out.)

Manders. Now then, what do you think of him, Mrs Alving! That was quite another explanation that he gave us.

Mrs. Alving. It was, indeed.

Manders. There, you see how exceedingly careful we ought to be in condemning our fellow-men. But at the same time it gives one genuine pleasure to find that one was mistaken. Don't you think so?

Mrs. Alving. What I think is that you are, and always will remain, a big baby, Mr. Manders.

Manders. I?

Mrs. Alving (laying her hands on his shoulders). And I think that I should like very much to give you a good hug.

Manders (drawing beck hastily). No, no, good gracious! What an idea!

Mrs. Alving (with a smile). Oh, you needn't be afraid of me.

Manders (standing by the table). You choose such an extravagant way of expressing yourself sometimes. Now I must get these papers together and put them in my bag. (Does so.) That's it. And now goodbye, for the present. Keep your eyes open when Oswald comes back. I will come back and see you again presently.

(He takes his hat and goes out by the hall door. MRS. ALVING sighs, glances out of the window, puts one or two things tidy in the room and turns to go into the dining-room. She stops in the doorway with a stifled cry.)

Mrs. Alving. Oswald, are you still sitting at table!

Oswald (from the dining-room). I am only finishing my cigar.

Mrs. Alving. I thought you had gone out for a little turn.

Oswald (from within the room). In weather like this? (A glass is heard clinking. MRS. ALVING leaves the door open and sits down
with her knitting on the couch by the window.) Wasn't that Mr. Manders that went out just now?

Mrs. Alving. Yes, he has gone over to the Orphanage.

Oswald. Oh. (The clink of a bottle on a glass is heard again.)

Mrs. Alving (with an uneasy expression.) Oswald, dear, you should be careful with that liqueur. It is strong.

Oswald. It's a good protective against the damp.

Mrs. Alving. Wouldn't you rather come in here?

Oswald. You know you don't like smoking in there.

Mrs. Alving. You may smoke a cigar in here, certainly.

Oswald. All right; I will come in, then. Just one drop more. There! ( Comes in, smoking a cigar, and shuts the door after him. A short silence.) Where has the parson gone?

Mrs. Alving. I told you he had gone over to the Orphanage.

Oswald. Oh, so you did.

Mrs. Alving. You shouldn't sit so long at table, Oswald,

Oswald (holding his cigar behind his back). But it's so nice and cosy, mother dear. (Caresses her with one hand.) (5) Think what it means to me--to have come home; to sit at my mother's own table, in my mother's own room, and to enjoy the charming meals she gives me.

Mrs. Alving. My dear, dear boy!

Oswald (a little impatiently, as he walks tip and down smoking.) And what else is there for me to do here? I have no occupation--

Mrs. Alving. No occupation?

Oswald. Not in this ghastly weather, when there isn't a blink of sunshine all day long. (Walks up and down the floor.) Not to be able to work, it's--!

Mrs. Alving. I don't believe you were wise to come home.
Oswald. Yes, mother; I had to.

Mrs. Alving. Because I would ten times rather give up the happiness of having you with me, sooner than that you should--

Oswald (standing still by the table). Tell me, mother--is it really such a great happiness for you to have me at home?

Mrs. Alving. Can you ask?

Oswald (crumpling up a newspaper). I should have thought it would have been pretty much the same to you whether I were here or away.

Mrs. Alving. Have you the heart to say that to your mother, Oswald?

Oswald. But you have been quite happy living without me so far.

Mrs. Alving. Yes, I have lived without you--that is true.

(A silence. The dusk falls by degrees. OSWALD walks restlessly up and down. He has laid aside his cigar.) Oswald (stopping beside Mrs. Alving). Mother, may I sit on the couch beside you?

Mrs. Alving. Of course, my dear boy.

Oswald (sitting down). Now I must tell you something mother.

Mrs. Alving (anxiously). What?

Oswald (staring in front of him). I can't bear it any longer.

Mrs. Alving. Bear what? What do you mean?

Oswald (as before). I couldn't bring myself to write to you about it; and since I have been at home--

Mrs. Alving (catching him by the arm). Oswald, what is it?

Oswald. Both yesterday and today I have tried to push my thoughts away from me--to free myself from them. But I can't.

Mrs. Alving (getting up). You must speak plainly, Oswald!
Oswald (drawing her down to her seat again). Sit still, and I will try and tell you. I have made a great deal of the fatigue I felt after my journey--

Mrs. Alving. Well, what of that?

Oswald. But that isn't what is the matter. It is no ordinary fatigue--

Mrs. Alving (trying to get up). You are not ill, Oswald!

Oswald (pulling her down again). Sit still, mother. Do take it quietly. I am not exactly ill--not ill in the usual sense. (Takes his head in his hands.) Mother, it's my mind that has broken down--gone to pieces--I shall never be able to work anymore! (Buries his face in his hands and throws himself at her knees in an outburst of sobs.)

Mrs. Alving (pale and trembling). Oswald! Look at me! No, no, it isn't true!

Oswald (looking up with a distracted expression). Never to be able to work anymore! Never--never! A living death! Mother, can you imagine anything so horrible!

Mrs. Alving. My poor unhappy boy? How has this terrible thing happened?

Oswald (sitting up again). That is just what I cannot possibly understand. I have never lived recklessly, in any sense. You must believe that of me, mother, I have never done that.

Mrs. Alving. I haven't a doubt of it, Oswald.

Oswald. And yet this comes upon me all the same; this terrible disaster!

Mrs. Alving. Oh, but it will all come right again, my dear precious boy. It is nothing but overwork. Believe me, that is so.

Oswald (dully). I thought so too, at first; but it isn't so.

Mrs. Alving. Tell me all about it.

Oswald. Yes, I will.
**Mrs. Alving.** When did you first feel anything?

**Oswald.** It was just after I had been home last time and had got back to Paris. I began to feel the most violent pains in my head-mostly at the back, I think. It was as if a tight band of iron was pressing on me from my neck upwards.

**Mrs. Alving.** And then?

**Oswald.** At first I thought it was nothing but the headaches I always used to be so much troubled with while I was growing.

**Mrs. Alving.** Yes, yes.

**Oswald.** But it wasn't; I soon saw that. I couldn't work any longer. I would try and start some big new picture; but it seemed as if all my faculties had forsaken me, as if all my strengths were paralysed. I couldn't manage to collect my thoughts; my head seemed to swim--everything went round and round. It was a horrible feeling! At last I sent for a doctor--and from him I learned the truth.

**Mrs. Alving.** In what way, do you mean?

**Oswald.** He was one of the best doctors there. He made me describe what I felt, and then he began to ask me a whole heap of questions which seemed to me to have nothing to do with the matter. I couldn't see what he was driving at--

**Mrs. Alving.** Well?

**Oswald.** At last he said: "You have had the canker of disease in you practically from your birth"--the actual word he used was "vermoulu"...

**Mrs. Alving (anxiously).** 099What did he mean by that?

**Oswald.** I couldn't understand, either--and I asked him for a clearer explanation, And then the old cynic said--(clenching his fist). Oh!

**Mrs. Alving.** What did he say?

**Oswald.** He said: "The sins of the fathers are visited on the children."

**Mrs. Alving (getting up slowly).** The sins of the fathers--!
Oswald. I nearly struck him in the face.

Mrs. Alving (walking across the room). The sins of the fathers--!

Oswald (smiling sadly). Yes, just imagine! Naturally I assured him that what he thought was impossible. But do you think he paid any heed to me? No, he persisted in his opinion; and it was only when I got out your letters and translated to him all the passages that referred to my father--

Mrs. Alving. Well, and then?

Oswald. Well, then of course he had to admit that he was on the wrong track; and then I learned the truth-- the incomprehensible truth! I ought to have had nothing to do with the joyous happy life I had lived with my comrades. It had been too much for my strength. So it was my own fault!

Mrs. Alving. No, no, Oswald! Don't believe that--

Oswald. There was no other explanation of it possible, he said. That is the most horrible part of it. My whole life incurably ruined--just because of my own imprudence. All that I wanted to do in the world--not to dare to think of it any more--not to be able to think of it! Oh! if only I could live my life over again--if only I could undo what I have done! ( Throws himself on his face on the couch. Mrs. Alving wrings her hands, and walks up and down silently fighting with herself.)

Oswald (looks up after a while, raising himself on his elbows). If only it had been something I had inherited--something I could not help. But, instead of that, to have disgracefully, stupidly, thoughtlessly thrown away one's happiness, one's health, everything in the world-- one's future, one's life!

Mrs. Alving. No, no, my darling boy; that is impossible! (Bending over him.) Things are not so desperate as you think.

Oswald. Ah, you don't know--(Springs up.) And to think, mother, that I should bring all this sorrow upon you! Many a time I have almost wished and hoped that you really did not care so very much for me.

Mrs. Alving. I, Oswald? (My only son! All that I have in the world! The only thing I care about!
Oswald (taking hold of her hands and kissing them). Yes, yes, I know that is so. When I am at home I know that is true. And that is one of the hardest parts of it to me. But now you know all about it; and now we won't talk anymore about it today. I can't stand thinking about it long at a time. (Walks across the room.) Let me have something to drink, mother!

Mrs. Alving. To drink? What do you want?

Oswald. Oh, anything you like. I suppose you have got some punch in the house.

Mrs. Alving. Yes, but my dear Oswald--!

Oswald. Don't tell me I mustn't, mother. Do be nice! I must have something to drown these gnawing thoughts. (Goes into the conservatory.) And how--how gloomy it is here! (MRS. ALVING rings the bell.) And this incessant rain. It may go on week after week--a whole month. Never a ray of sunshine. I don't remember ever having seen the sunshine once when I have been at home.

Mrs. Alving. Oswald--you are thinking of going away from me!

Oswald. Hm!--(sighs deeply). I am not thinking about anything. I can't think about anything! (In a low voice.) I have to let that alone.

Regina (coming from the dining-room). Did you ring, ma'am?

Mrs. Alving. Yes, let us have the lamp in.

Regina. In a moment, ma'am; it is all ready lit. (Goes out.)

Mrs. Alving (going up to Oswald). Oswald, don't keep anything back from me.

Oswald. I don't, mother. (Goes to the table.) It seems to me I have told you a good lot.

(Regina brings the lamp and puts it upon the table.)

Mrs. Alving. Regina, you might bring us a small bottle of champagne.

Regina. Yes, ma'am. (Goes out.)
Oswald (taking hold of his mother's face). That's right; I knew my mother wouldn't let her son go thirsty.

Mrs. Alving. My poor dear boy, how could I refuse you anything now?

Oswald (eagerly). Is that true, mother? Do you mean it?

Mrs. Alving. Mean what?

Oswald. That you couldn't deny me anything?

Mrs. Alving. My dear Oswald--

Oswald. Hush!

(REGINA brings in a tray with a small bottle of champagne and two glasses, which she puts on the table.)

Regina. Shall I open the bottle?

Oswald. No, thank you, I will do it. (REGINA goes out.)

Mrs. Alving (sitting clown at the table). What did you mean, when you asked if I could refuse you nothing?

Oswald (busy opening the bottle). Let us have a glass first--or two.

(He draws the cork, fills one glass and is going to fill the other.)

Mrs. Alving (holding her hand over the second glass) No, thanks--not for me.

Oswald. Oh, well, for me then! (He empties his glass, fills it again and empties it; then sits down at the table.)

Mrs. Alving (expectantly). Now, tell me.

Oswald (without looking at her). Tell me this; I thought you and Mr. Manders seemed so strange--so quiet--at dinner.

Mrs. Alving. Did you notice that?
Oswald. Yes. Ahem! (After a short pause.) Tell me--what do you think of Regina?

Mrs. Alving. What do I think of her?

Oswald. Yes, isn't she splendid!

Mrs. Alving. Dear Oswald, you don't know her as well as I do--

Oswald. What of that?

Mrs. Alving. Regina was too long at home, unfortunately. I ought to have taken her under my charge sooner.

Oswald. (7)Yes, but isn't she splendid to look at, mother? (Fills his glass,)

Mrs. Alving. Regina has many serious faults--

Oswald. Yes, but what of that? (Drinks.)

Mrs. Alving. But I am fond of her, all the same; and I have made myself responsible for her. I wouldn't for the world she should come to any harm.

Oswald (jumping up). Mother, Regina is my only hope of salvation!

Mrs. Alving (getting up). What do you mean?

Oswald. I can't go on bearing all this agony of mind alone.

Mrs. Alving. Haven't you your mother to help you to bear it?

Oswald. Yes, I thought so; that was why I came home to you. But it is no use; I see that it isn't. I cannot spend my life here.

Mrs. Alving. Oswald!

Oswald. I must live a different sort of life, mother; so I shall have to go away from you, I don't want you watching it.

Mrs. Alving. My unhappy boy! But, Oswald, as long as you are ill like this--

Oswald. If it was only a matter of feeling ill, I would stay with you, mother. You are the best friend I have in the world.
Mrs. Alving. Yes, I am that, Oswald, am I not?

Oswald (walking restlessly about). But all this torment—the regret, the remorse—and the deadly fear. Oh—this horrible fear!

Mrs. Alving (following him). Fear? Fear of what? What do you mean?

Oswald. Oh, don't ask me any more about it. I don't know what it is. I can't put it into words. (MRS. ALVING crosses the room and rings the bell.) What do you want?

Mrs. Alving. I want my boy to be happy, that's what I want. He mustn't brood over anything. (To REGINA, who has come to the door.) More champagne— a large bottle.

Oswald. Mother!

Mrs. Alving. Do you think we country people don't know how to live?

Oswald. Isn't she splendid to look at? What a figure! And the picture of health!

Mrs. Alving (sitting down at the table). Sit down, Oswald, and let us have a quiet talk.

Oswald (sitting down). You don't know, mother, that I owe Regina a little reparation.

Mrs. Alving. You!

Oswald. Oh, it was only a little thoughtlessness—call it what you like. Something quite innocent, anyway. The last time I was home—

Mrs. Alving. Yes?

Oswald. --she used often to ask me questions about Paris, and I told her one thing and another about the life there. And I remember saying one day: "Wouldn't you like to go there yourself?"

Mrs. Alving. Well?
Oswald. I saw her blush, and she said: "Yes, I should like to very much." "All right." I said, "I daresay it might be managed"--or something of that sort.

Mrs. Alving. And then?

Oswald. I naturally had forgotten all about it; but the day before yesterday I happened to ask her if she was glad I was to be so long at home--

Mrs. Alving. Well?

Oswald. --and she looked so queerly at me, and asked: "But what is to become of my trip to Paris?"

Mrs. Alving. Her trip!

Oswald. And then I got it out of her that she had taken the thing seriously, and had been thinking about me all the time, and had set herself to learn French--

Mrs. Alving. So that was why--

Oswald. (7) Mother--when I saw this fine, splendid, handsome girl standing there in front of me--I had never paid any attention to her before then--but now, when she stood there as if with open arms ready for me to take her to myself--

Mrs. Alving. Oswald!

Oswald. --then I realised that my salvation lay in her, for I saw the joy of life in her!

Mrs. Alving (starting back). The joy of life--? Is there salvation in that?

Regina (coming in from the dining-room with a bottle of champagne). Excuse me for being so long; but I had to go to the cellar. (Puts the bottle down on the table.)

Oswald. Bring another glass, too.

Regina (looking at him in astonishment). The mistress's glass is there, sir.
Oswald. Yes, but fetch one for yourself, Regina (REGINA starts, and gives a quick shy glance at MRS. ALVING.) Well?

Regina (in a low and hesitating voice). Do you wish me to, ma'am?

Mrs. Alving. Fetch the glass, Regina. (REGINA goes into the dining-room.)

Oswald (looking after her). (7)Have you noticed how well she walks?--so firmly and confidently!

Mrs. Alving. It cannot be, Oswald.

Oswald. (2)It is settled. You must see that. It is no use forbidding it. (REGINA comes in with a glass, which she holds in her hand.) (2)Sit down, Regina. (REGINA looks questioningly at Mrs. Alving.)

Mrs. Alving. Sit down. (REGINA sits down on a chair near the dining-room door, still holding the glass in her hand.) Oswald, what was it you were saying about the joy of life?

Oswald. Ah, mother--the joy of life! You don't know very much about that at home here. I shall never realise it here.

Mrs. Alving. Not even when you are with me?

Oswald. Never at home. (9)But you can't understand that.

Mrs. Alving. (10)Yes, indeed I almost think I do understand you now.

Oswald. That--and the joy of work. They are really the same thing at bottom. (3)But you don't know anything about that either.

Mrs. Alving. Perhaps you are right. Tell me some more about it, Oswald.

Oswald. Well, all I mean is that here people are brought up to believe that work is a curse and a punishment for sin, and that life is a state of wretchedness and that the sooner we can get out of it the better.

Mrs. Alving. A vale of tears, yes. And we quite conscientiously make it so.

Oswald. But the people over there will have none of that. There is no one there who really believes doctrines of that kind any
longer. Over there the mere fact of being alive is thought to be a matter for exultant happiness. Mother, have you noticed that everything I have painted has turned upon the joy of life?--always upon the joy of life, unfailingly. There is light there, and sunshine, and a holiday feeling--and people's faces beaming with happiness. That is why I am afraid to stay at home here with you.

**Mrs. Alving.** Afraid? What are you afraid of here, with me?

**Oswald.** I am afraid that all these feelings that are so strong in me would degenerate into something ugly here.

**Mrs. Alving** (looking steadily at him). Do you think that is what would happen?

**Oswald.** I am certain it would. Even if one lived the same life at home here, as over there--it would never really be the same life.

**Mrs. Alving** (who has listened anxiously to him, gets up with a thoughtful expression and says:) Now I see clearly how it all happened.

**Oswald.** What do you see?

**Mrs. Alving.** I see it now for the first time. And now I can speak.

**Oswald** (getting up). Mother, I don't understand you.

**Regina** (who has got up also). Perhaps I had better go.

**Mrs. Alving.** No, stay here. Now I can speak. Now, my son, you shall know the whole truth. Oswald! Regina!

**Oswald.** Hush!--here is the parson.

(MANDERS comes in by the hall door.)

**Manders.** Well, my friends, we have been spending an edifying time over there.

**Oswald.** So have we.

**Manders.** Engstrand must have help with his Sailors Home. Regina must go home with him and give him her assistance.
Regina. (10) No, thank you, Mr. Manders.

Manders (perceiving her for the first time). (5) What--? You in here?-- and with a wineglass in your hand!

Regina (putting down the glass hastily). (10) I beg your pardon--!

Oswald. (2) Regina is going away with me, Mr. Manders.

Manders. Going away! With you!

Oswald. (2) Yes, as my wife-- if she insists on that.

Manders. But, good heavens--!

Regina. (10) It is not my fault, Mr. Manders.

Oswald. (2) Or else she stays here if I stay.

Regina (involuntarily). Here!

Manders. (5) I am amazed at you, Mrs. Alving.

Mrs. Alving. (10) Neither of those things will happen, for now I can speak openly.

Manders. (2) But you won't do that! No, no, no!

Mrs. Alving. (10) Yes, I can and I will. (5) And without destroying anyone's ideals.

Oswald. Mother, what is it that is being concealed from me?

Regina (listening). Mrs. Alving! Listen! They are shouting outside.

(Goes into the conservatory and looks out.)

Oswald (going to the window on the left). What can be the matter? Where does that glare come from?

Regina (calls out). The Orphanage is on fire!

Mrs. Alving (going to the window). On fire?

Manders. On fire? Impossible. I was there just a moment ago.
Oswald. Where is my hat? Oh, never mind that. Father's Orphanage--!

(Runs out through the garden door.)

Mrs. Alving. My shawl, Regina! The whole place is in flames.

Manders. How terrible! Mrs. Alving, that fire is a judgment on this house of sin!

Mrs. Alving. Quite so. Come, Regina.

(She and REGINA hurry out.)

Manders (clasping his hands). And no insurance! (Follows them out.)

ACT III

(The same scene. All the doors are standing open. The lamp is still burning on the table. It is dark outside, except for a faint glimmer of light seen through the windows at the back. MRS. ALVING, with a shawl over her head, is standing in the conservatory, looking out. REGINA, also wrapped in a shawl, is standing a little behind her.)

Mrs. Alving. Everything burned--down to the ground.

Regina. It is burning still in the basement.

Mrs. Alving. I can't think why Oswald doesn't come back. There is no chance of saving anything.

Regina. Shall I go and take his hat to him?

Mrs. Alving. Hasn't he even got his hat?

Regina (pointing to the hall). No, there it is, hanging up.

Mrs. Alving. Never mind. He is sure to come back soon. I will go and see what he is doing. (Goes out by the garden door. MANDERS comes in from the hall.)
Manders. Isn't Mrs. Alving here?

Regina. She has just this moment gone down into the garden.

Manders. I have never spent such a terrible night in my life.

Regina. Isn't it a shocking misfortune, sir!

Manders. (2)Oh, don't speak about it. I scarcely dare to think about it.

Regina. But how can it have happened?

Manders. Don't ask me, Miss Engstrand! How should I know? Are you going to suggest too--? Isn't it enough that your father--?

Regina. What has he done?

Manders. He has nearly driven me crazy.

Engstrand (coming in from the hall). Mr. Manders--!

Manders (turning round with a start). Have you ever followed me here!

Engstrand. Yes, God help us all--! Great heavens! What a dreadful thing, your reverence!

Manders (walking u¢ and down). Oh dear, oh dear!

Regina. What do you mean?

Engstrand. Our little prayer-meeting was the cause of it all, don't you see? (Aside, to REGINA.) Now we've got the old fool, (8)my girl. (Aloud.) And to think it is my fault that Mr. Manders should be the cause of such a thing!

Manders. I assure you, Engstrand--

Engstrand. But there was no one else carrying a light there except you, sir.

Manders (standing still). Yes, so you say. But I have no clear recollection of having had a light in my hand.
**Engstrand.** But I saw quite distinctly your reverence take a candle and snuff it with your fingers and throw away the burning bit of wick among the shavings.

**Manders.** Did you see that?

**Engstrand.** Yes, distinctly.

**Manders.** I can't understand it at all. It is never my habit to snuff a candle with my fingers.

**Engstrand.** Yes, it wasn't like you to do that, sir. But, who would have thought it could be such a dangerous thing to do?

**Manders** (walking restlessly backwards and forwards) Oh, don't ask me!

**Engstrand** (following him about). And you hadn't insured it either, had you, sir?

**Manders.** No, no, no; you heard me say so.

**Engstrand.** You hadn't insured it--and then went and set light to the whole place! Good Lord, what bad luck!

**Manders** (wiping the perspiration from his forehead). You may well say so, Engstrand.

**Engstrand.** And that it should happen to a charitable institution that would have been of service both to the town and the country, so to speak! The newspapers won't be very kind to your reverence, I expect.

**Manders.** No, that is just what I am thinking of. It is almost the worst part of the whole thing. The spiteful attacks and accusations--it is horrible to think of!

**Mrs. Alving** (coming in from the garden). I can't get him away from the fire.

**Manders.** Oh, there you are, Mrs. Alving.

**Mrs. Alving.** You will escape having to make your inaugural address now, at all events, Mr. Manders.

**Manders.** Oh, I would so gladly have--
Mrs. Alving (in a dull voice). It is just as well it has happened. This Orphanage would never have come to any good.

Manders. Don't you think so?

Mrs. Alving. Do you?

Manders. But it is none the less an extraordinary piece of ill luck.

Mrs: Alving. We will discuss it simply as a business matter. Are you waiting for Mr. Manders, Engstrand?

Engstrand (at the hall door). Yes, I am.

Mrs. Alving. Sit down then, while you are waiting.

Engstrand. Thank you, I would rather stand.

Mrs. Alving (to MANDERS). I suppose you are going by the boat?

Manders. Yes: It goes in about an hour--

Mrs. Alving. Please take all the documents back with you. I don't want to hear another word about the matter. I have something else to think about now.

Manders. Mrs. Alving--

Mrs. Alving. Later on I will send you a power of attorney to deal with it exactly as you please.

Manders. I shall be most happy to undertake that; I am afraid the original intention of the bequest will have to be entirely altered now.

Mrs. Alving. Of course.

Manders. Provisionally, I should suggest this way of disposing of it: Make over the Solvik property to the parish. The land is undoubtedly not without a certain value; it will always be useful for some purpose or another. And as for the interest on the remaining capital that is on deposit in the bank, possibly I might make suitable use of that in support of some undertaking that promises to be of use to the town.
Mrs. Alving. (10) Do exactly as you please. (9) The whole thing is a matter of indifference to me now.

Engstrand. You will think of my Sailors' Home, Mr, Manders?

Manders. Yes, certainly, that is a suggestion. But we must consider the matter carefully.

Engstrand (aside). Consider! -- devil take it! Oh Lord.

