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Kamban**

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HADDA PADDA

By Godmunder Kamban

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FOREWORD

The value of this play lies in the fact that, beneath the surface, it vibrates with the quivering, intensely pulsating forces of life. The speeches breathe. The leading characters not only have perspicuity, but each has its own representative melodic theme. There is as music under the text, a constant accompaniment of exquisite passion, rising, sinking, and now rising once more, in a struggle with vacillating sensual pleasure and base inclination to supersede others. Around the simple action there is an atmosphere of poetry. The play opens with the superstition of olden times, in the old nurse's tale about the life-egg, suggested to her by a crystal ball, with which the sisters are playing. Modern superstition is woven into the beautiful scene, where Hadda Padda, with heroically mastered despair, meets the herborist who talks of her plants in a calm poetic manner, reminiscent of the way Ophelia speaks of the flowers she has picked and collected.

The drama stands or falls with Hadda Padda, that is to say, it STANDS. She holds it with a firm hand, as the Saint in the old paintings bears the church. In her, the Iceland of ancient and modern times meets. She has more warmth, more kindness of heart, more womanly affection, than any antique figure from a Saga. She gives herself completely, resignedly. She is tender and she is mild, without being meek. In her inmost self, however, she is proud. When first this pride is touched, then hurt, and finally the very woman in her is mortally wounded, it is at once perceptible that she descends from the strong, wild women of olden times. The wildness has become resolution, the pride has become poise, the strength has remained unchanged. She plays with life and death like the heroes of a thousand years ago. She faces death without flinching, and despite all her goodness, her delicacy, her kindly love for the old and the young, for the humble and the poor, for animals and plants, at the bottom of her nature she is heathen. In life's last moments, with death and revenge in mind, she can still pretend, invent, dupe. Such profound and exquisite womanhood, such inflexible masculine will, have hardly ever been seen combined on the stage before.

GEORG BRANDES.

INTRODUCTION

Iceland has always been famous for the quality of her literature, although nowadays but little of it comes to our shores. It is, therefore, an especial pleasure to introduce the author of "Hadda Padda."

Godmundur Kamban, son of a merchant of an old and well known Icelandic family, was born near Reykjavik, the capital of Iceland, on June 8, 1888. He was graduated twenty-two years later from the College of Reykjavik, where he received honoris causa in literature and language, the first and only time this prize has ever been awarded. While still at college, he was made assistant editor of the best known newspaper in Iceland, edited by Bjorn Jonsson, the late Prime Minister, in whose home Mr. Kamban lived during his college career. In 1910, he proceeded to the University of Copenhagen, where he specialized in literature and received his Master's degree. In Copenhagen, Peter Jerndorff, the famous Acteur Royal, practically regarded him as his own son. Under Jerndorff's direction for five years, he obtained that thorough dramatic education which is so essential to the fastidious Scandinavian Theatre, and to which Ibsen also served an apprenticeship.

"Hadda Padda," Mr. Kamban's first dramatic work, was written in Denmark in 1912, while he was still a student at the University of Copenhagen. Originally written in Icelandic, it was translated into Danish and submitted to the Royal Theatre, a fortress difficult of access to the newcomer. This theatre did not even fully recognise such masters as Ibsen and Bjornson until they stood on the heights of achievement. Our author was but twenty-four years old, unknown, and offering his first play.

From the outset "Hadda Padda" caused the directors unexpected trouble. It took them four times as long as usual to come to a decision. They finally accepted it "on account of its literary merit," but without any obligation on their part to produce it, as the scenery of the last act was of "such daring and dangerous character."

There was but one thing to do and Mr. Kamban did it. His play was published by Gyldendal, the most distinguished of the Scandinavian publishers. He sent a copy to Georg Brandes, as do thousands of authors from all parts of the world. Next evening he received a letter from the great critic, telling him that he had read the play, and asking Mr. Kamban to call on him at his home. A few days later, when he spent four hours with Brandes at and after table, the latter told him that he received on an average twelve volumes a day from different authors of every nationality, and were he to do nothing else, he could not read even one twelfth of them. "But I am going to write an article about your play," he concluded. Thus was Mr. Kamban's place as an artist assured.

In spite of the unanimous recognition the play received from the press, the theatre still refused to produce it, as nearly all the authorities agreed that it would be "hardly possible to stage." Finally, the new chief of the theatre, Count F. Brockenhuus-Schack, determined to carry the matter through. The author then undertook to stage the play, designed the scenes, and arranged the mise-en-scene to the minutest detail. On November 14, 1914, the first performance took place. He sat in the latticed author's box. The first three acts went smoothly, interrupted at times by applause. The fourth act, the one talked about and difficult, was still to come. The fate of the play depended on this act. The curtain rose, and with the slowness of life the act proceeded. The silence of the audience was uncanny. Toward the end, the foremost theatrical critic of the city rose to his feet and raised his hand as if in horror. The curtain fell. Not a hand stirred. A whole minute elapsed and Mr. Kamban left the box, refusing to himself to admit the failure. Then suddenly a wild enthusiasm broke loose and lasted several minutes. According to the regulations—unique in Europe—of the

Royal Theatre, the curtain may not be raised for any author or actor except at a jubilee. The public, however, refused to leave the theatre till the manager had escorted Mr. Kamban to the dais in front of the curtain, and there he expressed his thanks to the audience.

After four months in Copenhagen, "Hadda Padda" toured the Scandinavian Countries, and preparations were being made for its production in Germany, when the war broke out, and the German theatres were indefinitely closed to foreign dramatists. That is why, two years ago, he came to America.

