

A doll's house: summary

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It was Christmas Eve and Nora Helmer has just arrived home after completing her Christmas shopping list which includes a horse and a sword for her male children and a doll for her female child. She paid the porter twice of how much she owed him, went inside the house and ate some macaroons before her husband, Torvald Helmer, came out of his study room and investigated the things she bought.

Torvald addressed his wife with terms such as 'skylark' and 'squirrel' while sweetly scolding her for being a spendthrift. Nora immediately denied by saying that saves money whenever she could but she just can't help herself with the Christmas shopping because it's time that they celebrate the good fortune that is ahead of them.

Nora is talking about the job promotion that Torvald got from the bank he is working for, an event which according to his wife will allow them to more extravagant this season as compared to what they had last year.

However, Torvald argued by saying that the promotion will take effect after New Year so before that, they must be more watchful with their expenses, Nora suggested that they can spend on credit until Torvald is paid but her husband immediately reprimanded and explained that there is no freedom or beauty in a home life that is based on debt.

As a result, Nora finally gave up with her suggestion. Noticing his wife's disappointment, Torvald asked Nora of the gift she wants to receive. Nora hesitated at first but eventually shared that she would want her husband to give her money instead so she could buy the things she wanted.

Torvald again accused his wife of being wasteful, a trait which he believed is inherited by Nora from her father. He then asked Nora if she has eaten macaroons that day but she denied. The couple then proceeded to discuss the misfortunes they had last year and compared it with the blessings that they are enjoying today.

Suddenly, their maid, Helene, entered the room and announced the arrival of Dr. Rank, Torvald's doctor, and Mrs. Linde, Nora's friend whom she has not seen for many years.

The drastic changes in Mrs. Linde's appearance, as Nora described them to be, made it hard for Nora to recognize her childhood friend. She said that Mrs. Linde looked paler and thinner and she also apologized for her inability to write her when the news about her husband's death spread.

Nora inquired on the kind of life Mrs. Linde had after the death of her husband. Mrs. Linde replied by saying that it was a very dark chapter of her life since her husband left nothing to her, not even money or a child, while she was tasked to take care of an ailing mother and two younger brothers.

But today, after three years of working in various jobs, nursing her mother who has recently passed away, and supporting her brothers who are grown ups now, her life is sadder because there is no one to depend on her.

Nora sympathized to Mrs. Linde but wasn't able to help herself from discussing about her three lovely children, happy marriage life, and Torvald's new position at the bank. Mrs. Linde saw her opportunity and expressed her desire to have a position at the bank where Torvald works. Nora said that she will discuss the matter with her husband.

Nora proceed to mention that life has not always been so good at them because Torvald was hospitalized and needed to be transported to Italy to allow himself to recuperate, an event which required Nora to borrow money and work in order to pay for it. She emphasized that Torvald knew nothing about these stuff because she was sure that her husband's pride would be greatly hurt of the idea that he owed his life to his wife.

Nora told Torvald that the money came from her deceased father but the truth is that she took job as copy writer during the winter and locked herself inside a room to conceal her secret while making her husband believe that she was just making ornaments.

She even boasted that she will be free from her debt after new year and by then, she will be able to completely assume her role as wife and mother. Krogstad, a lawyer wishing to discuss bank business with Torvald suddenly appeared on the door while Nora and Mrs. Linde were talking.

Nora introduced him to her friend but Mrs. Linde said that she already knew him. Krogstad entered Torvald's study room when Dr. Rank came out from it. Nora introduced Dr. Rank to Mrs. Linde and the three of them left the house.

In the next scene, Nora was seen playing with her children. Krogstad came and talked to her explaining his belief that Mrs. Linde will replace his position at the bank. He said that Nora should influence her husband and must prevent him from firing Krogstad from his bank position.

When Nora was trying to deny his influence on her husband, Krogstad tried to blackmail Nora and said that if she will not help him then he will have to inform Torvald of the debt that Nora incurred from him. He even reminded

Nora of the forgery she made on her father's signature saying that it is a serious crime that is punishable by law.