Manders (sighing). And unfortunately I can't tell how much longer I may have anything to do with the matter--whether public opinion may not force me to retire from it altogether. That depends entirely upon the result of the inquiry into the cause of the fire.

Mrs. Alving. What do you say?

Manders. And one cannot in any way reckon upon the result beforehand.

Engstrand (going nearer to him). Yes, indeed one can; because here stand I, Jacob Engstrand.

Manders. Quite so, but--

Engstrand (lowering his voice). And Jacob Engstrand isn't the man to desert a worthy benefactor in the hour of need, as the saying is.

Manders. Yes, but, my dear fellow–how--?

Engstrand. You might say Jacob Engstrand is an angel of salvation, so to speak, your reverence.

Manders. No, no, I couldn't possibly accept that.

Engstrand. That's how it will be, all the same. I know someone who has taken the blame for someone else on his shoulders before now, I do.

Manders. Jacob! (Grasps his hand.) You are one in a thousand! You shall have assistance in the matter of your Sailors' Home, you may rely upon that.

(Engstrand tries to thank him, but is prevented by emotion.)
Manders (hanging his wallet over his shoulder). Now we must be off. We will travel together.

Engstrand (by the dining-room door, says aside to Regina). Come with me, you hussy! You shall be as cosy as the yolk in an egg!

Regina (tossing her head). Merci!

(She goes out into the hall and brings back Manders' luggage.)

Manders. Good-bye, Mrs. Alving! And may the spirit of order and of what is lawful speedily enter into this house.

Mrs. Alving. Goodbye, Mr. Manders.

(She goes into the conservatory, as she sees Oswald coming in by the garden door.)

Engstrand (as he and Regina are helping Manders on with his coat). Goodbye, my child. And if anything should happen to you, you know where Jacob Engstrand is to be found. (Lowering his voice.) Little Harbour Street, ahem--! (To Mrs. Alving and Oswald.) And my house for poor seafaring men shall be called the "Alving Home," it shall. And, if I can carry out my own ideas about it, I shall make bold to hope that it may be worthy of bearing the late Mr. Alving's name.

Manders (at the door). Ahem--ahem! Come along, my dear Engstrand. Goodbye--goodbye!

(He and Engstrand go out by the hall door.)

Oswald (going to the table). What house was he speaking about?

Mrs. Alving. I believe it is some sort of a Home that he and Mr. Manders want to start.

Oswald. It will be burned up just like this one.

Mrs. Alving. What makes you think that?

Oswald. Everything will be burned up; nothing will be left that is in memory of my father. Here am I being burned up, too.

(REGINA looks at him in alarm.)
Mrs. Alving. Oswald! You should not have stayed so long over there, my poor boy.

Oswald (sitting down at the table). I almost believe you are right.

Mrs. Alving. Let me dry your face, Oswald; you are all wet. (Wipes his face with her handkerchief.)

Oswald (looking straight before him, with no expression in his eyes). Thank you, mother.

Mrs. Alving. And aren't you tired, Oswald? Don't you want to go to sleep?

Oswald (uneasily). No, no--not to sleep! I never sleep; I only pretend to. (Gloomily.) That will come soon enough.

Mrs. Alving (looking at him anxiously). Anyhow you are really ill, my darling boy.

Regina (intently). Is Mr. Alving ill?

Oswald (impatiently). (2) And do shut all the doors! This deadly fear--

Mrs. Alving. Shut the doors, Regina. (REGINA shuts the doors and remains standing by the hall door. MRS, ALVING takes off her shawl; REGINA does the same. MRS. ALVING draws up a chair near to Oswald' S and sits down beside him.) That's it! Now I will sit beside you--

Oswald. Yes, do. (2) And Regina must stay in here too; Regina must always be near me. (5) You must give me a helping hand, you know, Regina. Won't you do that?

Regina. I don't understand--

Mrs. Alving. A helping hand?

Oswald. Yes--when there is need for it.

Mrs. Alving. Oswald, (6) have you not your mother to give you a helping hand?
Oswald. You? (Smiles.) No, mother, you will never give me the kind of helping hand I mean. (Laughs grimly.) You! Ha, ha! (Looks gravely at her.) After all, you have the best right. (Impetuously.) Why don't you call me by my Christian name, Regina? (Why don't you say Oswald?)

Regina (in a low voice). I did not think Mrs. Alving would like it.

Mrs. Alving. It will not be long before you have the right to do it. Sit down here now beside us, too. (REGINA sits down quietly and hesitantly at the other side of the table.) And now, my poor tortured boy, I am going to take the burden off your mind--

Oswald. You, mother?

Mrs. Alving. --all that you call remorse and regret and self-reproach.

Oswald. And you think you can do that?

Mrs. Alving. Yes, now I can, Oswald. A little while ago you were talking about the joy of life, and what you said seemed to shed a new light upon everything in my whole life.

Oswald (shaking his head). I don't in the least understand what you mean.

Mrs. Alving. You should have known your father in his young days in the army. He was full of the joy of life, I can tell you.

Oswald. Yes, I know.

Mrs. Alving. It gave me a holiday feeling only to look at him, full of irrepressible energy and exuberant spirits.

Oswald. What then?

Mrs. Alving. Well, then this boy, full of the joy of life--for he was just like a boy, then--had to make his home in a second-rate town which had none of the joy of life to offer him, but only dissipations. He had to come out here and live an aimless life; he had only an official post. He had no work worth devoting his whole mind to; he had nothing more than official routine to attend to. He had not a single companion capable of appreciating what the joy of life meant; nothing but idlers and tipplers...
Oswald. Mother--!

Mrs. Alving. And so the inevitable happened!

Oswald. What was the inevitable?

Mrs. Alving. You said yourself this evening what would happen in your case if you stayed at home.

Oswald. Do you mean by that, that father--?

Mrs. Alving. Your poor father never found any outlet for the overmastering joy of life that was in him. And I brought no holiday spirit into his home, either.

Oswald. You didn't, either?

Mrs. Alving. (I had been taught about duty, and the sort of thing that I believed in so long here. Everything seemed to turn upon duty--my duty, or his duty--and I am afraid I made your poor father's home unbearable to him, Oswald.

Oswald. Why didn't you ever say anything about it to me in your letters?

Mrs. Alving. I never looked at it as a thing I could speak of to you, who were his son.

Oswald. What way did you look at it, then?

Mrs. Alving. I only saw the one fact, that your father was a lost man before ever you were born.

Oswald (in a choking voice). Ah--! (He gets up and goes to the window.)

Mrs. Alving. And then I had the one thought in my mind, day and night, that Regina in fact had as good a right in this house--as my own boy had.

Oswald (turns round suddenly), Regina--?

Regina (gets up and asks in choking tones). I--?

Mrs. Alving. Yes, now you both know it.
Oswald. Regina!

Regina (to herself). (5) So mother was one of that sort too.

Mrs. Alving. (10) Your mother had many good qualities, Regina.

Regina. (5) Yes, but she was one of that sort too, all the same. I have even thought so myself, sometimes, but--. Then, if you please, Mrs. Alving, (4) may I have permission to leave at once?

Mrs. Alving. (4) Do you really wish to, Regina?

Regina. (4) Yes, indeed, I certainly wish to.

Mrs. Alving. (4) Of course you shall do as you like, but--

Oswald (going up to REGINA). (2) Leave now? (5) This is your home.

Regina. Merci, Mr. Alving--oh, (2) of course I may say Oswald now, but that is not the way I thought it would become allowable.

Mrs. Alving. Regina, I have not been open with you--

Regina. No, I can't say you have! If I had known Oswald was ill-- (5) And now that there can never be anything serious between us--. (4) No, I really can't stay here in the country and wear myself out looking after invalids.

Oswald. Not even for the sake of one who has so near a claim on you?

Regina. (10) No, indeed I can't. (7) A poor girl must make some use of her youth, otherwise she may easily land herself out in the cold before she knows where she is. (10) And I have got the joy of life in me too, Mrs. Alving!

Mrs. Alving. Yes, unfortunately; (5) but don't throw yourself away, Regina.

Regina. (10) Oh, what's going to happen will happen. If Oswald takes after his father, it is just as likely I take after my mother, I expect.-- (5) May I ask, Mrs. Alving, whether Mr. Manders knows this about me?

Mrs. Alving. Mr. Manders knows everything.
Regina (putting on her shawl). (10) Oh, well then, the best thing I can do is to get away by the boat as soon as I can. (1) Mr. Manders is such a nice gentleman to deal with; and it certainly seems to me that I have just as much right to some of that money as he--as that horrid carpenter.

Mrs. Alving. (10) You are quite welcome to it, Regina.

Regina (looking at her fixedly). (10) You might as well have brought me up like a gentleman's daughter; it would have been more suitable. (Tosses her head.) Oh, well--never mind! (With a bitter glance at the unopened bottle.) (10) I daresay someday I shall be drinking champagne with gentlefolk, after all.

Mrs. Alving. (4) If ever you need a home, Regina, come to me.

Regina. (10) No, thank you, Mrs. Alving. (8) Mr. Manders takes an interest in me, I know. And if things should go very badly with me, I know one house at any rate where I shall feel at home.

Mrs. Alving. Where is that?

Regina. In the "Alving Home."

Mrs. Alving. (5) Regina--I can see quite well--you are going to your ruin!

Regina. Pooh!-- (10) goodbye.

(She bows to them and goes out through the hall.)

Oswald (standing by the window and looking out). Has she gone?

Mrs. Alving. Yes.

Oswald (muttering to himself). I think it's all wrong.

Mrs. Alving (going up to him from behind and putting her hands on his shoulders). Oswald, my dear boy--has it been a great shock to you?

Oswald (turning his face towards her). All this about father, do you mean?

Mrs. Alving. Yes, about your unhappy father. I am so afraid it may have been too much for you.
Oswald. What makes you think that? Naturally it has taken me entirely by surprise; but, after all, I don't know that it matters much to me.

Mrs. Alving (drawing back her hands). Doesn't matter!--that your father's life was such a terrible failure!

Oswald. Of course I can feel sympathy for him, just as I would for anyone else, but--

Mrs. Alving. No more than that! For your own father!

Oswald (impatiently). Father--father! I never knew anything of my father. I don't remember anything else about him except that he once made me sick.

Mrs. Alving. It is dreadful to think of!--But surely a child should feel some affection for his father, whatever happens?

Oswald. When the child has nothing to thank his father for? When he has never known him? Do you really cling to that antiquated superstition--you, who are so broad-minded in other things?

Mrs. Alving. You call it nothing but a superstition!

Oswald. Yes, and you can see that for yourself quite well, mother. It is one of those beliefs that are put into circulation in the world, and--

Mrs. Alving. Ghosts of beliefs!

Oswald (walking across the room). Yes, you might call them ghosts.

Mrs. Alving (with an outburst of feeling). Oswald! then you don't love me either!

Oswald. You I know, at any rate--

Mrs. Alving. You know me, yes; but is that all?

Oswald. And I know how fond you are of me, and I ought to be grateful to you for that. Besides, you can be so tremendously useful to me, now that I am ill.
Mrs. Alving. Yes, can't I, Oswald! I could almost bless your illness, as it has driven you home to me. For I see quite well that you are not my very own yet; you must be won.

Oswald (impatiently). Yes, yes, yes; all that is just a way of talking. You must remember I am a sick man, mother. I can't concern myself much with anyone else; I have enough to do, thinking about myself.

Mrs. Alving (gently). I will be very good and patient.

Oswald. And cheerful too, mother!

Mrs. Alving. Yes, my dear boy, you are quite right. (Goes up to him.) Now have I taken away all your remorse and self-reproach?

Oswald. Yes, you have done that. But who will take away the fear?

Mrs. Alving. The fear?

Oswald (crossing the room). Regina would have done it for one kind word.

Mrs. Alving. I don't understand you. What fear do you mean--and what has Regina to do with it?

Oswald. Is it very late, mother?

Mrs. Alving. It is early morning. (Looks out through the conservatory windows.) The dawn is breaking already on the heights. And the sky is clear, Oswald. In a little while you will see the sun.

Oswald. I am glad of that. After all, there may be many things yet for me to be glad of and to live for--

Mrs. Alving. I should hope so!

Oswald. Even if I am not able to work--

Mrs. Alving. You will soon find you are able to work again now, my dear boy. You have no longer all those painful depressing thoughts to brood over.
Oswald. No, it is a good thing that you have been able to rid me of those fancies; if only, now, I could overcome this one thing--(Sits down on the couch.) Let us have a little chat, mother.

Mrs. Alving. Yes, let us. (Pushes an armchair near to the couch and sits down beside him.)

Oswald. The sun is rising--and you know all about it; so I don't feel the fear any longer.

Mrs. Alving. I know all about what?

Oswald (without listening to her). Mother, isn't it the case that you said this evening there was nothing in the world you would not do for me if I asked you?

Mrs. Alving. Yes, certainly I said so.

Oswald. And will you be as good as your word, mother?

Mrs. Alving. You may rely upon that, my own dear boy. I have nothing else to live for, but you.

Oswald. Yes, yes; well, listen to me, mother, You are very strong-minded, I know. I want you to sit quite quiet when you hear what I am going to tell you,

Mrs. Alving. But what is this dreadful thing--?

Oswald. You mustn't scream. Do you hear? Will you promise me that? We are going to sit and talk it over quite quietly. Will you promise me that, mother?

Mrs. Alving. Yes, yes, I promise--only tell me what it is.

Oswald. Well, then, you must know that this fatigue of mine--and my not being able to think about my work--all that is not really the illness itself--

Mrs. Alving. What is the illness itself?

Oswald. What I am suffering from is hereditary; it--(touches his forehead, and speaks very quietly)--it lies here.

Mrs. Alving (almost speechless). Oswald! No--no!
Oswald. (2) Don't scream; I can't stand it. Yes, I tell you, it lies here, waiting. And any time, any moment, it may break out.

Mrs. Alving. How horrible--!

Oswald. (2) Do keep quiet. That is the state I am in--

Mrs. Alving (springing up). (10) It isn't true, Oswald! (10) It is impossible! It can't be that!

Oswald. I had one attack while I was abroad. It passed off quickly. But when I learned the condition (5) I had been in, then this dreadful haunting fear took possession of me.

Mrs. Alving. That was the fear, then--

Oswald. Yes, it is so indescribably horrible, you know If only it had been an ordinary mortal disease--. I am not so much afraid of dying; though, of course, I should like to live as long as I can.

Mrs. Alving. (4) Yes, yes, Oswald, you must!

Oswald. But this is so appallingly horrible. (6) To become like a helpless child again-- to have to be fed, to have to be--. Oh, it's unspeakable!

Mrs. Alving. (5) My child has his mother to tend him.

Oswald (jumping up). (3) No, never; that is just what I won't endure! I dare not think what it would mean to linger on like that for years-- to get old and grey like that. And you might die before I did. (Sits down in MRS. ALVING'S chair.) Because it doesn't necessarily have a fatal end quickly, the doctor said; he called it a kind of softening of the brain-- or something of that sort. (Smiles mournfully.) I think that expression sounds so nice. It always makes me think of cherry-coloured velvet curtains-- something that is soft to stroke.

Mrs. Alving (with a scream). Oswald!

Oswald (jumps up and walks about the room). (8) And now you have taken Regina from me! (5) If I had only had her, she would have given me a helping hand, I know.
Mrs. Alving (going up to him). (9)What do you mean, my darling boy? Is there any help in the world I would not be willing to give you?

Oswald. When I had recovered from the attack I had abroad, the doctor told me that when it recurred--and it will recur--there would be no more hope.

Mrs. Alving. And he was heartless enough to--

Oswald. I insisted on knowing. I told him I had arrangements to make--. (Smiles cunningly.) And so I had. (Takes a small box from his inner breast-pocket.) (2)Mother, do you see this?

Mrs. Alving. What is it?

Oswald. Morphia powders.

Mrs. Alving (looking at him in terror). Oswald--my boy!

Oswald. I have twelve of them saved up--

Mrs. Alving (snatching at it). (10)Give me the box, Oswald!

Oswald. Not yet, mother. (Puts it lack in his pocket.)

Mrs. Alving. I shall never get over this!

Oswald. (2)You must. If I had had Regina here now, I would have told her quietly how things stand with me--and asked her to give me this last helping hand. She would have helped me, I am certain.

Mrs. Alving. (10)Never!

Oswald. If this horrible thing had come upon me and she had seen me lying helpless, like a baby, past help, past saving, past hope--with no chance of recovering--

Mrs. Alving. (10)Never in the world would Regina have done it.

Oswald. Regina would have done it. (10)Regina was so splendidly light-hearted. And she would very soon have tired of looking after an invalid like me.

Mrs. Alving. Then thank heaven Regina is not here!
Oswald. (10) Well, now you have got to give me that helping hand, mother.

Mrs. Alving (with a loud scream). (10) I!

Oswald. Who has a better right than you?

Mrs. Alving. (10) I! Your mother!

Oswald. Just for that reason.

Mrs. Alving. (10) I, who gave you your life!

Oswald, I never asked you for life. And what kind of a life was it that you gave me? I don't want it! You shall take it back!

Mrs. Alving. Help! Help! (_runs into the hall.)

Oswald (following her). (2) Don't leave me! (2) Where are you going?

Mrs. Alving (in the hall). (10) To fetch the doctor to you, Oswald! Let me out!

Oswald (going into the hall). (2) You shan't go out. (2) And no one shall come in. (Turns the key in the lock.)

Mrs. Alving (coming in again). Oswald! Oswald!--my child!

Oswald (following her). (6) Have you a mother's heart--and can bear to see me suffering this unspeakable terror?

Mrs. Alving (controlling herself, after a moment's silence). There is my hand on it.

Oswald. Will you--?

Mrs. Alving. If it becomes necessary. But it shan't become necessary: No, no--it is impossible it should!

Oswald. Let us hope so. (2) And let us live together as long as we can. Thank you, mother.

(He sits down in the armchair, which MRS. ALVING had moved beside the couch. Day is breaking; the lamp is still burning on the table.)
Mrs. Alving (coming cautiously nearer). Do you feel calmer now?

Oswald. Yes.

Mrs. Alving (bending over him). It has only been a dreadful fancy of yours, Oswald. Nothing but fancy. All this upset has been bad for you. But now you will get some rest, at home with your own mother, my darling boy. You shall have everything you want, just as you did when you were a little child.--There, now. The attack is over. You see how easily it passed off! I knew it would.--And look, Oswald, what a lovely day we are going to have? Brilliant sunshine. Now you will be able to see your home properly. (She goes to the table and puts out the lamp. It is sunrise. The glaciers and peaks in the distance are seen bathed in bright morning light.)

Oswald (who has been sitting motionless in the armchair, with his back to the scene outside, suddenly says:) Mother, give me the sun.

Mrs. Alving (standing at the table, and looking at him in amazement). What do you say?

Oswald (repeats in a dull, toneless voice). The sun--the sun.

Mrs. Alving (going up to him). Oswald, what is the matter with you? (Oswald seems to shrink up in the chair; all his muscles relax; his face loses its expression, and his eyes stare stupidly. MRS. ALVING is trembling with terror.) What is it! (Screams.) Oswald! What is the matter with you! (Throws herself on her knees beside him and shakes him.) Oswald! Oswald! Look at me! Don't you know me!

Oswald (in an expressionless voice, as before). The sun--the sun.

Mrs. Alving (jumps up despairingly, beats her head with her hands, and screams). I can't bear it! (Whispers as though paralysed with fear.) I can't bear it... I Never! (Suddenly.) Where has he got it? (Passes her hand quickly over his coat.) Here! (Draws back a little spay and cries :) No, no, no!--Yes!--no, no! (She stands a few steps from him, her hands thrust into her hair, and stares at him in speechless terror.)

Oswald (sitting motionless, as before). The sun--the sun.
A spacious, handsome, and tastefully furnished drawing room, decorated in dark colours. In the back, a wide doorway with curtains drawn back, leading into a smaller room decorated in the same style as the drawing-room. In the right-hand wall of the front room, a folding door leading out to the hall. In the opposite wall, on the left, a glass door, also with curtains drawn back. Through the panes can be seen part of a verandah outside, and trees covered with autumn foliage. An oval table, with a cover on it, and surrounded by chairs, stands well forward. In front, by the wall on the right, a wide stove of dark porcelain, a high-backed arm-chair, a cushioned foot-rest, and two footstools. A settee, with a small round table in front of it, fills the upper right-hand corner. In front, on the left, a little way from the wall, a sofa. Further back than the glass door, a piano. On either side of the doorway at the back a whatnot with terra-cotta and majolica ornaments.--Against the back wall of the inner room a sofa, with a table, and one or two chairs. Over the sofa hangs the portrait of a handsome elderly man in a General's uniform. Over the table a hanging lamp, with an opal glass shade.--A number of bouquets are arranged about the drawing-room, in vases and glasses. Others lie upon the tables. The floors in both rooms are covered with thick carpets.--Morning light. The sun shines in through the glass door.

MISS JULIANA TESMAN, with her bonnet on a carrying a parasol, comes in from the hall, followed by BERTA, who carries a bouquet wrapped in paper. MISS TESMAN is a comely and pleasant-looking lady of about sixty-five. She is nicely but simply dressed in a grey walking-costume. BERTA is a middle-aged woman of plain and rather countrified appearance.

MISS TESMAN.

[Stops close to the door, listens, and says softly:] Upon my word, I don't believe they are stirring yet!
BERTA.

[Also softly.] I told you so, Miss. Remember how late the steamboat
got in last night. And then, when they got home!—good Lord, (5) what a
lot the young mistress had to unpack before she could get to bed.

MISS TESMAN.

Well well--let them have their sleep out. But let us see that they
get a good breath of the fresh morning air when they do appear.
[She goes to the glass door and throws it open.

BERTA.

[Beside the table, at a loss what to do with the bouquet in her hand.]  
I declare there isn't a bit of room left. I think I'll put it down
here, Miss. [She places it on the piano.

MISS TESMAN.

So you've got a new mistress now, my dear Berta. Heaven knows it was
a wrench to me to part with you.

BERTA.

[On the point of weeping.] And do you think it wasn't hard for me,
too, Miss? After all the blessed years I've been with you and Miss
Rina. (1)

MISS TESMAN.

We must make the best of it, Berta. There was nothing else to be
done. (5) George can't do without you, you see—he absolutely can't.
(5) He has had you to look after him ever since he was a little boy.
BERTA.

Ah but, Miss Julia, I can't help thinking of Miss Rina lying helpless at home there, poor thing. And with only that new girl too! She'll never learn to take proper care of an invalid.

MISS TESMAN.

(5)Oh, I shall manage to train her. (5)And of course, you know, I shall take most of it upon myself. (5)You needn't be uneasy about my poor sister, my dear Berta.

BERTA.

Well, but there's another thing, Miss. (5)I'm so mortally afraid I shan't be able to suit the young mistress.

MISS TESMAN.

Oh well--just at first there may be one or two things---

BERTA.

Most like she'll be terrible grand in her ways.

MISS TESMAN.

Well, you can't wonder at that--(8)General Gabler's daughter! Think of the sort of life she was accustomed to in her father's time. (7)Don't you remember how we used to see her riding down the road along with the General? In that long black habit--and with feathers in her hat?

BERTA.

Yes, indeed--I remember well enough!--But, good Lord, I should never have dreamt in those days that she and Master George would make a match of it.
MISS TESMAN.

Nor I.--But by-the-bye, Berta--while I think of it: in future you mustn't say Master George. You must say Dr. Tesman.

BERTA.

Yes, the young mistress spoke of that too--last night--the moment they set foot in the house. Is it true then, Miss?

MISS TESMAN.

Yes, indeed it is. Only think, Berta--some foreign university has made him a doctor--while he has been abroad, you understand. I hadn't heard a word about it, until he told me himself upon the pier.

BERTA.

Well well, he's clever enough for anything, he is. But I didn't think he'd have gone in for doctoring people.

MISS TESMAN.

No no, it's not that sort of doctor he is. [Nods significantly.] But let me tell you, we may have to call him something still grander before long.

BERTA.

You don't say so! What can that be, Miss?

MISS TESMAN.

[Smiling.] H'm--wouldn't you like to know! [With emotion.] Ah, dear dear--if my poor brother could only look up from his grave now, and see what his little boy has grown into! [Looks around.] But bless me, Berta--why have you done this? Taken the chintz covers off all the furniture.
BERTA.

The mistress told me to. She can't abide covers on the chairs, she says.

MISS TESMAN.

Are they going to make this their everyday sitting-room then?

BERTA.

Yes, that's what I understood--from the mistress. Master George--the doctor--he said nothing.

GEORGE TESMAN comes from the right into the inner room, humming to himself, and carrying an unstrapped empty portmanteau. He is a middle-sized, young-looking man of thirty-three, rather stout, with a round, open, cheerful face, fair hair and beard. He wears spectacles, and is somewhat carelessly dressed in comfortable indoor clothes.