K.

CHARACTERS

SKULI, the town judge.
LADY ANNA, his wife.
HRAFNHILD, called HADDA PADDA; KRISTRUN; their daughters.
LITTLE SKULI, their grandson.
RANNVEIG, Hadda Padda's nurse.
THE SHERIFF OF BREIDABOL.
LADY MARGARET, his wife.
INGOLF, law student; OLOF; their children.
STEINDOR, Olof's husband, the sheriff's secretary.
SIGGA; DODDI; MAGGA; Steindor's and Olof's children.
AN HERBORIST.
NATIVE AND FOREIGN SUMMER TOURISTS.

There is an interval of a year between Acts I and II; of a week between Acts II and III. One night elapses between Acts III and IV.

PLACE: Iceland. TIME: Present.

HADDA PADDA

ACT I

(A luxuriously furnished drawing-room in the house of the Town Judge. On the right, in front, a door. In the middle rear an open door draped with rich, heavy, deep-red curtains. On the left a large window. In the corner, between the window and the door, a grand piano, behind which stands a palm, the leaves spreading over the piano. In front, on the left, a divan. Alongside of it is a pedestal with a black terra cotta statue on it.)

(Hadda Padda and Kristrun are sitting toward the front, in large deep arm-chairs, throwing a crystal ball to each other. Near by is a small table, covered with a piece of velvet, on which the ball had lain. Hadda Padda is very sunburnt.)

RANNVEIG [enters from behind. She is knitting, keeping the ball of yarn under her arm. She is dressed in an Icelandic costume]. Take care! Don't drop the ball! [Drops a stitch, takes it up again—smiles.] Who knows—maybe it is your life-egg, children!

KRISTRUN. Life-egg!... Is that a fairy-tale?

RANNVEIG. Haven't you ever heard it? Come, let me tell you about it. [Takes a chair and sits down beside them.] Once upon a time there lived two giantesses who were sisters. One day, they lured a young prince to them. They let the prince sleep under a coverlet woven of gold, while they themselves slept under one woven of silver. When at last the prince pledged himself in marriage to one of them, he made them tell him how they spent the day in the forest. They went hunting deer and birds, and when they rested, they sat down under an oak, and threw their life-egg to each other. If they broke it they both would die. The next day, the prince went to the forest, and saw the sisters sitting there, under the oak. One of them was holding a golden egg in her hand, and just as she tossed it into the air, he hurled his spear. It hit the egg, and broke it—the giantesses fell down, dead.

KRISTRUN. Brave giantesses who dared to treat your sacred possession so heedlessly!

RANNVEIG. One does not hear the footstep of vengeance. It came to them unexpectedly.

KRISTRUN. How I wish my whole fate were held in this ball.

RANNVEIG. What would you do if it were?

KRISTRUN. I would lay it gently in the hand of the man I loved, saying: Take it to a safe place!—and I would shut my eyes—while he were searching for the place.

RANNVEIG. If my sister were here, perhaps she could read your fate in the ball, both the past and the future... Who knows, but the whole Universe may be mirrored in this one glass globe.

KRISTRUN. That's your favorite superstition. [Smiling surreptitiously.] Tell me, Veiga—haven't you a life-egg? [Turns abruptly from her, throwing the ball to Hadda.]

RANNVEIG [evasively]. I had one once....

KRISTRUN [catching the ball]. Then you haven't it any more?

RANNVEIG. No.

KRISTRUN. And you are still alive?

RANNVEIG. He who lived once in happiness dies twice. [Sees the sisters throw the ball faster and faster.] Don't throw the ball so carelessly.

KRISTRUN. Be calm. The prince won't come. And even if he came—do you think we have the same life-egg, I and Hrafnhild?

RANNVEIG. Now stop making fun of me! The ball may hit you in the face—there now!—that's enough!—you nearly dazed my Hadda. It is strange to like to do this. [Picks up the ball, and puts it back on the velvet.]

KRISTRUN. Tell me, Veiga, perhaps your life-egg was a young man's heart....

RANNVEIG. We won't talk about it any more.

KRISTRUN. And how did it break?

RANNVEIG [enraged]. At least I didn't play with it. *I* never played with anybody else's feelings.

KRISTRUN. There—there, don't snarl so, you're simply barking—bow, wow!

RANNVEIG [furious]. How many have you made fools of already?

KRISTRUN. Let me see—. [Counts on her fingers.] One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, [throws off one shoe, and counts on her toes] eleven... twelve... thirteen—ah! here's a hole in my stocking. Thirteen! Thirteen, Veiga dear! The unlucky number! Wonderful! I'll never throw him over!

RANNVEIG. You're horribly flippant, Kristrun.

KRISTRUN [sits down at the small table, shades her face as she looks into the ball]. Fancy, Veiga, I see your whole fate in the ball.

RANNVEIG. Leave the crystal alone, it won't hurt you.

KRISTRUN. As sure as I live—I can see the most trivial events in your life. I see you by day, in this room here, when your nose begins to itch, and you steal into the kitchen to take a pinch of snuff. I see.... [Looks up; Rannveig has come up to her, and is about to strike her.]

KRISTRUN [slipping away from her]. Look out, the snuff is dripping from your nose! [Runs out, Rannveig shuts the door behind her, and turns around. She passes her finger under her nose, looks at it, shakes her head.]

HADDA PADDA. You and Runa don't seem to get on any better since I've been away.

RANNVEIG. We have never gotten along together.... I don't understand the young people nowadays. They are merely butterflies—all of them.

