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www.dramatists.com



A DOLL'S HOUSE, PART 2

BY LUCAS HATH



★
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PLAY SERVICE
INC.



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A DOLL'S HOUSE, PART 2 was originally produced on Broadway at the John Golden Theatre by Scott Rudin, Eli Bush, Joey Parnes, Sue Wagner and John Johnson, opening on April 27, 2017. It was directed by Sam Gold, the set designer was Miriam Buether, the costume designer was David Zinn, the lighting designer was Jennifer Tipton, the sound designer was Leon Rothenberg, and the dramaturg was Sarah Lunnie. The cast was as follows:

NORA Laurie Metcalf
TORVALD Chris Cooper
ANNE MARIE Jayne Houdyshell
EMMY Condola Rashad

A DOLL'S HOUSE, PART 2 was commissioned and first produced by South Coast Repertory, opening on April 14, 2017. It was directed by Shelley Butler, the scenic designers were Takeshi Kata and Se Hyun Oh, the costume designer was Sara Ryung Clement, the lighting designer was Tom Ontiveros, and the sound designer was Cricket S. Myers. The cast was as follows:

NORA Shannon Cochran
TORVALD Bill Geisslinger
ANNE MARIE Lynn Milgrim
EMMY Virginia Vale

THE AUTHOR WOULD LIKE TO THANK

Kimberly Colbourn, Kelly Miller, Marc Masterson and South Coast Rep.

Kate Mulgrew, Tom Nelis, Tina Chilip, Mike Crane, Polly Lee, Peggy Scott.

Sarah Lunnie.

David Adjmi.

Emily Morse, John Steber.

Tessa Auberjonois, Carmela Corbett, Steven Culp, Tracey A. Leigh, Lynne Milgrim.

Mia Barron, Rob Nagle.

Laura Linney, John Benjamin Hickey, Lois Smith, Grace Gummer, Daniel Sullivan, Lynne Meadow.

Elizabeth Marvel, Bill Camp.

Shelley Butler, Shannon Cochran, Bill Geisslinger, Virginia Vale.

Sam Gold, Osheen Jones.

Laurie Metcalf, Chris Cooper, Jayne Houdyshell, Condola Rashad.

Miriam Buether, Peter Nigrini, Jennifer Tipton, David Zinn.

Julie White, Stephen McKinley Henderson, Erin Wilhelmi.

Val Day, Derek Zasky.

Scott Rudin, Eli Bush, Joey Parnes, Sue Wagner, John Johnson.

Mona Pirnot.

CHARACTERS

NORA

TORVALD

ANNE MARIE

EMMY

WHERE

Norway. Inside the Helmer house.

WHEN

15 years since Nora left Torvald.

THE SPACE

The play takes place in a room. It's quite spare. Some chairs, maybe a table, not much else. It ought to feel a touch like a forum. I wouldn't be sad at all if the play were played in the round.

And it's crucial there be a door. A very prominent door to the outside.

COSTUMES

Period, more or less.

SCRIPT GRAMMAR

In general, the whole play wants to move very swiftly, without breath, except where the play tells you take a breath or pause or silence.

A space between lines indicates a very brief pause or breath. Example:

NORA.
And so I say, well just end it.
End marriage.
And it will end. I know it.

An ellipsis in place of a character line represents a fuller beat. It's a moment of thinking or rethinking or sassing or a look, a sidelong glance, etc.

Enjambments are not meant to suggest a pause or break.

Dashes within lines generally bring together fragments as if they are all part of one continuous sentence. They're not meant to pause the line. Rather, move through those dashes without air.

Dashes at the ends of lines indicate an unfinished thought, either because a character halts herself or because another character interrupts.

Some lines end without punctuation. This is intentional and meant to indicate that there wants to be an almost seamless flow from one character's line to the next character's line.

Slashes indicate the point at which the following character's line cuts in.

A DOLL'S HOUSE, PART 2

NORA

(The room is empty.)
(And silent.)
(Silent and empty for a while.)
(Until...)
(There's a knock at the door.)
(Then silence.)
(No one comes to answer it.)
(Another knock-knock.)
(Nothing.)
(And another knock at the door.)
(From offstage we hear a voice call out—)

ANNE MARIE.

Hold on! I'm coming!

(And then silence, until...)
(An older woman, Anne Marie, enters the room, slowly—
she's got a little hobble.)
(She makes it to the door.)
(Unlocks it.)
(Opens it.)
(In the doorway: Nora.)
(Long Pause.)
(Then...)

Oh Nora!

NORA.

Hello Anne Marie.

ANNE MARIE.
Nora I can't believe it's you!

NORA.
...It's good to see you.

ANNE MARIE.
It's really you. Nora Nora Nora—
It's been so long

NORA.
it has.

ANNE MARIE.
... You got a little fatter.
You got older and you got a little—

NORA.
well you hit a certain age—

ANNE MARIE.
Don't I know it.
Come in come here give me a hug it's so good to see you.
How are you. Come in there's some chairs you can take a chair and
sit in it

NORA.
don't worry about me, I'm fine

ANNE MARIE.
I'm going to sit I'm going to sit my knees aren't good.
However I look on the outside—
inside it's all a lot worse. And how are your insides—?

NORA.
They're good, Anne Marie.

ANNE MARIE.
That's good.
Mine, I don't know, it's the stomach that feels like it's gone all wrong,
but you look good and if your insides are all in order then I'll take
your word for it—

I just—I just can't believe it's really you

NORA.
well

ANNE MARIE.
I didn't know—no idea—if you'd ever come back around.
That first month, and those first six months—the first year or two or
three even—there was the thought that maybe you'd show up, come
back around, but then the more time that passed—you didn't even
write, no letters, nothing—

15 years, 15 years, could've thought you'd gone off and died—

I, for the record, never thought you were dead—a lot of people thought
you were dead, other people, not Torvald and the kids of course,
but a lot of people think you're dead.

NORA.
...okay.

ANNE MARIE.
And I look at your clothes and it looks like you're definitely not
destitute

NORA.
nope, not at all

ANNE MARIE.
it looks like the opposite of destitute

NORA.
I've done very well.

ANNE MARIE.

That's just so nice. I'm happy to hear that, I never wanted bad things to happen to you...

(Nora takes in her surroundings, moving her eyes around a room she hasn't seen in 15 years.)

NORA.

The house is—

ANNE MARIE.

yes—?

NORA.

it's so...

ANNE MARIE.

different?

NORA.

from what I remembered

ANNE MARIE.

same house

NORA.

less stuff

ANNE MARIE.

you forget things

NORA.

there was a cuckoo clock used to be there, is that—?

ANNE MARIE.

gone

NORA.

the cabinet with the trinkets

ANNE MARIE.

gone

NORA.

and my piano

ANNE MARIE.

that's gone too.

NORA.

And there—a picture, a portrait—
there was a picture of my mother

ANNE MARIE.

I mean of course anything that was yours
got thrown out
after you left.

NORA.

...Right.

So, how much time do we have—?

ANNE MARIE.

until—?

NORA.

he gets back

ANNE MARIE.

a few hours

NORA.

you're sure

ANNE MARIE.

he's at work

NORA.
he still works.

ANNE MARIE.
But I had been thinking—I don't know how you feel about this—I know you're just briefly in town—I know you said in your letter that you were just going to be very briefly in town and so I shouldn't tell the kids / that you're here—

NORA.
you didn't tell them did you—?

ANNE MARIE.
no, I didn't

NORA.
oh good, you scared me there—

ANNE MARIE.
not that that would be such a bad idea—

NORA.
they're grown up, they're grown ups, they have their lives, their lives are without me, there's no point—

ANNE MARIE.
no, I understand

NORA.
good

ANNE MARIE.
but I mean if you wanted to see them, I'm sure they would really like to see you, I think—

NORA.
no, I don't agree—who am I to them? I'm nobody, they were so young, I'm not a person to them, I don't mean anything—

ANNE MARIE.
I don't know, I'm not so—well, that's aside from the point.

But what I *was* thinking is that maybe it wouldn't be a bad idea to see Torvald while you're here, just to say hi, just to, I don't know, see each other. Given how much time has passed, given how things ended, given that you're just passing through, no pressure, real easy, I just think it could be helpful, it could repair something

NORA.
is something broken

ANNE MARIE.
wouldn't say that, but—

NORA.
you said "repair."
Is Torvald broken, still, is he still broken over me? I mean, I'm sure he—

ANNE MARIE.
no

NORA.
good.
That's good.
So then—

He's well

ANNE MARIE.
he's not broken, I didn't mean to make it sound—

NORA.
yes, but—

ANNE MARIE.
he's great, he's good—

NORA.
He never remarried

ANNE MARIE.
no

NORA.
no, I didn't think so.

ANNE MARIE.
...

NORA.
...

ANNE MARIE.
—but I do think he should get a dog.
I think if he had a dog he'd be happier,
not that he's not happy, I don't mean that but
he just likes dogs so much.
I see him—he'll see a dog
and he'll get so happy,
and likes to pet the dogs
and he lets them lick his face
and he holds them close.

I told him to get a dog and he said no and I said why,
and he said that dogs die.
Dogs die. They get sick, their bodies break, they hurt, and
when that happens he'd have to put the thing out of its misery:
cut its throat or break its neck or pelt its head with a rock,
and he doesn't want to come to love something

only to have to kill it.