MISS TESMAN.

Good morning, good morning, George.

TESMAN.

[In the doorway between the rooms.] Aunt Julia! Dear Aunt Julia! [Goes up to her and shakes hands warmly.] Come all this way--so early! Eh?

MISS TESMAN.

Why, of course I had to come and see how you were getting on.

TESMAN.

In spite of your having had no proper night's rest?
MISS TESMAN.

Oh, that makes no difference to me.

TESMAN.

Well, I suppose you got home all right from the pier? Eh?

MISS TESMAN.

Yes, quite safely, thank goodness. Judge Brack was good enough to see me right to my door.

TESMAN.

We were so sorry we couldn't give you a seat in the carriage. But you saw what a pile of boxes Hedda had to bring with her.

MISS TESMAN.

Yes, she had certainly plenty of boxes.

BERTA.

[To TESMAN.] Shall I go in and see if there's anything I can do for the mistress?

TESMAN.

No thank you, Berta--you needn't. She said she would ring if she wanted anything.

BERTA.

[Going towards the right.] Very well.
TESMAN.

But look here--take this portmanteau with you.

BERTA.

[Taking it.] I'll put it in the attic.
[She goes out by the hall door.

TESMAN.

Fancy, Auntie--I had the whole of that portmanteau chock full of copies of the documents. You wouldn't believe how much I have picked up from all the archives I have been examining--curious old details that no one has had any idea of---

MISS TESMAN.

Yes, you don't seem to have wasted you time on your wedding trip, George.

TESMAN.

No, that I haven't. But do take off your bonnet, Auntie. Look here! Let me untie the strings--eh?

MISS TESMAN.

[While he does so.] Well well--this is just as if you were still at home with us.

TESMAN.

[With the bonnet in his hand, looks at it from all sides.] Why, what a gorgeous bonnet you've been investing in!

MISS TESMAN.

I bought it on Hedda's account.
TESMAN.

On Hedda's account? Eh?

MISS TESMAN.

(5)Yes, so that Hedda needn't be ashamed of me if we happened to go out together.

TESMAN.

[Patting her cheek.] You always think of everything, Aunt Julia. [Lays the bonnet on a chair beside the table.] And now, look here--suppose we sit comfortably on the sofa and have a little chat, till Hedda comes. [They seat themselves. She places her parasol in the corner of the sofa.

MISS TESMAN.

[Takes both his hands and looks at him.] What a delight it is to have you again, as large as life, before my very eyes, George! My George--my poor brother's own boy!

TESMAN.

And it's a delight for me, too, to see you again, Aunt Julia! You, who have been father and mother in one to me.

MISS TESMAN.

Oh yes, I know you will always keep a place in your heart for your old aunts.

TESMAN.

And what about Aunt Rina? No improvement--eh?
MISS TESMAN.

Oh, no--we can scarcely look for any improvement in her case, poor thing. There she lies, helpless, as she has lain for all these years. But heaven grant I may not lose her yet awhile! For if I did, I don't know what I should make of my life, George--especially now that I haven't you to look after any more.

TESMAN.

[Patting her back.] There there there---!

MISS TESMAN.

[Suddenly changing her tone.] And to think that here are you a married man, George!--And that you should be the one to carry off Hedda Gabler--the beautiful Hedda Gabler! Only think of it--she, that was so beset with admirers!

TESMAN.

[Hums a little and smiles complacently.] Yes, I fancy I have several good friends about town who would like to stand in my shoes--eh?

MISS TESMAN.

And then this fine long wedding-tour you have had! More than five--nearly six months---

TESMAN.

Well, for me it has been a sort of tour of research as well. I have had to do so much grubbing among old records--and to read no end of books too, Auntie.

MISS TESMAN.

Oh yes, I suppose so. [More confidentially, and lowering her voice a little.] But listen now, George--have you nothing--nothing special to tell me?
TESMAN.

As to our journey?

MISS TESMAN.

Yes.

TESMAN.

No, I don't know of anything except what I have told you in my letters. I had a doctor's degree conferred on me--but that I told you yesterday.

MISS TESMAN.

Yes, yes, you did. But what I mean is--haven't you any--any--expectations--?

TESMAN.

Expectations?

MISS TESMAN.

Why you know, George--I'm your old auntie!

TESMAN.

Why, of course I have expectations.

MISS TESMAN.

Ah!

TESMAN.

I have every expectation of being a professor one of these days.
MISS TESMAN.

Oh yes, a professor---

TESMAN.

Indeed, I may say I am certain of it. But my dear Auntie--you know all about that already!

MISS TESMAN.

[Laughing to herself.] Yes, of course I do. You are quite right there. [Changing the subject.] But we were talking about your journey. (1)It must have cost a great deal of money, George?

Tesman.

Well, you see--my handsome travelling-scholarship went a good way.

MISS TESMAN.

(1)But I can't understand how you can have made it go far enough for two.

TESMAN.

(9)No, that's not easy to understand--eh?

MISS TESMAN.

(1)And especially travelling with a lady--(1)they tell me that makes it ever so much more expensive.

TESMAN.

(1)Yes, of course--it makes it a little more expensive. (1)But Hedda had to have this trip, Auntie! (1)She really had to. (1)Nothing else would have done.
MISS TESMAN.

No no, I suppose not. A wedding-tour seems to be quite indispensable nowadays.--But tell me now--have you gone thoroughly over the house yet?

TESMAN.

Yes, you may be sure I have. I have been afoot ever since daylight.

MISS TESMAN.

And what do you think of it all?

TESMAN.

I'm delighted! Quite delighted! Only I can't think what we are to do with the two empty rooms between this inner parlour and Hedda's bedroom.

MISS TESMAN.

[Laughing.] Oh my dear George, I daresay you may find some use for them--in the course of time.

TESMAN.

Why of course you are quite right, Aunt Julia! You mean as my library increases--eh?

MISS TESMAN.

Yes, quite so, my dear boy. It was your library I was thinking of.
TESMAN.

I am specially pleased on Hedda's account. Often and often, before we were engaged, she said that she would never care to live anywhere but in Secretary Falk's villa. (2)

MISS TESMAN.

Yes, it was lucky that this very house should come into the market, just after you had started.

TESMAN.

Yes, Aunt Julia, the luck was on our side, wasn't it--eh?

MISS TESMAN.

(1)But the expense, my dear George! (1)You will find it very expensive, all this.

TESMAN.

[Looks at her, a little cast down.] Yes, I suppose I shall, Aunt!

MISS TESMAN.

Oh, frightfully!

TESMAN.

(1)How much do you think? In round numbers?--Eh?

MISS TESMAN.

(1)Oh, I can't even guess until all the accounts come in.
TESMAN.

(1) Well, fortunately, Judge Brack has secured the most favourable terms for me, so he said in a letter to Hedda.

MISS TESMAN.

Yes, don't be uneasy, my dear boy.--(1) Besides, I have given security for the furniture and all the carpets.

TESMAN.

(1) Security? You? My dear Aunt Julia--(9) what sort of security could you give?

MISS TESMAN.

(1) I have given a mortgage on our annuity.

TESMAN.

[Placing himself before her.] (9) Have you gone out of your senses, Auntie? (2) Your annuity--it's all that you and Aunt Rina have to live upon.

MISS TESMAN.

Well well--don't get so excited about it. (5) It's only a matter of form you know--Judge Brack assured me of that. (5) It was he that was kind enough to arrange the whole affair for me. A mere matter of form, he said.
TESMAN.

Yes, that may be all very well. But nevertheless---

MISS TESMAN.

(1)You will have your own salary to depend upon now. And, good heavens, even if we did have to pay up a little---! (1)To eke things out a bit at the start---! (5)Why, it would be nothing but a pleasure to us.

TESMAN.

(5)Oh Auntie--will you never be tired of making sacrifices for me!

MISS TESMAN.

[Rises and lays her hand on his shoulders.] (5)Have I any other happiness in this world except to smooth your way for you, my dear boy. You, who have had neither father nor mother to depend on. And now we have reached the goal, George! Things have looked black enough for us, sometimes; but, thank heaven, now you have nothing to fear.

TESMAN.

Yes, it is really marvellous how every thing has turned out for the best.

MISS TESMAN.

And the people who opposed you--who wanted to bar the way for you--now you have them at your feet. They have fallen, George. Your most dangerous rival--his fall was the worst.--And now he has to lie on the bed he has made for himself--poor misguided creature.

TESMAN.

Have you heard anything of Eilert? Since I went away, I mean.
MISS TESMAN.

Only that he is said to have published a new book.

TESMAN.

What! Eilert Lovborg! Recently--eh?

MISS TESMAN.

Yes, so they say. Heaven knows whether it can be worth anything! Ah, when your new book appears--that will be another story, George! What is it to be about?

TESMAN.

It will deal with the domestic industries of Brabant during the Middle Ages.

MISS TESMAN.

Fancy--to be able to write on such a subject as that!

TESMAN.

However, it may be some time before the book is ready. I have all these collections to arrange first, you see.

MISS TESMAN.

Yes, collecting and arranging--no one can beat you at that. There you are my poor brother's own son.

TESMAN.

(8) I am looking forward eagerly to setting to work at it; especially now that I have my own delightful home to work in.
MISS TESMAN.

(8)And, most of all, now that you have got the wife of your heart, my dear George.

TESMAN.

[Embracing her.] Oh yes, yes, Aunt Julia! Hedda--(7)she is the best part of it all! I believe I hear her coming--eh?

HEDDA enters from the left through the inner room. Her face and figure show refinement and distinction. Her complexion is pale and opaque. Her steel-grey eyes express a cold, unruflled repose. Her hair is of an agreeable brown, but not particularly abundant. She is dressed in a tasteful, somewhat loose-fitting morning gown.

MISS TESMAN.

[Going to meet HEDDA.] Good morning, my dear Hedda! Good morning, and a hearty welcome!

HEDDA.

[Holds out her hand.] Good morning, dear Miss Tesman! So early a call! That is kind of you.

MISS TESMAN.

[With some embarrassment.] Well--has the bride slept well in her new home?

HEDDA.

Oh yes, thanks. Passably.

TESMAN.

[Laughing.] Passably! Come, that's good, Hedda! You were sleeping like a stone when I got up.
HEDDA.

Fortunately. Of course one has always to accustom one's self to new surroundings, Miss Tesman--little by little. [Looking towards the left.] Oh, there the servant has gone and opened the veranda door, and let in a whole flood of sunshine.

MISS TESMAN.

[Going towards the door.] Well, then we will shut it.

HEDDA.

No no, not that! Tesman, please draw the curtains. That will give a softer light.

TESMAN.

[At the door.] All right--all right.--There now, Hedda, now you have both shade and fresh air.

HEDDA.

Yes, fresh air we certainly must have, with all these stacks of flowers--. But--won't you sit down, Miss Tesman?

MISS TESMAN.

No, thank you. Now that I have seen that everything is all right here--thank heaven!--I must be getting home again. My sister is lying longing for me, poor thing.

TESMAN.

Give her my very best love, Auntie; and say (5)I shall look in and see her later in the day.
MISS TESMAN.

Yes, yes, I'll be sure to tell her. But by-the-bye, George--[Feeling in her dress pocket]--I had almost forgotten--I have something for you here.

TESMAN.

What is it, Auntie? Eh?

MISS TESMAN.

[ Produces a flat parcel wrapped in newspaper and hands it to him. ]
Look here, my dear boy.

TESMAN.

[ Opening the parcel. ] Well, I declare!--(5) Have you really saved them for me, Aunt Julia! Hedda! isn't this touching--eh?

HEDDA.

[ Beside the whatnot on the right. ] Well, what is it?

TESMAN.

My old morning-shoes! My slippers.

HEDDA.

Indeed. I remember you often spoke of them while we were abroad.

TESMAN.

Yes, I missed them terribly. [ Goes up to her. ] Now you shall see them, Hedda!
HEDDA.

[Going towards the stove.] Thanks, I really don't care about it.

TESMAN.

[Following her.] Only think--ill as she was, Aunt Rina embroidered these for me. Oh you can't think how many associations cling to them.

HEDDA.

[At the table.] Scarcely for me.

MISS TESMAN.

Of course not for Hedda, George.

TESMAN.

Well, but now that she belongs to the family, I thought---

HEDDA.

[Interrupting.] We shall never get on with this servant, Tesman.

MISS TESMAN.

Not get on with Berta?

TESMAN.

Why, dear, what puts that in your head? Eh?

HEDDA.

[Pointing.] Look there! She has left her old bonnet lying about on a chair.

TESMAN.

[In consternation, drops the slippers on the floor.] Why, Hedda---
HEDDA.

Just fancy, if any one should come in and see it!

TESMAN.

But Hedda--that's Aunt Julia's bonnet.

HEDDA.

Is it!

MISS TESMAN.

[Taking up the bonnet.] Yes, indeed it's mine. And, what's more, it's not old, Madam Hedda.

HEDDA.

I really did not look closely at it, Miss Tesman.

MISS TESMAN.

[Trying on the bonnet.] Let me tell you it's the first time I have worn it--the very first time.

TESMAN.

And a very nice bonnet it is too--quite a beauty!

MISS TESMAN.

Oh, it's no such great things, George. [Looks around her.] My parasol---? Ah, here. [Takes it.] For this is mine too--[mutters] --not Berta's.
TESMAN.

A new bonnet and a new parasol! Only think, Hedda.

HEDDA.

Very handsome indeed.

TESMAN.

Yes, isn't it? Eh? (7) But Auntie, take a good look at Hedda before you go! (7) See how handsome she is!

MISS TESMAN.

Oh, my dear boy, there's nothing new in that. (7) Hedda was always lovely. [She nods and goes toward the right.

TESMAN.

[Following.] (7) Yes, but have you noticed what splendid condition she is in? (7) How she has filled out on the journey?

HEDDA.

[Crossing the room.] (10) Oh, do be quiet---!

MISS TESMAN.

[Who has stopped and turned.] (6) Filled out?

TESMAN.

Of course you don't notice it so much now that she has that dress on. (7) But I, who can see---
HEDDA.

[At the glass door, impatiently.] (10) Oh, you can't see anything.

TESMAN.

It must be the mountain air in the Tyrol---

HEDDA.

[Curtly, interrupting.] (10) I am exactly as I was when I started.

TESMAN.

So you insist; (7) but I'm quite certain you are not. Don't you agree with me, Auntie?

MISS TESMAN.

[Who has been gazing at her with folded hands.] (7) Hedda is lovely--lovely--lovely. [Goes up to her, takes her head between both hands, draws it downwards, and kisses her hair.] (8) God bless and preserve Hedda Tesman--for George's sake.

HEDDA.

[Gently freeing herself.] Oh--! (10) Let me go.

MISS TESMAN.

[In quiet emotion.] (5) I shall not let a day pass without coming to see you.

TESMAN.

No you won't, will you, Auntie? Eh?
MISS TESMAN.

Good-bye--good-bye!
[She goes out by the hall door. TESMAN accompanies her. The
door remains half open. TESMAN can be heard repeating his
message to Aunt Rina and his thanks for the slippers.
[In the meantime, HEDDA walks about the room, raising her arms
and clenching her hands as if in desperation. Then she flings
back the curtains from the glass door, and stands there looking
out.
[Presently, TESMAN returns and closes the door behind him.

TESMAN.

[Picks up the slippers from the floor.] What are you looking at,
Hedda?

HEDDA.

[Once more calm and mistress of herself.] I am only looking at the
leaves. They are so yellow--so withered.

TESMAN.

[Wraps up the slippers and lays them on the table.] Well, you see,
we are well into September now.

HEDDA.

[Again restless.] Yes, to think of it!--already in--in September.

TESMAN.

Don't you think Aunt Julia's manner was strange, dear? Almost solemn?
Can you imagine what was the matter with her? Eh?

HEDDA.

I scarcely know her, you see. Is she not often like that?
TESMAN.

No, not as she was to-day.

HEDDA.

[Leaving the glass door.] Do you think she was annoyed about the bonnet?

TESMAN.

Oh, scarcely at all. Perhaps a little, just at the moment---

HEDDA.

But what an idea, to pitch her bonnet about in the drawing-room! No one does that sort of thing.

TESMAN.

Well you may be sure Aunt Julia won't do it again.

HEDDA.

In any case, I shall manage to make my peace with her.

TESMAN.

Yes, my dear, good Hedda, if you only would.

HEDDA.

When you call this afternoon, you might invite her to spend the evening here.
TESMAN.

Yes, that I will. And there's one thing more you could do that would delight her heart.

HEDDA.

What is it?

TESMAN.

If you could only prevail on yourself to say _du_ (3) to her. For my sake, Hedda? Eh?

HEDDA.

(10)No, no, Tesman--you really mustn't ask that of me. I have told you so already. I shall try to call her "Aunt"; and you must be satisfied with that.

TESMAN.

Well well. Only I think (8) now that you belong to the family, you---

HEDDA.

H'm--I can't in the least see why---
[She goes up towards the middle doorway.

TESMAN.

[After a pause.] Is there anything the matter with you, Hedda? Eh?

HEDDA.

I'm only looking at my old piano. It doesn't go at all well with all the other things.
TESMAN.

(2) The first time I draw my salary, we'll see about exchanging it.

HEDDA.

(10) No, no--no exchanging. (10) I don't want to part with it. (10) Suppose we put it there in the inner room, and then get another here in its place. When it's convenient, I mean.

TESMAN.

[A little taken aback.] Yes--of course we could do that.

HEDDA.

[Takes up the bouquet from the piano.] These flowers were not here last night when we arrived.

TESMAN.

Aunt Julia must have brought them for you.

HEDDA.

[Examining the bouquet.] A visiting-card. [Takes it out and reads:] "Shall return later in the day." Can you guess whose card it is?

TESMAN.

No. Whose? Eh?

HEDDA.

The name is "Mrs. Elvsted."
TESMAN.

Is it really? \(^{(8)}\) Sheriff Elvsted's wife? Miss Rysing that was.

HEDDA.

Exactly. The girl with the irritating hair, that she was always showing off. \(^{(8)}\) An old flame of yours I've been told.

TESMAN.

[Laughing.] Oh, that didn't last long; and it was before I met you, Hedda. But fancy her being in town!

HEDDA.

It's odd that she should call upon us. I have scarcely seen her since we left school.

TESMAN.

I haven't see her either for--heaven knows how long. I wonder how she can endure to live in such an out-of-the way hole--eh?

HEDDA.

[After a moment's thought, says suddenly.] Tell me, Tesman--isn't it somewhere near there that he--that--Eilert Lovborg is living?

TESMAN.

Yes, he is somewhere in that part of the country.

BERTA enters by the hall door.

BERTA.

That lady, ma'am, that brought some flowers a little while ago, is here again. [Pointing.] The flowers you have in your hand, ma'am.
HEDDA.

Ah, is she? Well, please show her in.

BERTA opens the door for MRS. ELVSTED, and goes out herself.
--MRS. ELVSTED is a woman of fragile figure, with pretty, soft features. Her eyes are light blue, large, round, and somewhat prominent, with a startled, inquiring expression. Her hair is remarkably light, almost flaxen, and unusually abundant and wavy. She is a couple of years younger than HEDDA. She wears a dark visiting dress, tasteful, but not quite in the latest fashion.

HEDDA.

[Receives her warmly.] How do you do, my dear Mrs. Elvsted? It's delightful to see you again.

MRS. ELVSTED.

[Nervously, struggling for self-control.] Yes, it's a very long time since we met.

TESMAN.

[Gives her his hand.] And we too--eh?

HEDDA.

Thanks for your lovely flowers---

MRS. ELVSTED.

Oh, not at all--. I would have come straight here yesterday afternoon; but I heard that you were away---
TESMAN.

Have you just come to town? Eh?

MRS. ELVSTED.

I arrived yesterday, about midday. Oh, I was quite in despair when I heard that you were not at home.

HEDDA.

In despair! How so?

TESMAN.

(8) Why, my dear Mrs. Rysing--I mean Mrs. Elvsted---

HEDDA.

I hope that you are not in any trouble?

MRS. ELVSTED.

Yes, I am. And I don't know another living creature here that I can turn to.

HEDDA.

[Laying the bouquet on the table.] Come--let us sit here on the sofa---

MRS. ELVSTED.

Oh, I am too restless to sit down.
HEDDA.

Oh no, you're not. Come here.
[She draws MRS. ELVSTED down upon the sofa and sits at her side.

TESMAN.

Well? What is it, Mrs. Elvsted---?

HEDDA.

Has anything particular happened to you at home?

MRS. ELVSTED.

Yes--and no. Oh--I am so anxious you should not misunderstand me---

HEDDA.

Then your best plan is to tell us the whole story, Mrs. Elvsted.

TESMAN.

I suppose that's what you have come for--eh?

MRS. ELVSTED.

Yes, yes--of course it is. Well then, I must tell you--if you don't already know--that Eilert Lovborg is in town, too.

HEDDA.

Lovborg---!

TESMAN.

What! Has Eilert Lovborg come back? Fancy that, Hedda!
HEDDA.

(10) Well well--I hear it.

MRS. ELVSTED.

He has been here a week already. Just fancy--a whole week! In this terrible town, alone! With so many temptations on all sides.

HEDDA.

But, my dear Mrs. Elvsted--how does he concern you so much?

MRS. ELVSTED.

[Looks at her with a startled air, and says rapidly.] He was the children's tutor.

HEDDA.

Your children's?

MRS. ELVSTED.

My husband's. I have none.

HEDDA.

Your step-children's, then?

MRS. ELVSTED.

Yes.
TESMAN.

[Somewhat hesitatingly.] Then was he--I don't know how to express it--was he--regular enough in his habits to be fit for the post? Eh?

MRS. ELVSTED.

For the last two years his conduct has been irreproachable.

TESMAN.

Has it indeed? Fancy that, Hedda!

HEDDA.

I hear it.

MRS. ELVSTED.

Perfectly irreproachable, I assure you! In every respect. But all the same--now that I know he is here--in this great town--and with a large sum of money in his hands--I can't help being in mortal fear for him.

TESMAN.

Why did he not remain where he was? With you and your husband? Eh?

MRS. ELVSTED.

After his book was published he was too restless and unsettled to remain with us.

TESMAN.

Yes, by-the-bye, Aunt Julia told me he had published a new book.
MRS. ELVSTED.

Yes, a big book, dealing with the march of civilisation--in broad outline, as it were. It came out about a fortnight ago. And since it has sold so well, and been so much read--and made such a sensation---

TESMAN.

Has it indeed? It must be something he has had lying by since his better days.

MRS. ELVSTED.

Long ago, you mean?

TESMAN.

Yes.

MRS. ELVSTED.

No, he has written it all since he has been with us--within the last year.

TESMAN.

Isn't that good news, Hedda? Think of that.

MRS. ELVSTED.

Ah yes, if only it would last!

HEDDA.

Have you seen him here in town?
MRS. ELVSTED.

No, not yet. I have had the greatest difficulty in finding out his address. But this morning I discovered it at last.

HEDDA.

[Lookssearchingly at her.] (5) Do you know, it seems to me a little odd of your husband--h'm---

MRS. ELVSTED.

[Starting nervously.] (10) Of my husband! What?

HEDDA.

(2) That he should send you to town on such an errand--(2) that he does not come himself and look after his friend.

MRS. ELVSTED.

Oh no, no--my husband has no time. And besides, I--I had some shopping to do.

HEDDA.

[With a slight smile.] Ah, that is a different matter.

MRS. ELVSTED.

[Rising quickly and uneasily.] And now I beg and implore you, Mr. Tesman--receive Eilert Lovborg kindly if he comes to you! And that he is sure to do. You see you were such great friends in the old days. And then you are interested in the same studies--the same branch of science--so far as I can understand.

TESMAN.

We used to be at any rate.
MRS. ELVSTED.

That is why I beg so earnestly that you—you too—will keep a sharp eye upon him. Oh, you will promise me that, Mr. Tesman--won't you?

TESMAN.

With the greatest of pleasure, Mrs. Rysing---

HEDDA.

Elvsted.

TESMAN.

I assure you I shall do all I possibly can for Eilert. You may rely upon me.

MRS. ELVSTED.

Oh, how very, very kind of you! [Presses his hands.] Thanks, thanks, thanks! [Frightened.] (10)You see, my husband is so very fond of him!

HEDDA.

[Rising.] You ought to write to him, Tesman. Perhaps he may not care to come to you of his own accord.

TESMAN.

Well, perhaps it would be the right thing to do, Hedda? Eh?

HEDDA.

And the sooner the better. Why not at once?
MRS. ELVSTED.

[Imploringly.] Oh, if you only would!

TESMAN.

I'll write this moment. Have you his address, Mrs.--Mrs. Elvsted.

MRS. ELVSTED.