HADDA PADDA. You once told me, dear, that sometime in every one's life there comes a wishing hour. Maybe Runa had hers when she wished for the joy of living.

RANNVEIG. It's a strange joy then, to want to make other people miserable! To use the beauty God has given her, against those who cannot resist it.... Why do you suppose the new engineer has stopped coming here since the son of the Chief Justice returned from Copenhagen—and he seemed like such a sweet boy too! It is not the first or the second time she has changed her mind.

HADDA PADDA. When a true and deep love comes to her, she will not change her mind.

RANNVEIG. It's no use to stand up for her; she wheedles them all.

HADDA PADDA. But still you told me, dear, that you would be fonder of me if I did not marry.

RANNVEIG. How can you say that, Hadda dear? I said that marriage doesn't always bring happiness. HADDA PADDA. I know. You told me that only to console me, because I am now twenty-six years old. Runa is nineteen, prettier than most girls, and a wild little imp, surrounded by young men all the time. And they play upon her vanity only to make her cruel. [Stands up.]

RANNVEIG. At her age you were prettier, and are, still, but you were not like that. No, she hasn't your character.

KRISTRUN [enters from behind]. The prince is coming! [Rannveig gathers her knitting, and drops the yarn. Kristrun jumps at it like a cat, and catches it.] Now I'll dance for you, Veiga dear. [She whirls around her, singing, yarn in hand, twisting the thread around the old woman. They listen for footsteps. Rannveig slips out, on the right, entangled in the yarn, Kristrun following.]

INGOLF [enters. Like Hadda, he is sunburnt].

HADDA PADDA. How do you do! You promised to be here earlier, dear. [Kisses him.]

INGOLF. What time is it? [About to take out his watch.]

HADDA PADDA [catching his hands]. I don't know. But I felt the moment slipping by, when you should have been here.

INGOLF [kisses her again].

HADDA PADDA. While I was sitting there, in the arm-chair, waiting for you, I closed my eyes, and do you know what I saw?

INGOLF. No.

HADDA PADDA [pointing to the crystal]. I saw the crystal ball through my eyelashes.

INGOLF [smiling]. Then you did not close your eyes—

HADDA PADDA. No, I cheated. [They laugh.]... and then I began to throw the crystal ball to Runa, do you know why?

INGOLF. No—?

HADDA PADDA. So as to lure back an old recollection.... Do you remember, it was your last winter at the Latin school. One day you came home, and we two were alone in the room here, you took the ball, threw it to

me, and called: WISHING—! I caught it, and said:—STONE! And so we continued to play, till you called HADDA! I didn't quite follow your trick at first, but caught the word: PADDA! Then you laughed and said: From now on, you shall never be called anything but HADDA PADDA. Do you remember?

INGOLF. I do.

HADDA PADDA. Everybody calls me that now, except my nurse.

RANNVEIG [peeping in through the curtain]. Don't let me hear that name. Hf! Padda! That's an insect! [Disappears.]

HADDA PADDA [walks gently forth, and rolls the door back]. Then I asked you what christening gift I was to have. You gave me your first kiss.

INGOLF [sits down on the divan, takes Hadda on his knee]. Hadda Padda! You don't know how I love that name. You don't know how many times I have wrapped you in it, as in some fantastic mantle. After you had left Copenhagen last spring, and I sat reading all the live-long day, until at last I went to bed, my lips did not close on your name, till my eyes had closed on your picture.

HADDA PADDA. You must never call me anything but that. Each time you say it, it brings back the joy of your first kiss.

INGOLF. Were you really in love with me then?

HADDA PADDA. You don't know?... Then I did succeed in hiding it?

INGOLF. Why did you hide it, Hadda? Why, I almost believed you bore me a grudge. You seemed to hold more aloof each day.

HADDA PADDA. And even that did not betray me?

INGOLF. Why did you hide it, Hadda?

(Footsteps are heard outside.)

HADDA PADDA [kisses Ingolf hastily, gets up, and seats herself at his side, takes his hand]. Don't you understand, dear, I was afraid of knowing the certainty. The stronger my love grew, the more carefully I had to hide it. I dared not risk those beautiful dream-children of uncertainty for a disguised certainty. Whenever we talked together, and you looked up at me, I was startled. I thought you understood, and your hurried glance reached me only after the fear of seeing the answer in it.

INGOLF. You, the most sincere of women, could cherish so strong a love and seem so cold.

HADDA PADDA. Now I have made too great a virtue of my love. Some of my reserve was pride. Just think, you lived with us during your entire schooltime, and in the summer sister and I were by turns at your home. We grew up, you, handsome and manly, and a lord of pleasures; and you always seemed to be careful not to pay me greater attention than the other girls, especially at parties. That was why I drew back.—I was eighteen, you were twenty; you were graduated and went abroad. And poor, proud little Hadda Padda was left alone.

INGOLF. Poor proud little Hadda Padda. [They laugh.]

HADDA PADDA. Then when you came back the next spring, it was Krístrun's turn to go to the country. And since then, you have not been home during the summer.

INGOLF. And when you went to Copenhagen the following winter, it just happened to be the only year I stayed home.

HADDA PADDA. Then I thought it surely was the will of fate to separate us. But I loved you even more. I could not give up hope. Not even when you wrote home, the year before last, that you had decided to live abroad. I got that news on the shortest day of the year. I watched the twilight darken into night until the very blackness swam before my eyes in blood-red spots. It was then I made up my mind to go.

INGOLF. Yes, you came in the autumn.