I sort of wanted to say but didn't say but wanted to say that—
I think he's at a point where the dog will probably outlive him.
I think that's pretty optimistic to think that he'll be around to put
the dog down.

NORA.
...

ANNE MARIE.
But what about you, tell me about you,
what's happened to you?

NORA.
I'll tell you what: I'm not the same person
who left through that door.
I'm a very different person

ANNE MARIE.
yes, I'd imagine—

NORA.
you really want to know?

ANNE MARIE.
Yes I do, I know nothing!

NORA.
Guess.

ANNE MARIE.
Guess?

NORA.
You want to know what I've been up to,
but I want to know what you thought I was doing—
what did you imagine—?

ANNE MARIE.
oh Nora I don't know—

NORA.
you must've imagined something—how could you not—
you're saying you never thought about it?

ANNE MARIE.
No

NORA.
you've wondered, you've thought—

ANNE MARIE.
of course I—

NORA.
what?

ANNE MARIE.
You've done very well

NORA.
you know that *now* but—?

ANNE MARIE.
yes?

NORA.
You thought I had a very easy time?

ANNE MARIE.
No.

NORA.
Go on...

ANNE MARIE.
Okay well I thought maybe you might have had a difficult time,
being a woman and being the way women are sometimes—
often treated
these days

NORA.
you'd think it would be hard

ANNE MARIE.
that you struggled

NORA.
and what would you think if I didn't struggle

ANNE MARIE.
I'd think you were very lucky

NORA.
lucky

ANNE MARIE.
fortunate?

NORA.
Not clever, not resourceful, not—?

ANNE MARIE.
no of course I—

NORA.
but first you'd think I was lucky.

Interesting.

ANNE MARIE.
I didn't mean it as an insult

NORA.

no I know, I'm just interested in these kinds of things, I think it's to be expected that a person would think that after I left this house and my husband and my children that I'd have a very difficult time

ANNE MARIE.

the world is a hard place

NORA.

so we're trained to think. I mean I think there's something in our time and place and culture that teaches us to expect and even *want* for women who leave their families to be punished

ANNE MARIE.

oh now I didn't say—

NORA.

come on—keep guessing—
this is fun.

ANNE MARIE.

...

NORA.

Come on—

ANNE MARIE.

feel like I'm being set up

NORA.

I've done well.

So, knowing that I've done really well
what do you think I did that did so well?

ANNE MARIE.

...

NORA.

Go ahead.

ANNE MARIE.

You've made money

NORA.

right

ANNE MARIE.

a lot

NORA.

yes.

ANNE MARIE.

...

NORA.

...

ANNE MARIE.

Are you an actress?

NORA. (*Scoff.*)

No!

ANNE MARIE.

A dancer—?

NORA.

nope

ANNE MARIE.

something

having to do
with
clothes?

NORA.
I find it so interesting the kinds of things you're guessing

ANNE MARIE.
alright then are you a lawyer—?

NORA.
no

ANNE MARIE.
a banker

NORA.
no now make some serious guesses.

ANNE MARIE.
...Do you make...things—?

NORA.
eh sort of, yes and no

ANNE MARIE.
I don't know, I don't—

NORA.
you give up

ANNE MARIE.
I give up.

NORA.
I write books.

ANNE MARIE.
You're a writer

NORA. —
you're surprised

ANNE MARIE.
you've made money writing?

NORA.
A lot.

ANNE MARIE.
So you're a popular writer

NORA.
women's writing is very popular, there's a big interest in—

ANNE MARIE.
what do you write?

NORA.
Books about women

ANNE MARIE.
okay—?

NORA.
and the things women do and want and don't want and don't do.
And the way the world is towards women
and the ways in which the world is wrong.

ANNE MARIE.
Have I heard of these books?

NORA.
One of them is really controversial

ANNE MARIE.

I think I'd remember if I saw a book you'd—

NORA.

I don't write under the name "Nora,"
I have a pseudonym

ANNE MARIE.

oh that's clever.

NORA.

At first I wasn't sure what to write
so I wrote the first thing that came to mind
which was a story about a woman,
who lived in a house like this house
and had a husband like Torvald,
and lived in a marriage which—by all appearances
was a good marriage,
but for the woman, for my heroine—
she felt suffocated, she felt like she had no options,
that her life was as his little wife and—that this was set in stone and
there'd never be the possibility of anything else ever.
And so she left her husband
and she started a life of her—

ANNE MARIE.

so you basically wrote your own story

NORA.

with some differences

ANNE MARIE.

oh sure, but—

NORA.

yes, it's mostly about me and
about how I no longer see a reason for marriage

ANNE MARIE.

well now Nora—

NORA.

also I think that women who are not happy in their marriages
should refuse to honor the contract
and leave.

ANNE MARIE.

That's a terrible thing to tell people.

NORA.

Is it, though?
Think about it.
Marriage is cruel,
and it destroys women's lives

ANNE MARIE.

oh I don't know—

NORA.

really

ANNE MARIE.

maybe in some cases—

NORA.

more than some

ANNE MARIE.

marriage makes a lot of people very happy, very—

NORA.

that's debatable. I'd argue that most people would be happier, more
fulfilled without it

ANNE MARIE.

you can't say that

NORA.
and you can't say that they wouldn't be.

ANNE MARIE.
If marriage were so bad do you really think people would still be—
after all this time of people living on this earth—
would people still be getting married?

NORA.
We do a lot of things that aren't good for us—
this we do because our parents tell us
from an early age—our parents,
our churches,
our leaders—
everyone
tells us that we need it, so we believe it,
and the idea gets etched inside our skulls
but you only think you need it because it's all you've ever
been told.

They tell us: "It's an expression of love,
the ultimate expression of love,
the one that we're all working towards"
—but how does that make any sense—?
to say "I love you, therefore
you should tie yourself to me,
and you can never leave me,
you can never love anyone else,
you're off limits, I own you."
I *own* you.
That's what marriage says—to me that sounds more cruel than kind—
also, also—

When people marry,
they say, "I choose you,
and I choose you forever,"
but who is this "you" that they're choosing?

Because people change, over time
people change into different people,
so how can you say that "I want
to be with this person"
when "this person" is not
going to be "this person"
3 or 5 or 10 years from now,
but there you are committed,
forever
till death
stuck,
stuck either with a person you don't want to be with
or with a person pretending to be a person they no longer are.
I mean, I'd even go so far as to say that marriage
makes a person change for the worse.

Because, before marriage, before marriage
you're wooing the other person,
wooing—what does that mean—that means always putting your best,
your kindest, your most attractive side forward,
and you woo and you woo until
you can convince the other person
to commit to marriage.

And then what happens?
What happens when there's
no more reason to woo—?
to put your best side forward?
Marriage tells us that you're committed,
you're bound
to this other person
regardless of how you're treated.
Think about it:
Don't you think that that encourages
couples to treat each other
however they want—? to be as awful as you want—
it doesn't matter,
because you're in it until death.

This happens.
All the time.
And people are miserable.

Yes, yes, we want to be intimate with another person,
to know another person,
to love that person deeply,
and to be naked with that person—

but why do we need a marriage for that?

And why does it need to be with just one person
and for the rest of your life?

Seems so sad.

And we know it's sad—we *know* it—
we know it and we feel it
and we go and we *reach*
outside that contract of marriage,
all the time it happens,
men and women—
we fail to be faithful because deep down we ache for more,
because this ache is in the core of who we are—
but we stomp it out,
and we beat ourselves up
for failing to be something we never were to begin with.

And so I say, well just end it.
End marriage.

And it will end. I know it.
In the future,
20, 30 years from now,
marriage will be a thing of the past,
and those in the future
will look back on us,
and they'll be in shock,
in total—just awe—
at how stupid we are,
how backwards our thinking,
how sad it is

that we put ourselves through
this completely unnecessary
process of self-torture.

20, 30 years from now,
people will have many spouses in a life,
even many spouses at once.
There won't be lines drawn between couples,
and there won't be jealousy because there won't be anything to be
jealous of

ANNE MARIE.
but Nora—

NORA.
you disagree

ANNE MARIE.
all of this is just so—

NORA.
it seems extreme

ANNE MARIE.
and against the nature—

NORA.
nature—what is nature—?

ANNE MARIE.
that maybe there's a reason why things are the way they are,
why men are the way they are
and women are the way they are?
It's been like this for all of human history—don't you think
there's probably a really good reason why it's this way?
And you go and you fight it and that's going to make people very
uncomfortable—

NORA.

I know. That's why at the end of the book she dies.

ANNE MARIE.

Who—?

NORA.

the woman, in the book, my heroine who says all the things I just said to you—had to kill her off— Oh the book would have never been published if she didn't die of consumption at the end of it. I wish I didn't have to do that, but I figured it's more important that people hear her ideas than not at all, and so—but in my mind it's not so much a literal death as it is a symbolic one— you know, she sheds her old life and enters into a new one.

And it's not like I'm saying anything that anyone doesn't already somewhere in their minds already sort of think—certainly if they're being completely honest with themselves.

...which brings me to the reason I'm here.

You see,

some women who read the book were so moved by it that they even went so far as to actually leave their marriages. But it so happens that one of these women was the wife of a particular judge who presides in the particular city where I live.