Krogstad further assured Nora of the gravity of her crime and threatened her once more before leaving. Nora was left very disturbed.

On Christmas day, the Helmer house is portrayed to be messy of decorations and gifts. Nora, on the other hand, is not jubilated by the occasion because she is deeply thinking on how to prevent Krogstad's dismissal.

She seriously tried to persuade her husband to retain Krogstad's position but her husband declined saying that the presence of Krogstad in the bank is a disgrace for the company because Krogstad is not a reputable man. Torvald explained that Krogstad forged many signatures before and denied it, an event which damaged his reputation. Torvald then proceed to prepare Krogstad's letter of dismissal.

The next day, when Nora was trying to win the favor of Dr. Rank in order to help her influence Torvald regarding the dismissal of Krogstad, Dr. Rank suddenly confessed his love to Nora and shared to her that his day are numbered because of a serious illness.

Nora was shocked of the doctor's declaration of love but was saddened by the news of his impending death. Dr. Rank said that he intends to leave the town after his declaration of his feelings to Nora and said that a calling card with a black cross will be sent to the Helmer's house to signal his imminent death.

After receiving his dismissal letter, Krogstad dropped a letter in Torvald's mailbox. The letter contained a detailed explanation of his transaction with

Nora. Mrs. Linde became aware of the situation when she saw Nora crying. She promised to help Nora by persuading Krogstad, who happened to be her ex-lover.

Torvald then appeared and Nora asked him to help her prepare the tarantella that she will dance at the costume party. Such action was actually Nora's way of preventing her husband from reading Krogstad's letter.

Mrs. Linde met Krogstad at the doorway of the Helmer's house. She confessed to him that she still loved him and wants to take care of him and his children. She also explained that she left him before because she needed the money that she will get from her marriage.

Krogstad was skeptical at first because he thought Mrs. Linde was only doing this in order to prevent him from blackmailing Nora but Mrs. Linde said that she believed that Torvald deserves to know the truth. However, she agreed that Krogstad must retract from his first plans of blackmailing Nora.

Krogstad eventually agreed to Mrs. Linde's proposal. Inside the Helmer's house, Torvald saw Dr. Rank's card and Krogstad's letter. He went inside his study room and read both letters then stormed out of the living room and punished Nora. He said that he now owes his reputation to Krogstad and he accuses Nora of destroying his life.

He said that Nora is a hypocrite and a liar but prevents her from leaving saying that they must still maintain their marriage in order to save themselves from further disgrace. In response to this, Nora felt calm and frozen as she began to realize the truth of her marriage. The door bell rang and their maid came with a letter for Nora.

Torvald read it and suddenly expressed a change of emotion. He said that the letter came from Krogstad telling them that he will no longer blackmail Nora. As an assurance, Krogstad even attached the promissory note which Nora forged. This made Torvald very happy and explained to Nora that everything has returned to normal and that she must forget the things that he has told earlier.

However, Nora has made up her mind. She said that Torvald has only treated her as a doll and not as a real human being. She now realizes that she has been blinded by her love for Torvald that she has forgotten to her own identity.

Torvald explained that Nora ought to fulfill her duty to as a wife and mother but Nora replied that her duty to herself is more important. Nora removed her wedding ring, freed Torvald of all of his obligations on her, instructed him never to contact her, walked out of the room, and finally, slammed the door.

Questions:

1. Act Three. Torvald to Mrs. Linde: Being Nora's close friend, can you advise me of ways on how to win my wife back? Is there a way for me a “ glorious” thing to happen so that I can save our marriage? What changes should I do in order to make myself worthy of Nora's love again?
2. Act Three. Torvald to Krogstad: Why did you withdraw your intentions of blackmailing my wife? I just want to be ware of the reasons that made you write a retraction letter? Don't you have any hidden agenda?