HADDA PADDA. And it was not before December, at a meeting of the Icelandic Society—we sat alone, in an outer room. Then I placed my fate in your hand.

INGOLF. Then you placed your hand in mine.

HADDA PADDA. Then I placed my life in your hand. I willed all my power into my hand and placed it in yours. That instant, nothing but my hand lived. Had you thrust it away, I would not now be living.

INGOLF. How silently happiness steals upon us. We sat alone in the room, far from the din of the dance. Then it came. I heard its tread in the quiver of your breath.... Then I felt it in my hand.

HADDA PADDA. And yet you sat there immovable, and made the very seconds fight for my life. When I held your hand, I was afraid lest a single finger tremble—till you closed your hand around my wrist, and drew me to you. [She leans toward him.]

INGOLF. Do you know what attracted me most to you?

HADDA PADDA. You don't know yourself.

INGOLF. Why not...?

HADDA PADDA. Because you love me.

INGOLF. But I think I know now.

HADDA PADDA. Well, what is it?

INGOLF. The thing that kept us apart so long.

HADDA PADDA. And that is?...

INGOLF. Your reticence. That awaiting attitude you just called pride. I have known other women. They came to me without first listening to my heart... but you did not.

HADDA PADDA. I looked into your eyes. I saw the flame in them increase, the longer they gazed at me.

INGOLF. The human heart is like the mountains: they give no echo if we get too near.

HADDA PADDA [lets herself slide down at Ingolf's knees, so that he sits bending over her]. Let me look at

you for a long time.—How long your eyelashes are! Each time you blink, it is as though invisible petals were sprinkled upon me.

INGOLF [closing her hands in his]. Now you have no hands.... Shall I give them to you again? [Lets go, but looks at her one hand lying in his.] Your nails have a tinge like that of ice in sunshine.

HADDA PADDA [withdraws her hand, laughing, and gets up]. I am just thinking...

INGOLF. What are you thinking?

HADDA PADDA [walks a few steps and stops behind him]. I was lying down outside in the garden to-day. I could not keep awake. I dreamed I stood outside the Cathedral. It was dark inside, but all along the church floor, on either side, was a straight row of unlit candles. I remember all the white soft wicks, peeping half out, waiting for light. Then a sudden gust of wind swept through the whole church, and as it grazed the wicks, all the candles were lighted.

INGOLF [keeps silent].

HADDA PADDA. What do you think the dream means? I think it means happiness.

INGOLF. You must not deprive your dream of its beauty by interpreting it.

HADDA PADDA. Happiness comes to us like a beautiful dream that we don't dare to interpret.

INGOLF. You have promised to trust me as much as you love me.

HADDA PADDA. I see the future mirrored in those days we lived together.

INGOLF. I love you, Hadda Padda.

HADDA PADDA. Your words are the light, your caresses are the warmth. Give me both, Ingolf. Kiss me.

INGOLF [kisses her].

HADDA PADDA. And I should not trust you? Has not a sacred hour welded our hearts together? And have you not placed your life in my hands?—Do you remember last summer, when I visited your home, how you lowered me with a rope down the Angelica Gorge? I have not often lived so exquisite an hour. Then I became quite foolhardy. When I came up again, I asked you to go down and let me hold the rope for you.

INGOLF. I hardly believed you were as strong as you are.

HADDA PADDA. If you had not had courage to go down by my hands, I am not quite sure that I could be so fond of you. I shall never forget that moment. I saw you come up again with an angelica crown on your head. I saw you rise up like a green-crowned sea-god from the deep.—

INGOLF. I can't bear the thought that I shall leave you in a few days.

HADDA PADDA [smiles].

INGOLF. You smile?

HADDA PADDA. I am thinking of something. Shall I tell you?

LITTLE SKULI [comes rushing in from the right]. Hadda Padda! Have you seen—? Ah, Ingolf, are you here? [Runs straight up to Ingolf, catching hold of both his hands]. Why did you leave home so soon, Ingolf?

INGOLF. Because I wanted to go to Copenhagen.

HADDA PADDA. Skuli dear, will you be a good boy and make me a ship?

LITTLE SKULI. Oh no, not now.

HADDA PADDA. Oh yes, your last ship was so well cut out, with great big masts. [Pats him.] You're a dear.

INGOLF. Then you'll be allowed to come along with us to the country next summer.

HADDA PADDA. And sit in front, on the Sheriff's horse, many, many times.

LITTLE SKULI. Then will the Sheriff give me a sheep again?

INGOLF. Yes, my little friend, father will give you a sheep, and I will give you one too; I'll give you one with pretty rounded horns.

LITTLE SKULI. Does it butt?

INGOLF. O, of course not, it eats bread from your hand.

LITTLE SKULI. Then I'll saw its horns off, and give them to Sigga—she has lots of horns she plays sheep with. [Laughter.]

INGOLF. Well, are you going to make that ship?

LITTLE SKULI. Are you the one who gets all Hadda Padda's ships?

INGOLF. Well, I daresay I get most of them.—What makes you think so?

LITTLE SKULI. Because, whenever she is with you, she always wants me to make ships. [Ingolf and Hadda look at each other and laugh.]

INGOLF. Yes, she knows I am very fond of your ships.

LITTLE SKULI. Then I'll make ships for you often. [Runs out, Ingolf and Hadda still laughing.]

INGOLF. What was it you were going to tell me before?

HADDA PADDA. Something that...

INGOLF. That..?

HADDA PADDA. That...

INGOLF. Are you teasing me?

RANNVEIG [enters from the back, knitting, sits down]. What a lovely day it is.

