

NORA. If little squirrel asked you really prettily to grant her a wish—

HELMER. Well?

NORA. Would you grant it to her?

HELMER. First I should naturally have to know what it was.

NORA. Squirrel would do lots of pretty tricks for you if you granted her wish.

HELMER out with it, then.

NORA. Your little skylark would sing in every room –

HELMER. My little skylark does that already.

NORA. I'd turn myself into a little fairy and dance for you in the moonlight, Torvald.

HELMER. Nora, it isn't that business you were talking about this morning?

NORA (*comes closer*). Yes, Torvald – oh, please! I beg of you!

HELMER. Have you really the nerve to bring that up again?

NORA. Yes, Torvald, yes, you must do as I ask! You must let Krogstad keep his place at the bank!

HELMER. My dear Nora, his is the job I'm giving to Mrs Linde.

NORA. Yes, that's terribly sweet of you. But you can get rid of one of the other clerks instead of Krogstad.

HELMER. Really, you're being incredibly obstinate. Just because you thoughtlessly promised to put in a word for him, you expect me to—

NORA. No, it isn't that, Helmer. It's for your own sake. That man writes for the most beastly newspapers – you said so yourself. He could do you tremendous harm. I'm so dreadfully frightened of him—

HELMER. Oh, I understand. Memories of the past. That's what's frightening you.

NORA. What do you mean?

HELMER. You're thinking of your father, aren't you?

NORA. Yes, yes. Of course. Just think what those dreadful men wrote in the papers about papa! The most frightful slanders. I really believe it would have lost him his job if the Ministry hadn't sent you down to investigate, and you hadn't been so kind and helpful to him.

Why is Nora using Helmer's nicknames?

How would you characterize her diction and syntax? Why is she speaking in this way?

What is being implied here?

HELMER. But, my dear little Nora, there's a considerable difference between your father and me. Your father was not a man of unassailable reputation. But I am. And I hope to remain so all my life.

NORA. But no one knows what spiteful people may not dig up. We could be so peaceful and happy now, Torvald – we could be free from every worry – you and I and the children. Oh, please, Torvald, please -- !

HELMER. The very fact of your pleading his cause makes it impossible for me to keep him. Everyone at the bank already knows that I intend to dismiss Krogstad. If the rumour got about that the new vice-president had allowed his wife to persuade him to change his mind –

NORA. Well, what then?

HELMER. Oh, nothing, nothing. As long as my little Miss Obstinate gets her way - ! Do you expect me to make a laughing-stock of myself before my entire staff – give people the idea that I am open to outside influence? Believe me, I'd soon feel the consequences! Besides – there's something else that makes it impossible for Krogstad to remain in the bank while I am its manager.

NORA. What is it?

HELMER. I might conceivably have allowed myself to ignore his moral obloquies-

NORA. Yes, Torvald, surely

HELMER. And I hear he's quite efficient at his job. But we – well, we were school friends. It was one of those friendships that one enters into over-hastily and so often comes to regret later in life. I might as well confess the truth. We – well, we're on Christian name terms And the tactless idiot makes no attempt to conceal it when other people are present. On the contrary, he thinks it gives him the right to be familiar with me. He shows off the whole time, with 'Torvald this', and 'Torvald that'. I can tell you, I find it damned annoying. If he stayed, he'd make my position intolerable.

NORA. Torvald, you can't mean this seriously.

HELMER. Oh? And why not?

NORA. But it's so petty.

HELMER. What did you say? Petty? You think *I* am petty?

NORA. No, Torvald dear, of course you're not. That's just why—

HELMER. Don't quibble! You call my motives petty. Then I must be petty too. Petty! I see. Well, I've had enough of this. (*Goes to the door and calls into the hall*)

NORA. What are you going to do?

How does Helmer's dialogue prove that he is a static character?

How has Nora's word choice changed throughout the course of this conversation? Why has Ibsen created this transformation in her dialogue?

HELMER. (*Searching among his papers*). I'm going to settle this matter once and for all. *The maid enters.* Take this letter downstairs at once. Find a messenger and see that he delivers it. Immediately! The address is on the envelope. Here's the money.

MAID. Very good, sir. (*Goes out with the letter.*)

HELMER. (*putting his papers in order*). There now, little Miss Obstinate.

NORA (*tensely*). Torvald – what was in that letter?

HELMER. Krogstad's dismissal.

NORA. Call her back, Torvald! There's still time. Oh, Torvald, call her back! Do it for my sake – for your own sake – for the children! Do you hear me, Torvald? Please do it! You don't realize what this may do to us all!

HELMER. Too late.

What is the difference in Nora's tone in these two lines?
Why does Ibsen juxtapose these lines?

NORA. Yes. Too late.

Is he strong and courageous? What evidence is there to prove that he is not?

HELMER. My dear Nora, I forgive you this anxiety. Though it is a bit of an insult vindictiveness of a depraved hack journalist? But I forgive you, because it so charmingly testifies to the love you bear me. (*Takes her in his arms*). Which is as it should be, my own dearest Nora. Let what will happen, happen. When the real crisis comes, you will not find me lacking in strength and courage. I am man enough to bear the burden for us both.

How does this final speech demonstrate that Helmer is living out his role as a "man"?

At this point in the play, what is your opinion of Helmer?