He was mad and he wanted to find a way to ruin me, so he set out to find out who I really was— who I was behind the name I publicly use. Turns out it isn't that difficult, all you have to do is threaten to take a publisher to court, so what—? who cares—? right—? so he's got my real name: what do I have to hide. And he went and did some digging around.

And after he'd done his digging,

I got a little letter from him,

and it said all the things you'd think he'd say:

"I know who you really are I don't like you I'm really mad"

and so on and so on

until

he revealed a secret that not even I knew.

He wrote:

"I know that your real name is

Nora Helmer."

ANNE MARIE.

...

NORA.

...

ANNE MARIE.

... Yes?

NORA.

That doesn't seem strange?

ANNE MARIE.

That he found out your name?

NORA.

But my name isn't Nora Helmer. Not Helmer. Not anymore.

Anne Marie, Torvald never filed the divorce.

15 years ago, he was supposed to,

but he didn't

and now,

I find out that Torvald and I

are still husband and wife.

ANNE MARIE.

I'm sure that's not true, someone's confused—

NORA.

I didn't believe it at first either,
so I got someone I knew—a lawyer—to look into it, and
it turns out that yes, Torvald never filed for the divorce,
and that, yes, he and I are still married.

Did you know—?

ANNE MARIE.

no, no of course not.

NORA.

This judge—he says that unless I publicly retract everything I've
said in my books,
write a letter and have it published in all of the newspapers,
apologize for what I wrote
apologize for encouraging women to leave bad marriages,
and say that what I said was wrong and dangerous—

that unless I do that,
he will expose me:
expose my real name,
expose me as a married woman
who claims to be unmarried—
I've signed contracts, done business, had lovers—all sorts of things
that a married woman isn't allowed to do, that are illegal, that amount
to fraud—This judge could make a lot of trouble for me.

ANNE MARIE.

So *that's* why you're here

NORA.

I do plan on seeing Torvald,
tomorrow I will see him,
and I will ask him for the divorce—
to simply send a letter to local clerk,
just clear up any confusion,
and let everyone know that

we haven't been "man and wife" for the past 15 years—
The clerk files the divorce—it's done. Crisis averted.

It's so easy for him to do it—easier for him than me—
the way they have the laws the man can get a divorce for no reason
at all
but a woman has to prove the man did something horrible to her—
threatened her life, committed incest, gave her syphilis.
Hopefully he'll just file the divorce and we can get it done before
the judge tries to follow through on those threats

ANNE MARIE.

and my role in all of this?

NORA.

Based on even the little you said earlier,
it sounds like he's still upset about what happened between us,
and I might need your help.

(Anne Marie has a handkerchief out, wiping her eyes.)

ANNE MARIE.

Oh well shit. Shit Nora shit.

NORA.

Are you crying?

ANNE MARIE.

I think you've gone and misinterpreted what I said—
was it what I said about the dogs?—
and now you have this picture in your head of him being spiteful
and sad and broken and obsessed and—
I just wanted—oh fuck it all—I just thought it would be nice
if after all these years, you two could
sit together
and have a nice talk
and have things be normal
and nice
and maybe even, who knows—but you read too much into the things
I say.

NORA.

Anne Marie. You didn't do anything wrong.
I might need a little more help,
we're allies,
we go way back,
you're like a mother to me,
you were practically my mother,
you raised me

ANNE MARIE.

yes and I also raised your children.

NORA.

And I'm like a daughter to you,
yes?
Isn't that true?
Before Torvald, there was you and there was me and that was it.

ANNE MARIE.

I don't like being in the middle of things—allies?—that sounds like war.
I like everybody just fine—

NORA.

yes, yes, but
I am in a precarious position right now—

ANNE MARIE.

so am I, Nora, so am—

NORA.

yes, but if you—

(The door opens.)

(It's Torvald.)

ANNE MARIE.

...

NORA.

...

TORVALD.

I'm interrupting something aren't I.

ANNE MARIE.

Why aren't you at work.

TORVALD.

I forgot something...
I left papers. I left—there's a big bound stack, like about this big
that—I thought I brought it to the office—do you know what I'm
talking about? I could've sworn I took it to the office, but I don't
know—I feel like I'm...it doesn't matter.

ANNE MARIE.

...

NORA.

...

TORVALD.

Who's your friend?

ANNE MARIE.

...

TORVALD.

Are you going to introduce me to your friend?

ANNE MARIE.

...no?

NORA.

...

TORVALD.
oh

(He stares at her for a bit.)

...are you...?
you aren't—

NORA.
yes.

TORVALD.
You are.

NORA.
I am.

(Silence, then...)

TORVALD.
I have to go to the bathroom.

*(Torvald leaves the stage.)
(Nora and Anne Marie, alone.)*

ANNE MARIE.
I really thought he'd be out until late.
I didn't know.
I thought—he never comes home during the day, I
—you should go, I think you should go, you should—

NORA.
No. You.
You should go.
When he comes back,
he and I will talk,
and when we talk,
we'll talk alone.

This isn't how I wanted it,
but this is how it is,
and I'll just deal with it.

ANNE MARIE.
He might be in there for a while.

I'm pissed.

I'm pissed off at you.

I don't like how you've sprung this on me.

NORA.
I have to deal with this now.
You should go.

*(Anne Marie exits to the side.)
(Nora rearranges the furniture.)
(Two chairs, face to face.)
(After some time...)
(Torvald reenters.)*

TORVALD

*(A period of silence.)
(Followed by...)*

NORA.
Are you going to say anything.

TORVALD.
...No. I don't think so.
Not yet.

(And back to silence.)

...it's not not wanting to,

it's just that
I don't know what to say, really.

NORA.
That's okay.

TORVALD.

I did not expect this, I...

(Torvald sits, facing away from Nora.)

(Nora sits too.)

(Nora looks over at Torvald.)

(Torvald just stares out, straight ahead.)

(Nora goes back to looking out, waiting.)

(And so it goes on, more nothing.)

NORA.

I'm fine just sitting here

with you

for as long as you want.

(Nora looks at him again, this time she holds her gaze.)

TORVALD.

I've

thought a lot

about what this would feel like.

NORA.

What.

TORVALD.

This.

I'd wondered

what it would feel like if I ran into you on the street...

NORA.

and how do you feel, Torvald?

TORVALD.

...I feel shaky.

My hand is shaking.

My leg

is also shaky.

NORA.

If you want

I can leave

—come back later. Alright I'll leave.

I'm leaving.

TORVALD.

Tell me why you're here

NORA.

maybe now's not a good time.

TORVALD.

No, just do it.

NORA.

Are you going to look at me?

TORVALD.

I doubt it.

Not yet.

Just talk.

NORA.

Alright.

Here's what it is, Torvald:

When I left you,

15 years ago,

—you remember that night—

I told you,

you're free. You have no obligation to me.

I gave you my ring,

and you gave me yours—

We agreed—we made an agreement—
that the marriage was done,
and you would divorce me,
and that would be that.

15 years passed.

I've been under the impression all this time that we were divorced
until a few weeks ago
when I found out
that you never filed it.

TORVALD.

...

NORA.

Is that true—did you never divorce me?

TORVALD.

...

NORA.

...Why?

TORVALD.

Did I want you to leave?

NORA.

...no.

TORVALD.

I didn't want to divorce you.
You wanted that.

NORA.

Okay.

Well—

can we agree now that you'll

do what you need to do
to make the divorce "official."

TORVALD.

And why do I need to do that.

NORA.

I would do it myself
but I know you know that
you and I
a man and a woman
in the eyes of the law
do not have equal rights to a divorce.
So I do need your help here, I can't do it by myself.

TORVALD.

...

NORA.

You know it's not right
to hold me to something
that I don't want
to be held to.

TORVALD.

...

NORA.

Are you really
after all this time
going to stand in the way of me getting a divorce?

TORVALD.

...

NORA.

It costs you nothing to do it.

TORVALD.

You're assuming that it costs me nothing

NORA.

what does it cost you—?

TORVALD.

maybe not as much as however much that dress cost you

NORA.

what—? Torvald—

TORVALD.

...

NORA.

Okay, then let me tell you what it costs me.
Because you won't file for the divorce,
because you're holding me in this marriage that's not a marriage,
you have made me a criminal—

TORVALD.

a criminal

NORA.

yes

TORVALD.

How.

NORA.

I've behaved as an unmarried woman,
I have conducted business that married women are
not allowed to conduct without the consent of their husbands,
signed contracts that are now void,
I could be prosecuted and put in prison
and believe me there are people who would have me prosecuted,
who would have me dragged through the mud

TORVALD.

you're that unpopular

NORA.

this doesn't just apply to me, Torvald.
This affects you, if you ever wanted to get married again,
haven't you ever wanted that—?

TORVALD.

no

NORA.

not even the possibility

TORVALD.

no Nora, I haven't—you sorta killed that for me.

NORA.

Well just so you know
there have been other men—after you, several.
I've had lovers.
I've had a life.
I did what I did thinking that you were no longer my husband,
and now, because you failed to take the action you said you'd take—

TORVALD.

I'm not sure that I—

NORA.

I'm now in danger of having that life taken away from me.

TORVALD.

...

NORA.

...

TORVALD.

You left.

You left me.

You walked out this door
and you left me
and you left the kids
and when I think back on what happened
I think to myself that I have one
big
regret:

I wish I left you.