HADDA PADDA. Veiga, dear, you promised to darn my lilac stockings for me. I haven't any to wear to-morrow.

RANNVEIG [considering]. How about the yellow ones?

HADDA PADDA. Oh, Runa must have taken them; I couldn't find them.

RANNVEIG [gets up]. Well, I can't let you go barefooted. [Goes out.]

INGOLF. You are shrewd, Hadda Padda!—Now, tell it to me.

HADDA PADDA. First, kiss me!

INGOLF [kisses her].

HADDA PADDA. Do you think you will miss me very much when you are gone?

INGOLF. How can you ask?

RANNVEIG [enters from the back, with the stockings in her hand]. I knew as much. I was right.—[Sees them embracing.]—I might have saved myself the trouble of looking for the stockings. [Turns round, and goes out.]

HADDA PADDA. Ingolf!

INGOLF. Yes—

HADDA PADDA. Now listen:—

THE JUDGE [enters from the back].

INGOLF [looks impatiently at his watch, and walks toward the door on the right.]

THE JUDGE. Are you going out, Ingolf?

INGOLF. I'm just going up to my room. I have a letter to answer. [Goes out.]

THE JUDGE. Well, my dear, to-morrow is the great day. HADDA PADDA. How good you are, father, to make me feel your gladness as you do.

THE JUDGE [takes her to his side, and sits down with her]. You happy child! I can't believe that you are grown up. It is as if I were beginning to realise it now, for the first time. But still, I shall have you one year more.

HADDA PADDA. Father!

THE JUDGE. Yes, dear.

HADDA PADDA. Father....!

THE JUDGE. What is the matter, dear?

HADDA PADDA. There is something I want to ask you.

THE JUDGE. And that is?

HADDA PADDA. I want to ask you—[Stops abruptly.]

LADY ANNA [enters from the back].

THE JUDGE [to Hadda]. What did you want to ask me? [Smiles to his wife.] Something mother may not hear?

HADDA PADDA. No, something I have to ask both of you.

THE JUDGE. Let us hear it, then.

HADDA PADDA. It is a very great favor, but you must not say no.

THE JUDGE. Ask it.

LADY ANNA. Well, what is it? [She has taken some work from the basket, and sits down to sew.]

HADDA PADDA. I want you to let me go to Copenhagen again. I want to go with Ingolf.

THE JUDGE. Now?

HADDA PADDA. Yes, now, Tuesday.

LADY ANNA. You are not in earnest, Hrafnhild. You know, Kristrun is going to leave for England next month, your brother has written for her. And she hasn't been abroad yet, while you have been twice.

HADDA PADDA. Nor do I want her to abandon her plan.

LADY ANNA. But do you want me to do without both of you at the same time?

HADDA PADDA. Would that be hard for you, mother?

LADY ANNA. Hard—it would be impossible. With all the parties we have, I must have one of you at home.

THE JUDGE. Of course, it would be difficult for mother to manage without your assistance—since Kristrun is going away.

LADY ANNA. I never thought of that, Hrafnhild. Besides, I think it in good taste, since your engagement will be announced to-morrow before Ingolf leaves, for you to remain at home this year till he has passed his examination and comes back.

HADDA PADDA. Yes, that would be in very good taste, if I could only bear it.

LADY ANNA. You must also remember that you would disturb him in his studies, if you were with him this winter.... Just when he wants to concentrate on his work.

HADDA PADDA. I want to make his work easier—that's just what I want to do.

LADY ANNA. I can't do without you, Hadda.

THE JUDGE [pats his wife on the cheek]. If our dear little Hadda Padda were sick, we would have to get one girl more in the house. And then, if she had to go away for a year to recover, and we were waiting for her to come back strong and healthy—don't you think we would readily allow her to go?

HADDA PADDA [throws her arms around his neck]. Father, I was sure that you...

LADY ANNA. That would be quite another thing.

THE JUDGE. Then you would realise that you COULD do without her.

LADY ANNA. But you don't mean, that any one else can fill her place—

HADDA PADDA. Mother, you think so much of Helga. I have talked to her, and she is willing to help you.

THE JUDGE. There you are! Can you imagine any one better?

LADY ANNA. It is not only that—if they were married, it would be quite proper for them to go abroad together.

HADDA PADDA [looks angrily at her mother, but says nothing].

THE JUDGE [discovers it. Walks up to his wife, and lays his arm on her shoulder]. We have not grown so old as you would have us. [*Heartily.*] Perhaps then, it is not proper for an old venerable judge to be as much in love with his silver-haired wife as when they were engaged. But he can't help it, and that's just the reason, he still understands love in young people. [*To Hadda.*] Ask your mother once more to let you go. Maybe she will when she knows you have my consent.

LADY ANNA. Well, I see what this is leading to. You know I don't usually oppose you.

HADDA PADDA. Father, you're always so good to me. [*Kisses him.*]

THE JUDGE [*in a whisper to Hadda*]. Now kiss your mother too!

HADDA PADDA. Nice mother! I will be twice as much pleasure to you when I come back. [*Kisses her.*]

LITTLE SKULI [*enters*]. Hadda Padda, do you want the ship to have two or three masts?

HADDA PADDA. Now let me see, my boy. [*Goes out with him.*]

THE JUDGE. To-morrow—that will be a happy day. At last I shall see my fondest wish fulfilled, mine and my dear old friend's—that our children should belong to each other. I never suspected this would happen when Hrafnhild went abroad last year.

LADY ANNA. And now she is to go with him again. She has much to thank her father for.