Yes. [Takes a slip of paper from her pocket, and hands it to him.] Here it is.

TESMAN.

Good, good. Then I'll go in--- [Looks about him.] By-the-bye,--my slippers? Oh, here. [Takes the packet and is about to go.

HEDDA.

Be sure you write him a cordial, friendly letter. And a good long one too.

TESMAN.

Yes, I will.

MRS. ELVSTED.

But please, please don't say a word to show that I have suggested it.

TESMAN.

No, how could you think I would? Eh?
[He goes out to the right, through the inner room.
HEDDA.

[Goes up to MRS. ELVSTED, smiles, and says in a low voice.] There! We have killed two birds with one stone.

MRS. ELVSTED.

What do you mean?

HEDDA.

Could you not see that I wanted him to go?

MRS. ELVSTED.

Yes, to write the letter---

HEDDA.

And that I might speak to you alone.

MRS. ELVSTED.

[Confused.] About the same thing?

HEDDA.

Precisely.

MRS. ELVSTED.

[Apprehensively.] But there is nothing more, Mrs. Tesman! Absolutely nothing!

HEDDA.

Oh yes, but there is. There is a great deal more--I can see that. Sit here--and we'll have a cosy, confidential chat.
[She forces MRS. ELVSTED to sit in the easy-chair beside the stove, and seats herself on one of the footstools.]

MRS. ELVSTED.

[Anxiously, looking at her watch.] But, my dear Mrs. Tesman--(4) I was really on the point of going.

HEDDA.

Oh, you can't be in such a hurry.--Well? Now tell me something about your life at home.

MRS. ELVSTED.

Oh, that is just what I care least to speak about.

HEDDA.

But to me, dear---? Why, weren't we schoolfellows?

MRS. ELVSTED.

Yes, but you were in the class above me. Oh, how dreadfully afraid of you I was then!

HEDDA.

Afraid of me?

MRS. ELVSTED.

Yes, dreadfully. For when we met on the stairs you used always to pull my hair.

HEDDA.

Did I, really?
MRS. ELVSTED.

Yes, and once you said you would burn it off my head.

HEDDA.

Oh that was all nonsense, of course.

MRS. ELVSTED.

Yes, but I was so silly in those days.--And since then, too--we have drifted so far--far apart from each other. Our circles have been so entirely different.

HEDDA.

Well then, we must try to drift together again. Now listen. At school we said _du_ (4) to each other; and we called each other by our Christian names---

MRS. ELVSTED.

No, I am sure you must be mistaken.

HEDDA.

No, not at all! I can remember quite distinctly. So now we are going to renew our old friendship. [Draws the footstool closer to MRS. ELVSTED.] There now! [Kisses her cheek.] You must say _du_ to me and call me Hedda.

MRS. ELVSTED.

[Presses and pats her hands.] Oh, how good and kind you are! I am not used to such kindness.
HEDDA.

There, there, there! (10) And I shall say _du_ to you, as in the old days, and call you my dear Thora.

MRS. ELVSTED.

My name is Thea. (5)

HEDDA.

Why, of course! I meant Thea. [Looks at her compassionately.] So you are not accustomed to goodness and kindness, Thea? (10) Not in your own home?

MRS. ELVSTED.

(8) Oh, if I only had a home! (5) But I haven't any; (5) I have never had a home.

HEDDA.

[Looks at her for a moment.] I almost suspected as much.

MRS. ELVSTED.

[Gazing helplessly before her.] Yes--yes--yes.

HEDDA.

I don't quite remember--(5) was it not as housekeeper that you first went to Mr. Elvsted's?

MRS. ELVSTED.

(5) I really went as governess. (5) But his wife--his late wife--was an invalid,--and rarely left her room. (5) So I had to look after the housekeeping as well.
HEDDA.

(5) And then--at last--you became mistress of the house.

MRS. ELVSTED.

[Sadly.] Yes, I did.

HEDDA.

Let me see--about how long ago was that?

MRS. ELVSTED.

My marriage?

HEDDA.

Yes.

MRS. ELVSTED.

Five years ago.

HEDDA.

To be sure; it must be that.

MRS. ELVSTED.

Oh those five years---! Or at all events the last two or three of them! Oh, if you (6) could only imagine---

HEDDA.

[Giving her a little slap on the hand.] De? Fie, Thea!
MRS. ELVSTED.

Yes, yes, I will try---. Well, if--you could only imagine and understand---

HEDDA.

[Lightly.] Eilert Lovborg has been in your neighbourhood about three years, hasn't he?

MRS. ELVSTED.

[Looks at here doubtfully.] Eilert Lovborg? Yes--he has.

HEDDA.

Had you known him before, in town here?

MRS. ELVSTED.

Scarcely at all. I mean--I knew him by name of course.

HEDDA.

But you saw a good deal of him in the country?

MRS. ELVSTED.

Yes, he came to us every day. You see, he gave the children lessons; for in the long run I couldn't manage it all myself.

HEDDA.

(10) No, that's clear.--And your husband--? I suppose he is often away from home?
MRS. ELVSTED.

Yes. Being sheriff, you know, he has to travel about a good deal in his district.

HEDDA.

[Leaning against the arm of the chair.] Thea--my poor, sweet Thea--now you must tell me everything--exactly as it stands.

MRS. ELVSTED.

Well, then you must question me.

HEDDA.

What sort of a man is your husband, Thea? I mean--you know--in everyday life. (5)Is he kind to you?

MRS. ELVSTED.

[Evasively.] I am sure he means well in everything.

HEDDA.

I should think he must be altogether too old for you. There is at least twenty years' difference between you, is there not?

MRS. ELVSTED.

[Irritably.] Yes, that is true, too. (10)Everything about him is repellent to me! We have not a thought in common. We have no single point of sympathy--he and I.

HEDDA.

(5)But is he not fond of you all the same? In his own way?
MRS. ELVSTED.

Oh I really don't know. (5) I think he regards me simply as a useful property. (1) And then it doesn't cost much to keep me. (1) I am not expensive.

HEDDA.

(10) That is stupid of you.

MRS. ELVSTED.

[Shakes her head.] It cannot be otherwise--not with him. (1) I don't think he really cares for any one but himself--and perhaps a little for the children.

HEDDA.

And for Eilert Lovborg, Thea?

MRS. ELVSTED.

[Looking at her.] For Eilert Lovborg? What puts that into your head?

HEDDA.

Well, my dear--I should say, (2) when he sends you after him all the way to town--- [Smiling almost imperceptibly.] (10) And besides, you said so yourself, to Tesman.

MRS. ELVSTED.

[With a little nervous twitch.] Did I? Yes, I suppose I did. [Vehemently, but not loudly.] No--I may just as well make a clean breast of it at once! For it must all come out in any case.

HEDDA.

Why, my dear Thea---?
MRS. ELVSTED.

Well, to make a long story short: (10) My husband did not know that I was coming.

HEDDA.

What! Your husband didn't know it!

MRS. ELVSTED.

No, of course not. For that matter, he was away from home himself--he was travelling. (10) Oh, I could bear it no longer, Hedda! (4) I couldn't indeed--so utterly alone as I should have been in future.

HEDDA.

Well? And then?

MRS. ELVSTED.

So I put together some of my things--what I needed most--as quietly as possible. (10) And then I left the house.

HEDDA.

Without a word?

MRS. ELVSTED.

(10) Yes--and took the train to town.

HEDDA.

(5) Why, my dear, good Thea--to think of you daring to do it!
MRS. ELVSTED.

[Rises and moves about the room.] What else could I possibly do?

HEDDA.

(5)But what do you think your husband will say when you go home again?

MRS. ELVSTED.

[At the table, looks at her.] (10)Back to him?

HEDDA.

Of course.

MRS. ELVSTED.

(10)I shall never go back to him again.

HEDDA.

[Rising and going towards her.] (10)Then you have left your home--for good and all?

MRS. ELVSTED.

Yes. (10)There was nothing else to be done.

HEDDA.

But then--to take flight so openly.

MRS. ELVSTED.

(5)Oh, it's impossible to keep things of that sort secret.
HEDDA.

(5) But what do you think people will say of you, Thea?

MRS. ELVSTED.

(10) They may say what they like, for aught I care. [Seats herself wearily and sadly on the sofa.] (10) I have done nothing but what I had to do.

HEDDA.

[After a short silence.] And what are your plans now? (3) What do you think of doing.

MRS. ELVSTED.

I don't know yet. (10) I only know this, that I must live here, where Eilert Lovborg is--if I am to live at all.

HEDDA.

[ Takes a chair from the table, seats herself beside her, and strokes her hands. ] My dear Thea--how did this--this friendship--between you and Eilert Lovborg come about?

MRS. ELVSTED.

Oh it grew up gradually. I gained a sort of influence over him.

HEDDA.

Indeed?
MRS. ELVSTED.

He gave up his old habits. Not because I asked him to, for I never dared do that. But of course he saw how repulsive they were to me; and so he dropped them.

HEDDA.

[Concealing an involuntary smile of scorn.] Then you have reclaimed him--as the saying goes--my little Thea.

MRS. ELVSTED.

So he says himself, at any rate. And he, on his side, has made a real human being of me--taught me to think, and to understand so many things.

HEDDA.

Did he give you lessons too, then?

MRS. ELVSTED.

No, not exactly lessons. But he talked to me--talked about such an infinity of things. And then came the lovely, happy time when I began to share in his work--when he allowed me to help him!

HEDDA.

Oh he did, did he?

MRS. ELVSTED.

Yes! He never wrote anything without my assistance.

HEDDA.

You were two good comrades, in fact?
MRS. ELVSTED.

[Eagerly.] Comrades! Yes, fancy, Hedda--that is the very word he used!--Oh, I ought to feel perfectly happy; and yet I cannot; for I don't know how long it will last.

HEDDA.

Are you no surer of him than that?

MRS. ELVSTED.

[Gloomily.] A woman's shadow stands between Eilert Lovborg and me.

HEDDA.

[Looks at her anxiously.] Who can that be?

MRS. ELVSTED.

I don't know. Some one he knew in his--in his past. Some one he has never been able wholly to forget.

HEDDA.

What has he told you--about this?

MRS. ELVSTED.

He has only once--quite vaguely--alluded to it.

HEDDA.

Well! And what did he say?
MRS. ELVSTED.

He said that when they parted, she threatened to shoot him with a pistol.

HEDDA.

[With cold composure.] Oh nonsense! No one does that sort of thing here.

MRS. ELVSTED.

No. And that is why I think it must have been that red-haired singing-woman whom he once---

HEDDA.

Yes, very likely.

MRS. ELVSTED.

For I remember they used to say of her that she carried loaded firearms.

HEDDA.

Oh—then of course it must have been she.

MRS. ELVSTED.

[Wringing her hands.] And now just fancy, Hedda—I hear that this singing-woman—that she is in town again! Oh, I don't know what to do---

HEDDA.

[Glancing towards the inner room.] Hush! Here comes Tesman. [Rises and whispers.] Thea—all this must remain between you and me.
MRS. ELVSTED.

[Springing up.] Oh yes--yes! For heaven's sake---!

GEORGE TESMAN, with a letter in his hand, comes from the right through the inner room.

TESMAN.

There now--the epistle is finished.

HEDDA.

That's right. And now Mrs. Elvsted is just going. Wait a moment--I'll go with you to the garden gate.

TESMAN.

Do you think Berta could post the letter, Hedda dear?

HEDDA.

[Takes it.] (5)I will tell her to.

BERTA enters from the hall.

BERTA.

Judge Brack wishes to know if Mrs. Tesman will receive him.

HEDDA.

Yes, ask Judge Brack to come in. And look here--put this letter in the post.

BERTA. [Taking the letter.] Yes, ma'am.
[She opens the door for JUDGE BRACK and goes out herself. Brack is a main of forty-five; thick set, but well-built and elastic in his movements. His face is roundish with an aristocratic profile. His hair is short, still almost black, and carefully dressed. His eyebrows thick. His moustaches are also thick, with short-cut ends. He wears a well-cut walking-suit, a little too youthful for his age. He uses an eye-glass, which he now and then lets drop.

JUDGE BRACK.

[With his hat in his hand, bowing.] May one venture to call so early in the day?

HEDDA.

Of course one may.

TESMAN.

[Presses his hand.] You are welcome at any time. [Introducing him.] Judge Brack--Miss Rysing---

HEDDA.

Oh---!

BRACK.

[Bowing.] Ah--delighted---

HEDDA.

[Looks at him and laughs.] It's nice to have a look at you by daylight, Judge!

BRACK.

So you find me--altered?
HEDDA.

A little younger, I think.

BRACK.

Thank you so much.

TESMAN.

But what do you think of Hedda--eh? (7) Doesn't she look flourishing? She has actually---

HEDDA.

(10) Oh, do leave me alone. You haven't thanked Judge Brack for all the trouble he has taken---

BRACK.

Oh, nonsense--it was a pleasure to me---

HEDDA.

Yes, you are a friend indeed. But here stands Thea all impatience to be off--so _au revoir_ Judge. I shall be back again presently. [Mutual salutations. MRS. ELVSTED and HEDDA go out by the hall door.

BRACK.

(5) Well,--is your wife tolerably satisfied---

TESMAN.

Yes, we can't thank you sufficiently. Of course she talks of a little re-arrangement here and there; and one or two things are still wanting. We shall have to buy some additional trifles.
BRACK.

Indeed!

TESMAN.

But we won't trouble you about these things. (1)Hedda say she herself will look after what is wanting.--Shan't we sit down? Eh?

BRACK.

Thanks, for a moment. [Seats himself beside the table.] There is something I wanted to speak to about, my dear Tesman.

TESMAN.

Indeed? Ah, I understand! [Seating himself.] I suppose it's the serious part of the frolic that is coming now. Eh?

BRACK.

Oh, the money question is not so very pressing; though, for that matter, (1) I wish we had gone a little more economically to work.

TESMAN.

But that would never have done, you know! Think of Hedda, my dear fellow! You, who know her so well---! (1) I couldn't possibly ask her to put up with a shabby style of living!

BRACK.

No, no--that is just the difficulty.

TESMAN.

And then--fortunately--it can't be long before I receive my appointment.
BRACK.

Well, you see--such things are often apt to hang fire for a long time.

TESMAN.

Have you heard anything definite? Eh?

BRACK.

Nothing exactly definite---. [Interrupting himself.] But by-the-bye --I have one piece of news for you.

TESMAN.

Well?

BRACK.

Your old friend, Eilert Lovborg, has returned to town.

TESMAN.

I know that already.

BRACK.

Indeed! How did you learn it?

TESMAN.

From that lady who went out with Hedda.

BRACK.

Really? What was her name? I didn't quite catch it.
TESMAN.

Mrs. Elvsted.

BRACK.

Aha--(8) Sheriff Elvsted's wife? Of course--he has been living up in their regions.

TESMAN.

And fancy--I'm delighted to hear that he is quite a reformed character.

BRACK.

So they say.

TESMAN.

And then he has published a new book--eh?

BRACK.

Yes, indeed he has.

TESMAN.

And I hear it has made some sensation!

BRACK.

Quite an unusual sensation.

TESMAN.

Fancy--isn't that good news! A man of such extraordinary talents---. I felt so grieved to think that he had gone irretrievably to ruin.
BRACK.

That was what everybody thought.

TESMAN.

But I cannot imagine what he will take to now! How in the world will he be able to make his living? Eh?

[During the last words, HEDDA has entered by the hall door.

HEDDA.

[To BRACK, laughing with a touch of scorn.] (1)Tesman is for ever worrying about how people are to make their living.

TESMAN.

Well you see, dear--we were talking about poor Eilert Lovborg.

HEDDA.

[Glancing at him rapidly.] Oh, indeed? [Sets herself in the arm-chair beside the stove and asks indifferently:] What is the matter with him?

TESMAN.

Well--no doubt he has run through all his property long ago; and he can scarcely write a new book every year--eh? So I really can't see what is to become of him.

BRACK.

Perhaps I can give you some information on that point.
TESMAN.
Indeed!

BRACK.
You must remember that his relations have a good deal of influence.

TESMAN.
Oh, his relations, have entirely washed their hands of him.

BRACK.
At one time they called him the hope of the family.

TESMAN.
At one time, yes! But he has put an end to all that.

HEDDA.
Who knows? [With a slight smile.] I hear they have reclaimed him up at Sheriff Elvsted's---

BRACK.
And then this book that he has published---

TESMAN.
Well well, I hope to goodness they may find something for him to do. I have just written to him. I asked him to come and see us this evening, Hedda dear.
BRACK.

But my dear fellow, you are booked for my bachelor's party this evening. You promised on the pier last night.

HEDDA.

Had you forgotten, Tesman?

TESMAN.

Yes, I had utterly forgotten.

BRACK.

But it doesn't matter, for you may be sure he won't come.

TESMAN.

What makes you think that? Eh?

BRACK.

[With a little hesitation, rising and resting his hands on the back of his chair.] My dear Tesman--and you too, Mrs. Tesman--I think I ought not to keep you in the dark about something that--that---

TESMAN.

That concerns Eilert---?

BRACK.

Both you and him.

TESMAN.

Well, my dear Judge, out with it.
BRACK.

You must be prepared to find your appointment deferred longer than you desired or expected.

TESMAN.

[Jumping up uneasily.] Is there some hitch about it? Eh?

BRACK.

The nomination may perhaps be made conditional on the result of a competition---

TESMAN.

Competition! Think of that, Hedda!

HEDDA.

[Leans further back in the chair.] Aha--aha!

TESMAN.

But who can my competitor be? Surely not---?

BRACK.

Yes, precisely--Eilert Lovborg.

TESMAN.

[Clasping his hands.] No, no--it's quite impossible! Eh?

BRACK.

H'm--that is what it may come to, all the same.
TESMAN.

Well but, Judge Brack--it would show the most incredible lack of
consideration for me. [Gesticulates with his arms.] For--just
think--I'm a married man! (5) We have married on the strength of these
prospects, Hedda and I; (1) and run deep into debt; (1) and borrowed money
from Aunt Julia too. Good heavens, they had as good as promised me
the appointment. Eh?

BRACK.

Well, well, well--no doubt you will get it in the end; only after a
contest.

HEDDA.

[Immovable in her arm-chair.] Fancy, Tesman, there will be a sort of
sporting interest in that.

TESMAN.

Why, my dearest Hedda, how can you be so indifferent about it?

HEDDA.

[As before.] I am not at all indifferent. I am most eager to see
who wins.

BRACK.

In any case, Mrs. Tesman, it is best that you should know how matters
stand. (1) I mean--before you set about the little purchases I hear you
are threatening.

HEDDA.

This can make no difference.
BRACK.

Indeed! Then I have no more to say. Good-bye! [To TESMAN.] I shall look in on my way back from my afternoon walk, and take you home with me.

TESMAN.

Oh yes, yes--your news has quite upset me.

HEDDA.

[Reclining, holds out her hand.] Good-bye, Judge; and be sure you call in the afternoon.

BRACK.

Many thanks. Good-bye, good-bye!

TESMAN.

[Accompanying him to the door.] Good-bye my dear Judge! You must really excuse me--- [JUDGE BRACK goes out by the hall door.

TESMAN.

[Crosses the room.] Oh Hedda--one should never rush into adventures. Eh?

HEDDA.

[Looks at him, smiling.] Do you do that?

TESMAN.

Yes, dear--there is no denying--it was adventurous to go and marry and set up house upon mere expectations.
HEDDA.

Perhaps you are right there.

TESMAN.

Well--at all events, we have our delightful home, Hedda! Fancy, the home we both dreamed of--the home we were in love with, I may almost say. Eh?

HEDDA.

[Rising slowly and wearily.] (\textsuperscript{1}) It was part of our compact that we were to go into society--to keep open house.

TESMAN.

Yes, if you only knew how I had been looking forward to it! Fancy--(\textsuperscript{5}) to see you as hostess--in a select circle! Eh? Well, well, well--for the present we shall have to get on without society, Hedda--only to invite Aunt Julia now and then.--(\textsuperscript{1}) Oh, I intended you to lead such an utterly different life, dear---!

HEDDA.

(\textsuperscript{1}) Of course I cannot have my man in livery just yet.

TESMAN.

(\textsuperscript{1}) Oh, no, unfortunately. It would be out of the question for us to keep a footman, you know.

HEDDA.

(\textsuperscript{1}) And the saddle-horse I was to have had---

TESMAN.

[Aghast.] The saddle-horse!
HEDDA.

---I suppose I must not think of that now.

TESMAN.

(2)Good heavens, no!--(9)that's as clear as daylight!

HEDDA.

[Goes up the room.] Well, I shall have one thing at least to kill time with in the meanwhile.

TESMAN.

[Beaming.] Oh thank heaven for that! What is it, Hedda. Eh?

HEDDA.

[In the middle doorway, looks at him with covert scorn.] (10)My pistols, George.

TESMAN.

[In alarm.] (2)Your pistols!

HEDDA.

[With cold eyes.] (8)General Gabler's pistols.
[She goes out through the inner room, to the left.

TESMAN.

[Rushes up to the middle doorway and calls after her:] (2)No, for heaven's sake, Hedda darling--don't touch those dangerous things! For my sake Hedda! Eh?
ACT II

The room at the TESMANS' as in the first Act, except that the piano has been removed, and an elegant little writing-table with the book-shelves put in its place. A smaller table stands near the sofa on the left. Most of the bouquets have been taken away. MRS. ELVSTED'S bouquet is upon the large table in front.--It is afternoon.

HEDDA, dressed to receive callers, is alone in the room. She stands by the open glass door, loading a revolver. The fellow to it lies in an open pistol-case on the writing-table.

HEDDA.

[Looks down the garden, and calls:] So you are here again, Judge!

BRACK.

[Is heard calling from a distance.] As you see, Mrs. Tesman!

HEDDA.

[Raises the pistol and points.] (10)Now I'll shoot you, Judge Brack!

BRACK.

[Calling unseen.] (2)No, no, no! (2)Don't stand aiming at me!

HEDDA.

(10)This is what comes of sneaking in by the back way. (7) [She fires.

BRACK.

[Nearer.] (9)Are you out of your senses---!
HEDDA.

Dear me--did I happen to hit you?

BRACK.

[Still outside.] (2)I wish you would let these pranks alone!

HEDDA.

Come in then, Judge.

JUDGE BRACK, dressed as though for a men's party, enters by the glass door. He carries a light overcoat over his arm.

BRACK.

What the deuce--haven't you tired of that sport, yet? What are you shooting at?

HEDDA.

Oh, I am only firing in the air.

BRACK.

[Gently takes the pistol out of her hand.] (2)Allow me, madam! [Looks at it.] Ah--I know this pistol well! [Looks around.] Where is the case? Ah, here it is. [Lays the pistol in it, and shuts it.] (2)Now we won't play at that game any more to-day.

HEDDA.

(10)Then what in heaven's name would you have me do with myself?

BRACK.

Have you had no visitors?
HEDDA.

[Closing the glass door.] Not one. I suppose all our set are still out of town.

BRACK.

And is Tesman not at home either?

HEDDA.

[At the writing-table, putting the pistol-case in a drawer which she shuts.] No. He rushed off to his aunt's directly after lunch; he didn't expect you so early.

BRACK.

H'm--how stupid of me not to have thought of that!

HEDDA.

[Turning her head to look at him.] Why stupid?

BRACK.

Because if I had thought of it I should have come a little--earlier.

HEDDA.

[Crossing the room.] Then you would have found no one to receive you; for I have been in my room changing my dress ever since lunch.

BRACK.

And is there no sort of little chink that we could hold a parley through?
HEDDA.

You have forgotten to arrange one.

BRACK.

That was another piece of stupidity.

HEDDA.

Well, we must just settle down here--and wait. Tesman is not likely to be back for some time yet.

BRACK.

Never mind; I shall not be impatient.

HEDDA seats herself in the corner of the sofa. BRACK lays his overcoat over the back of the nearest chair, and sits down, but keeps his hat in his hand. A short silence. They look at each other.

HEDDA.

Well?

BRACK.

[In the same tone.] Well?

HEDDA.

I spoke first.

BRACK.

[Bending a little forward.] Come, let us have a cosy little chat, Mrs. Hedda. (8)
HEDDA.

[Leaning further back in the sofa.] Does it not seem like a whole eternity since our last talk? Of course I don't count those few words yesterday evening and this morning.

BRACK.

You mean since our last confidential talk? Our last _tete-a-tete_?

HEDDA.

Well yes--since you put it so.

BRACK.

Not a day passed but I have wished that you were home again.

HEDDA.

And I have done nothing but wish the same thing.

BRACK.

You? Really, Mrs. Hedda? And I thought you had been enjoying your tour so much!

HEDDA.

(10) Oh yes, you may be sure of that!

BRACK.

But Tesman's letters spoke of nothing but happiness.
HEDDA.

