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Honors 499 Project Abstract

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For my Honors 499 Creative Project, I prepared and performed the role of Nora Helmer, in Michael O'Hara and Rodger W. Smith's new translation of Henrik Ibsen's classic humanist drama, *A Doll House*. My preparation includes research about Ibsen, other actresses who have attempted this challenging role, and the multitude of concepts surrounding this famous character. As part of my process, I utilized an acting technique outlined in *The Practical Handbook for the Actor*, a text inspired by the teachings of David Mamet and William H. Macy. My research compounded with rehearsals, the stage performance in September and the filming in October, served for three hours credit in Honors 499.

Research on the role of Nora has been conducted since the part was originally played by Betty Hennings, in Copenhagen, in 1879. Various productions and theories have emerged, and I attempted to incorporate many of these theories into my Nora. Our updated version of the play took place in 1998, so I also carefully studied women of today to effectively bring Nora from the nineteenth to the twentieth century.

The technique I used in deciphering this role is one of goals, objectives, tactics, and expectations. I broke down every scene into literal and essential actions. For every essential action, I scored the script according to beat changes and tactics. The final challenge was to incorporate these into my performance on stage and on film.

An Actor's Production Book
For
Henrik Ibsen's
A Doll House

By
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Rodger W. Smith

Ball State University
Muncie, Indiana
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Character Backstory

1. Play Basics

Name

My maiden name is Eleanora Kayla Peterson. Eleanora means "lighthearted and spirited." The abbreviated nickname Nora was given to me by my father when I was a little girl. He was the only parent I had, for my mother died when I was just two years old. I did my best to fit the petname meaning "small and diminutive." I became Papa's little doll, another nickname and a part I played beautifully.

I was married at age nineteen to Torvald Helmer. And the home we made brought a plethora of new nicknames. Lark, Bird, and Squirrel were the new petnames I acquired. The bird names because of the way I flit about the house making it beautiful for Torvald; and Squirrel because of my pack-rat nature, saving everything. Every piece of art work the children made, and my ability to decorate the house with everything I had collected in the past.

Sex

I know how to use my sex as a means of getting what I want. When I was young, I had my father wrapped around my finger; all I had to do was smile, use my "little girl voice" and he was mine. I have the same power over my husband. He is more stubborn than Papa, but I use sex to press his buttons. Depending on the situation, his little lark, the helpless victim, or a seductress are necessary roles to play to get what I want.

Our sex life is full and satisfying. I know exactly what Torvald likes. He loves it when I dance for him, or when I dress up in costumes. He is the adventurous type, and he likes variety.

Marital Status and History

I married Torvald when I was nineteen years old. Before him the only other significant man in my life was my father. He and I were so close as I grew up that I never had the time to really date other boys. I had a few dates throughout high school, a few kisses here and there, but nothing significant. I met Torvald in college. He was a senior studying law when I was a freshman. He was so much like my father in so many ways. His intelligence and good looks, and the way he doted on everything I did. But he had other admirable qualities too, that were so unlike my father's. He was a tightwad! He never spent money he didn't have. To me, the girl with a credit card debt with more zeroes than she cared to count, such a financial mind was doubly attractive. He seemed to like the fact that I was in financial distress; he even helped me work out a payment plan so I could get out of debt. Then he made me cut up all my credit cards and swear I would never use them again. We were married once he graduated, and he went on to law school the following year.

We had our first son, Torvald Jr. (T.J.), in October of 1990. Sylvia Marie (Sylvie) was born in 1993, and our youngest daughter, Emily Suzanne (Emmy) was just born two years ago in 1996. They are all wonderful children. T.J. is the smartest, and so athletic! Baseball is his favorite sport. Sylvie is my beauty queen. She insists on always wearing dresses and she loves playing dress up with her mommy's costumes. Emmy is my little doll-angel. She is so placid and does exactly as she is told. She is the sweetest of my babies.

Educational Level

I always loved school, especially English. Creative Writing was my specialty. Through high school I would bring my projects home to Papa and read them to him. He loved them. He encouraged me to go to college so I could continue writing stories for him. I went on to Harvard as an English major with an emphasis in creative writing. I hated all of my classes except the ones in my major. So I never went to my general studies classes. It was when I should have been in astronomy, but instead I was writing in the quad that I met Torvald. He was cute and paid me a lot of attention. When I took him home to meet Papa, they were instant comrades. When we decided to get married, it was Torvald who suggested that I quit school. There was no way we could afford to put me through my remaining three years of college and see that Torvald got through law school. We planned that I should go back to finish my degree once Torvald was established as a lawyer, but I became pregnant with T.J. and soon the other babies were born, and there was no time or need for me to go back for an education. After all I was needed at home.