THE JUDGE. I think time has kept them apart long enough.—I had a long talk with Helga the other day—they are very good friends, you know, and she was in Copenhagen at the same time as Hadda last year. She told me that Ingolf had quite given up his studies, and it was Hadda Padda who made him take them up again.... From Christmas on, last year, he studied from morning to night,—and now he will pass his examination, and begin here as an attorney. Then they will probably marry next autumn.

LADY ANNA [*nods*]. He must be kind to Hrafnhild—she is more than just fond of him. Have you noticed that she is beginning to resemble him?

THE JUDGE. Now, in spite of everything, I think we are beginning to grow old; our sight is failing us.

LADY ANNA. Not my sight. Listen to me. You should have seen her with the flowers this summer while she was home. When she watered them, she talked with them as if they could understand her. It was as if she returned every rise of fragrance with a smile. And the flowers thrived and blossomed, as if they absorbed her tenderness.

THE JUDGE. I have noticed something else lately: that every time she comes into a room it is as though the air were filled with the beauty of peace. I could have myself blindfolded, and all Reykavik could walk through the room on soles of velvet—when SHE entered I could recognize her by the delightful calm that accompanies her.

LADY ANNA. This excessive love... it is worrying me. Maybe it was mostly on that account that I delayed agreeing to her departure.

THE JUDGE. There are so many things that worry you. Why doesn't Ingolf come back? [*Kisses her on the cheek.*] I will talk to him about it. [*Goes out.*]

RANNVEIG [*enters*]. The servants want to know how many places to lay for dinner.

LADY ANNA [*putting aside her needlework*]. Well, I'm coming—[*Goes out.*]

RANNVEIG [*walks slowly to the centre of the room, stands looking at the terra cotta statue*]. When you dream something, you don't want to come true, you ought to tell it to some one—better to a stone than to no one. [*Hands folded, she walks slowly up to the statue, whispering in its ear,*] I dreamed of a beautiful and marvellous diamond palace. I walked around it, but it had no doors. No one could get in. If any one were inside, he could not get out. I heard weeping inside the palace. It seemed to tear my heart. I recognised the weeping?—[*She passes her hand over her eyes, looks at the statue a long time, walks away from it, looks back at it once more, and goes out. In the doorway she encounters Hadda, looks at her, pats her cheek, and disappears.*]

HADDA PADDA [*enters with a water jug in her hand, walks up to a flower in the window*].

INGOLF [*enters and steals up to her*].

INGOLF. Now I know the secret. You are going with me to Copenhagen. Hadda Padda, Hadda Padda, I love you! Let me sing to you. [*He takes both her hands and while he sings, wild with joy, she hums the tune.*]

*You shall stand upon my skis,
In a mad precipitation
We, together, cleave the breeze:
We will,
My daffodil!*

*To the place where we'll abide
On my white horse you'll be riding:
Clouds of dust the moon will hide—
They will,
My daffodil!*

[*He lifts her in his arms. The sun is shining through the window and lights up the room.*]

HADDA PADDA [*stretches her arms toward the light*]. It is as though I had wings. [*Turns round in his arms, and folds him in her embrace.*] I will fly to my happiness.

CURTAIN

ACT II

(The following summer. A drawing-room in the Sheriff's house. The furniture old-fashioned and elaborate. On the left, a door leading to the dining-room. Against the wall, in front, a piano. On the right, under a window, a chaise-longue. In the back, an open window, through which can be seen green meadows, rising to a plateau, over the edge of which roars a water-fall. At the horizon, deep blue mountains. Bright sunshine, a hot summer's day.)

(In the middle of the room, around a table, set for coffee, the Sheriff and Lady Margaret, Olof and Steindor, Ingolf, Hrafnhild and Kristrun are sitting. The children, Little Skuli, Sigga, Doddi and Magga are seated at a small table near the window.)

OLOF [to the children]. You may go out now, children.

THE CHILDREN [rise].

SIGGA [To Olof]. Mother, when may we go berry-picking with Hadda Padda?

HADDA PADDA [smiles at the children]. We'll go next Sunday.

OLOF. Now go out and play! It's such lovely weather!

STEINDOR. And you may build your little play-house, but not in the part that isn't mowed.

SKULI. Come along, children!

DODDI. Come along! [The children go out.]

HADDA PADDA. I had a letter from my friend Helga to-day. She writes she is coming to see me for the week-end.

THE SHERIFF. We expect quite a few people over the week-end. I had a letter from Arni, the tourist guide, who says he'll be here with six tourists next Sunday.

STEINDOR. How are we going to accommodate all these people?

LADY MARGARET. Yes, it is true, every summer we have more and more guests. But, what difference does it make—The rooms of Breidabol are still large enough.

OLOF [to Steindor]. You can room with Ingolf for the present. [To Hadda.] And I'll move in with you. Then we'll have an extra room.

THE SHERIFF. My, but will you really be here three weeks to-morrow? It's so good to have both sisters at the same time. You haven't been here together since you were tiny little tots—just so high!

KRISTRUN. I would have been here last year, if I hadn't been sick.

THE SHERIFF... Well, let's not lose any more time, [Gets up] Steindor, we are behind in our work. [They go out. Then all get up. Ingolf goes over to the arm-chair near the window, and sits down.]

LADY MARGARET [going out]. Will you clear the table, Olla dear.

HADDA PADDA [assists Olof]. Shall we all go for a walk now? It's a glorious day!

OLOF [taking the coffee things into the dining-room]. Yes, I just have some time to spare.

KRISTRUN. I'm not going out again, I've just come in.