Oh, Tesman! You see, he thinks nothing is so delightful as grubbing in libraries and making copies of old parchments, or whatever you call them.

BRACK.

[With a smile of malice.] Well, that is his vocation in life—or part of it at any rate.

HEDDA.

Yes, of course; and no doubt when it's your vocation—. But I! Oh, my dear Mr. Brack, how mortally bored I have been.

BRACK.

[Sympathetically.] Do you really say so? In downright earnest?

HEDDA.

Yes, you can surely understand it! To go for six whole months without meeting a soul that knew anything of our circle, or could talk about things we were interested in.

BRACK.

Yes, yes—I too should feel that a deprivation.

HEDDA.

And then, what I found most intolerable of all—

BRACK.

Well?
HEDDA.

---(10) was being everlastingly in the company of--one and the same person--

BRACK.

[With a nod of assent.] Morning, noon, and night, yes--at all possible times and seasons.

HEDDA.

(10) I said "everlastingly."

BRACK.

Just so. But I should have thought, with our excellent Tesman, one could---

HEDDA.

Tesman is--a specialist, my dear Judge.

BRACK.

Undeniable.

HEDDA.

And specialists are not at all amusing to travel with. Not in the long run at any rate.

BRACK.

Not even--the specialist one happens to love?

HEDDA.

Faugh--don't use that sickening word!
BRACK.

[Taken aback.] What do you say, Mrs. Hedda?

HEDDA.

[Half laughing, half irritated.] You should just try it! To hear of nothing but the history of civilisation, morning, noon, and night---

BRACK.

Everlastingly.

HEDDA.

Yes yes yes! And then all this about the domestic industry of the middle ages---! That's the most disgusting part of it!

BRACK.

[Looks searchingly at her.] But tell me--in that case, how am I to understand your---? H'm---

HEDDA.

My accepting George Tesman, you mean?

BRACK.

Well, let us put it so.

HEDDA.

Good heavens, do you see anything so wonderful in that?
BRACK.

Yes and no--Mrs. Hedda.

HEDDA.

(7) I had positively danced myself tired, my dear Judge. (7) My day was done --- [With a slight shudder.] Oh no--I won't say that; nor think it either!

BRACK.

(7) You have assuredly no reason to.

HEDDA.

Oh, reasons--- [Watching him closely.] And George Tesman--(5) after all, you must admit that he is correctness itself.

BRACK.

His correctness and respectability are beyond all question.

HEDDA.

And I don't see anything absolutely ridiculous about him.--Do you?

BRACK.

Ridiculous? N--no--I shouldn't exactly say so---

HEDDA.

Well--and his powers of research, at all events, are untiring.--I see no reason why he should not one day come to the front, after all.
BRACK.

[Looks at her hesitatingly.] I thought that you, like every one else, expected him to attain the highest distinction.

HEDDA.

[With an expression of fatigue.] Yes, so I did.--(5)And then, since he was bent, at all hazards, on being allowed to provide for me--I really don't know why I should not have accepted his offer?

BRACK.

No--if you look at it in that light---

HEDDA.

(5)It was more than my other adorers were prepared to do for me, my dear Judge.

BRACK.

[Laughing.] Well, I can't answer for all the rest; but as for myself, you know quite well that I have always entertained a--a certain respect for the marriage tie--for marriage as an institution, Mrs. Hedda.

HEDDA.

[Jestingly.] Oh, I assure you I have never cherished any hopes with respect to you.

BRACK.

(2)All I require is a pleasant and intimate interior, where I can make myself useful in every way, and am free to come and go as--as a trusted friend---
HEDDA.

(10) Of the master of the house, do you mean?

BRACK.

[Bowing.] Frankly--of the mistress first of all; but of course of the master too, in the second place. Such a triangular friendship--if I may call it so--is really a great convenience for all the parties, let me tell you.

HEDDA.

Yes, I have many a time longed for some one to make a third on our travels. Oh--those railway-carriage _tete-a-tetes_---!

BRACK.

Fortunately your wedding journey is over now.

HEDDA.

[Shaking her head.] Not by a long--long way. I have only arrived at a station on the line.

BRACK.

Well, then the passengers jump out and move about a little, Mrs. Hedda.

HEDDA.

(5) I never jump out.

BRACK.

Really?
HEDDA.

No--because there is always some one standing by to---

BRACK.

[Laughing.] (7) To look at your ankles, do you mean?

HEDDA.

Precisely.

BRACK.

Well but, dear me---

HEDDA.

[With a gesture of repulsion.] I won't have it. I would rather keep my seat where I happen to be--and continue the _tete-a-tete_.

BRACK.

But suppose a third person were to jump in and join the couple.

HEDDA.

Ah--that is quite another matter!

BRACK.

A trusted, sympathetic friend---

HEDDA.

---with a fund of conversation on all sorts of lively topics---
---and not the least bit of a specialist!

[With an audible sigh.] Yes, that would be a relief indeed.

[Hears the front door open, and glances in that direction.] The triangle is completed.

[Half aloud.] And on goes the train.

GEORGE TESMAN, in a grey walking-suit, with a soft felt hat, enters from the hall. He has a number of unbound books under his arm and in his pockets.

[ Goes up to the table beside the corner settee.] Ouf--what a load for a warm day--all these books. [Lays them on the table.] I'm positively perspiring, Hedda. Hallo--are you there already, my dear Judge? Eh? Berta didn't tell me.

[B R A C K.]

[Rising.] I came in through the garden.

HEDDA.

What books have you got there?
TESMAN.

[Stands looking them through.] Some new books on my special subjects--quite indispensable to me.

HEDDA.

Your special subjects?

BRACK.

Yes, books on his special subjects, Mrs. Tesman. [BRACK and HEDDA exchange a confidential smile.

HEDDA.

Do you need still more books on your special subjects?

TESMAN.

Yes, my dear Hedda, one can never have too many of them. Of course one must keep up with all that is written and published.

HEDDA.

Yes, I suppose one must.

TESMAN.

[Searching among his books.] And look here--I have got hold of Eilert Lovborg's new book too. [Offering it to her.] Perhaps you would like to glance through it, Hedda? Eh?

HEDDA.

No, thank you. Or rather--afterwards perhaps.
TESMAN.

I looked into it a little on the way home.

BRACK.

Well, what do you think of it--as a specialist?

TESMAN.

I think it shows quite remarkable soundness of judgment. He never wrote like that before. [Putting the books together.] Now I shall take all these into my study. I'm longing to cut the leaves---! And then I must change my clothes. [To BRACK.] I suppose we needn't start just yet? Eh?

BRACK.

Oh, dear no--there is not the slightest hurry.

TESMAN.

Well then, I will take my time. [Is going with his books, but stops in the doorway and turns.] By-the-bye, Hedda--Aunt Julia is not coming this evening.

HEDDA.

Not coming? Is it that affair of the bonnet that keeps her away?

TESMAN.

(9) Oh, not at all. How could you think such a thing of Aunt Julia? Just fancy---! The fact is, Aunt Rina is very ill.

HEDDA.

She always is.
TESMAN.

Yes, but to-day she is much worse than usual, poor dear.

HEDDA.

Oh, then it's only natural that her sister should remain with her.
I must bear my disappointment.

TESMAN.

(7) And you can't imagine, dear, how delighted Aunt Julia seemed to be--
because you had come home looking so flourishing!

HEDDA.

[Half aloud, rising.] (10) Oh, those everlasting Aunts!

TESMAN.

What?

HEDDA.

[Going to the glass door.] Nothing.

TESMAN.

Oh, all right. [He goes through the inner room, out to the right.

BRACK.

What bonnet were you talking about?
HEDDA.

Oh, it was a little episode with Miss Tesman this morning. She had laid down her bonnet on the chair there--[Looks at him and smiles.]--and I pretended to think it was the servant's.

BRACK.

[Shaking his head.] (2)Now my dear Mrs. Hedda, how could you do such a thing? To the excellent old lady, too!

HEDDA.

[Nervously crossing the room.] Well, you see--these impulses come over me all of a sudden; (10)and I cannot resist them. [Throws herself down in the easy-chair by the stove.] Oh, I don't know how to explain it.

BRACK.

[Behind the easy-chair.] You are not really happy--that is at the bottom of it.

HEDDA.

[Looking straight before her.] (10)I know of no reason why I should be--happy. (10)Perhaps you can give me one?

BRACK.

(5)Well-amongst other things, because you have got exactly the home you had set your heart on.

HEDDA.

[Looks up at him and laughs.] Do you too believe in that legend?
BRACK.

Is there nothing in it, then?

HEDDA.

Oh yes, there is something in it.

BRACK.

Well?

HEDDA.

There is this in it, that I made use of Tesman to see me home from evening parties last summer---

BRACK.

I, unfortunately, had to go quite a different way.

HEDDA.

That's true. I know you were going a different way last summer.

BRACK.

[Laughing.] Oh fie, Mrs. Hedda! Well, then--you and Tesman---?

HEDDA.

Well, we happened to pass here one evening; Tesman, poor fellow, was writhing in the agony of having to find conversation; so I took pity on the learned man---

BRACK.

[Smiles doubtfully.] You took pity? H'm---
HEDDA.

Yes, I really did. And so--to help him out of his torment--I happened to say, in pure thoughtlessness, that I should like to live in this villa.

BRACK.

No more than that?

HEDDA.

Not that evening.

BRACK.

But afterwards?

HEDDA.

Yes, my thoughtlessness had consequences, my dear Judge.

BRACK.

Unfortunately that too often happens, Mrs. Hedda.

HEDDA.

Thanks! So you see it was this enthusiasm for Secretary Falk's villa that first constituted a bond of sympathy between George Tesman and me. (3) From that came our engagement and our marriage, and our wedding journey, and all the rest of it. Well, well, my dear Judge--as you make your bed so you must lie, I could almost say.

BRACK.

This is exquisite! And you really cared not a rap about it all the time?
HEDDA.

(10) No, heaven knows I didn't.

BRACK.

But now? (2) Now that we have made it so homelike for you?

HEDDA.

Uh--the rooms all seem to smell of lavender and dried rose-leaves.--
But perhaps it's Aunt Julia that has brought that scent with her.

BRACK.

[Laughing.] No, I think it must be a legacy from the late Mrs.
Secretary Falk.

HEDDA.

Yes, there is an odour of mortality about it. It reminds me of a
bouquet--the day after the ball. [Clasps her hands behind her head,
leans back in her chair and looks at him.] Oh, my dear Judge--(4) you
cannot imagine how horribly I shall bore myself here.

BRACK.

(3) Why should not you, too, find some sort of vocation in life, Mrs.
Hedda?

HEDDA.

(4) A vocation--that should attract me?

BRACK.

If possible, of course.
HEDDA.

Heaven knows what sort of a vocation that could be. (4) I often wonder whether--- [Breaking off.] (4) But that would never do either.

BRACK.

Who can tell? Let me hear what it is.

HEDDA.

(4) Whether I might not get Tesman to go into politics, I mean.

BRACK.

[Laughing.] Tesman? No really now, political life is not the thing for him--not at all in his line.

HEDDA.

No, I daresay not.-- (4) But if I could get him into it all the same?

BRACK.

Why--what satisfaction could you find in that? If he is not fitted for that sort of thing, why should you want to drive him into it?

HEDDA.

(4) Because I am bored, I tell you! [After a pause.] So you think it quite out of the question that Tesman should ever get into the ministry?

BRACK.

H'm--you see, my dear Mrs. Hedda--(1) to get into the ministry, he would have to be a tolerably rich man.
HEDDA.

[Rising impatiently.] Yes, there we have it! (5) It is this genteel poverty I have managed to drop into---! [Crosses the room.] (10) That is what makes life so pitiable! (10) So utterly ludicrous!--- (10) For that's what it is.

BRACK.

Now _I_ should say the fault lay elsewhere.

HEDDA.

Where, then?

BRACK.

You have never gone through any really stimulating experience.

HEDDA.

Anything serious, you mean?

BRACK.

Yes, you may call it so. (6) But now you may perhaps have one in store.

HEDDA.

[Tossing her head.] Oh, you're thinking of the annoyances about this wretched professorship! But that must be Tesman's own affair. I assure you I shall not waste a thought upon it.

BRACK.

No, no, I daresay not. (6) But suppose now that what people call--in elegant language--a solemn responsibility were to come upon you? [Smiling.] (6) A new responsibility, Mrs. Hedda?
HEDDA.

[Angrily.] \(10\) Be quiet! \(6\) Nothing of that sort will ever happen!

BRACK.

[Warily.] \(6\) We will speak of this again a year hence--at the very outside.

HEDDA.

[Curtly.] \(6\) I have no turn for anything of the sort, Judge Brack. \(6\) No responsibilities for me!

BRACK.

\(6\) Are you so unlike the generality of women as to have no turn for duties which---?

HEDDA.

[Beside the glass door.] \(10\) Oh, be quiet, I tell you!--I often think there is only one thing in the world I have any turn for.

BRACK.

[Drawing near to her.] And what is that, if I may ask?

HEDDA.

[Stands looking out.] \(4\) Boring myself to death. \(10\) Now you know it. [Turns, looks towards the inner room, and laughs.] Yes, as I thought! Here comes the Professor.

BRACK.

[Softly, in a tone of warning.] \(2\) Come, come, come, Mrs. Hedda!
GEORGE TESMAN, dressed for the party, with his gloves and hat in his hand, enters from the right through the inner room.

TESMAN.
Hedda, has no message come from Eilert Lovborg? Eh?

HEDDA.
No.

TESMAN.
Then you'll see he'll be here presently.

BRACK.
Do you really think he will come?

TESMAN.
Yes, I am almost sure of it. For what you were telling us this morning must have been a mere floating rumour.

BRACK.
You think so?

TESMAN.
At any rate, Aunt Julia said she did not believe for a moment that he would ever stand in my way again. Fancy that!

BRACK.
Well then, that's all right.
TESMAN.

[Placing his hat and gloves on a chair on the right.] Yes, but you must really let me wait for him as long as possible.

BRACK.

We have plenty of time yet. None of my guests will arrive before seven or half-past.

TESMAN.

Then meanwhile we can keep Hedda company, and see what happens. Eh?

HEDDA.

[Placing BRACK'S hat and overcoat upon the corner settee.] And at the worst Mr. Lovborg can remain here with me.

BRACK.

[Offering to take his things.] Oh, allow me, Mrs. Tesman!--What do you mean by "At the worst"?

HEDDA.

If he won't go with you and Tesman.

TESMAN.

[Looks dubiously at her.] (5)But, Hedda dear--do you think it would quite do for him to remain here with you? Eh? (9)Remember, Aunt Julia can't come.

HEDDA.

No, but Mrs. Elvsted is coming. (5)We three can have a cup of tea together.
TESMAN.

Oh yes, that will be all right.

BRACK.

[Smiling.] And that would perhaps be the safest plan for him.

HEDDA.

Why so?

BRACK.

Well, you know, Mrs. Tesman, how you used to gird at my little bachelor parties. (5) You declared they were adapted only for men of the strictest principles.

HEDDA.

But no doubt Mr. Lovborg's principles are strict enough now. A converted sinner--- [BERTA appears at the hall door.

BERTA.

There's a gentleman asking if you are at home, ma'am---

HEDDA.

Well, show him in.

TESMAN.

[Softly.] I'm sure it is he! Fancy that!

EILERT LOVBORG enters from the hall. He is slim and lean; of the same age as TESMAN, but looks older and somewhat
worn-out. His hair and beard are of a blackish brown, his face long and pale, but with patches of colour on the cheeks. He is dressed in a well-cut black visiting suit, quite new. He has dark gloves and a silk hat. He stops near the door, and makes a rapid bow, seeming somewhat embarrassed.

TESMAN.

[ Goes up to him and shakes him warmly by the hand. ] Well, my dear Eilert--so at last we meet again!

EILERT LOVBORG.

[ Speaks in a subdued voice. ] Thanks for your letter, Tesman. [ Approaching HEDDA. ] (10) Will you too shake hands with me, Mrs. Tesman?

HEDDA.

[ Taking his hand. ] I am glad to see you, Mr. Lovborg. [ With a motion of her hand. ] I don't know whether you two gentlemen---?

LOVBORG.

[ Bowing slightly. ] Judge Brack, I think.

BRACK.

[ Doing likewise. ] Oh yes,--in the old days---

TESMAN.

[ To LOVBORG, with his hands on his shoulders. ] And now you must make yourself entirely at home, Eilert! Mustn't he, Hedda?--For I hear you are going to settle in town again? Eh?

LOVBORG.

Yes, I am.
TESMAN.

Quite right, quite right. Let me tell you, I have got hold of your new book; but I haven't had time to read it yet.

LOVBORG.

You may spare yourself the trouble.

TESMAN.

Why so?

LOVBORG.

Because there is very little in it.

TESMAN.

Just fancy--how can you say so?

BRACK.

But it has been very much praised, I hear.

LOVBORG.

That was what I wanted; so I put nothing into the book but what every one would agree with.

BRACK.

Very wise of you.

TESMAN.

Well but, my dear Eilert---!
LOVBORG.

For now I mean to win myself a position again--to make a fresh start.

TESMAN.

[A little embarrassed.] Ah, that is what you wish to do? Eh?

LOVBORG.

[Smiling, lays down his hat, and draws a packet wrapped in paper, from his coat pocket.] But when this one appears, George Tesman, you will have to read it. For this is the real book--the book I have put my true self into.

TESMAN.

Indeed? And what is it?

LOVBORG.

It is the continuation.

TESMAN.

The continuation? Of what?

LOVBORG.

Of the book.

TESMAN.

Of the new book?
LOVBORG.

Of course.

TESMAN.

Why, my dear Eilert--does it not come down to our own days?

LOVBORG.

Yes, it does; and this one deals with the future.

TESMAN.

With the future! But, good heavens, we know nothing of the future!

LOVBORG.

No; but there is a thing or two to be said about it all the same. [Opens the packet.] Look here---

TESMAN.

Why, that's not your handwriting.

LOVBORG.

I dictated it. [Turning over the pages.] It falls into two sections. The first deals with the civilising forces of the future. And here is the second--[running through the pages towards the end]--forecasting the probable line of development.

TESMAN.

How odd now! I should never have thought of writing anything of that sort.
HEDDA.

[At the glass door, drumming on the pane.](10) H'm---. I daresay not.

LOVBORG.

[Replacing the manuscript in its paper and laying the packet on the table.] I brought it, thinking I might read you a little of it this evening.

TESMAN.

That was very good of you, Eilert. But this evening---? [Looking back at BRACK.] I don't see how we can manage it---

LOVBORG.

Well then, some other time. There is no hurry.

BRACK.

I must tell you, Mr. Lovborg--there is a little gathering at my house this evening--mainly in honour of Tesman, you know---

LOVBORG.

[Looking for his hat.] Oh--then I won't detain you---

BRACK.

No, but listen--will you not do me the favour of joining us?

LOVBORG.

[Curtly and decidedly.] No, I can't--thank you very much.
BRACK.

Oh, nonsense--do! We shall be quite a select little circle. And I assure you we shall have a "lively time," as Mrs. Hed--as Mrs. Tesman says.

LOVBORG.

I have no doubt of it. But nevertheless---

BRACK.

And then you might bring your manuscript with you, and read it to Tesman at my house. I could give you a room to yourselves.

TESMAN.

Yes, think of that, Eilert,--why shouldn't you? Eh?

HEDDA.

[Interposing.] But, Tesman, if Mr. Lovborg would really rather not! I am sure Mr. Lovborg is much more inclined to remain here and have supper with me.

LOVBORG.

[Looking at her.] With you, Mrs. Tesman?

HEDDA.

And with Mrs. Elvsted.

LOVBORG.

Ah--- [Lightly.] I saw her for a moment this morning.
HEDDA.

Did you? Well, she is coming this evening. So you see you are almost bound to remain, Mr. Lovborg, (5) or she will have no one to see her home.

LOVBORG.

That's true. Many thanks, Mrs. Tesman--in that case I will remain.

HEDDA.

Then I have one or two orders to give the servant---
[She goes to the hall door and rings. BERTA enters. HEDDA talks to her in a whisper, and points towards the inner room. BERTA nods and goes out again.

TESMAN.

[At the same time, to LOVBORG.] Tell me, Eilert--is it this new subject--the future--that you are going to lecture about?

LOVBORG.

Yes.

TESMAN.

They told me at the bookseller's that you are going to deliver a course of lectures this autumn.

LOVBORG.

That is my intention. I hope you won't take it ill, Tesman.

TESMAN.

Oh no, not in the least! But---?
LOVBORG.

I can quite understand that it must be very disagreeable to you.

TESMAN.

[Cast down.] Oh, I can't expect you, out of consideration for me, to---

LOVBORG.

But I shall wait till you have received your appointment.

TESMAN.

Will you wait? Yes but--yes but--are you not going to compete with me? Eh?

LOVBORG.

No; it is only the moral victory I care for.

TESMAN.

Why, bless me--then Aunt Julia was right after all! Oh yes--I knew it! Hedda! Just fancy--Eilert Lovborg is not going to stand in our way!

HEDDA.

[Curly.] (10) Our way? (10) Pray leave me out of the question. [She goes up towards the inner room, where BERTA is placing a tray with decanters and glasses on the table. HEDDA nods approval, and comes forward again. BERTA goes out.]
TESMAN.

[At the same time.] And you, Judge Brack--what do you say to this? Eh?

BRACK.

Well, I say that a moral victory--h'm--may be all very fine---

TESMAN.

Yes, certainly. But all the same---

HEDDA.

[Looking at TESMAN with a cold smile.] You stand there looking as if you were thunderstruck---

TESMAN.

Yes--so I am--I almost think---

BRACK.

Don't you see, Mrs. Tesman, a thunderstorm has just passed over?

HEDDA.

[Pointing towards the room.] (5) Will you not take a glass of cold punch, gentlemen?

BRACK.

[Looking at his watch.] A stirrup-cup? Yes, it wouldn't come amiss.
TESMAN.

A capital idea, Hedda! Just the thing! Now that the weight has been taken off my mind---

HEDDA.

Will you not join them, Mr. Lovborg?

LOVBORG.

[With a gesture of refusal.] No, thank you. Nothing for me.

BRACK.

Why bless me--cold punch is surely not poison.

LOVBORG.

Perhaps not for everyone.

HEDDA.

I will keep Mr. Lovborg company in the meantime.

TESMAN.

Yes, yes, Hedda dear, do.
[He and BRACK go into the inner room, seat themselves, drink punch, smoke cigarettes, and carry on a lively conversation during what follows. EILERT LOVBORG remains standing beside the stove. HEDDA goes to the writing-table.

HEDDA.

[Raising he voice a little.] Do you care to look at some photographs, Mr. Lovborg? You know Tesman and I made a tour in the Tyrol on our way home?
[She takes up an album, and places it on the table beside the sofa, in the further corner of which she seats herself. EILERT
LOVBORG approaches, stops, and looks at her. Then he takes a chair and seats himself to her left.

HEDDA.

[Opening the album.] Do you see this range of mountains, Mr. Lovborg? It's the Ortler group. Tesman has written the name underneath. Here it is: "The Ortler group near Meran."

LOVBORG.

[Who has never taken his eyes off her, says softly and slowly:] Hedda--Gabler!

HEDDA.

[Glancing hastily at him.] Ah! (Hush!

LOVBORG.

[Repeats softly.] Hedda Gabler!

HEDDA.

[Looking at the album.] (That was my name in the old days--when we two knew each other.

LOVBORG.

And I must teach myself never to say Hedda Gabler again--never, as long as I live.

HEDDA.

[Still turning over the pages.] Yes, you must. (And I think you ought to practise in time. (The sooner the better, I should say.
LOVBORG.

[In a tone of indignation.] Hedda Gabler married? And married to--George Tesman!

HEDDA.

Yes--so the world goes.

LOVBORG.

(5)Oh, Hedda, Hedda--how could you (9) throw yourself away!

HEDDA.

[Looks sharply at him.] (10)What? I can't allow this!

LOVBORG.

What do you mean?
[TESMAN comes into the room and goes towards the sofa.

HEDDA.

[Hears him coming and says in an indifferent tone.] And this is a view from the Val d'Ampezzo, Mr. Lovborg. Just look at these peaks! [Looks affectionately up at TESMAN.] What's the name of these curious peaks, dear?

TESMAN.

Let me see. Oh, those are the Dolomites.

HEDDA.

Yes, that's it!--Those are the Dolomites, Mr. Lovborg.
TESMAN.

Hedda, dear,—I only wanted to ask whether I shouldn't bring you a little punch after all? For yourself at any rate—eh?

HEDDA.

Yes, do, please; and perhaps a few biscuits.

TESMAN.

No cigarettes?

HEDDA.

No.

TESMAN.

Very well.
[He goes into the inner room and out to the right. BRACK sits in the inner room, and keeps an eye from time to time on HEDDA and LOVBORG.