NORA.

...

TORVALD.

I should have left you
long before you left me I should have—I think back
to all these moments where I should have left you—there are so
many—

NORA.

are there—

TORVALD.

—every time you chastised me for being too serious or being too
worried about small things, never taking seriously the things that I
cared about

—and every time you asked me for money—and every time you
asked me for money by first telling me how much you love me as if
by telling me that you love me would make me give you the money—
that's really manipulative by the way

—every time you'd ask me to do a favor for a friend of yours—you
had all of these friends, and always it became my responsibility to
fix their problems as if the only value I had in your life was either

my ability to give you money and find your friends a job or a place
to live—never considering the possibility that maybe I didn't have
time to help everyone you thought needed help, or—

and you could tell that the favors you were asking me made me
uncomfortable, but you pushed and you pushed and you'd say
things to make me feel like I was being a wimp or weak

every time you talked down / to me—

NORA.

you were the one who talked down to me

TORVALD.

every time you flirted with other men—

NORA.

I never—

TORVALD.

yes, and every time you made fun of me in front of other men,
every time you rolled your eyes at me or—

NORA.

you did that to me too, all the time you—

TORVALD.

and when you told me that I was kind but being kind
wasn't enough to make you want to be with me
—and the moment when you told me that your own needs were
more important than taking care of your kids, your own kids who
needed you, who missed you, who wanted you
—and then the moment you told me you didn't love me anymore—
that moment that was maybe
a minute before you walked out of here—but I wish—
I wish I didn't take it like I took it.

NORA.

...

TORVALD.

...

NORA.

Alright Torvald—I see that you see me as some kind of monster, but you're not totally clean here either. You've changed what really happened, in your mind. You make yourself into the victim, the blameless, the right, the better one of the two. That's you. That's how you are—you have to be right and superior. This thing you do—this thing that men do of standing in front of women and looking down at them, telling them how the world works, educating them, us, me about how things should be as if you were some kind of expert.

TORVALD.

And what would happen if we—men—if we didn't—I wonder sometimes about this—yeah, I won't disagree—it happens—we do this, okay, but I wonder if women don't ask that men behave the way we behave, in some ways

NORA.
really

TORVALD.

if we didn't project some kind of confidence—an assuredness in what we know or think we know—would women even be attracted to men—?

NORA.
confidence is different from—

TORVALD.
to stand up straight and lead—

NORA.
that's different from talking down to me.

TORVALD.

How.
Explain the difference.

NORA.

Also.

Also.

Here's another thing that bothers me:
You don't get angry.

TORVALD.
Of course I do.

NORA.

Maybe once you've ever gotten—

TORVALD.
right now. I feel angry.

NORA.
Right now.
You feel angry

TORVALD.
damn right I—

NORA.

I don't believe that you *are* angry, that you're in it, that you're inside of that feeling of feeling angry right—no, I think you're just outside of it, looking at it like it's some interesting thing.

You don't act.

You're constipated.

You're scared.

I don't like that you're scared—
it's a really big turn off

TORVALD.

sorry, I'm not trying to turn you on right now

NORA.

and there it is

TORVALD.

what.

NORA.

That tone

TORVALD.

of

NORA.

condescension

TORVALD.

not standing up for myself?

NORA.

Yeah, I don't read that as standing up for yourself at all.

TORVALD.

Then what is it?

What is the difference between being

condescending and standing up for myself?

You won't say, even though I've asked you twice to show me—

NORA.

so that you can just disprove me

TORVALD.

so you can educate me

NORA.

oh!

TORVALD.

I would like to learn

NORA.

you'd like to be right

TORVALD.

I'd like you to stand up and take the lead and teach me something

NORA.

I did. 15 years ago, right here, I did that

TORVALD.

No.

No.

What happened 15 years ago—if you'd like to talk about that—okay
let's talk about that—

is that you stood here and had your big epiphany,

and you know, I think—I thought then and I think now—

that a lot of things you said had a lot of validity.

You said that we never had a serious conversation in

8 years of marriage,

and yeah, I think that there was some truth to that.

We'd both been avoiding things,

avoiding hurting the other,

and all of that avoiding of stuff made us liars.

And yes, we have to tell the truth.

We have to stick our noses in some shit—

we have to—you talk about a true marriage,

you talked about how what we needed was a true marriage—

well, I think sticking our faces in the shit
is a really big part of that.

But listen, Nora, here's where you're wrong.
At the very moment that you realized the problem with our marriage

NORA.
let's be real, there was more than one problem

TORVALD.
no, I get that—I'm not saying there wasn't—but the moment you
brought the problems to light,
you walked out the door.

That's shitty if you ask me

NORA.
how is it—?

TORVALD.
shitty—? because having epiphanies is easy,
but actually doing something about it is—

NORA.
my "doing something" was leaving, that was "doing" and that sure
as hell wasn't easy

TORVALD.
easier than staying and trying to tough it out with me—us toughing
it out together—instead you run off and pretend that this is the
same thing as being strong.

And I look at you and I...

NORA.
...

TORVALD.
...I think—

NORA.

...

TORVALD.
I did so much for you.
I loved you.
And you threw it away.

NORA.
But who did you love really?
Because who I was when I was last here—that wasn't me.
You liked that, but what I was doing—that was just for show.
All the flitting around, the whole "oh Torvald, oh help me,
I can't figure out this or that, I can't do anything myself, oh help me"
—that's not me. That was a thing I was doing, because if I didn't do it,
then you wouldn't have paid attention to anything that was important
to me.

I don't think you'd like what I'm actually like.

...

TORVALD.

...

NORA.
I hurt you.
I know that.
Don't think that I don't know.

And I knew what I was doing when I left you, and I knew what I was
doing was very cruel—very harsh. But staying would have been
cruel to me—

TORVALD.
and our kids?

NORA.
Don't bring up the children

as though that drowns out anything I have to say
about why I did what I did and whether what I did was right.

Do I wish I'd done it differently?: oh who knows.
Would I *not* do what I did?: absolutely not.
No regrets, Torvald.

TORVALD.

...

NORA.
I'm not playing around.

It's out of kindness that I'm asking you to file for the divorce and not
me. It's easier for a man, the courts don't care about the reason,
but for a woman to do it, the law asks me to prove that I deserve the
divorce, and in order to deserve the divorce I have to make you look
really bad—I have to ruin you—your reputation—in public record—
I have to—I have to—Do you want that?

Torvald?

TORVALD.

Do it.

Do it.

I'm not giving you a divorce because you don't deserve for this to be
easy.

If you're going to ruin me, I want you to do it.
I want you to decide to do it.
I want you to do it so you have to think about what you're doing.

You say you'll ruin me,
you already did that,
except it happened while you were far far away.
This time if you're going to do it,
you're going to have to be part of it.

NORA.

...

TORVALD.

Alright that's what I have to say—
(Calls out.) Anne Marie!

NORA.

...

TORVALD.

Anne Marie stop pretending that you're not listening and come in
here.

(Anne Marie enters, carrying something.)

I'm late.
I have to leave now.
Show her out when she's ready to leave?

ANNE MARIE.

I found your papers.

(Hands them to him.)

TORVALD.

...

ANNE MARIE.

...

TORVALD.

You and I will need to have a talk when I get back, okay?

ANNE MARIE. *(Nods.)*

...

(Torvald exits.)

ANNE MARIE

(Anne Marie and Nora.)

NORA.

Alright Anne Marie, this is the point where I need your help.
Torvald won't give me the divorce himself, so now
I have limited options for how to get it.

Option #1 is the option where I make up a story that says that
Torvald did something awful to me, threatened my life or
something and you corroborate that story. Option 1 would work,
but I would never do option 1, because option 1 is wrong and weak
and it's just ugly and wrong and—

Option #2, I give in to the judge's demand, I retract all my writings,
everything I've ever publicly said about—everything—no, I'd rather
die before taking it all back—Option 2 is also not an option.

So what I need is an option 3.

ANNE MARIE.

...

NORA.

Do you know of an option 3?

ANNE MARIE.

I'm still really pissed at you.

I think you should go.

He's gone, it's not appropriate for you to be here.

You've put me in a bad spot, you've put me in a...

Torvald is all I have in this world, my only family.

He takes care of me.

He supports me.

Do you know why?

He doesn't have to do it, the children are grown up,
but he does it because he's grateful to me for sticking around after

you ran off—

for staying with him through a very difficult time—taking care of
the kids—raising the kids—and looking after him—oh he was mess!
You have no idea, you can't even begin to imagine.

The silence.

The not-eating.

The very dark thoughts he'd think.

The shame—

And how this must've looked to him—the thoughts he must've
thought when he saw us together, conspiring behind his—

NORA.

we weren't

ANNE MARIE.

I want you to go.

Just go.

Leave.

There's the door.

I know you know how to use it.

NORA. *(About to say something.)*

...

ANNE MARIE.

...

NORA.

...

ANNE MARIE.

...

NORA.

No, I'm not leaving.

I'm staying.

Get a room ready for me

ANNE MARIE.
you're being selfish

NORA.
it's my legal right / if I'm—

ANNE MARIE.
No. No, / you're—

NORA.
married to Torvald, I'm married to Torvald—I'm married to Torvald
then this is my house just like it's his house, I deserve to be here,
and this is where I'll stay until we're no longer married.