HADDA PADDA [taking Ingolf's hand]. You look so tired to-day.... Shall we go?

INGOLF. It's cooler indoors.

HADDA PADDA [in the same tone, as if she had not addressed Ingolf]. Olof, shall we go?

OLOF. Yes, Hadda dear. [Takes her arm—they go. Ingolf leans back in the arm-chair and closes his eyes.]

KRISTRUN [jumps on top of the chaise-longue, swings her arms crying]. Ingolf! Ride me pickaback! Right now! [Ingolf looks at her, smiling, casts a glance at the door and through the window, as he approaches the chaise-longue. Kristrun sits gracefully down on his shoulder. Her dress is drawn rather tightly, so that one of her legs shows. He takes hold of her leg to support her, and starts walking around the table.]

KRISTRUN [raises her head and looks into his eyes]. Will you be a good boy and take hold above the dress. [Lets go, and raises herself.] You silly boy, do you think you may hold me by my leg?

INGOLF. Well—I don't want to hold you by your leg!

KRISTRUN [grasps him around the shoulder]. You silly boy! Do you think you can lower your shoulder! I'm falling, I'm falling, hold on to my leg! [Ingolf walks on. They hear footsteps.]

KRISTRUN [about to spring down]. Somebody's coming! Oh, it's only the children. [Doddi and Skuli appear in the doorway.]

DODDI. Isn't father here? [The boys begin to laugh.]

KRISTRUN [clicks with her tongue]. There!—Now my horse must run!—Now run, my colt! [Strokes his hair.] If he is spirited, I'll call him Goldmane!—Ge-yap! Ge-yap!... He doesn't want to be called Goldmane? Skuli, hand me my whip, in the corner there, right by the sideboard. [Points into the dining-room.]

LITTLE SKULI. To beat Ingolf! No indeed!

KRISTRUN. Doddi dear, you do it! [Doddi runs for the whip, and gives it to her. She swings the whip around, so that it whizzes in the air. As Ingolf passes the piano, she runs the knob of the whip along the keyboard.]

LITTLE SKULI. Let's go, Doddi. [They go out.]

KRISTRUN. Are you tired?

INGOLF. I seem to feel lighter, in holding you on my shoulder.

KRISTRUN. Hf—! Lighter?

INGOLF. Yes, certainly!

KRISTRUN. Hf—! In carrying me?

INGOLF. In feeling the weight of your body. In that way, I could bear you to the end of the world.

KRISTRUN [hops down, looks straight into his eyes]. Really now, I refuse to listen to such foolishness.... Only look kindly at me once, instead of bearing me to the end of the world. [Sits down.]

INGOLF. Kindly!—Kristrun, do I deserve the cruelty you have shown me these last days.—Every moment of the day you have felt my soul streaming out to you, yet you choose the most common terms to describe my feelings, and pretend not to recognize them. I have been inventing new pet-names for you all the time, so that no one should have as pretty a name as you, so that you should have a prettier name to-day than you had yesterday. You pretend not to hear them. I have shown you every tenderness, but by your pretence you keep it at sword's length from you. You have been torturing me in this way now for three days.... Look kindly at you! Why, every time I look at you, you see my eyes shine through a tear-filled dimness...

KRISTRUN. Have you seen it in the glass?

INGOLF [keeps silent for a while, bites his lips, turns away from her]. Some women should not be allowed to be pretty.

KRISTRUN [laughs, dangling her foot]. Quite right. But men in turn, ought to be obliged to be handsome—otherwise they are disgusting.

INGOLF. Kristrun! Is it quite impossible to talk seriously with you? Is there nothing so sacred to you that you wouldn't ridicule it?

KRISTRUN. Well—?

INGOLF. No, I suppose there is not.

KRISTRUN.... Perhaps more than you think.

INGOLF. Why do you let me suffer, then? Haven't I confessed my love to you?

KRISTRUN. No, you haven't.

INGOLF [sits down at her side. While he speaks she sits erect in the chair, her hands folded in her lap, her head raised. A bright smile plays on her half-open lips. It is as if she were listening to a beautiful tale]. Are you waiting for me to say just the words: I love you! Weren't there moments when I made a greater confession, when one sigh, one glance, told you more than these words? But you are not satisfied with hearing a love like the fluttering of wings in the dead of night, you want to hear it sound like a clarion call in your ears: I love you, I love you! ... To-day I saw you standing at the piano, there; each feature in your face was in repose, each move blended softly into fine lines. I saw you as one of those works of art of an ancient master, which could lure the infidel to believe in the resurrection of the body. What was my surprise, when I saw you move, and walk across the floor!... Even your dress, altering its folds with the rhythm of your step, becomes mysterious, like the sea—floating, as it were, with life itself.... Only that fleeting sparkle from your eyes as you roll them upward... Or when you are lying down, and you stretch your foot out—so supple, that the tension on your arch makes your instep seem higher... And then your everlasting vivacity: when you laugh, the air seems to float with tiny fairies ... I love you, Kristrun, only you, you, you. [Kristrun still gazes into space, dreamily. Ingolf reaches hesitatingly for her hand; discreetly, she withdraws it.]

INGOLF [gets up]. Did you lie to me, Kristrun? The other night, when I told you, without speaking, for the first time, just as plainly as now with words, that I loved you: we heard footsteps, you ran away, you turned around and kissed me, and disappeared—did this sweet kiss then lie, was it only a moment's impulse that played with a sacred feeling?

KRISTRUN. It was not, Ingolf.

INGOLF. But—?