I am smart in other ways as well. I have a way of reading people and knowing their desires and weaknesses. Torvald has a weakness for beautiful things. He likes things around him to be beautiful, and he'd do anything to assure the maintenance of beauty around him. My father was another man I could read. He loved beauty as well, but more than that he wanted the appearance of happiness. He would spend any amount of money to see that I was happy and that others around him were happy. To extract what I wanted from him, I had to play the sad little girl. He would immediately do anything to assure my happiness.

Economic/Social Status

I have always been well taken care of. Even though my father had money problems he made sure I lived a very extravagant lifestyle. He could not afford Harvard, but it was the school I wanted so he borrowed enough to see that I would have the education I desired. The two of us enjoyed many elaborate vacations, and he bought me everything I wanted. In turn, I spent all the money he gave me, without giving much thought to the possibility that the supply may not be endless. Torvald would not let me spend money like Papa did, but he always saw that I was more than taken care of. He liked to live well, and he was very aware of appearances. He wanted to appear as if we had more money than our bank account would reveal. Though we talked of "our money," Torvald handled all bank business. I was merely given an allowance.

Our first year of marriage was particularly difficult. Torvald had two jobs and he was taking classes. By May of 1991, he was so ill, that the doctors said he had to leave New York for the winter and head to a warmer climate or he would never make it. We couldn't afford a vacation, and Torvald wouldn't consider borrowing. So I took out a loan from Nils Krogstad. The money I used to make payments was out of my weekly allowance from Torvald, plus what ever money I could sweet-talk out of him. I also made extra money writing romantic short stories for the local tabloids and by doing word processing at home. This way I could stay at home with the children, and Torvald would never be suspicious. The job he got as branch manager of the bank is very important to both of us. For Torvald, it means we have the money to afford the standard we have always tried to project. For me, it means paying off the debt and finally spending money on myself again.

Psychological State

I am driven by the desire to please those around me and in doing so, I please myself

as well. I thrive on secrets, and my greatest is that I saved Torvald's life. I love to create allusions. Perhaps this is why I enjoy dressing up for Torvald. It not only pleases him, but it excites me as well. Torvald doesn't know that I still write short stories. He thought my English major was a frivolous whim anyway.

I am totally aware of my manipulations, and I love that I am smart enough to pull them off. Every time I get extra money out of Torvald, I feel fulfilled in a way, but also very empty. A part of me wishes I had finished college and that I could really earn money of my own. However, the men in my life have never looked past my cute exterior to realize that I could be a successful woman, therefore I have never looked that deeply either.

Purpose

My purpose in this play is to protect my home. My husband and children are the most important things in the world to me, and I would do anything to protect them, even if it meant sacrificing myself. The loan I took for the trip to New Mexico is one example, but also the painstaking lengths I have gone to to cover the secret prove that my family comes first in my life.

GOTE- 1.1

Where have I been?

I have been shopping most of the morning. I stopped at every toy store in the city to find the perfect gifts for T.J., Bobby, and Sylvie. T.J. loves to play sports- especially basketball, so I got him a running suit. Of course I got him a new video game because when he is not playing basketball, he is sitting in front of his Super Nintendo. I got Bobby a suit just like the ones Daddy wears to work. He looks up to his father so much, and maybe Torvald can take him into the office some time after the New Year. Sylvie loves to play dress-up in my clothes and make-up; I bought her some play make-up and a fancy dress "for a little lady." I stopped at a children's clothing store to buy each an outfit for Christmas dinner. I bought our yearly Christmas ornament at Hallmark. (We get a new one every year, engraved with each of our names and the year. Victoria's Secret was having a pre-Christmas sale so I bought a little something Torvald will like. My last stop was at the Cobblestones, the candy store; I needed some stocking stuffers for the kids and a bag of chocolates for me. Torvald insists that I take a cab home because the subway is too dangerous for his little bird, but I need to save that cab fare to pay my debt to Krogstad. Therefore I had a long walk home with many bags and cold feet.