ANNE MARIE.
Just take option 2

NORA.
never

ANNE MARIE.
so what—the judge wants you to write a letter taking back some
things you said that you probably shouldn't have said in the first
place—so what—it makes you feel bad, / just get over it

NORA.
it's not about feelings—

ANNE MARIE.
you don't have to run with every feeling you have, you don't have to
indulge—because some feelings make trouble—and here I am—forget
how I feel—I have feelings too, but also my livelihood is at stake

NORA.
so is mine—on paper we're married,
and that means as my husband

he has claim to all of it—
all the money that I've earned for myself

ANNE MARIE.
he wouldn't

NORA.
what

ANNE MARIE.
take your money

NORA.
maybe, maybe not, I don't know.
He was always very weird about money,
very controlling, very—

ANNE MARIE.
you can trust him

NORA.
but I don't want to have to trust him—that's my point—
I can't be tied to him.
I can't be always looking over my shoulder, worrying about—
That's what I left.
That's what I ended by walking out this door

ANNE MARIE.
and what about me—?

NORA.
what about you—?

ANNE MARIE.
you're saying—what, that I don't matter—?

NORA.
no, I'm—of course you—

ANNE MARIE.
he'll kick me out

NORA.
no he won't

ANNE MARIE.
here I am, the one total innocent in all of this

NORA.
is that so

ANNE MARIE.
I think—

NORA.
what makes you innocent—?

ANNE MARIE.
aren't I—?

NORA.
you're saying you have nothing to do with this problem?

ANNE MARIE.
You're saying I—

NORA.
you're not doing anything to help fix the problem.

ANNE MARIE.
After all the problems I've already fixed for you
I have to fix this too?

Is that what you're really saying?

Fuck you, Nora.

Fuck you.

You have zero gratitude.
I raised your kids.
You should be coming in here—first words out of your mouth should
have been:
Thank you Anne Marie.
Thank you for abandoning your own life, your own child
and raising mine, so that I could go off to do my little thing.

NORA.
I didn't ask you to do that.
I didn't make you stay.
I left.
You decided to stay.
I'm thankful that you stayed,
but that was not your responsibility

ANNE MARIE.
but—

NORA.
—was your choice, not—

ANNE MARIE.
how could I leave

NORA.
just like I did

ANNE MARIE.
I'm not as cold as you.

NORA.
You had even less reason to stay.
It should have been easier for you than me.

ANNE MARIE.
It was my job, Nora, and if I didn't do what I did, three very young
children—were going to be left alone—

NORA.
They had Torvald.

ANNE MARIE.
A father
but no mother?

NORA.
Is that not enough?
Men leave their families—happens all the time—a mother but no
father—
now, but if a woman—if a woman does it—she's a monster, and the
children are ruined—

ANNE MARIE.
far as I'm concerned, either way it's bad

NORA.
also
also—and I'm just gonna put this out there—you do realize that
you kind of did the same thing I did—

ANNE MARIE.
How did I—?

NORA.
You had your own child, but you left her
to raise another mother's child.
You chose to love someone's child who wasn't your own.
And that's okay.
But don't tell me we're different.
We're the same.

ANNE MARIE.
No. We're not.
I didn't have a father with money like you had a father with money.
I didn't have the same options you had.

Do you think I wanted to leave my home and become a nanny?
My options were—what—working in a factory and wearing my
body down to the point of uselessness at an early age,
or I could go out and be a prostitute

NORA.
Yes. No, I—You're right.

ANNE MARIE.
I would have never, ever left my child if I didn't absolutely have to—

NORA.
But I did.

And you may not believe me but
I *had* to leave...

...and leaving my children was the hardest part—
it's the part of what I did that I hate the most,
that hurts, that still hurts—
don't you think there wasn't a moment
that I didn't think of sending them a little letter,
a little note saying "hello, mommy is thinking of you,
mommy loves you, mommy misses you very very much,"

or on a birthday or Christmas sending a gift—
I did—I bought them gifts, Anne Marie,
for the first couple of years—
I had a little pile of gifts for them sitting the corner of my room,
I'd buy these gifts and I'd be just about to send them—
and then I wouldn't because I knew
that sending them would make *me* feel very good,
but for them it could be—
because I thought about them thinking about me,
thinking that they must wonder about me,
and thinking that I wanted to answer all of their questions—

Better for there to be nothing,
for there to be silence,
than this thing that's somewhere halfway in between because

that—that Anne Marie—would be cruel.

A wound has to be allowed to heal,
no matter how much you have the desire,
the urge to touch it, to—

It's not good for the...the healing.
Do you understand?

Do you.

ANNE MARIE.

...

NORA.

What I did wasn't easy.

It was hard.

It took discipline.

And I had to think past the feelings
and about what's best for everyone involved.

And yes, yes—! because of what you did,
because of what you gave up,
my children felt loved.

And I am grateful.

You say I'm not, but I am.

And I'm so sorry if

I did not make you feel that.

(A moment of silence.)

Anne Marie, I have money,
and I can give you a kind of freedom.

I can buy you your own house.

I can give you a lump sum of money so that—provided you invest
it wisely—you'll never need to work again. You're on some kind
of—I'm sure—tiny allowance, trickling out just enough money to
get you to the end of the month.

Isn't that true.

And I look at you, and you look so tired and worn,

and when you walk, you limp.

and you say you have problems with your stomach?

And in exchange, Torvald gives you a little room in the back?

I can give you a better life,

and I promise you, it's not conditional.

You help me or not,

that's up to you.

ANNE MARIE.

...

NORA.

Can I do that for you?

Will you let me do that?

ANNE MARIE.

...

NORA.

...

ANNE MARIE.

...No. I don't want your money.

It's too late in life to up and...

NORA.

...

ANNE MARIE.

Option 3.

NORA.

What?

ANNE MARIE.

Option 3. You said you were looking for a third option for handling
the problem with Torvald?

I know a third option.
Would you like to know what it is.

NORA.
Uh, yes.

ANNE MARIE.
It means you have to do the thing I think you're most scared to do,
but if you want what you want—

NORA.
what is it.

ANNE MARIE.
Meet your daughter.

NORA.
...no

ANNE MARIE.
wait—

NORA.
it's not a good idea—

ANNE MARIE.
hear me out.

NORA.
I'm like a stranger to her—

ANNE MARIE.
Listen: you were not able to convince Torvald to agree to the divorce.
And I would never be able to convince him either.
Our words mean nothing to him—
But Emmy—she can be very persuasive,
—I think you'll be impressed—

you know I raised her to be very resourceful,
just like I raised you, and I think maybe—
maybe she would have a good idea for what could be done.

NORA.
I think that could be very confusing, the way things are—there's a
balance that we have that I wouldn't want to upset

ANNE MARIE.
but she's an adult,
there's no damage you can do,
not now. She has a life—
a life outside of you,
and she's happy with that life,
I think you aggrandize yourself.

NORA.
...

ANNE MARIE.
Hey. I have nothing to gain from you meeting with her or not.
You ask me what will get you what you're looking for.
This is what will do it.
It's the only option.

EMMY

(Enter Emmy.)

EMMY.
Hello.
I'm Emmy.
I'm your daughter.

NORA.
Yes, I know.

EMMY.
It's very nice to meet you.

NORA.
You too.

EMMY.
...

NORA.
I hope you're alright with this

EMMY.
with this?

NORA.
Meeting me, I hope it isn't strange
or upsetting—

EMMY.
no, not at all

NORA.
good.
I was worried it would be.

EMMY.
Why?

NORA.
Well I've never been part of your life

EMMY.
this counts as being part of my life—?

NORA.
no but a little step towards—seems potentially,

I don't know, harmful,
I don't want to do any harm.

*(Emmy thinks about this for a moment, like she's adding
something up in her mind, and then...)*

EMMY.
No I don't think us doing this—meeting—I don't think it does any
harm

NORA.
okay, well—good—I hope—

EMMY.
and just so you know, I feel no animosity towards you.

NORA.
Oh that's—that's nice to hear

EMMY.
this is exciting!—meeting you is

NORA.
yes

EMMY.
I don't remember you at all

NORA.
I didn't think that you would.
You were very little, very—

EMMY.
for the longest time I thought you were dead

NORA.
well you're not the first person to tell me that

EMMY.
everyone thought you died,
everyone in town, everyone who—

NORA.
I didn't

EMMY.
except obviously
Torvald, Anne Marie,
my brothers—but I did for a long time—

NORA.
so when did you—?

EMMY.
when I was 7 or 8—

NORA.
I see

EMMY.
my brothers told me.
They remembered things that I didn't or couldn't,
and they told me about how you left.
I didn't believe them at first—sounded
like the kind of thing you say to
avoid telling a kid the harder truth,
but Iver said that if I didn't believe them,
that I could go down to the clerk's office
where they keep all the records—birth records, death records—
and he said that if I looked for your death certificate
there wouldn't be one

—and I went to school with a boy whose
father worked in the clerk's office,
and this boy liked me, so I acted like I liked him back,
and got him to let me into the office one night

And I looked through the records,
and there was no death certificate,
and then I knew, that
you weren't dead,
you just left.

