

Exemplar Drama – A Doll’s House

Ibsen, Henrik. *A Doll’s House*. New York: Signet Classics, 2006. (1879)

From Act I

Helmer (in his room). Is that my lark twittering there?

Nora (busy opening some of her parcels). Yes, it is.

Helmer. Is it the squirrel frisking around?

Nora. Yes!

Helmer. When did the squirrel get home?

Nora. Just this minute. (Hides the bag of macaroons in her pocket and wipes her mouth.) Come here, Torvald, and see what I’ve been buying.

Helmer. Don’t interrupt me. (A little later he opens the door and looks in, pen in hand.) Buying, did you say? What! All that? Has my little spendthrift been making the money fly again?

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

Helmer. Come, come; we can’t afford to squander money.

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

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

Nora. Never mind; we can borrow in the meantime.

Helmer. Nora! (He goes up to her and takes her playfully by the ear.) Still my little featherbrain! Supposing I borrowed a thousand crowns today, and you made ducks and drakes of them during Christmas week, and then on New Year’s Eve a tile blew off the roof and knocked my brains out

Nora (laying her hand on his mouth). Hush! How can you talk so horridly?

Helmer. But supposing it were to happen — what then?

Nora. If anything so dreadful happened, it would be all the same to me whether I was in debt or

not.

Helmer. But what about the creditors?

Nora. They! Who cares for them? They're only strangers.

Helmer. Nora, Nora! What a woman you are! But seriously, Nora, you know my principles on these points. No debts! No borrowing! Home life ceases to be free and beautiful as soon as it is founded on borrowing and debt. We two have held out bravely till now, and we are not going to give in at the last.

Nora (going to the fireplace). Very well — as you please, Torvald.