What's literally happening?

- enter with packages, humming/singing
- play with the children/chocolate business
- hurry kids out of room when Torvald announces his presence
- try to talk him into spending a little more this Christmas
- tiff about borrowing
- money
- show off the gifts I bought
- tell Torvald I want money for Christmas
- defend my spending habits
- candy investigation/lie about eating candy
- celebrate Torvald's promotion

Literal Action

Putting my home (husband and children) in the Christmas Spirit.

Essential Action

To get Torvald to appreciate the work I do.

Tactics

INDUCIVE: to play

INDUCIVE: to flirt

THREATENING: to pout

INDUCIVE: to show off

INDUCIVE: to seduce (to avoid telling the truth)

THREATENING: to snap

INDUCIVE: to play my role

As If

It's as if I got sent to the Principal's Office and I have to avoid punishment.

Business

chocolates

gifts/packages/wrapping paper

running suit, video game, suit, action figures, dress, knick knacks

Victoria's Secret bag

money- \$100

unpacking

GOTE- 1.2

What's literally happening?

- maid shows Christina in/ I don't recognize her
- recognize my old friend
- invite her for Christmas dinner
- make her comfortable- take her coat, sit her by the fire
- apologize for not writing when her husband died/briefly sympathize
- tell of Torvald's promotion
- defend myself-tell of the "light work" I've done to earn money
- talk of trip to NM
- offer to help her get a job under Torvald
- tell about saving Torvald's life and the accompanying hardships/secrets

Literal Action

Reacquainting myself with an old friend.

Essential Action

To rekindle a friendship. (Make her stay!!)

Tactics

INDUCIVE: to welcome

THREATENING: to impress

INDUCIVE: to coax

THREATENING: to debate

THREATENING: to drive her crazy

INDUCIVE: to defend

As If

It's as if I was telling my life story to the Queen of England.

Obstacles

We haven't seen each other in more than nine years, so there is a certain level of discomfort. I also don't want to upset Torvald by having an old friend in the house, but I am desperately lonely for a friend of my own-not Torvald's.

Business

Christina's coat/etc.

fireplace stuff

food/drink to offer her

pictures of the kids

wrap gifts?

GOTE- 1.3

What's literally happening?

- bell rings, maid brings in Krogstad
- question Krogstad's presence
- show him to Torvald's study
- discuss Krogstad with Christina briefly
- to unpack kitchen supplies

Literal Action

Keeping up appearances.

Essential Action

To conceal my fear and pain from Christina.

Tactics

- INDUCIVE: to put on a happy face
- THREATENING: to gently interrogate
- INDUCIVE: to entertain

As If

It's as if my friends were daring me to ride a roller coaster, and I can't let on to them that I am scared to death.

Obstacles

The largest obstacle is that Christina cannot know that I know Krogstad. She may become suspicious and deduce that he is the one who loaned me the money. And What if Krogstad is here to tell my husband about the loan? I have to conceal that fear from Krogstad and Christina.

Business

- tray (with food)
- box of kitchen stuff

GOTE- 1.4

What's literally happening?

- introduce Rank and Christina
- tease Rank that he wants to live too
- ask what Krogstad wanted with Torvald
- laugh that Torvald and I have so much power over the employees (Krogstad)
- feed Rank, Christina, and myself chocolates
- lie that Christina gave them to me
- announce how I would like to swear in front of Torvald
- hide candy

Literal Action

Entertaining my guests

Essential Action

To get Rank and Christina to validate their love for me

Tactics

- INDUCIVE: to joke
- THREATENING: to interrogate
- INDUCIVE: to celebrate

As If

It's as if I was a contestant performing in a beauty pageant.

Obstacles

My main obstacle is that Krogstad is in the next room. He could be telling Torvald about the loan. He could be ruining the happy home I have worked so hard to create. My fear for him must be a driving energy in this scene. To get rid of that fear, I must focus even more on Rank and Christina.

Business

- chocolates
- ornaments
- candy tray

GOTE- 1.5

What's literally happening?