Bob and Iver told me that someday maybe you'd come back
and that I should be ready for it, that you would come
and that you would take us with you,
and that you would be a lot more fun to live with than Torvald
who—
he's not bad—but fun isn't the word I'd use to describe—

NORA.
yes—

EMMY.
I mean I think it's kind of adorable—his sort of—I don't know what
to call it

NORA.
gloom—?

EMMY.
no—that's not quite...

Bob remembered you best

NORA.
oh Bob.

EMMY.
Bob missed you the most.
Bob could draw.
I asked Bob if he would draw a picture of you—He wouldn't.
Iver said that it was probably because if he did,
Bob would start crying
and Bob never liked to be seen crying
because he thought crying made his face look fat.

NORA.
Yes,

I do remember that about Bob
about him—not the fat face thing—but the crying—he doesn't still
do that—?

EMMY.
he does

NORA.
poor Bob

EMMY.
Iver on the other hand—

NORA.
the opposite of Bob

EMMY.
in every way.

NORA.
Yes.

EMMY.
Now tell me something you remember about me

NORA.
you

EMMY.
yes!

NORA.
uhhhhh, what should I—well here's something:
When you were born

EMMY.
yes—?

NORA.
I had you very fast.
You came right out of me—like you were racing to get out into the
world—like you couldn't wait—The boys—they were very slow. I
was in labor for—oh god, it was terrible—
but you were very easy.

So. You can put that into your
book of memories.

EMMY.
And tell me something about you.

NORA.
Uh like what?

EMMY.
Oh I don't know—
Are you happy?

NORA.
Yes.
Very.

EMMY.
What makes you happy?

NORA.
My work makes me happy.
I like my house, I have a nice little house,
it's by a lake,
it's quiet.

EMMY.
That sounds nice...

NORA.
And are you happy, Emmy?

EMMY.
I am.

NORA.
What makes you happy.

EMMY.
All sorts of things:
I have enough money.
I have enough food.
Physically I'm
fine—there aren't problems
with my health.

NORA.
That's good.

EMMY.
I actually think in a lot of ways
things turned out better because you weren't around.

NORA.
...

EMMY.
I think I'm better at life because of it.
I had a lot more responsibility,
I had to deal with some difficult truths about life
at an earlier age than you usually have to deal with those types of things.
I feel bad for the kids who growing up had the usual life.
I feel special.

NORA.
...that's good to hear, it's—I'm happy that—

EMMY.
people say I'm an old soul.

NORA.
yes, yes—! you seem very
grown up. Very adult. Very
impressive.

EMMY. (*Smiling to herself.*)
Thank you.

And you, you've done well because of it too, haven't you

NORA.
what do you mean—?

EMMY.
Anne Marie told me that you have your own money,
and that you write books.

NORA.
I do

EMMY.
I find that very interesting.

NORA.
I'll send you one.

EMMY.
I don't really read books

NORA.
no?

EMMY.
Never could get interested in—I get bored easily—it's...

NORA.
...And so, Emmy—

EMMY.
yes—?

NORA.
did Anne Marie also tell you *why* I'm here?

EMMY.
All I know is—
that you and Torvald were supposed to be divorced
but you found out you're not,
and you're trying to get Torvald to file the divorce
but he won't do it

NORA.
that's pretty much it.

EMMY.
I'm guessing what you want from me is for me to go to him
and convince him to do the thing that he's refusing to do

NORA.
yes, yes, that's—I was just thinking that
if you were to go to him,
tell him that this is what's right for him—

EMMY.
uh-huh

NORA.
for everyone,

tell him it will be alright,
that there's no point in wrecking everything he's built,
tell him to do it for you

EMMY.
but it's not for me

NORA.
of course it's for you—
the whole family
and you and Bob and Iver and—
the kind of—I don't know—disgrace
that could come as a result of—
—it would make the family look very bad—and

I don't know if Anne Marie told you, but there's this judge who's
threatening to—

EMMY.
yes, I know

NORA.
right. so.

EMMY.
...

NORA.
I understand if maybe you have concerns.

Let me try to address some of—maybe you're not sure
how to approach this matter with Torvald,
I understand that, yes, that could be awkward: what do you say?
You go to him out of the blue:
I think you should give Nora the divorce she's asking for—
he'll think you talked with me and that I put you up to it

EMMY.
but aren't you—?

NORA.
what—

EMMY.
putting me up to it.

NORA.
So say instead—you don't tell him we met,
and say instead that you heard from
Anne Marie about my problem—well, you did—
that's true—Anne Marie told you what she told you,
and say you got to thinking about the situation
and my dilemma and what this could mean to Torvald,
and how it could look really bad,
get him in a bad spot with his reputation—
and explain to him how you think it's best
to just let me go
and let it all go
and file the divorce.

If you can show him how he's making this worse for himself,
if you leave me out of it,
because I don't think Torvald will do what Torvald does
for my sake, that his interests are—

EMMY.
are what? What do you think his interests—?

NORA.
Honestly?

Isn't it apparent?

I think he doesn't want to let me go,
that there's some part of him that is hoping
that maybe I'd come back to him, that there would be uh
reconciliation.

EMMY.
Did he propose a reconciliation?

NORA.
...

EMMY.
...

NORA.
...um—

EMMY.
No, see, I think you're very wrong,
and that you've made a lot of assumptions
and that you don't know what you're doing,
you think you do, but you—and it's not your fault,
but I need to correct you—

NORA.
correct me—?

EMMY.
Torvald did something really stupid.

I know that he's still, technically speaking, married to you.
And I'm not saying that none of this is his fault.
There's fault on his part, for sure.
But basically, what happened,
when you left, people noticed,
and of course they noticed,
and people would ask, "Where's Nora?"
And Torvald, I'm sure you could guess,
he was pretty upset about it, felt pretty private about it,
didn't want to talk about it—it was embarrassing—people ask him
where you are and he'd have to say you left him—it would be awkward,
both for him and for the person asking,
so at first when people asked, he'd say that you had gone away,

left town, visiting family,
something like that.

He really didn't say much about it, he didn't want to lie,
but then when about two or so months had gone by,
and you were still gone—I mean I don't know exactly how it happened,
obviously I was so little, I wasn't aware of what was happening—but
someone made the assumption that you weren't well,
that you had gotten sick,
and Torvald didn't say no,
so that's the story that went around—
that you were gone and you were sick
and recovering at a sanitarium.
And then another month or two passes,
and someone somewhere says something or makes the assumption
that it's worse than that,
and that you hadn't recovered
and you were
no longer alive.

And that's what people assumed,
and Torvald—now he's so far in
and to explain the truth—I know it's a weak thing he did
but he had his job at the bank and was
a very respected member of the community,
very well-liked, trusted,
to have to explain such an embarrassing set of
truths and misunderstandings and so on—
so he said nothing.
And by saying nothing
he was sort of saying something
which is that you
had died.

And once people came to think that,
that's when—well you know what happens when that happens—
there's an outpouring of affection and support,
people visited,

they brought food,
they really rallied around him
and us—the whole family.

And there's also some government support for the families,
there's that—some money you get—of course there was no death
certificate ever filed,
but these things happen, mistakes, oversights—
just because of the way people found out,
this gradual sort of realization that that's what was—and because
Torvald is well-respected, well-liked, and because he runs the bank—

You see?

It's a problem. You being here, doing what you're doing.

Do you—?

NORA.
No, I don't—

EMMY.
It's fraud, technically, it is—it's fraud, and Torvald could be tried—
he could lose everything—just like you, and that's why
he can't give you your divorce

NORA.
...

EMMY.
but...

there is another option:

NORA.
...

EMMY.
You die.

NORA.
What?

EMMY.
Let me ask you:
who have you seen while you've been in town?
me, Anne Marie, Torvald...
anyone else?

NORA.
...no.

EMMY.
Good.

Remember how I said there's no death certificate?
What if there was one. What if—using what connections I have—
that piece of paper were to just show up in the files of the local
clerk's office?

You see?

If you're dead, there is no marriage.

NORA.
Does Torvald know about this idea?

EMMY.
No.
This is my idea.
I came up with it myself.

NORA.
...

EMMY.
It's clever, isn't it.

NORA.
It is.

EMMY.
Thank you.
So will you do it then?

NORA.
...

EMMY.
Will you—what reason would you have for not doing it.
I can't think of one, can you?

NORA.
You'd be committing *forgery*

EMMY.
yes

NORA.
of public records

EMMY.
sure, but—

NORA.
the kind of trouble, you'd—

EMMY.
no one will find out

NORA.
I do have some experience with this kind of thing, and you'd be
surprised by how these kinds of things can just sorta come to light
at the worst possible—

EMMY.
but if Torvald's lie is exposed—

NORA.
How is this right!

How is it right that Torvald lies
and I'm the one paying for it—
that you're paying for it—
that—and I'm expected to be the one to lose everything because—

EMMY.
It's just that I'm engaged.

NORA.
...ah.

EMMY.
To a man.

NORA.
I see.

EMMY.
Named Jorgen.

NORA.
...Jorgen.

EMMY.
He's a banker

NORA.
of course he is

EMMY.
he works with Torvald.

NORA.
...

EMMY.
And if you cause a scandal he won't be able to marry me.
And there goes my future.
Gone.

NORA.
...