LOVBORG.

[Softly, as before.] (2) Answer me, Hedda—how could you go and do this?

HEDDA.

[Apparently absorbed in the album.] (10) If you continue to say _du_ to me I won't talk to you.

LOVBORG.

May I not say _du_ even when we are alone?
HEDDA.

No. You may think it; but you mustn't say it.

LOVBORG.

Ah, I understand. It is an offence against George Tesman, whom you (10)--love.

HEDDA.

[Glances at him and smiles.] (10)Love? (10)What an idea!

LOVBORG.

You don't love him then!

HEDDA.

(5)But I won't hear of any sort of unfaithfulness! (10)Remember that.

LOVBORG.

Hedda--answer me one thing---

HEDDA.

Hush! [TESMAN enters with a small tray from the inner room.

TESMAN.

Here you are! Isn't this tempting? [He puts the tray on the table.

HEDDA.

(5)Why do you bring it yourself?
TESMAN.

[Filling the glasses.] \(^{(2)}\) Because I think it's such fun to wait upon you, Hedda.

HEDDA.

But you have poured out two glasses. Mr. Lovborg said he wouldn't have any---

TESMAN.

No, but Mrs. Elvsted will soon be here, won't she?

HEDDA.

Yes, by-the-bye--Mrs. Elvsted---

TESMAN.

Had you forgotten her? Eh?

HEDDA.

We were so absorbed in these photographs. [Shows him a picture.] Do you remember this little village?

TESMAN.

Oh, it's that one just below the Brenner Pass. It was there we passed the night---

HEDDA.

---and met that lively party of tourists.
TESMAN.

Yes, that was the place. Fancy--if we could only have had you with us, Eilert! Eh?
[He returns to the inner room and sits beside BRACK.

LOVBORG.

(2) Answer me one thing, Hedda---

HEDDA.

Well?

LOVBORG.

Was there no love in your friendship for me either? Not a spark--not a tinge of love in it?

HEDDA.

I wonder if there was? To me it seems as though we were two good comrades--two thoroughly intimate friends. [Smilingly.] You especially were frankness itself.

LOVBORG.

(4) It was you that made me so.

HEDDA.

As I look back upon it all, I think there was really something beautiful, something fascinating--something daring--in--in that secret intimacy--that comradeship which no living creature so much as dreamed of.
LOVBORG.

Yes, yes, Hedda! Was there not?--When I used to come to your father's in the afternoon--and the General sat over at the window reading his papers--with his back towards us---

HEDDA.

And we two on the corner sofa---

LOVBORG.

Always with the same illustrated paper before us---

HEDDA.

For want of an album, yes.

LOVBORG.

Yes, Hedda, and when I made my confessions to you--told you about myself, things that at that time no one else knew! There I would sit and tell you of my escapades--my days and nights of devilment. Oh, Hedda--what was the power in you that forced me to confess these things?

HEDDA.

Do you think it was any power in me?

LOVBORG.

How else can I explain it? And all those--those roundabout questions you used to put to me---

HEDDA.

Which you understood so particularly well---
LOVBORG.

(10) How could you sit and question me like that? (10) Question me quite frankly--

HEDDA.

In roundabout terms, please observe.

LOVBORG.

Yes, but frankly nevertheless. (10) Cross-question me about--all that sort of thing?

HEDDA.

And how could you answer, Mr. Lovborg?

LOVBORG.

Yes, that is just what I can't understand--in looking back upon it. But tell me now, Hedda--was there not love at the bottom of our friendship? (5) On your side, did you not feel as though you might purge my stains away--if I made you my confessor? Was it not so?

HEDDA.

No, not quite.

LOVBORG.

What was you motive, then?

HEDDA.

(4) Do think it quite incomprehensible that a young girl--when it can be done--without any one knowing---
LOVBORG.

Well?

HEDDA.

---⁴ should be glad to have a peep, now and then, into a world which---?

LOVBORG.

Which---?

HEDDA.

---⁴ which she is forbidden to know anything about?

LOVBORG.

So that was it?

HEDDA.

Partly. Partly--I almost think.

LOVBORG.

Comradeship in the thirst for life. But why should not that, at any rate, have continued?

HEDDA.

The fault was yours.

LOVBORG.

It was you that broke with me.
HEDDA.

(5)Yes, when our friendship threatened to develop into something more serious. Shame upon you, Eilert Lovborg! (4) How could you think of wronging your--your frank comrade.

LOVBORG.

[Clenches his hands.] Oh, why did you not carry out your threat? Why did you not shoot me down?

HEDDA.

(5) Because I have such a dread of scandal.

LOVBORG.

Yes, Hedda, you are a coward at heart.

HEDDA.

A terrible coward. [Changing her tone.] But it was a lucky thing for you. And now you have found ample consolation at the Elvsted's.

LOVBORG.

I know what Thea has confided to you.

HEDDA.

And perhaps you have confided to her something about us?

LOVBORG.

Not a word. (9) She is too stupid to understand anything of that sort.
HEDDA.

(9) Stupid?

LOVBORG.

(9) She is stupid about matters of that sort.

HEDDA.

And I am cowardly. [Bends over towards him, without looking him in the face, and says more softly:] But now I will confide something to you.

LOVBORG.

[Eagerly.] Well?

HEDDA.

(10) The fact that I dared not shoot you down---

LOVBORG.

Yes!

HEDDA.

---(4) that was not my arrant cowardice--that evening.

LOVBORG.

[Looks at her a moment, understands, and whispers passionately.] Oh, Hedda! Hedda Gabler! Now I begin to see a hidden reason beneath our comradeship! You (11) and I---!(8) After all, then, it was your craving for life---
HEDDA.

[Softly, with a sharp glance.] Take care! (5) Believe nothing of the sort!
[Twilight has begun to fall. The hall door is opened from without by BERTA.

HEDDA.

[Closes the album with a bang and calls smilingly:] Ah, at last!
My darling Thea,—come along!

MRS. ELVSTED enters from the hall. She is in evening dress.
The door is closed behind her.

HEDDA.

[On the sofa, stretches out her arms towards her.] My sweet Thea—
you can't think how I have been longing for you!
[MRS. ELVSTED, in passing, exchanges slight salutations with
the gentlemen in the inner room, then goes up to the table
and gives HEDDA her hand. EILERT LOVBORG has risen. He and
MRS. ELVSTED greet each other with a silent nod.

MRS. ELVSTED.

Ought I to go in and talk to your husband for a moment?

HEDDA.

Oh, not at all. Leave those two alone. They will soon be going.

MRS. ELVSTED.

Are they going out?

HEDDA.

Yes, to a supper-party.
MRS. ELVSTED.

[Quickly, to LOVBORG.] Not you?

LOVBORG.

No.

HEDDA.

Mr. Lovborg remains with us.

MRS. ELVSTED.

[Takes a chair and is about to seat herself at his side.] Oh, how nice it is here!

HEDDA.

No, thank you, my little Thea! Not there! You'll be good enough to come over here to me. (4)I will sit between you.

MRS. ELVSTED.

Yes, just as you please.
[She goes round the table and seats herself on the sofa on HEDDA'S right. LOVBORG re-seats himself on his chair.

LOVBORG.

[After a short pause, to HEDDA.] (7)Is not she lovely to look at?

HEDDA.

[Lightly stroking her hair.] (7)Only to look at!
LOVBORG.

Yes. For we two--she and I--we are two real comrades. We have absolute faith in each other; so we can sit and talk with perfect frankness---

HEDDA.

(4) Not round about, Mr. Lovborg?

LOVBORG.

Well---

MRS. ELVSTED.

[Softly clinging close to HEDDA.] Oh, how happy I am, Hedda! For only think, (5) he says I have inspired him too.

HEDDA.

[Looks at her with a smile.] Ah! Does he say that, dear?

LOVBORG.

And then she is so brave, Mrs. Tesman!

MRS. ELVSTED.

Good heavens--am I brave?

LOVBORG.

Exceedingly--where your comrade is concerned.

HEDDA.

Exceedingly--where your comrade is concerned.
HEDDA.

Ah, yes--courage! If one only had that!

LOVBORG.

What then? What do you mean?

HEDDA.

Then life would perhaps be liveable, after all. [With a sudden change of tone.] But now, my dearest Thea, you really must have a glass of cold punch.

MRS. ELVSTED.

No, thanks--I never take anything of that kind.

HEDDA.

Well then, you, Mr. Lovborg.

LOVBORG.

Nor I, thank you.

MRS. ELVSTED.

No, he doesn't either.

HEDDA.

[Looks fixedly at him.] But if I say you shall?

LOVBORG.

It would be of no use.
HEDDA.

[Laughing.] Then I, poor creature, have no sort of power over you?

LOVBORG.

Not in that respect.

HEDDA.

But seriously, I think you ought to--for your own sake.

MRS. ELVSTED.

Why, Hedda---!

LOVBORG.

How so?

HEDDA.

Or rather on account of other people.

LOVBORG.

Indeed?

HEDDA.

Otherwise people might be apt to suspect that--in your heart of hearts--you did not feel quite secure--quite confident in yourself.

MRS. ELVSTED.

[Softly.] Oh please, Hedda---!
LOVBORG.

People may suspect what they like--for the present.

MRS. ELVSTED.

[Joyfully.] Yes, let them!

HEDDA.

I saw it plainly in Judge Brack's face a moment ago.

LOVBORG.

What did you see?

HEDDA.

His contemptuous smile, when you dared not go with them into the inner room.

LOVBORG.

Dared not? Of course I preferred to stop here and talk to you.

MRS. ELVSTED.

What could be more natural, Hedda?

HEDDA.

But the Judge could not guess that. And I say, too, the way he smiled and glanced at Tesman when you dared not accept his invitation to this wretched little supper-party of his.

LOVBORG.

Dared not! Do you say I dared not?
HEDDA.

_I_ don't say so. But that was how Judge Brack understood it.

LOVBORG.

Well, let him.

HEDDA.

Then you are not going with them?

LOVBORG.

I will stay here with you and Thea.

MRS. ELVSTED.

Yes, Hedda--how can you doubt that?

HEDDA.

[Smiles and nods approvingly to LOVBORG.] Firm as a rock! Faithful to your principles, now and for ever! Ah, that is how a man should be! [Turns to MRS. ELVSTED and caresses her.] Well now, what did I tell you, when you came to us this morning in such a state of distraction---

LOVBORG.

[Surprised.] Distraction!

MRS. ELVSTED.

[Terrified.] Hedda--oh Hedda---!
HEDDA.

You can see for yourself! You haven't the slightest reason to be in such mortal terror--- [Interrupting herself.] There! Now we can all three enjoy ourselves!

LOVBORG.

[Who has given a start.] Ah--what is all this, Mrs. Tesman?

MRS. ELVSTED.

Oh my God, Hedda! What are you saying? What are you doing?

HEDDA.

Don't get excited! That horrid Judge Brack is sitting watching you.

LOVBORG.

So she was in mortal terror! On my account!

MRS. ELVSTED.

[Softly and piteously.] Oh, Hedda--now you have ruined everything!

LOVBORG.

[Looks fixedly at her for a moment. His face is distorted.] So that was my comrade's frank confidence in me?

MRS. ELVSTED.

[Imploringly.] Oh, my dearest friend--only let me tell you---
LOVBORG.

[Takes one of the glasses of punch, raises it to his lips, and says in a low, husky voice.] Your health, Thea!
[He empties the glass, puts it down, and takes the second.

MRS. ELVSTED.

[Softly.] Oh, Hedda, Hedda--how could you do this?

HEDDA.

_I_ do it? _I_? Are you crazy?

LOVBORG.

Here's to your health too, Mrs. Tesman. Thanks for the truth. Hurrah for the truth!
[He empties the glass and is about to re-fill it.

HEDDA.

[Lays her hand on his arm.] Come, come--no more for the present.
Remember you are going out to supper.

MRS. ELVSTED.

No, no, no!

HEDDA.

Hush! They are sitting watching you.

LOVBORG.

[Putting down the glass.] Now, Thea--tell me the truth---
MRS. ELVSTED.

Yes.

LOVBORG.

(5) Did your husband know that you had come after me?

MRS. ELVSTED.

[Wringing her hands.] Oh, Hedda--do you hear what his is asking?

LOVBORG.

Was it arranged between you and him that you were to come to town and look after me? Perhaps it was the Sheriff himself that urged you to come? Aha, my dear--no doubt he wanted my help in his office! Or was it at the card-table that he missed me?

MRS. ELVSTED.

[Softly, in agony.] Oh, Lovborg, Lovborg---!

LOVBORG.

[Seizes a glass and is on the point of filling it.] Here's a glass for the old Sheriff too!

HEDDA.

[Preventing him.] No more just now. Remember, you have to read your manuscript to Tesman.

LOVBORG.

[Calmly, putting down the glass.] It was stupid of me all this. Thea--to take it in this way, I mean. Don't be angry with me, my dear, dear comrade. You shall see--both you and the others--that if I was fallen once--now I have risen again! (5) Thanks to you, Thea.
MRS. ELVSTED.

[Radiant with joy.] Oh, heaven be praised---!
[BRACK has in the meantime looked at his watch. He and TESMAN rise and come into the drawing-room.

BRACK.

[Takes his hat and overcoat.] Well, Mrs. Tesman, our time has come.

HEDDA.

I suppose it has.

LOVBORG.

[Rising.] Mine too, Judge Brack.

MRS. ELVSTED.

[Softly and imploringly.] (10)Oh, Lovborg, don't do it!

HEDDA.

[Pinching her arm.] They can hear you!

MRS. ELVSTED.

[With a suppressed shriek.] Ow!

LOVBORG.

[To BRACK.] You were good enough to invite me.

JUDGE BRACK.

Well, are you coming after all?
LOVBORG.

Yes, many thanks.

BRACK.

I'm delighted---

LOVBORG.

[To TESMAN, putting the parcel of MS. in his pocket.] I should like to show you one or two things before I send it to the printers.

TESMAN.

Fancy--that will be delightful. But, Hedda dear, how is Mrs. Elvsted to get home? Eh?

HEDDA.

Oh, that can be managed somehow.

LOVBORG.

[Looking towards the ladies.] Mrs. Elvsted? (5)Of course, I'll come again and fetch her. [Approaching.] At ten or thereabouts, Mrs. Tesman? Will that do?

HEDDA.

Certainly. That will do capitally.

TESMAN.

Well, then, that's all right. (2)But you must not expect me so early, Hedda.
HEDDA.

Oh, you may stop as long--as long as every you please.

MRS. ELVSTED.

[Trying to conceal her anxiety.] *Well then, Mr. Lovborg--I shall remain here until you come.*

LOVBORG.

[With his hat in his hand.] Pray do, Mrs. Elvsted.

BRACK.

And now off goes the excursion train, gentlemen! I hope we shall have a lively time, as a certain fair lady puts it.

HEDDA.

*Ah, if only the fair lady could be present unseen---!*

BRACK.

Why unseen?

HEDDA.

*In order to hear a little of your liveliness at first hand, Judge Brack.*

BRACK.

[Laughing.] I should not advise the fair lady to try it.

TESMAN.

[Also laughing.] *Come, you're a nice one Hedda! Fancy that!*
BRACK.

Well, good-bye, good-bye, ladies.

LOVBORG.

[Bowing.] About ten o'clock, then,
[BRAK, LOVBORG, and TESMAN go out by the hall door. At the
same time, BERTA enters from the inner room with a lighted
lamp, which she places on the drawing-room table; she goes
out by the way she came.

MRS. ELVSTED.

[Who has risen and is wandering restlessly about the room.] Hedda--
Hedda--what will come of all this?

HEDDA.

At ten o'clock--he will be here. I can see him already--with vine-
leaves in his hair--flushed and fearless---

MRS. ELVSTED.

Oh, I hope he may.

HEDDA.

And then, you see--then he will have regained control over himself.
Then he will be a free man for all his days.

MRS. ELVSTED.

Oh God!--if he would only come as you see him now!
HEDDA.

He will come as I see him--so, and not otherwise! [Rises and approaches THEA.] You may doubt him as long as you please; _I_ believe in him. And now we will try---

MRS. ELVSTED.

You have some hidden motive in this, Hedda!

HEDDA.

Yes, I have. (_I_ want for once in my life to have power to mould a human destiny.

MRS. ELVSTED.

Have you not the power?

HEDDA.

I have not--and have never had it.

MRS. ELVSTED.

Not your husband's?

HEDDA.

Do you think that is worth the trouble? (_Oh, if you could only understand how poor I am. And fate has made you so rich! [Clasps her passionately in her arms.] I think I must burn your hair off after all.

MRS. ELVSTED.

Let me go! Let me go! I am afraid of you, Hedda!
BERTA.
[In the middle doorway.] Tea is laid in the dining-room, ma'am.

HEDDA.
Very well. We are coming

MRS. ELVSTED.
No, no, no! I would rather go home alone! At once!

HEDDA.
Nonsense! (10) First you shall have a cup of tea, you little stupid. And then--at ten o'clock--Eilert Lovborg will be here--with vine-leaves in his hair. [She drags MRS. ELVSTED almost by force to the middle doorway.

ACT III

The room at the TESMANS'. The curtains are drawn over the middle doorway, and also over the glass door. The lamp, half turned down, and with a shade over it, is burning on the table. In the stove, the door of which stands open, there has been a fire, which is now nearly burnt out.

MRS. ELVSTED, wrapped in a large shawl, and with her feet upon a foot-rest, sits close to the stove, sunk back in the arm-chair. HEDDA, fully dressed, lies sleeping upon the sofa, with a sofa-blanket over her.

MRS. ELVSTED.
[After a pause, suddenly sits up in her chair, and listens eagerly. Then she sinks back again wearily, moaning to herself.] Not yet!--Oh God--oh God--not yet!
BERTA slips cautiously in by the hall door. She has a letter in her hand.

MRS. ELVSTED.
[Turns and whispers eagerly.] Well--has any one come?

BERTA.
[Softly.] Yes, a girl has just brought this letter.

MRS. ELVSTED.
[Quickly, holding out her hand.] A letter! Give it to me!

BERTA.
No, it's for Dr. Tesman, ma'am.

MRS. ELVSTED.
Oh, indeed.

BERTA.
It was Miss Tesman's servant that brought it. I'll lay it here on the table.

MRS. ELVSTED.
Yes, do.

BERTA.
[Laying down the letter.] I think I had better put out the lamp. It's smoking.
MRS. ELVSTED.

Yes, put it out. It must soon be daylight now.

BERTA.

[Putting out the lamp.] It is daylight already, ma'am.

MRS. ELVSTED.

Yes, broad day! And no one come back yet---!

BERTA.

Lord bless you, ma'am--I guessed how it would be.

MRS. ELVSTED.

You guessed?

BERTA.

Yes, when I saw that a certain person had come back to town--and that he went off with them. For we've heard enough about that gentleman before now.

MRS. ELVSTED.

Don't speak so loud. You will waken Mrs. Tesman.

BERTA.

[Looks towards the sofa and sighs.] No, no--let her sleep, poor thing. Shan't I put some wood on the fire?
MRS. ELVSTED.

Thanks, not for me.

BERTA.

Oh, very well. [She goes softly out by the hall door.

HEDDA.

[Is wakened by the shutting of the door, and looks up.] What's that---?

MRS. ELVSTED.

It was only the servant.

HEDDA.

[Looking about her.] Oh, we're here---! Yes, now I remember. [Sits erect upon the sofa, stretches herself, and rubs her eyes.] What o'clock is it, Thea?

MRS. ELVSTED.

[Looks at her watch.] It's past seven.

HEDDA.

When did Tesman come home?

MRS. ELVSTED.

He has not come.

HEDDA.

Not come home yet?
MRS. ELVSTED.

[Rising.] No one has come.

HEDDA.

Think of our watching and waiting here till four in the morning---

MRS. ELVSTED.

[Wringing her hands.] And how I watched and waited for him!

HEDDA.

[Yawns, and says with her hand before her mouth.] Well well--we might have spared ourselves the trouble.

MRS. ELVSTED.

Did you get a little sleep?

HEDDA.

Oh yes; I believe I have slept pretty well. Have you not?

MRS. ELVSTED.

Not for a moment. I couldn't, Hedda!--not to save my life.

HEDDA.

[Rises and goes towards her.] There there there! There's nothing to be so alarmed about. I understand quite well what has happened.

MRS. ELVSTED.

Well, what do you think? Won't you tell me?
HEDDA.

Why, of course it has been a very late affair at Judge Brack's---

MRS. ELVSTED.

Yes, yes--that is clear enough. But all the same---

HEDDA.

And then, you see, Tesman hasn't cared to come home and ring us up in the middle of the night. [Laughing.] Perhaps he wasn't inclined to show himself either--immediately after a jollification.

MRS. ELVSTED.

But in that case--where can he have gone?

HEDDA.

Of course he has gone to his Aunts' and slept there. They have his old room ready for him.

MRS. ELVSTED.

No, he can't be with them for a letter has just come for him from Miss Tesman. There it lies.

HEDDA.

Indeed? [Looks at the address.] Why yes, it's addressed in Aunt Julia's hand. Well then, he has remained at Judge Brack's. And as for Eilert Lovborg--he is sitting, with vine leaves in his hair, reading his manuscript.

MRS. ELVSTED.

Oh, Hedda, you are just saying things you don't believe a bit.
HEDDA.

(9) You really are a little blockhead, Thea.

MRS. ELVSTED.

(9) Oh yes, I suppose I am.

HEDDA.

And how mortally tired you look.

MRS. ELVSTED.

Yes, I am mortally tired.

HEDDA.

(10) Well then, you must do as I tell you. You must go into my room and lie down for a little while.

MRS. ELVSTED.

Oh no, no--I shouldn't be able to sleep.

HEDDA.

I am sure you would.

MRS. ELVSTED.

Well, but you husband is certain to come soon now; and then I want to know at once---

HEDDA.

I shall take care to let you know when he comes.
MRS. ELVSTED.

Do you promise me, Hedda?

HEDDA.

Yes, rely upon me. Just you go in and have a sleep in the meantime.

MRS. ELVSTED.

Thanks; then I'll try. [She goes off to the inner room. [HEDDA goes up to the glass door and draws back the curtains. The broad daylight streams into the room. Then she takes a little hand-glass from the writing-table, looks at herself in it, and arranges her hair. Next she goes to the hall door and presses the bell-button.

BERTA presently appears at the hall door.

BERTA.

Did you want anything, ma'am?

HEDDA.

Yes; you must put some more wood in the stove. I am shivering.

BERTA.

Bless me--I'll make up the fire at once. [She rakes the embers together and lays a piece of wood upon them; then stops and listens.] That was a ring at the front door, ma'am.

HEDDA.

Then go to the door. I will look after the fire.
BERTA.

It'll soon burn up. [She goes out by the hall door. [HEDDA kneels on the foot-rest and lays some more pieces of wood in the stove.

After a short pause, GEORGE TESMAN enters from the hall. He steals on tiptoe towards the middle doorway and is about to slip through the curtains.

HEDDA.

[At the stove, without looking up.] Good morning.

TESMAN.

[Turns.] Hedda! [Approaching her.] Good heavens--are you up so early? Eh?

HEDDA.

Yes, I am up very early this morning.

TESMAN.

And I never doubted you were still sound asleep! Fancy that, Hedda!

HEDDA.

Don't speak so loud. Mrs. Elvsted is resting in my room.

TESMAN.

Has Mrs. Elvsted been here all night?
HEDDA.

Yes, since no one came to fetch her.

TESMAN.

Ah, to be sure.

HEDDA.

[Closes the door of the stove and rises.] Well, did you enjoy yourselves at Judge Brack's?

TESMAN.

Have you been anxious about me? Eh?

HEDDA.

(10)No, I should never think of being anxious. But I asked if you had enjoyed yourself.

TESMAN.

Oh yes,—for once in a way. Especially the beginning of the evening; for then Eilert read me part of his book. We arrived more than an hour too early—fancy that! And Brack had all sorts of arrangements to make—so Eilert read to me.

HEDDA.

[Seating herself by the table on the right.] Well? Tell me then---

TESMAN.

[Sitting on a footstool near the stove.] Oh, Hedda, you can't conceive what a book that is going to be! I believe it is one of the most remarkable things that have ever been written. Fancy that!
HEDDA.
**
Yes yes; I don't care about that---

TESMAN.

I must make a confession to you, Hedda. When he had finished reading--a horrid feeling came over me.

HEDDA.

A horrid feeling?

TESMAN.

I felt jealous of Eilert for having had it in him to write such a book. Only think, Hedda!

HEDDA.

Yes, yes, I am thinking!

TESMAN.

And then how pitiful to think that he--with all his gifts--should be irreclaimable, after all.

HEDDA.

I suppose you mean that he has more courage than the rest?