- introduce Torvald and Christina
- cover for Torvald not knowing Christina
- tell Torvald Christina came to see him about a job
- ask for a favor (for Christina to be hired at the bank)
- children enter; introduce them to Christina

Literal Action

Asking a favor from my husband

Essential Action

Impressing Christina with my ability to manipulate

Tactics

- INDUCIVE: to inflate his ego
- INDUCIVE: to seduce
- INDUCIVE: to reward

As If

It's as if I was a used car salesman trying to sell a real junker.

Obstacles

I am trespassing in Torvald's business world. Torvald likes to keep me as far away from business as possible so as not to trouble me with any problems. He hates it when I interfere so there is the risk that he will say that I have no business recommending anyone to work at the bank. That would be disheartening and also very embarrassing in front of Christina and Rank.

Business

- hiding chocolates
- help Torvald with coat scarf
- Christina's coat and scarf
- fiddle with gifts (Victoria's Secret bag?)

GOTE- 1.6

What's literally happening?

- tell children to wave good-bye
- play hide-and-seek

Literal Action

Playing with my children

Essential Action

To excite my children to the point where they fill the room with their laughter

Tactics

- INDUCIVE: to tease
- THREATENING: to surprise
- INDUCIVE: to play

As If

It's as if I was on the world's largest jungle gym and I had all of my favorite friends and an unlimited time to play there.

Obstacles

I have three children and I must be careful to treat them all equally. If I play favorites they will become jealous of one another and we would not have the happy home that Torvald wants.

Business

- Hide and Seek
- moving boxes

GOTE- 1.7

What's literally happening?

- question Krogstad on his arrival
- send children away
- he interrogates about Christina's presence/hiring
- boast that I have influence to get her hired
- he orders to use influence to keep his job
- I don't have that kind of power
- he threatens to tell Torvald of the loan
- learn that he knows of forgery
- defend that I did it for love
- he says that I broke the law and I will pay
- he exits/children return
- send children to Anna
- order Ellen to bring in Christmas ornaments
- begin to decorate tree

Literal Action

Defending my territory

Essential Action

Protecting my children from a dangerous man

Tactics

THREATENING: to belittle

INDUCIVE: to plead

THREATENING: to insult

INDUCIVE: to sweet talk

INDUCIVE: to beg for my life

INDUCIVE: to spell out

As If

I was arguing with a person who had a serious heart condition

Obstacles

This man has so much power over me, especially when he reveals that he knows of my forgery. I have to be very careful not to infuriate him to the point he would tell my husband. However, if I do not scare him somewhat, he could ruin me, my husband, and my family by exposing my forgery. This man is like a time bomb, and I have to work carefully not to set him off.

Business

trim tree

hide from Krogstad

GOTE- 1.8

What's literally happening?

- decorate tree
- Torvald enters and I lie about Krogstad
- he catches the lie
- change the subject to the Sternborg's ball
- ask Torvald for costume advice
- find out Krogstad's "little crime" was forgery
- the morally sick poison their children
- Torvald orders the end of the Krogstad discussion and leaves
- Anna enters to say the children are asking for me
- tell her to keep them with her

Literal Action

keeping a secret from Torvald

Essential Action

To obtain reassurance from Torvald that I am not as bad as Krogstad

Tactics

INDUCIVE: to conceal

INDUCIVE: to childishly seduce

THREATENING: to defend

As If

It's as if I wanted my boyfriend to propose to me.

Obstacles

You can't ever say the wrong thing to Torvald. Even if you say the right thing in the wrong way to Torvald he becomes hostile and unreasonable. In this scene I need to be careful to not say the wrong things concerning Krogstad. One, Torvald could become suspicious, and two, he could get really mad. If I don't come up with just the right way to change the topic, Torvald won't leave the last subject alone. I need to control this scene while letting Torvald think that he is the dominant one.

Business

- trim the tree
- the bank papers
- give Torvald a massage
- hang the stockings

GOTE- 2.1

Where am I?

It is Christmas morning so there are boxes and wrapping paper strewn about the room. This morning, I had to force myself to keep a smile through the ritual opening up Santa's gifts, while maintaining a safe distance for the children. It was so hard. Christmas is my favorite time of year, especially when the children are so happy. Since dinner last night, Anna has repeatedly asked me to play with the children. She doesn't understand why I have to stay away from them. Her requests are becoming harder and harder to brush off.