EMMY.
You don't like that, do you

NORA.
what

EMMY.
that I'm getting married.
You think no one should get married

NORA.
no, I—

EMMY.
Anne Marie told me.
She told me, "Don't bring up Jorgen."
But it seemed weird not to tell you,
because we're in love.
I know you probably don't believe in "being in love."

NORA.
But I do. I do believe in—
I have nothing against love, Emmy, but
love
love is different from marriage.

Marriage is this binding contract,
and love is—love has to be the opposite of a contract—
love needs to be free,
and it is free
until the moment you marry,
and then something changes
and you're no longer as free as you once were—
because you go from being two separate people
to something more like one person,
and you get swallowed up—and because of the way the world is
it's you that's going to get swallowed up into him.
And anything you want
for yourself will have to be part of what he wants,
and he's going to expect this from you

EMMY.
Jorgen is very kind, very—

NORA.
so was Torvald—has nothing to do with
kindness—it has to do with...
what people do and have always done and
don't even bother to question—
How much do you even know about marriage—?

EMMY.
nothing

NORA.
exactly

EMMY.
because you left, I know nothing about
what a marriage is and what it looks like.
But I do know what the absence of it looks like,
and what I want is the opposite of that.
I want to be held.

I want to be possessed.
I want to be somebody's something—
I can see you cringe when I say what I'm saying.
But that's about you, and it's not about me,
and I'm telling you what I want,
and you may want something different for yourself,
but don't make my wants about your wants

NORA.
but—

EMMY.
you're telling me I don't want what I want?

NORA.
Emmy, I'm telling you that I once wanted what you wanted
only to find out that when I got what I wanted
that it was definitely not what I wanted.

EMMY.
But you don't know that it will be the same with me.
I'm not you.

NORA.
I have a feeling you're a lot like me

EMMY.
no

NORA.
the kinds of things you're saying
are the kinds of thing I said

EMMY.
You don't even know me.
You came back here for the first time in 15 years
and you didn't want to see me—the only reason you're even talking
to me is because you want something from me

NORA.
no, no

EMMY.
that's not why you wanted to see me?

NORA.
...

EMMY.
...

NORA.
Yes, yes I did come here to ask you for some help

EMMY.
see—?

NORA.
but you think I didn't *want* to see you—?

EMMY.
you don't ask me any questions

NORA.
because I don't know where to begin!

EMMY.
How do you think it makes me feel
to know that the only reason my mother
wants to see me is to get me to fix a problem for her.

NORA.
...

EMMY.
...

NORA.
...

EMMY.
You've never given me anything.
This is the only thing I'm asking for

NORA.
you'd be putting yourself at terrible risk

EMMY.
and what about you—?
you talk to me about the trouble I could get into by forging a
death certificate—I'd imagine the trouble you're facing is worse.
Aren't you scared?

NORA.
What scares me more is the thought of you doing everything that I did
that I wish I didn't do—
That's worse because it means that everything I've done since walking
out that door, means nothing

EMMY.
everything you've done, which is—what?

NORA.
the books, the books I've written—everything that I—

EMMY.
these books that tell women to leave their marriages

NORA.
if they're feeling stuck and—

EMMY.
and they do—?

NORA.
some are moved to—

EMMY.
and how is that good?

How many women have left their husbands because of you?
How many women have left their children?
How many women have left their husbands and children, and gotten themselves into the same kind of trouble you're in right now—? It's— it's like you've saved everyone from a drowning boat, but you've left them with no way to get back to shore.

NORA.
...

EMMY.
I actually think it's good to be stuck in a marriage.
It's the fact that we're bound together, that it's difficult to leave, that actually makes people stick around and try—
I think—because if things keep on going the way you say they should, then—what will that look like—?
a future where everyone is leaving each other—
that in a lifetime one person will have tried to be with—what, four, five, six people—but always just skating through their lives, never able to settle or slow or experience anything that takes any real difficult time—
never finding a home,
never finding a place to rest,
a person to rest with,
never finding a person who knows you
and that sounds—and what do I know—
but that sounds so sad
and so lonely
and so
so deeply unsatisfying
this future

where we're all just nomads...
Is that really what you want?

NORA.
...

EMMY.
You let me do this for you—Nora Helmer will officially be dead. You leave here,
you move somewhere quiet—you stay quiet for a couple of years—this trouble with the judge—it will eventually pass,
and then you'll be free—
free of Nora Helmer. That's what you always wanted, from the very beginning, isn't it—?
when you walked out that door,
you wanted to find out who you really were.
You've found that person. You don't need Nora Helmer anymore. She's dead.
And now you really get to be reborn as this new person you've created. And me and Torvald and my brothers can go on living lives without you.

(An unusually long period of silence.)

NORA.
...

EMMY.
...

NORA.
...

EMMY.
...

NORA.
...

EMMY.
Nora...?

NORA.
This isn't right—
this scheming,
this lying—this is what I left behind—

EMMY.

...

NORA.

...

(Nora begins to leave.)

EMMY.
where are you going?

NORA.
You think I've never given you anything, but
you don't know what I've given you—
because what I'm trying to do for you—
the kind of world I'm trying make for you—
it hasn't happened yet.

But it won't happen this way—not if I let you or Torvald
fix this problem for me

EMMY.

...

NORA.
no, I have to do this myself—
If that judge wants to me to publish a letter,
then I'll do it and I'll tell everyone
"Yes, yes, I'm a criminal,
and I am not sorry,"
I'll go and face the people who are telling me what I can and can't
do and show them that there's nothing they can do—

EMMY.
they can put you in prison—

NORA.
it doesn't matter—because I'm already
in a prison if I'm having to rely on Torvald to give me a divorce,
if I'm having to hide behind some pseudonym,
if I'm—if we're beholden to all of these

bad rules is what they are—

there are so many bad rules in this world, Emmy—
I'm not going to follow these bad rules,
this is my chance to change the rules

because 20, 30 years from now
the world isn't going to be the kind of place I say it's going to be
unless I'm the one to make it that way—

(Anne Marie enters with Torvald.)

(Torvald is bleeding from the head.)

ANNE MARIE.
Torvald's been attacked—!

EMMY.
What—?

ANNE MARIE.
just found him like this walking through the streets like this, like a
crazy person—

EMMY.
I'll go get some bandages

(Emmy exits.)

ANNE MARIE.
blood coming out of his head, people on the street staring at him—
(To Torvald.) everyone's going to think you've gone out of your mind—
(To Nora.) this is all your fault—none of this would have happened

if you didn't come here—I should have never answered your letter,
I should have never said it was alright for you to come here—

(Emmy reenters with supplies.)

TORVALD.

Anne Marie

why don't you—I don't know—take a walk.

ANNE MARIE.

...

(Anne Marie exits.)

(For a moment, Emmy dresses Torvald's wounds.)

(Then...)

TORVALD.

Emmy, you too.

(Emmy exits.)

(To Nora.) We should talk—

NORA & TORVALD

(Torvald produces a book.)

NORA.

...

TORVALD.

...

NORA.

I see.

TORVALD.

Anne Marie told me that you—you write these little books—

NORA.

little—

TORVALD.

I didn't mean that in a—I meant—just she told me that that's what
you do now,

so I was curious,

and I walked into a bookstore.

I asked the man in the bookstore

what's the book that the women are reading,

I'd like to read that book,

and he said, well you must be thinking of this book,

and he handed me a book,

and it didn't have your name on it,

but I figured it was a uh—

NORA.

pseudonym

TORVALD.

Right. Yes.

And so I bought the book,

and I took it with me to the fjord,

and I sat on the rock,

and I read the book,

the whole thing,

from beginning to end.

And the book was about you,

and the book was about me,

and it was about all the things that happened between us.

It was hard for me to read it.

NORA.

It was hard for me to live it.

TORVALD.

...I'm sitting there reading

and thinking every so often,
oh I remember that or I forgot that or—
And some things made me really mad and—

NORA.
like what?

TORVALD.
I come off pretty badly in the book. I come off as a real—
I'm going to read some parts out loud

NORA.
just say what you—

TORVALD.
"He looked at me with a look of condescension"

(Turns a page.)

—you say things like that often—"He sneered,"
"He pontificated"...

but this is the one.
This one is the one that really—

(Turns to a page.)

"I lived in terror of my husband.
He didn't so much look *at* me, as much as he looked *through* me.
I didn't exist.

Yes, he doted on me,
but he only doted because the act of doting made him feel good.
But you could have substituted in for me
any woman. It didn't matter.

Once I asked him what he liked about me.
He told me he liked everything.
I pressed for more.
He said I was pretty.
He said I was his.
He said I was perfect.

This is why I lived in terror.
Not because he was violent—he wasn't—
not because he ever threatened my life—he never did—
unless you count living with someone who can't see you
as life-threatening—which in a way it is."

NORA.
...

TORVALD.
That hurts.

NORA.
Because...?

TORVALD.
I'm not like that—not *now*

NORA.
it's not about how you are now. It's about how—

TORVALD.
I think about dying.

I uh think about how when I die
which will be someday sooner than later—
and I think what it is I'm leaving behind—what mark I've made—
and I think about how this is it.

(To the book.)

This is the story that's told about me and that's it,
and I don't want that to be it,
and so—

NORA.
...

TORVALD.
I went to the clerk's office this morning

NORA.
you did

TORVALD.
told the clerk,
"I'm here to file a divorce—"

NORA.
oh Torvald—

TORVALD.
let me finish—he didn't understand because—

NORA.
he thought I was dead.