TESMAN.

No, not at all--I mean that he is incapable of taking his pleasure in moderation.
HEDDA.

And what came of it all--in the end?

TESMAN.

Well, to tell the truth, I think it might best be described as an orgie, Hedda.

HEDDA.

Had he vine-leaves in his hair?

TESMAN.

Vine-leaves? No, I saw nothing of the sort. But he made a long, rambling speech in honour of the woman who had inspired him in his work--that was the phrase he used.

HEDDA.

Did he name her?

TESMAN.

No, he didn't; but I can't help thinking he meant Mrs. Elvsted. You may be sure he did.

HEDDA.

Well--where did you part from him?

TESMAN.

On the way to town. We broke up--the last of us at any rate--all together; and Brack came with us to get a breath of fresh air. And then, you see, we agreed to take Eilert home; for he had had far more than was good for him.
HEDDA.

I daresay.

TESMAN.

But now comes the strange part of it, Hedda; or, I should rather say, the melancholy part of it. I declare I am almost ashamed--on Eilert's account--to tell you---

HEDDA.

Oh, go on---!

TESMAN.

Well, as we were getting near town, you see, I happened to drop a little behind the others. Only for a minute or two--fancy that!

HEDDA.

Yes yes yes, but---?

TESMAN.

And then, as I hurried after them--what do you think I found by the wayside? Eh?

HEDDA.

Oh, how should I know!

TESMAN.

You mustn't speak of it to a soul, Hedda! Do you hear! Promise me, for Eilert's sake. [Draws a parcel, wrapped in paper, from his coat pocket.] Fancy, dear--I found this.
HEDDA.

Is not that the parcel he had with him yesterday?

TESMAN.

Yes, it is the whole of his precious, irreplaceable manuscript! And he had gone and lost it, and knew nothing about it. Only fancy, Hedda! So deplorably---

HEDDA.

But why did you not give him back the parcel at once?

TESMAN.

I didn't dare to--in the state he was then in---

HEDDA.

Did you not tell any of the others that you had found it?

TESMAN.

Oh, far from it! You can surely understand that, for Eilert's sake, I wouldn't do that.

HEDDA.

So no one knows that Eilert Lovborg's manuscript is in your possession?

TESMAN.

No. (2) And no one must know it.
HEDDA.

Then what did you say to him afterwards?

TESMAN.

I didn't talk to him again at all; for when we got in among the streets, he and two or three of the others gave us the slip and disappeared. Fancy that!

HEDDA.

Indeed! They must have taken him home then.

TESMAN.

Yes, so it would appear. And Brack, too, left us.

HEDDA.

And what have you been doing with yourself since?

TESMAN.

Well, I and some of the others went home with one of the party, a jolly fellow, and took our morning coffee with him; or perhaps I should rather call it our night coffee--eh? But now, when I have rested a little, and given Eilert, poor fellow, time to have his sleep out, I must take this back to him.

HEDDA.

[Hold out her hand for the packet.] No--[10] don't give it to him! Not in such a hurry, I mean. Let me read it first.

TESMAN.

No, my dearest Hedda, I mustn't, I really mustn't.
HEDDA.

You must not?

TESMAN.

No--for you can imagine what a state of despair he will be in when he wakens and misses the manuscript. He has no copy of it, you must know! He told me so.

HEDDA.

[Looking searchingly at him.] Can such a thing not be reproduced? Written over again?

TESMAN.

No, I don't think that would be possible. For the inspiration, you see---

HEDDA.

Yes, yes--I suppose it depends on that---[Lightly.] But, by-the-bye --here is a letter for you.

TESMAN.

Fancy---!

HEDDA.

[Handing it to him.] It came early this morning.

TESMAN.

It's from Aunt Julia! What can it be? [He lays the packet on the other footstool, opens the letter, runs his eye through it, and jumps up.] Oh, Hedda--she says that poor Aunt Rina is dying!
HEDDA.

Well, we were prepared for that.

TESMAN.

And that if I want to see her again, I must make haste. I'll run in to them at once.

HEDDA.

[Suppressing a smile.] Will you run?

TESMAN.

Oh, my dearest Hedda--if you could only make up your mind to come with me! Just think!

HEDDA.

[Rises and says wearily, repelling the idea.] {10} No, no don't ask me. {4} I will not look upon sickness and death. {4} I loathe all sorts of ugliness.

TESMAN.

Well, well, then---! [Bustling around.] My hat---? My overcoat---? Oh, in the hall---. I do hope I mayn't come too late, Hedda! Eh?

HEDDA.

Oh, if you run--- [BERTA appears at the hall door.

BERTA.

Judge Brack is at the door, and wishes to know if he may come in.
TESMAN.

At this time! No, I can't possibly see him.

HEDDA.

(10) But I can. [To BERTA.] (10) Ask Judge Brack to come in. [BERTA goes out.

HEDDA.

[Quickly, whispering.] The parcel, Tesman!
[She snatches it up from the stool.

TESMAN.

Yes, give it to me!

HEDDA.

No, no, I will keep it till you come back.
[She goes to the writing-table and places it in the bookcase.
TESMAN stands in a flurry of haste, and cannot get his gloves on.

JUDGE BRACK enters from the hall.

HEDDA.

[Nodding to him.] You are an early bird, I must say.

BRACK.

Yes, don't you think so! [To TESMAN.] Are you on the move, too?

TESMAN.

Yes, I must rush off to my aunts'. Fancy--the invalid one is lying at death's door, poor creature.
BRACK.

Dear me, is she indeed? Then on no account let me detain you. At such a critical moment---

TESMAN.

Yes, I must really rush--- Good-bye! Good-bye!
[He hastens out by the hall door.

HEDDA.

[Approaching.] You seem to have made a particularly lively night of it at your rooms, Judge Brack.

BRACK.

I assure you I have not had my clothes off, Mrs. Hedda.

HEDDA.

Not you, either?

BRACK.

No, as you may see. But what has Tesman been telling you of the night's adventures?

HEDDA.

Oh, some tiresome story. Only that they went and had coffee somewhere or other.

BRACK.

I have heard about that coffee-party already. Eilert Lovborg was not with them, I fancy?
HEDDA.

No, they had taken him home before that.

BRACK.

Tesman too?

HEDDA.

No, but some of the others, he said.

BRACK.

[Smiling.] George Tesman is really an ingenuous creature, Mrs. Hedda.

HEDDA.

Yes, heaven knows he is. Then is there something behind all this?

BRACK.

Yes, perhaps there may be.

HEDDA.

Well then, sit down, my dear Judge, and tell your story in comfort. [She seats herself to the left of the table. BRACK sits near her, at the long side of the table.

HEDDA.

Now then?

BRACK.

I had special reasons for keeping track of my guests--last night.
HEDDA.
Of Eilert Lovborg among the rest, perhaps?

BRACK.
Frankly, yes.

HEDDA.
Now you make me really curious---

BRACK.
Do you know where he and one or two of the others finished the night, Mrs. Hedda?

HEDDA.
If it is not quite unmentionable, tell me.

BRACK.
Oh no, it's not at all unmentionable. Well, they put in an appearance at a particularly animated soiree.

HEDDA.
Of the lively kind?

BRACK.
Of the very liveliest---

HEDDA.
Tell me more of this, Judge Brack---
BRACK.

Lovborg, as well as the others, had been invited in advance. I knew all about it. But he had declined the invitation; for now, as you know, he has become a new man.

HEDDA.

Up at the Elvsted's', yes. But he went after all, then?

BRACK.

Well, you see, Mrs. Hedda--unhappily the spirit moved him at my rooms last evening---

HEDDA.

Yes, I hear he found inspiration.

BRACK.

Pretty violent inspiration. Well, I fancy that altered his purpose; for we menfolk are unfortunately not always so firm in our principles as we ought to be.

HEDDA.

Oh, I am sure you are an exception, Judge Brack. But as to Lovborg---?

BRACK.

To make a long story short--he landed at last in Mademoiselle Diana's rooms.

HEDDA.

Mademoiselle Diana's?
BRACK.

It was Mademoiselle Diana that was giving the soiree, to a select circle of her admirers and her lady friends.

HEDDA.

Is she a red-haired woman?

BRACK.

Precisely.

HEDDA.

A sort of a--singer?

BRACK.

Oh yes--in her leisure moments. And moreover a mighty huntress--of men--Mrs. Hedda. You have no doubt heard of her. Eilert Lovborg was one of her most enthusiastic protectors--in the days of his glory.

HEDDA.

And how did all this end?

BRACK.

Far from amicably, it appears. After a most tender meeting, they seem to have come to blows---

HEDDA.

Lovborg and she?
BRACK.

Yes. He accused her or her friends of having robbed him. He declared that his pocket-book had disappeared--and other things as well. In short, he seems to have made a furious disturbance.

HEDDA.

And what came of it all?

BRACK.

It came to a general scrimmage, in which the ladies as well as the gentlemen took part. Fortunately the police at last appeared on the scene.

HEDDA.

The police too?

BRACK.

Yes. I fancy it will prove a costly frolic for Eilert Lovborg, crazy being that he is.

HEDDA.

How so?

BRACK.

He seems to have made a violent resistance--to have hit one of the constables on the head and torn the coat off his back. So they had to march him off to the police-station with the rest.

HEDDA.

How have you learnt all this?
BRACK.
From the police themselves.

HEDDA.

[Gazing straight before her.] So that is what happened. Then he had no vine-leaves in his hair.

BRACK.

Vine-leaves, Mrs. Hedda?

HEDDA.

[Changing her tone.] But tell me now, Judge--what is your real reason for tracking out Eilert Lovborg's movements so carefully?

BRACK.

In the first place, it could not be entirely indifferent to me if it should appear in the police-court that he came straight from my house.

HEDDA.

Will the matter come into court then?

BRACK.

Of course. However, I should scarcely have troubled so much about that. But I thought that, as a friend of the family, it was my duty to supply you and Tesman with a full account of his nocturnal exploits.

HEDDA.

Why so, Judge Brack?
BRACK.

Why, because I have a shrewd suspicion that he intends to use you as a sort of blind.

HEDDA.

Oh, how can you think such a thing!

BRACK.

Good heavens, Mrs. Hedda--we have eyes in our head. Mark my words! This Mrs. Elvsted will be in no hurry to leave town again.

HEDDA.

Well, even if there should be anything between them, I suppose there are plenty of other places where they could meet.

BRACK.

Not a single home. Henceforth, as before, every respectable house will be closed against Eilert Lovborg.

HEDDA.

And so ought mine to be, you mean?

BRACK.

Yes. (2) I confess it would be more than painful to me if this personage were to be made free of your house. How superflous, how intrusive, he would be, if he were to force his way into---

HEDDA.

---into the triangle?
BRACK.

Precisely. (8) It would simply mean that I should find myself homeless.

HEDDA.

[Looks at him with a smile.] So you want to be the one cock in the basket (12)--that is your aim.

BRACK.

[Nods slowly and lowers his voice.] Yes, that is my aim. And for that I will fight--with every weapon I can command.

HEDDA.

[Her smile vanishing.] I see you are a dangerous person--when it comes to the point.

BRACK.

Do you think so?

HEDDA.

I am beginning to think so. (10) And I am exceedingly glad to think--that you have no sort of hold over me.

BRACK.

[Laughing equivocally.] Well well, Mrs. Hedda--perhaps you are right there. If I had, who knows what I might be capable of?

HEDDA.

Come come now, Judge Brack! That sounds almost like a threat.
BRACK.

[Rising.] Oh, not at all! The triangle, you know, ought, if possible, to be spontaneously constructed.

HEDDA.

There I agree with you.

BRACK.

Well, now I have said all I had to say; and I had better be getting back to town. Good-bye, Mrs. Hedda. [He goes towards the glass door.

HEDDA.

[Rising.] Are you going through the garden?

BRACK.

Yes, it's a short cut for me.

HEDDA.

And then it is a back way, too.

BRACK.

Quite so. I have no objection to back ways. They may be piquant enough at times.

HEDDA.

When there is ball practice going on, you mean?
BRACK.

[In the doorway, laughing to her.] (2) Oh, people don't shoot their tame poultry, I fancy.

HEDDA.

[Also laughing.] Oh no, when there is only one cock in the basket---

[They exchange laughing nods of farewell. He goes. She closes the door behind him.]
[HEDDA, who has become quite serious, stands for a moment looking out. Presently she goes and peeps through the curtain over the middle doorway. Then she goes to the writing-table, takes LOVBORG'S packet out of the bookcase, and is on the point of looking through its contents. BERTA is heard speaking loudly in the hall. HEDDA turns and listens. Then she hastily locks up the packet in the drawer, and lays the key on the inkstand.

EILERT LOVBORG, with his greatcoat on and his hat in his hand, tears open the hall door. He looks somewhat confused and irritated.

LOVBORG.

[Looking towards the hall.] and I tell you I must and will come in! There! [He closes the door, turns, sees HEDDA, at once regains his self-control, and bows.

HEDDA.

[At the writing-table.] Well, Mr Lovborg, this is rather a late hour to call for Thea.

LOVBORG.

You mean rather an early hour to call on you. (2) Pray pardon me.
HEDDA.

How do you know that she is still here?

LOVBORG.

(10) They told me at her lodgings that she had been out all night.

HEDDA.

[Going to the oval table.] (5) Did you notice anything about the people of the house when they said that?

LOVBORG.

[Looks inquiringly at her.] Notice anything about them?

HEDDA.

(5) I mean, did they seem to think it odd?

LOVBORG.

[Suddenly understanding.] Oh yes, of course! (2) I am dragging her down with me! However, I didn't notice anything.--I suppose Tesman is not up yet.

HEDDA.

No--I think not---

LOVBORG.

When did he come home?
HEDDA.

Very late.

LOVBORG.

Did he tell you anything?

HEDDA.

Yes, I gathered that you had had an exceedingly jolly evening at Judge Brack's.

LOVBORG.

Nothing more?

HEDDA.

I don't think so. However, I was so dreadfully sleepy---

MRS. ELVSTED enters through the curtains of the middle doorway.

MRS. ELVSTED.

[Going towards him.] Ah, Lovborg! At last---!

LOVBORG.

Yes, at last. And too late!

MRS. ELVSTED.

[Looks anxiously at him.] What is too late?

LOVBORG.

Everything is too late now. It is all over with me.
MRS. ELVSTED.

Oh no, no--don't say that!

LOVBORG.

You will say the same when you hear---

MRS. ELVSTED.

I won't hear anything!

HEDDA.

Perhaps you would prefer to talk to her alone? If so, I will leave you.

LOVBORG.

No, stay--you too. I beg you to stay.

MRS. ELVSTED.

Yes, but I won't hear anything, I tell you.

LOVBORG.

It is not last night's adventures that I want to talk about.

MRS. ELVSTED.

What is it then---?

LOVBORG.

(2) I want to say that now our ways must part.
MRS. ELVSTED.

Part!

HEDDA.

[Involuntarily.] I knew it!

LOVBORG.

You can be of no more service to me, Thea.

MRS. ELVSTED.

How can you stand there and say that! (2) No more service to you! (3) Am I not to help you now, as before? (2) Are we not to go on working together?

LOVBORG.

(3) Henceforward I shall do no work.

MRS. ELVSTED.

[Despairingly.] (4) Then what am I to do with my life?

LOVBORG.

(2) You must try to live your life as if you had never know me.

MRS. ELVSTED.

(10) But you know I cannot do that!

LOVBORG.

Try if you cannot, Thea. (2) You must go home again---
MRS. ELVSTED.

[In vehement protest.] \(^{(10)}\)Never in this world! \(^{(10)}\)Where you are, there will I be also! \(^{(6)}\)I will not let myself be driven away like this! \(^{(10)}\)I will remain here! \(^{(10)}\)I will be with you when the book appears.

HEDDA.

[Half aloud, in suspense.] Ah yes--the book!

LOVBORG.

[Looks at her.] My book and Thea's; for that is what it is.

MRS. ELVSTED.

Yes, I feel that it is. And that is why I have a right to be with you when it appears! \(^{(4)}\)I will see with my own eyes how respect and honour pour in upon you afresh. And the happiness--\(^{(4)}\)the happiness--oh, I must share it with you!

LOVBORG.

Thea--our book will never appear.

HEDDA.

Ah!

MRS. ELVSTED.

Never appear!

LOVBORG.

Can never appear.
MRS. ELVSTED.

[In agonised foreboding.] Lovborg--what have you done with the manuscript?

HEDDA.

[Looks anxiously at him.] Yes, the manuscript--?

MRS. ELVSTED.

Where is it?

LOVBORG.

The manuscript--. Well then--I have torn the manuscript into a thousand pieces.

MRS. ELVSTED.

[Shrieks.] Oh no, no--!

HEDDA.

[Involuntarily.] But that's not--

LOVBORG.

[Looks at her.] Not true, you think?

HEDDA.

[Collecting herself.] Oh well, of course--since you say so. But it sounded so improbable--
LOVBORG.

It is true, all the same.

MRS. ELVSTED.

[Wringing her hands.] Oh God--oh God, Hedda--torn his own work to pieces!

LOVBORG.

I have torn my own life to pieces. So why should I not tear my life-work too---?

MRS. ELVSTED.

And you did this last night?

LOVBORG.

Yes, I tell you! Tore it into a thousand pieces--and scattered them on the fiord--far out. There there is cool sea-water at any rate--let them drift upon it--drift with the current and the wind. And then presently they will sink---deeper and deeper--as I shall, Thea.

MRS. ELVSTED.

Do you know, Lovborg, that what you have done with the book--I shall think of it to my dying day as though you had killed a little child.

LOVBORG.

Yes, you are right. It is a sort of child-murder.

MRS. ELVSTED.

How could you, then---! Did not the child belong to me too?
HEDDA.

[Almost inaudibly.] Ah, the child---

MRS. ELVSTED.

[Breathing heavily.] It is all over then. Well well, now I will go, Hedda.

HEDDA.

But you are not going away from town?

MRS. ELVSTED.

Oh, I don't know what I shall do. I see nothing but darkness before me. [She goes out by the hall door.

HEDDA.

[Stands waiting for a moment.] So you are not going to see her home, Mr. Lovborg?

LOVBORG.

I? Through the streets? Would you have people see her walking with me?

HEDDA.

Of course I don't know what else may have happened last night. But is it so utterly irretrievable?

LOVBORG.

It will not end with last night--I know that perfectly well. And the thing is that now I have no taste for that sort of life either. I won't begin it anew. She has broken my courage and my power of braving life out.
HEDDA.

[Looking straight before her.] (9) So that pretty little fool has had her fingers in a man's destiny. [Looks at him.] But all the same, how could you treat her so heartlessly.

LOVBORG.

Oh, don't say that I was heartless!

HEDDA.

To go and destroy what has filled her whole soul for months and years! You do not call that heartless!

LOVBORG.

To you I can tell the truth, Hedda.

HEDDA.

The truth?

LOVBORG.

First promise me--give me your word--that what I now confide in you Thea shall never know.

HEDDA.

I give you my word.

LOVBORG.

Good. Then let me tell you that what I said just now was untrue.
HEDDA.

About the manuscript?

LOVBORG.

Yes. I have not torn it to pieces--nor thrown it into the fiord.

HEDDA.

No, no---. But--where is it then?

LOVBORG.

I have destroyed it none the less--utterly destroyed it, Hedda!

HEDDA.

I don't understand.

LOVBORG.

Thea said that what I had done seemed to her like a child-murder.

HEDDA.

Yes, so she said.

LOVBORG.

But to kill his child--that is not the worst thing a father can do to it.

HEDDA.

Not the worst?
LOVBORG.

Suppose now, Hedda, that a man—in the small hours of the morning—came home to his child's mother after a night of riot and debauchery, and said: "Listen—I have been here and there—in this place and in that. And I have taken our child with—to this place and to that. And I have lost the child—utterly lost it. The devil knows into what hands it may have fallen—who may have had their clutches on it."

HEDDA.

Well—but when all is said and done, you know—this was only a book---

LOVBORG.

Thea's pure soul was in that book.

HEDDA.

Yes, so I understand.

LOVBORG.

(2)And you can understand, too, that for her and me together no future is possible.

HEDDA.

What path do you mean to take then?

LOVBORG.

None. I will only try to make an end of it all—the sooner the better.

HEDDA.

[A step nearer him.] Eilert Lovborg—listen to me.--Will you not try to--to do it beautifully?
LOVBORG.

Beautifully? [Smiling.] With vine-leaves in my hair, as you used to dream in the old days---?

HEDDA.

No, no. I have lost my faith in the vine-leaves. But beautifully nevertheless! For once in a way!--Good-bye! You must go now--and do not come here any more.

LOVBORG.

Good-bye, Mrs. Tesman. And give George Tesman my love. [He is on the point of going.

HEDDA.

No, wait! I must give you a memento to take with you. [She goes to the writing-table and opens the drawer and the pistol-case; then returns to LOVBORG with one of the pistols.

LOVBORG.

[Looks at her.] This? Is this the memento?

HEDDA.

[Nodding slowly.] Do you recognise it? It was aimed at you once.

LOVBORG.

You should have used it then.

HEDDA.

Take it--and do you use it now.
LOVBORG.

[PUTS THE PISTOL IN HIS BREAST POCKET.] THANKS!

HEDDA.

AND BEAUTIFULLY, EILERT LOVBORG. PROMISE ME THAT!

LOVBORG.


HEDDA.


ACT IV

THE SAME ROOMS AT THE TESMANS'. IT IS EVENING. THE DRAWING-ROOM IS IN DARKNESS. THE BACK ROOM IS LIGHT BY THE HANGING LAMP OVER THE TABLE. THE CURTAINS OVER THE GLASS DOOR ARE DRAWN CLOSE.

HEDDA, DRESSED IN BLACK, WALKS TO AND FRO IN THE DARK ROOM. THEN SHE GOES INTO THE BACK ROOM AND DISAPPEARS FOR A MOMENT TO THE LEFT. SHE IS HEARD TO STRIKE A FEW CHORDS ON THE PIANO. PRESENTLY SHE COMES IN SIGHT AGAIN, AND RETURNS TO THE DRAWING-ROOM.
BERTA enters from the right, through the inner room, with a lighted lamp, which she places on the table in front of the corner settee in the drawing-room. Her eyes are red with weeping, and she has black ribbons in her cap. She goes quietly and circumspectly out to the right. HEDDA goes up to the glass door, lifts the curtain a little aside, and looks out into the darkness.

Shortly afterwards, MISS TESMAN, in mourning, with a bonnet and veil on, comes in from the hall. HEDDA goes towards her and holds out her hand.

MISS TESMAN.

Yes, Hedda, here I am, in mourning and forlorn; for now my poor sister has at last found peace.

HEDDA.

I have heard the news already, as you see. Tesman sent me a card.

MISS TESMAN.

Yes, he promised me he would. But nevertheless I thought that to Hedda--here in the house of life--I ought myself to bring the tidings of death.

HEDDA.

That was very kind of you.

MISS TESMAN.

Ah, Rina ought not to have left us just now. This is not the time for Hedda's house to be a house of mourning.

HEDDA.

[Changing the subject.] She died quite peacefully, did she not, Miss Tesman?
MISS TESMAN.

Oh, her end was so calm, so beautiful. And then she had the unspeakable happiness of seeing George once more--and bidding him good-bye.--Has he not come home yet?

HEDDA.

No. He wrote that he might be detained. But won't you sit down?

MISS TESMAN.

No thank you, my dear, dear Hedda. I should like to, but I have so much to do. I must prepare my dear one for her rest as well as I can. She shall go to her grave looking her best.

HEDDA.

Can I not help you in any way?

MISS TESMAN.

Oh, you must not think of it! Hedda Tesman must have no hand in such mournful work. Nor let her thought dwell on it either--not at this time.

HEDDA.

One is not always mistress of one's thoughts---

MISS TESMAN.

[Continuing.] Ah yes, it is the way of the world. At home we shall be sewing a shroud; and here there will soon be sewing too, I suppose --but of another sort, thank God!

GEORGE TESMAN enters by the hall door.
HEDDA.

Ah, you have come at last!

TESMAN.

You here, Aunt Julia? With Hedda? Fancy that!

MISS TESMAN.

I was just going, my dear boy. Well, have you done all you promised?

TESMAN.

No; I'm really afraid I have forgotten half of it. I must come to you again to-morrow. To-day my brain is all in a whirl. I can't keep my thoughts together.

MISS TESMAN.

Why, my dear George, you mustn't take it in this way.

TESMAN.

Mustn't---? How do you mean?

MISS TESMAN.

Even in your sorrow you must rejoice, as I do--rejoice that she is at rest.

TESMAN.

Oh yes, yes--you are thinking of Aunt Rina.
HEDDA.

You will feel lonely now, Miss Tesman.

MISS TESMAN.