In the last ten years, working out has become a way for me to escape my problems. Torvald bought the Nordic Track right after Bobby was born. I managed to escape gaining weight after T.J.'s birth; Torvald's illness, Father's funeral, and a new baby kept me so busy, that I didn't even have to try to lose weight. However, our lives were not nearly as stressful during our second pregnancy. Torvald was afraid the extra weight wouldn't come off as quickly so I got a Nordic Track for Christmas that year. Since then, I have used it for a daily work out regimen, but it also is a good way to focus my mind and "work out" my fears. So, this morning, after Torvald went to the bank, I started exercising; it has been about an hour since he left.

What's literally happening?

- work out on Nordic Track
- startled by a noise/ it is nothing
- Anna enters with costume/ it is torn
- ask about children/ they miss me
- ask about Anna giving her child up
- she reassures that if anything happened to me she would take care of mine
- send her away assuring everything will be perfect for tomorrow

Literal Action

Seeking out a friend to calm my nerves

Essential Action

determining if Anna is a trustworthy mother for my children

Tactics

THREATENING: to take my frustrations out on her

INDUCIVE: to seek guidance

THREATENING: to interrogate

INDUCIVE: to test

As If

I was asking someone to donate a kidney

Obstacles

I still have to maintain the illusion that everything is beautiful and perfect. Fooling Anna is a trial to see if I can fool Torvald. She has known me all my life, and if I can make her believe that I am perfectly all right, Torvald should be easy. In a way, this scene with Anna is a dress rehearsal for the scene with Torvald.

Business

dress

towel (work out)

Nordic Track

GOTE- 2.2

What's literally happening?

- size up condition of the dress
- scared by a noise
- Christina enters
- ask for help with dress repairs/ talk about dress and dance
- talk about dinner last night/Dr. Rank's disease
- defend my relationship with Rank
- Christina thinks that Rank gave me the money/I convince her otherwise
- She guesses I am hiding something
- Torvald comes home/send Christina to the nursery

Literal Action

Gossiping with a friend

Essential Action

To test the loyalty of a friend

Tactics

INDUCIVE: to calm

THREATENING: to inquisitively interrogate

INDUCIVE: to cautiously confide

As If

It's as if I was a millionaire and had to determine if this person should be the sole heir of all my money.

Obstacles

Torvald could come home at any minute. I cannot risk him overhearing a confession of my forgery. I also have not seen Christina for ten years. I have to determine if she is the same person; would she stand by me if I needed her help?

Business

dress

Christina's coat, hat

refreshments?

needle, thread

fireplace, fire poker, etc.

GOTE- 2.3

What's literally happening?

- Torvald comes home
- talk about Christina/the tarantella
- hint that I want a favor
- he guesses it is about Krogstad
- beg for Krogstad to keep his job
- Krogstad could write to the tabloids
- "Torv" thing
- argument about Torvald's pettiness
- he sends Krogstad's walking papers
- beg him to get them back
- he refuses/goes into study
- pray to God for help

Literal Action

Asking my husband for a favor

Essential Action

To wrap the one I love around my little finger

Tactics

- INDUCIVE: to playfully entice
- THREATENING: to sexually barter
- INDUCIVE: to implore
- INDUCIVE: to tease,
- THREATENING: to desperately beg for my life

As If

It's as if I was trying to convince someone that suicide would be fun

Obstacles

Torvald cannot know how scared I really am. If I let on to the slightest bit of nervousness, he could become suspicious. He can't ever find out about the loan because he would try to defend me and it would ruin him. Therefore I have to make everything seem as normal as possible, but everything in me is churning and moving. The slightest sound scares me. Controlling this fear is next to impossible.

Business

- papers
- other things involved with the costume (jewelry, hair ties, shoes)

GOTE- 2.4

What's literally happening?

- Dr. Rank comes in
- lie and say Torvald is busy
- think he knows about loan but really he has found he will die soon
- says when he knows he's in the last stages he'll send his card with a black cross
- try to cheer him up
- his jealousy of Christina
- invite him to watch me dance tomorrow
- tease him with silk stockings
- begin to ask him for help/he agrees without even knowing the question
- he kisses me/ I stop
- ask Ellen to bring in the lamp
- decide not to ask him for help
- Ellen enters with Krogstad's card
- send Rank into study
- order Ellen to send in Krogstad

Literal Action

Asking a friend for help

Essential Action

To convince Dr. Rank to protect me

Tactics

INDUCIVE: to flirtatiously charm

THREATENING: to interrogate

INDUCIVE: to bewitch

THREATENING: to test

INDUCIVE: to seductively play

INDUCIVE: to confide

THREATENING: to punish

INDUCIVE: to conceal

As if

It's as if I got pulled over for speeding, and I can't afford another ticket.