TORVALD.
Oh, you know about the—

NORA.
yes—

TORVALD.
he thought I was crazy,
he said, "Torvald, you think you've seen a ghost"
I said no, I said, I've been lying,
there's a pile of lies, I've been lying,
and that's done, I won't lie,
I'll face the consequences.

I even said, "If you don't believe me find the death certificate,"
and he said if there's no death certificate then
he should go ahead and make one.

And here he is taking out the papers to write up a death certificate,
and it was as if he was about to end your life in front my eyes—

NORA.
and did he?

TORVALD.

No, I grabbed the pen from his hand,
and in grabbing the pen, I knocked him to the ground,
and this clerk, he's not a small man—
he's younger than me, stronger than me—

and he grabs me, he holds me down,
and I—I'm just fighting back,
trying to break free of him.

And this fight—it's now—it's bigger than itself,
and I'm fighting for my life—
and he pushes me, and I fall...

my head hits the ground, where there's a bit of stone.
It cut into my head, I could hear the skull crack—

and he's now horrified, he backs away, I think he's even crying,
he says, "Torvald Helmer, what have you turned into,
what are you?"

And I said to him, said to the clerk,
"You will give me my divorce,"
and he nodded his head,
because he understood,
that this was about more than it was about.

He could have had me locked up,
but he understood, and—

(Torvald takes out a paper.)

This is it.

I did this for you.
I made everything right
by ruining myself,
by exposing a pile of lies that I've been hiding for 15 years,
and I'll probably lose my job
and lose my friends
and lose my savings,
but I did it

so hopefully I won't be remembered
the way you remember me
when I'm gone.

You can even go
and write a new book
where I'm a better man.

(Nora looks at it.)

Here. Take it.

(Nora does not take it.)

You won't take it.

NORA.
Thank you.

Thank you, Torvald.

I appreciate that you did this...
but...

I don't need this anymore

TORVALD.
what

NORA.
the divorce, I don't need it.
But I really do appreciate that you—

TORVALD.
I CAN'T WIN WITH YOU!

NORA.
...

TORVALD.
...

NORA.
...

TORVALD.
I CAN'T WIN WITH YOU!
I CAN'T FUCKING WIN WITH YOU

NORA.
THERE'S NOTHING TO WIN!
STOP TRYING TO "WIN"!

TORVALD.
I'M JUST TRYING TO BE A GOOD GUY HERE

NORA.
YOU GO AND YOU MAKE EVERYTHING ABOUT YOU—
YOU EVEN MADE MY BOOK ABOUT YOU

TORVALD.
I'M IN THERE AREN'T I?

NORA.
IT'S MY BOOK, MY FEELINGS, MY THOUGHTS,
MY EXPERIENCE, MY LIFE—

TORVALD.
I GAVE YOU WHAT YOU WANTED!

NORA.
ONLY BECAUSE YOU WANTED TO LOOK GOOD

TORVALD.
YOU WERE IN TROUBLE!

NORA.
BECAUSE OF YOU—BECAUSE OF YOUR LIES, / YOUR
COWARDLY—

TORVALD.
YOU WERE IN TROUBLE AND I SAVED / YOU AND—

NORA.
I DON'T NEED A FUCKING SAVIOR—

TORVALD.
YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHAT THIS COST ME—

NORA.
YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHAT THIS COST ME!

TORVALD.
NOW I'M RUINED BECAUSE I TRIED TO DO THE RIGHT /
THING—

NORA.
I BET YOU WANTED TO BE RUINED

TORVALD.
THAT'S INSANE!

NORA.
YOU LOVE IT WHEN PEOPLE FEEL BAD FOR YOU—

TORVALD.
/ AW FUCK YOU—

NORA.
HAVE TO TAKE CARE OF YOU, NURSE YOU BACK TO
HEALTH—THAT'S YOUR WHOLE LIFE—EVERYONE GIVING
UP EVERYTHING FOR TORVALD—SAME THING AS ALWAYS—
YOU HAVEN'T CHANGED A BIT.

(A long silence.)

TORVALD.

...

NORA.

...

TORVALD.

...

NORA.

...

TORVALD.

...

NORA.

...

TORVALD.

...

NORA.

...

TORVALD.

...

NORA.

...

(And then...)

TORVALD.

...I don't know what to do around you,
I don't know how to behave...

NORA.

...

TORVALD.

...

NORA.

...

(And then...)

TORVALD.

What happened—you used to be so—you were a different person and I find it incredibly disturbing that when I look at you I can't even see inside there to see the person that I used to know.

(Silence, and then...)

I think I miss you, Nora.

NORA.

...

TORVALD.

You think I don't see you,
that I don't know who you are,
but I don't know—I think maybe the same way
I made assumptions about you,
you made assumptions about me.
And maybe I would like what you really are,
and maybe I didn't like the things you thought I liked,
and kind of found some of them pretty annoying.

I don't know.

It's just so hard

NORA.

what's so—?

TORVALD.

all of this.
Being with people.

NORA.

Yes.

TORVALD.

Does it have to be so hard, really?

...

NORA.

...

TORVALD.

...

NORA.

...

TORVALD.

...

NORA.

...

TORVALD.

...you said there have been others since me.

NORA.

There were.

TORVALD.

Who were they?

NORA.

All sorts of people.
Some were important,
some weren't.
Some stand out in my mind,
and some sort of just fade

TORVALD.

...

NORA.

There was a painter,
and there was another banker,
there was an architect.

And there was also the man who built the houses the architect
designed.

There was...there was a man, a very young man.
I thought it would be interesting,
to have a relationship with a very young man

TORVALD.
was it—?

NORA.
no.

TORVALD.
...

NORA.
...

TORVALD.
There was a woman—

NORA.
there was?

TORVALD.
Don't be so surprised.

NORA.
...

TORVALD.
She was a widow—used to live three houses down.

After her husband died,
she'd come over for dinner and we'd play cards.

NORA.
Who was it—? Sofia?

TORVALD.
Yes—

NORA.
her—?

TORVALD.
what

(Nora laughs.)

what

NORA.
I just can't picture it.
I'm *trying*.
I just—can't picture it.

TORVALD.
Kids liked her,
she liked the kids,
but I just couldn't because—
because I was afraid.

NORA.
...

TORVALD.
...

NORA.
...

TORVALD.

You say you've become so honest,
So be honest with me:

I'm talking about two people,
spending time together,
figuring out
how to be around each other.

Is that a true marriage?
Before you walked out that door, I remember, that's what you said
you wanted.

So? Have you ever experienced that with anyone?
Be honest with me.

NORA.

...

TORVALD.

...

NORA.
No.

TORVALD.
I haven't either,
and I don't want to die
having never had that experience.

NORA.
Then go have it.
I want you to have that.

TORVALD.
But what about you?

NORA.
...when I left here, Torvald

15 years ago,
the first thing I did
—because I had nothing: no home, no family, no money—
was I went and lived in a boarding house.
And because I had no real skills other than I could sew things—
I did that—and made money sewing
and bit by bit saved up what I could—

Because what I really wanted to do was,
for the first time in my life,
be by myself.

So when I saved enough money,
I left the boarding house,
and went and lived up north.
I found what was basically an abandoned shack.

And even though I was living by myself—
for everything I did—
every decision I made,
from what I ate to when I went to bed—
I could hear a voice in the back of my head
that either sounded like you or my father or the pastor or
or any number of other people I knew—
I'd always in my head somehow manage to
check with that person
to see what he thought,
even though that person wasn't a person but
my thinking of that person.

And so, as long as that continued,
I'd decided that I'd live in silence,
not speaking and
avoiding the speaking of others—

and I'd live like this until
I couldn't remember what other people sounded like—
until I no longer heard a voice in my head
other than my voice
or what I was certain had to be my voice.

That was almost two years,
two years of silence.

And once I could hear my voice,
I could think of things that I wanted
that had nothing to do with what anyone else wanted.

It's really hard to hear your own voice,
and every lie you tell
makes your voice harder to hear,
and a lot of what we do is lying.
Especially when what we want so badly
from other people
is for them to love us.

So I find that I'm best—that I'm my best self if I'm by myself.

TORVALD.

...

NORA.

...but it's nice to sit with you.

TORVALD.

Yes.

It is,

(Torvald gently squeezes Nora's hand.)

(And holds it there for a bit.)

(And then...)

NORA.

Alright.

I'm ready.

TORVALD.

For what.

NORA.

I'm ready to go.

I'm ready to do this again—walk out that door
and away from this house,
off into the—
and I know that I'm going to have to fight a lot of people
all over again
and harder than I did before,
and I might lose everything I have,
but I've done that before
and I can do it again.

(A beat.)

(And then Nora gets up.)

(Nora and Torvald walk to the door together.)

(Nora begins to exit then turns around in the doorway.)

The world didn't change as much as I thought it would,
but I know that someday everything will be different,
and everyone will be free—freer than they are now.

TORVALD.

I can't imagine that.

NORA.

yeah...well

I just hope I live to see it.

(Nora walks out the door.)

(Torvald watches.)

(Door shuts, lights out together.)

End of Play

PROPERTY LIST

(Use this space to create props lists for your production)

SOUND EFFECTS

(Use this space to create sound effects lists for your production)

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