Just at first, yes. But that will not last very long, I hope. (5) I daresay I shall soon find an occupant for Rina's little room.

TESMAN.

Indeed? Who do you think will take it? Eh?

MISS TESMAN.

(5) Oh, there's always some poor invalid or other in want of nursing, unfortunately.

HEDDA.

(6) Would you really take such a burden upon you again?

MISS TESMAN.

A burden! (5) Heaven forgive you, child--it has been no burden to me.

HEDDA.

But suppose you had a total stranger on your hands---

MISS TESMAN.

Oh, one soon makes friends with sick folk; (6) and it's such an absolute necessity for me to have some one to live for. Well, heaven be praised, there may soon be something in this house, too, to keep an old aunt busy.
HEDDA.

Oh, don't trouble about anything here.

TESMAN.

Yes, just fancy what a nice time we three might have together, if---?

HEDDA.

If---?

TESMAN.

[Uneasily.] Oh nothing. It will all come right. Let us hope so--eh?

MISS TESMAN.

({6}Well well, I daresay you two want to talk to each other. [Smiling.]
{6}And perhaps Hedda may have something to tell you too, George. Goodbye! I must go home to Rina. [Turning at the door.] How strange it is to think that now Rina is with me and with my poor brother as well!

TESMAN.

Yes, fancy that, Aunt Julia! Eh?
[MISS TESMAN goes out by the hall door.

HEDDA.

[Follows TESMAN coldly and searchingly with her eyes.] I almost believe your Aunt Rina's death affects you more than it does your Aunt Julia.

TESMAN.

Oh, it's not that alone. It's Eilert I am so terribly uneasy about.
HEDDA.

[Quickly.] Is there anything new about him?

TESMAN.

I looked in at his rooms this afternoon, intending to tell him the manuscript was in safe keeping.

HEDDA.

Well, did you find him?

TESMAN.

No. He wasn't at home. But afterwards I met Mrs. Elvsted, and she told me that he had been here early this morning.

HEDDA.

Yes, directly after you had gone.

TESMAN.

And he said that he had torn his manuscript to pieces--eh?

HEDDA.

Yes, so he declared.

TESMAN.

Why, good heavens, he must have been completely out of his mind! And I suppose you thought it best not to give it back to him, Hedda?
HEDDA.

No, he did not get it.

TESMAN.

But of course you told him that we had it?

HEDDA.

No. [Quickly.] Did you tell Mrs. Elvsted?

TESMAN.

No; I thought I had better not. But you ought to have told him. Fancy, if, in desperation, he should go and do himself some injury! (2)Let me have the manuscript, Hedda! (2)I will take it to him at once. Where is it?

HEDDA.

[Cold and immovable, leaning on the arm-chair.] (10)I have not got it.

TESMAN.

Have not got it? What in the world do you mean?

HEDDA.

I have burnt it--every line of it.

TESMAN.

[With a violent movement of terror.] Burnt! Burnt Eilert's manuscript!
HEDDA.

Don't scream so. The servant might hear you.

TESMAN.

Burnt! Why, good God---! No, no, no! It's impossible!

HEDDA.

It is so, nevertheless.

TESMAN.

(9)Do you know what you have done, Hedda? (9)It's unlawful appropriation of lost property. Fancy that! Just ask Judge Brack, and he'll tell you what it is.

HEDDA.

I advise you not to speak of it--either to Judge Brack or to anyone else.

TESMAN.

But how could you do anything so unheard-of? What put it into your head? What possessed you? (2)Answer me that--eh?

HEDDA.

[Suppressing an almost imperceptible smile.] I did it for your sake, George.

TESMAN.

For my sake!
HEDDA.

This morning, when you told me about what he had read to you---

TESMAN.

Yes yes--what then?

HEDDA.

You acknowledged that you envied him his work.

TESMAN.

Oh, of course I didn't mean that literally.

HEDDA.

No matter--I could not bear the idea that any one should throw you into the shade.

TESMAN.

[In an outburst of mingled doubt and joy.] Hedda! Oh, is this true? But--but--I never knew you show your love like that before. Fancy that!

HEDDA.

(6)Well, I may as well tell you that--just at this time--- [Impatiently breaking off.] No, no; you can ask Aunt Julia. She well tell you, fast enough.

TESMAN.

Oh, I almost think I understand you, Hedda! [Clasps his hands together.] Great heavens! (6)do you really mean it! Eh?
HEDDA.

Don't shout so. The servant might hear.

TESMAN.

[Laughing in irrepressible glee.] The servant! Why, how absurd you are, Hedda. It's only my old Berta! Why, I'll tell Berta myself.

HEDDA.

[Clenching her hands together in desperation.] Oh, it is killing me, --it is killing me, all this!

TESMAN.

What is, Hedda? Eh?

HEDDA.

[Coldly, controlling herself.] All this--absurdity--George.

TESMAN.

Absurdity! Do you see anything absurd in my being overjoyed at the news! But after all--perhaps I had better not say anything to Berta.

HEDDA.

Oh---why not that too?

TESMAN.

No, no, not yet! But I must certainly tell Aunt Julia. And then that you have begun to call me George too! Fancy that! Oh, Aunt Julia will be so happy--so happy!
HEDDA.

When she hears that I have burnt Eilert Lovborg's manuscript--for your sake?

TESMAN.

No, by-the-bye--that affair of the manuscript--(2) of course nobody must know about that. But that you love me so much, (13) Hedda--Aunt Julia must really share my joy in that! (5) I wonder, now, whether this sort of thing is usual in young wives? Eh?

HEDDA.

I think you had better ask Aunt Julia that question too.

TESMAN.

I will indeed, some time or other. [Looks uneasy and downcast again.] And yet the manuscript--the manuscript! Good God! it is terrible to think what will become of poor Eilert now.

MRS. ELVSTED, dressed as in the first Act, with hat and cloak, enters by the hall door.

MRS. ELVSTED.

[Greets them hurriedly, and says in evident agitation.] Oh, dear Hedda, forgive my coming again.

HEDDA.

What is the matter with you, Thea?

TESMAN.

Something about Eilert Lovborg again--eh?
MRS. ELVSTED.

Yes! I am dreadfully afraid some misfortune has happened to him.

HEDDA.

[Seized her arm.] Ah,--do you think so?

TESMAN.

Why, good Lord--what makes you think that, Mrs. Elvsted?

MRS. ELVSTED.

I heard them talking of him at my boarding-house--just as I came in. Oh, the most incredible rumours are afloat about him to-day.

TESMAN.

Yes, fancy, so I heard too! And I can bear witness that he went straight home to bed last night. Fancy that!

HEDDA.

Well, what did they say at the boarding-house?

MRS. ELVSTED.

Oh, I couldn't make out anything clearly. (5) Either they knew nothing definite, or else---. (5) They stopped talking when they saw me; and I did not dare to ask.

TESMAN.

[Moving about uneasily.] We must hope--we must hope that you misunderstood them, Mrs. Elvsted.
MRS. ELVSTED.

(10) No, no; I am sure it was of him they were talking. And I heard something about the hospital or---

TESMAN.

The hospital?

HEDDA.

No--surely that cannot be!

MRS. ELVSTED.

Oh, I was in such mortal terror! (10) I went to his lodgings and asked for him there.

HEDDA.

(5) You could make up your mind to that, Thea!

MRS. ELVSTED.

(10) What else could I do? (10) I really could bear the suspense no longer.

TESMAN.

But you didn't find him either--eh?

MRS. ELVSTED.

No. And the people knew nothing about him. He hadn't been home since yesterday afternoon, they said.
TESMAN.

Yesterday! Fancy, how could they say that?

MRS. ELVSTED.

Oh, I am sure something terrible must have happened to him.

TESMAN.

(2) Hedda dear--how would it be if I were to go and make inquiries---?

HEDDA.

(5) No, no--don't you mix yourself up in this affair.

JUDGE BRACK, with his hat in his hand, enters by the hall door, which BERTA opens, and closes behind him. He looks grave and bows in silence.

TESMAN.

Oh, is that you, my dear Judge? Eh?

BRACK.

Yes. It was imperative I should see you this evening.

TESMAN.

I can see you have heard the news about Aunt Rina?

BRACK.

Yes, that among other things.
TESMAN.
Isn't it sad--eh?

BRACK.
Well, my dear Tesman, that depends on how you look at it.

TESMAN.
[Looks doubtfully at him.] Has anything else happened?

BRACK.
Yes.

HEDDA.
[In suspense.] Anything sad, Judge Brack?

BRACK.
That, too, depends on how you look at it, Mrs. Tesman.

MRS. ELVSTED.
[Unable to restrain her anxiety.] Oh! it is something about Eilert Lovborg!

BRACK.
[With a glance at her.] What makes you think that, Madam? Perhaps you have already heard something---?

MRS. ELVSTED.
[In confusion.] No, nothing at all, but---
TESMAN.

Oh, for heaven's sake, tell us!

BRACK.

[Shrugging his shoulders.] Well, I regret to say Eilert Lovborg has been taken to the hospital. He is lying at the point of death.

MRS. ELVSTED.

[Shrieks.] Oh God! oh God---!

TESMAN.

To the hospital! And at the point of death!

HEDDA.

[Involuntarily.] So soon then---

MRS. ELVSTED.

[Wailing.] And we parted in anger, Hedda!

HEDDA.

[Whispers.] (5)Thea--Thea--be careful!

MRS. ELVSTED.

[Not heeding her.] (10)I must go to him! (10)I must see him alive!

BRACK.

It is useless, Madam. No one will be admitted.
MRS. ELVSTED.

Oh, at least tell me what has happened to him? What is it?

TESMAN.

You don't mean to say that he has himself--- Eh?

HEDDA.

Yes, I am sure he has.

BRACK.

[Keeping his eyes fixed upon her.] Unfortunately you have guessed quite correctly, Mrs. Tesman.

MRS. ELVSTED.

Oh, how horrible!

TESMAN.

Himself, then! Fancy that!

HEDDA.

Shot himself!

BRACK.

Rightly guessed again, Mrs. Tesman.

MRS. ELVSTED.

[With an effort at self-control.] When did it happen, Mr. Brack?
BRACK.
This afternoon--between three and four.

TESMAN.
But, good Lord, where did he do it? Eh?

BRACK.
[With some hesitation.] Where? Well--I suppose at his lodgings.

MRS. ELVSTED.
(10)No, that cannot be; (10) for I was there between six and seven.

BRACK.
Well then, somewhere else. I don't know exactly. I only know that he was found---. He had shot himself--in the breast.

MRS. ELVSTED.
Oh, how terrible! That he should die like that!

HEDDA.
[To BRACK.] Was it in the breast?

BRACK.
Yes--as I told you.

HEDDA.
Not in the temple?
BRACK.

In the breast, Mrs. Tesman.

HEDDA.

Well, well--the breast is a good place, too.

BRACK.

How do you mean, Mrs. Tesman?

HEDDA.

[Evasively.] Oh, nothing--nothing.

TESMAN.

And the wound is dangerous, you say--eh?

BRACK.

Absolutely mortal. The end has probably come by this time.

MRS. ELVSTED.

Yes, yes, I feel it. The end! The end! Oh, Hedda---!

TESMAN.

But tell me, how have you learnt all this?

BRACK.

[Curtly.] Through one of the police. A man I had some business with.
HEDDA.

[In a clear voice.] At last a deed worth doing!

TESMAN.

[Terrified.] (9)Good heavens, Hedda! what are you saying?

HEDDA.

(10)I say there is beauty in this.

BRACK.

H'm, Mrs. Tesman---

MRS. ELVSTED.

Oh, Hedda, how can you talk of beauty in such an act!

HEDDA.

Eilert Lovborg has himself made up his account with life. He has had the courage to do--the one right thing.

MRS. ELVSTED.

(10)No, you must never think that was how it happened! (10)It must have been in delirium that he did it.

TESMAN.

In despair!

HEDDA.

(10)That he did not. (10)I am certain of that.
MRS. ELVSTED.

Yes, yes! In delirium! Just as when he tore up our manuscript.

BRACK.

[Starting.] The manuscript? Has he torn that up?

MRS. ELVSTED.

Yes, last night.

TESMAN.

[Whispers softly.] Oh, Hedda, we shall never get over this.

BRACK.

H'm, very extraordinary.

TESMAN.

[Moving about the room.] To think of Eilert going out of the world in this way! And not leaving behind him the book that would have immortalised his name---

MRS. ELVSTED.

Oh, if only it could be put together again!

TESMAN.

Yes, if it only could! I don't know what I would not give---

MRS. ELVSTED.

Perhaps it can, Mr. Tesman.
TESMAN.

What do you mean?

MRS. ELVSTED.

[Searches in the pocket of her dress.] Look here. I have kept all the loose notes he used to dictate from.

HEDDA.

[A step forward.] Ah---!

TESMAN.

You have kept them, Mrs. Elvsted! Eh?

MRS. ELVSTED.

Yes, I have them here. I put them in my pocket when I left home. Here they still are---

TESMAN.

(2)Oh, do let me see them!

MRS. ELVSTED.

[Hands him a bundle of papers.] But they are in such disorder--all mixed up.

TESMAN.

Fancy, if we could make something out of them, after all! Perhaps if we two put our heads together---
MRS. ELVSTED.

Oh yes, at least let us try---

TESMAN.

We will manage it! We must! I will dedicate my life to this task.

HEDDA.

You, George? Your life?

TESMAN.

Yes, or rather all the time I can spare. My own collections must wait in the meantime. Hedda--you understand, eh? I owe this to Eilert's memory.

HEDDA.

Perhaps.

TESMAN.

And so, my dear Mrs. Elvsted, we will give our whole minds to it. There is no use in brooding over what can't be undone--eh? We must try to control our grief as much as possible, and---

MRS. ELVSTED.

Yes, yes, Mr. Tesman, I will do the best I can.

TESMAN.

Well then, come here. I can't rest until we have looked through the notes. Where shall we sit? Here? No, in there, in the back room. Excuse me, my dear Judge. Come with me, Mrs. Elvsted.
MRS. ELVSTED.

Oh, if only it were possible!
[TESMAN and MRS. ELVSTED go into the back room. She takes off her hat and cloak. They both sit at the table under the hanging lamp, and are soon deep in an eager examination of the papers. HEDDA crosses to the stove and sits in the armchair. Presently BRACK goes up to her.

HEDDA.

[In a low voice.] (10)Oh, what a sense of freedom it gives one, this act of Eilert Lovborg's.

BRACK.

Freedom, Mrs. Hedda? Well, of course, it is a release for him---

HEDDA.

I mean for me. (10)It gives me a sense of freedom to know that a deed of deliberate courage is still possible in this world,--(10) a deed of spontaneous beauty.

BRACK.

[Smiling.] H'm--(8) my dear Mrs. Hedda---

HEDDA.

Oh, I know what you are going to say. For you are a kind of specialist too, like--you know!

BRACK.

[Looking hard at her.] Eilert Lovborg was more to you than perhaps you are willing to admit to yourself. Am I wrong?
HEDDA.

(10) I don't answer such questions. I only know that Eilert Lovborg has had the courage to live his life after his own fashion. And then--the last great act, with its beauty! Ah! that he should have the will and the strength to turn away from the banquet of life--so early.

BRACK.

I am sorry, Mrs. Hedda,--but I fear I must dispel an amiable illusion.

HEDDA.

Illusion?

BRACK.

Which could not have lasted long in any case.

HEDDA.

What do you mean?

BRACK.

Eilert Lovborg did not shoot himself--voluntarily.

HEDDA.

Not voluntarily?

BRACK.

No. The thing did not happen exactly as I told it.
HEDDA.

[In suspense.] Have you concealed something? What is it?

BRACK.

For poor Mrs. Elvsted's sake I idealised the facts a little.

HEDDA.

What are the facts?

BRACK.

First, that he is already dead.

HEDDA.

At the hospital?

BRACK.

Yes--without regaining consciousness.

HEDDA.

What more have you concealed?

BRACK.

This--the event did not happen at his lodgings.

HEDDA.

Oh, that can make no difference.
BRACK.

Perhaps it may. For I must tell you--Eilert Lovborg was found shot in--in Mademoiselle Diana's boudoir.

HEDDA.

[Makea motion as if to rise, but sinks back again.] That is impossible, Judge Brack! He cannot have been there again to-day.

BRACK.

He was there this afternoon. He went there, he said, to demand the return of something which they had taken from him. Talked wildly about a lost child---

HEDDA.

Ah--so that is why---

BRACK.

I thought probably he meant his manuscript; but now I hear he destroyed that himself. So I suppose it must have been his pocket-book.

HEDDA.

Yes, no doubt. And there--there he was found?

BRACK.

Yes, there. With a pistol in his breast-pocket, discharged. The ball had lodged in a vital part.

HEDDA.

In the breast--yes?
BRACK.

No--in the bowels.

HEDDA.

[Looks up at him with an expression of loathing.] That too! Oh, what curse is it that makes everything I touch turn ludicrous and mean?

BRACK.

There is one point more, Mrs. Hedda--another disagreeable feature in the affair.

HEDDA.

And what is that?

BRACK.

The pistol he carried---

HEDDA.

[Breathless.] Well? What of it?

BRACK.

He must have stolen it.

HEDDA.

[Leaps up.] Stolen it! That is not true! He did not steal it!

BRACK.

No other explanation is possible. He must have stolen it---. Hush!
TESMAN and MRS. ELVSTED have risen from the table in the back-
room, and come into the drawing-room.

TESMAN.

[With the papers in both his hands.] Hedda, dear, it is almost
impossible to see under that lamp. Think of that!

HEDDA.

Yes, I am thinking.

TESMAN.

Would you mind our sitting at you writing-table--eh?

HEDDA.

If you like. [Quickly.] No, wait! Let me clear it first!

TESMAN.

(2) Oh, you needn't trouble, Hedda. There is plenty of room.

HEDDA.

No no, let me clear it, I say! I will take these things in and put
them on the piano. There!

[She has drawn out an object, covered with sheet music, from
under the bookcase, places several other pieces of music upon
it, and carries the whole into the inner room, to the left.
TESMAN lays the scraps of paper on the writing-table, and moves
the lamp there from the corner table. He and Mrs. Elvsted sit
down and proceed with their work. HEDDA returns.]
HEDDA.

[Behind Mrs. Elvsted's chair, gently ruffling her hair.] (10)Well, my sweet Thea,—how goes it with Eilert Lovborg's monument?

MRS. ELVSTED.

[Looks dispiritedly up at her.] Oh, it will be terribly hard to put in order.

TESMAN.

(2)We must manage it. (2)I am determined. And arranging other people's papers is just the work for me.
[HEDDA goes over to the stove, and seats herself on one of the footstools. BRACK stands over her, leaning on the arm-chair.

HEDDA.

[Whispers.] What did you say about the pistol?

BRACK.

[Softly.] That he must have stolen it.

HEDDA.

Why stolen it?

BRACK.

Because every other explanation ought to be impossible, Mrs. Hedda.

HEDDA.

Indeed?
[Glances at her.] Of course Eilert Lovborg was here this morning. Was he not?

HEDDA.

Yes.

BRACK.

Were you alone with him?

HEDDA.

Part of the time.

BRACK.

Did you not leave the room whilst he was here?

HEDDA.

No.

BRACK.

Try to recollect. Were you not out of the room a moment?

HEDDA.

Yes, perhaps just a moment--out in the hall.

BRACK.

And where was you pistol-case during that time?
HEDDA.

I had it locked up in---

BRACK.

Well, Mrs. Hedda?

HEDDA.

The case stood there on the writing-table.

BRACK.

Have you looked since, to see whether both the pistols are there?

HEDDA.

No.

BRACK.

Well, you need not. I saw the pistol found in Lovborg's pocket, and I knew it at once as the one I had seen yesterday--and before, too.

HEDDA.

Have you it with you?

BRACK.

No; the police have it.

HEDDA.

What will the police do with it?
BRACK.

Search till they find the owner.

HEDDA.

Do you think they will succeed?

BRACK.

[Bends over her and whispers.] No, Hedda Gabler--not so long as I say nothing.

HEDDA.

[Looks frightened at him.] And if you do not say nothing,--what then?

BRACK.

[Shrugs his shoulders.] There is always the possibility that the pistol was stolen.

HEDDA.

[Firmly.] Death rather than that.

BRACK.

[Smiling.] *(5)People say such things--*(5)but they don't do them.

HEDDA.

[Without replying.] And supposing the pistol was not stolen, and the owner is discovered? What then?
BRACK.

(5)Well, Hedda--then comes the scandal!

HEDDA.

The scandal!

BRACK.

(5)Yes, the scandal--of which you are so mortally afraid. You will, of course, be brought before the court--both you and Mademoiselle Diana. She will have to explain how the thing happened--whether it was an accidental shot or murder. Did the pistol go off as he was trying to take it out of his pocket, to threaten her with? Or did she tear the pistol out of his hand, shoot him, and push it back into his pocket? That would be quite like her; for she is an able-bodied young person, this same Mademoiselle Diana.

HEDDA.

(5)But _I_ have nothing to do with all this repulsive business.

BRACK.

No. (5)But you will have to answer the question: Why did you give Eilert the pistol? And what conclusions will people draw from the fact that you did give it to him?

HEDDA.

[Lets her head sink.] That is true. I did not think of that.

BRACK.

Well, fortunately, there is no danger, so long as I say nothing.
HEDDA.

[Looks up at him.] (2) So I am in your power, Judge Brack. (2) You have me at your beck and call, from this time forward.

BRACK.

[Whispers softly.] (2) Dearest Hedda--believe me--I shall not abuse my advantage.

HEDDA.

(2) I am in your power none the less. (2) Subject to your will and your demands. (2) A slave, (10) a slave then! [Rises impetuously.] (10) No, I cannot endure the thought of that! (10) Never!

BRACK.

[Looks half-mockingly at her.] (2) People generally get used to the inevitable.

HEDDA.

[Returns his look.] Yes, perhaps. [She crosses to the writing-table. Suppressing an involuntary smile, she imitates TESMAN'S intonations.] Well? Are you getting on, George? Eh?

TESMAN.

Heaven knows, dear. In any case it will be the work of months.

HEDDA.

[As before.] Fancy that! [Passes her hands softly through Mrs. Elvsted's hair.] Doesn't it seem strange to you, Thea? Here are you sitting with Tesman--just as you used to sit with Eilert Lovborg?

MRS. ELVSTED.

(4) Ah, if I could only inspire your husband in the same way!
HEDDA.

(10) Oh, that will come too—in time.

TESMAN.

Yes, do you know, Hedda—I really think I begin to feel something of the sort. (2) But won't you go and sit with Brack again?

HEDDA.

(5) Is there nothing I can do to help you two?

TESMAN.

No, nothing in the world. [Turning his head.] (2) I trust to you to keep Hedda company, my dear Brack.

BRACK.

[With a glance at HEDDA.] With the very greatest of pleasure.

HEDDA.

Thanks. But I am tired this evening. I will go in and lie down a little on the sofa.

TESMAN.

Yes, do dear—eh?
[HEDDA goes into the back room and draws the curtains. A short pause. Suddenly she is heard playing a wild dance on the piano.

MRS. ELVSTED.

[Starts from her chair.] Oh—what is that?
TESMAN.

[Runs to the doorway.] (2)Why, my dearest Hedda--don't play dance-music to-night! Just think of Aunt Rina! And of Eilert too!

HEDDA.

[Puts her head out between the curtains.] And of Aunt Julia. And of all the rest of them.--(10)After this, I will be quiet. [Closes the curtains again.]

TESMAN.

[At the writing-table.] It's not good for her to see us at this distressing work. (2)I'll tell you what, Mrs. Elvsted.--you shall take the empty room at Aunt Julia's, (2)and then I will come over in the evenings, (2)and we can sit and work there--eh?

HEDDA.

[In the inner room.] I hear what you are saying, Tesman. (10)But how am _I_ to get through the evenings out here?

TESMAN.

[Turning over the papers.] Oh, I daresay Judge Brack will be so kind as to look in now and then, even though I am out.

BRACK.

[In the arm-chair, calls out gaily.] Every blessed evening, with all the pleasure in life, Mrs. Tesman! We shall get on capitally together, we two!

HEDDA.

[Speaking loud and clear.] Yes, don't you flatter yourself we will, Judge Brack? Now that you are the one cock in the basket---
[A shot is heard within. TESMAN, MRS. ELVSTED, and BRACK leap to their feet.

TESMAN.

Oh, now she is playing with those pistols again. [He throws back the curtains and runs in, followed by MRS. ELVSTED. HEDDA lies stretched on the sofa, lifeless. Confusion and cries. BERTA enters in alarm from the right.

TESMAN.

[Shrieks to BRACK.] (10) Shot herself! (10) Shot herself in the temple! (9) Fancy that!

BRACK.

[Half-fainting in the arm-chair.] (5) Good God! -- (5) people don't do such things.