Obstacles

Initially, the only obstacle is my nervousness. I have to appear collected so I can manipulate Rank easily. But once I learn that he has had feelings for me, all of my plans come screeching to a halt. Now I can't flirt, and tease; it wouldn't be appropriate. That would cheapen Nora. I know my boundaries: you can flirt with a friend, but it's not fair to tease someone who loves you.

Business

silk stockings

fix him a drink/ olives

clean up after the children

GOTE- 2.5

What's literally happening?

- Krogstad enters/tell him to keep quiet
- lock Torvald's office
- tell him I tried to convince Torvald to let him keep the job, but he wouldn't
- he threatens to tell Torvald
- beg him to think of my children
- he says the three of us can settle it/ I refuse
- thoughts of suicide are cast aside
- Krogstad produces a letter telling Torvald everything
- he wants to use my crime to manipulate Torvald
- he drops the letter into the box

Literal Action

getting out of a sticky situation

Essential Action

To negotiate with a madman for my life

Tactics

THREATENING: to command respect
INDUCIVE: to desperately plead with reason
THREATENING: to scare

As If

It's as if I was begging my dad to let me stay out past my curfew

Obstacles

If I were a man, Krogstad would "have me by the balls." He is totally in control of this situation, and he scares me to death. I need to either instill a fear of Torvald into him, or get him to show some compassion without pushing him over the edge.

Also, Torvald and Rank are in the next room. Volume must remain low, but I have to maintain intensity. (Talk faster)

Business

Krogstad's card
leftover drink from the scene before
the letter
lock Torvald's office

GOTE- 2.6

What's literally happening?

- Christina enters with costume
- show her letter in mailbox from Krogstad
- tell her I committed forgery
- ask her to be my witness
- tell her the miracle is coming and I have to stop it
- try to convince her not to go to Krogstad's
- give her his card with address
- Torvald tries to get into the living room/frightens me
- lie and say I'm trying on the dress
- Christina tells me to distract Torvald, and leaves

Literal Action

getting my best friend to help me out of a bad situation.

Essential Action

To prove to Christina that I am not off my rocker

Tactics

INDUCIVE: to calmly explain (I will definitely fail, but I have to try)

THREATENING: to frantically prove

INDUCIVE: to look for assurance

As If

It's as if I had to tell my mom I've been kicked out of school.

Obstacles

I am not a very reliable source right now. To Christina, I must look like a complete basketcase. I need to overcome that appearance to prove that I was and am completely sane. If I fail to prove my sanity to Christina, no one will believe that it was I and not Torvald who forged the loan. Most important is my family. I need Christina to help me protect them.

I also fear that she will judge me negatively once she finds out I broke the law. The decision to finally let her in on that secret is a difficult one. In this scene the world is starting to crash in, around me; if Christina doesn't help me, I will be floating alone.

Business

- Krogstad's card
- the letter
- hairpin to break into the mailbox

GOTE- 2.7

What's literally happening?

- ask Torvald to come out of study
- unlock the door
- they expected me to be in the dress/I tease that no one gets to see me in that until tomorrow
- convince Torvald to work with me on the tarantella and think of nothing else until after the costume ball
- stop him from checking the mail
- dance poorly on purpose while Torvald plays the piano
- dance again when Rank plays the piano
- Christina enters
- Torvald orders the end of the practice
- agree that nothing ugly can come between Torvald and me until tomorrow
- send the men into the dining room
- order Ellen to open champagne and put out chocolates
- ask Christina what happened with Krogstad/he wasn't home
- decide to just let the miracle happen, and I will take whatever means necessary to keep Torvald from sacrificing himself for me

Literal Action

dancing for my life

Essential Action

To distract my husband by making him feel that he is the most powerful, important person in my life

Tactics

INDUCIVE: to playfully flirt
INDUCIVE: to inflate his ego
THREATENING: to seductively demand
-----the dance-----
THREATENING: to sexually torture
INDUCIVE: to entice
-----after the dance-----
INDUCIVE: to celebrate

As If

It's as if I've been bit by a poisonous snake, I have to save myself, but I can't let anyone know what's going on.

Obstacles

If I don't succeed, Torvald will read Krogstad's letter, and he will be ruined. If I can distract him long enough to give Christina a chance to talk to Krogstad, it will all

work out. At this point, I am so scared, and it's almost impossible to cover my fear. There's also a certain discomfort factor with Dr. Rank since our last scene.

Business

the key to unlock the study

hiding the hairpin

the dance with a tambourine? a scarf?

a headdress maybe?

food?

GOTE- 3.2

Where have I been?

Torvald and I are returning from the Stenborg's home, across the street. They hold a large party every year after Christmas, and the party always has a theme. This year, it was a masquerade ball. I have never tried so hard to have a good time. I wanted Torvald to be especially entertained because this could be the last time we will be together for a long time. I do manage to enjoy myself, because being the eternal optimist, I've been clinging to the hope that Christina talked Krogstad into asking for his note back. The tarantella went well. Torvald played piano as I danced. I wish Dr. Rank would have played; I perform so much better when he plays for me. As soon as I was through dancing, Torvald whisked me away, to the coat room, and insisted we leave immediately. I wanted to stay for many reasons: there were still others I wanted to see, but mostly, at the party I was safe from the letter that awaits my husband at home. Though I hope for the best, there is still a part of me that fears Krogstad and suspects he will not bend, even for Christina.

The evening, though nerve racking, has been a success. The thing that will assure my happiness, and what I am expecting is that Christina has smoothed things over with Krogstad.

What's literally happening?

Beat 1

- enter protesting/I want to go back to the party
- Christina greets us.
- show her my costume
- Torvald criticizes me for not wanting to leave the party and exits
- ask Christina about Krogstad
- she could not find him to make arrangements

Beat 2

- this means I will have to leave/possibly commit suicide
- Torvald enters says good-bye to Christina's/tells her he hates knitting
- Christina leaves
- Torvald goes back to trying to seduce me.
- talk about Rank
- ask him not to call me by his pet names
- he confesses he stays away from me at parties intentionally
- I tell him to stop
- doorbell rings

Literal Action

Beat 1: extracting good news from a friend

Beat 2: preparing a loved one for my departure

Essential Action

Beat 1: To make Christina spill the beans

Beat 2: To obtain Torvald's forgiveness.

Tactics

Beat 1

INDUCIVE: to coax

THREATENING: to corner

Beat 2

INDUCIVE: to satisfy

INDUCIVE: to apologize

THREATENING: to force away

As If

Beat 1: It's as if I've been waiting my whole life to meet God so I could ask him a question, and he's finally here. *Beat 2:* It's as if I am talking to a three year old with A.D.D.

Obstacles

I don't want to hear bad news. It is difficult to first ask Christina what the news is, because I fear the worst while I hope for the best.

My guilt, desire to please Torvald, anticipation of the miracle, fear of death, the presence of the letter in the mail box are all factors that drive this scene. My greatest desire is to please Torvald, but as I try to please him sexually, I am tortured by my fears. I don't want to die, but it seems the only way out of the situation. This is the last time I will ever be with him. What I need more than anything, is to be held, but that is not on Torvald's agenda.

Business

shawl

coat, hat

Torvald's coat and hat

tambourine

Christina's coat, mittens, hat

GOTE- 3.3

What's literally happening?

- Rank enters (to Torvald's dismay)
- talk about the party (the champagne)
- Rank and I communicate over Torvald's head about Rank's illness
- I ask him what he will be at next year's ball
- I mistakenly think his answer confirms he will be fine
- offer to light Rank's cigar
- tell Rank to sleep well (good-bye)
- he wishes me the same and leaves
- Torvald comments on Rank's drinking

Literal Action

communicating in code with a friend

Essential Action

To assure my best friend understands that I love him and forgive him.

Tactics

INDUCIVE: to coddle

INDUCIVE: to secretly play

As If

It's as if I was passing notes in study hall

Obstacles

Torvald is the biggest obstacle here. I am trying to get as much information from Dr. Rank as I can, without letting Torvald know what we were talking about. Torvald couldn't handle it if we talked about death, so we must keep this secret.

This is also the last time I will ever see Dr. Rank. I avoided him at the party because of the kiss we shared earlier today. But now that I am planning on committing suicide, I want him to know that I have no hardfeelings. Trying to keep up the charade is the hardest obstacle within this scene. I am scared, and I cannot talk to anyone about my fears

Business

taking off hair piece, shoes

cigar

lighter

glass of water

GOTE- 3.4

What's literally happening?

- Torvald goes to open his mail/finds hairpin in the lock
- blame it on the kids
- the card from Rank arrived
- I explain this means he is dying and will no longer be with us
- Torvald says he'd die to protect me
- tell him to read his letters
- he says he'd rather hold me
- push him off with the excuse of Rank
- prepare to kill myself as he reads
- question my courage

Literal Action

preparing for my departure

Essential Action

To sever all ties with the man I love

Tactics

INDUCIVE: to ignore

THREATENING: to deny him sex

As If

It's as if I were breaking up with my boyfriend for his own good, even though I love him and don't want to leave him.

Obstacles

This scene is all about dashed hopes. Everything raises my hopes- maybe the box won't open- It does. Dr. Rank's card destroys my expectation that he will be here for Torvald when I am gone. The only thing left to do is sever all ties with the man I love. If I don't cut Torvald loose, he will try to protect me, and I cannot let the miracle happen.

Business

shawl
pills
liquor

GOTE- 3.5

What's literally happening?

- Torvald confronts me with letter/grabs me
- tell him he can't save me/I won't let him take the blame
- tell him I know what I've done and I did it out of love
- tell him I'm leaving so he'll be free of Krogstad
- he says I've inherited my father's lack of morality
- he asks if I understand what I've done/I do
- he says he won't let me pollute his children/they'll grow up to lie and cheat like

me

Literal Action

trying to commit suicide

Essential Action

To shield the man I love from my ugliness

Tactics

INDUCIVE: to plead

THREATENING: to adamantly defend

INDUCIVE: to apologize

As If

It's as if my little brother broke a lamp, and I told Dad it was my fault.

Obstacles

I have to leave before Torvald tries to stop me. I know he will rush to my defense, but I cannot let him do that. When he does not react as I suspected, I have another obstacle to overcome, my confusion. His mean reaction throws me for a loop, and I don't know how to react to this stranger.

Business

pills

anything I can touch or hold for comfort/stability

GOTE- 3.6

What's literally happening?

- Ellen brings a letter from Krogstad
- Torvald reads it-he's saved
- he apologizes for his violent outburst and assumes things can go back to normal
- I take off my dress
- Torvald "forgives" me
- announce we need to talk for the first time in eight years
- tell him he never loved me
- figure out he and Father both treated me like I was a doll
- I've never been happy here
- he tries to downplay the incident and says he can teach me how to be a good wife and mother
- realize I must learn on my own, and decide to leave Torvald and my children
- he tries to stop me
- I'll go to Christina's tonight and my old home tomorrow
- he says I am not being responsible as my duties should be to him and my children
- my duties are to myself first
- morality discussion
- tell him I don't love him
- explain how I decided to leave him: the miracle didn't happen
- women sacrifice themselves everyday while men do not
- try to go to the children, realize they should not see me like this
- leave my key
- Torvald asks if I will ever come back
- only if our marriage could be a real marriage
- leave the house

Literal Action

saving my marriage

Essential Action

Saving the lives of my children- HE'S WRONG

Tactics

- INDUCIVE: to negotiate
- THREATENING: to accuse
- INDUCIVE: struggle to explain
- THREATENING: to ridicule
- THREATENING: to dominate control
- INDUCIVE: to apologize
- INDUCIVE: to coax open his eyes

As If

It's as if I am telling my father, it is just as important to be an actress daughter as it is to be a golf-playing son..

Obstacles

The biggest obstacle in this scene is that I feel like I just got hit by a train, but I have to get up and keep fighting. Torvald is not the man I thought he was. So with the rug having just been pulled out from beneath my feet, I must face my biggest fear: a life alone. I have never been alone. For my entire life, I have had my father or Torvald to take care of me. Part of me wants to stay; I am scared, and I don't want to leave my children. However, I have to leave for them. If I stayed, it would teach them that their father is right in the way he treats me. I cannot teach them until I know what I have to within me to give them.

Business

new dress
overnight bags
house key
ring

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