KRISTRUN. It was a moment's impulse that played with a moment's impulse.

INGOLF. Perhaps for you, but not for me.

KRISTRUN. I thought your silent confession that evening was sincere. The next day, I overheard a conversation between you and Hrafnhild, you didn't know I was there. Perhaps she has noticed the change in you. She used her voice, her intelligence, her beauty, her whole appeal, to get your caresses. And she got them, many and warm.

INGOLF. You yourself say that I have changed. You yourself say that I love you.

KRISTRUN. I myself say that you must choose between us.

INGOLF. My heart has chosen, Kristrun. And now my hand chooses. [He slowly takes the ring off his finger.] Are you satisfied now?

KRISTRUN. Why do you ask so sadly? Do you do this half-heartedly? ... I don't know whether I can trust you. Only yesterday, when she called you away from me, my heart throbbed with joy. The air about me sang: It is you he loves! But after a while, when she came out, she passed me with a look of supremacy in her eyes. I saw it, I saw it... you are completely in her power.

INGOLF. Before the sun sets to-night, you will have to take back those words.

KRISTRUN. I fear the strength of her words when she pleads her own cause. It is as though she could charm you into her power by some magic. Do you know what she did yesterday? She came up to me afterwards, and tried to arouse my anger, and so sure was she of her victory, that she gloried in it. She said that I could flirt with any one I wanted—she held the love of the finest man in Iceland.

INGOLF. Now do you think she said it because she was so sure?

KRISTRUN [does not answer]. "SHE held the love of the finest man in Iceland!..." Do you love me, Ingolf?

INGOLF. You don't need to ask, Kristrun.

KRISTRUN. Do you love me?

INGOLF. I love you.

KRISTRUN [runs to the chaise-longue, and throws herself upon it; she sobs audibly].

INGOLF. What is the matter with you, Kristrun?

KRISTRUN. Why don't you take me in your arms?

INGOLF. Now I am—Do you still doubt? I lived behind a dark, dark wall. Through a crack in the wall a streak of light came in. I loved this streak. Then one day the wall tumbled down, and I bathed in a white sea of sunshine. Now I see that I only cared for Hrafnhild because of the natural likeness between you.

KRISTRUN. Do you think I would ever have let you suspect that I cared for you, if I did not know that you had stopped loving Hrafnhild. I began to care for you a long time ago, Ingolf. When I saw how happy Hrafnhild was, it seemed to dawn upon me how splendid you are. Every one envied her. You can imagine how I tried to crush my love. But it grew stronger each day,—it grew like a thorn into my heart. Yet, that did not matter. As long as I knew you loved Hrafnhild, I felt a greater obligation to my sister than to my love. But not any longer. Even were I to sacrifice all now, what would she gain, since you don't care for her?

INGOLF. I'll try to break off our engagement as gently as possible.

KRISTRUN. You promised to do it, before the sun sets to-night.

INGOLF. Surely, when I tell her I don't love her, she won't try to hold me any longer.

KRISTRUN [looks at him suspiciously. In order to evade her glance, he bends over and takes her in his arms].

INGOLF. I will raise you, slowly and carefully, like a cup brimful of intoxicating wine. [Kisses her a long time. Raises her up. They hear footsteps outside, and listen.]

INGOLF. It is Hrafnhild. [Loosens his embrace.]

KRISTRUN [throws her arms around his neck, and clings to him]. Why don't you want her to see?

INGOLF [trying to free himself]. You are not so heartless, Kristrun!

HADDA PADDA [opens the door. In her hand, she has a bouquet of violets, freshly gathered. A subdued smile lights up her face. As soon as she looks in, her features become distorted with horror. She takes half a step backwards, holding her hand before her eyes, as if to ward off a blow. A feeble cry, filled with pain, as if torn by force from the throat is expressed in the word No!]

KRISTRUN. It is I you love! It is I you love!

INGOLF [tears himself away]. Let me talk to Hrafnhild alone.

Hadda Padda stands motionless in the doorway, so that Kristrun has to pass her.

INGOLF. May I close the door and talk to you? [Hadda Padda moves within the door frame, and leans against it.]

INGOLF. Hadda, you have seen now that I am no longer worthy of your love.

HADDA PADDA. I have seen nothing. [Throws the bouquet on the table, and sits down on the chaise-longue, with her face turned toward the window.]

INGOLF. Don't say that, Hrafnhild. Even forgiveness demands return, and I cannot return yours.

HADDA PADDA [*Her whole frame trembling*].

INGOLF. I didn't think you could mistake my attitude these last few days. [*Both keep silent.*]

INGOLF. But now—? from to-day on, you must try to forget me.

HADDA PADDA [*gets up*]. Forget—? why should I forget my lover?

INGOLF. Because he cannot be your lover any longer.

HADDA PADDA. Yes, he *can*; he promised. He promised to love me all my life.

INGOLF. He did not know what he promised.

HADDA PADDA [*sees Ingolf's hand without the ring, grasps it with horror, whispers*]. What have you done?—Ingolf, it cannot be true. It is not she you love. I saw you push her from you, when she clung about your neck. Say she told you a lie, when she cried. Only say something—say that suddenly an earthquake came, and she threw herself in your arms from fear. I'll believe you.

INGOLF [*shakes his head*].

HADDA PADDA. Ingolf, how could you be so hard? [*Hides her face.*] Any other, any other—but *she!* [*Weeps bitterly*].

INGOLF. It is not that, Hrafnhild. Now let us talk calmly. Even if you could, would you continue to be tied to a man who does not love you any longer?

HADDA PADDA. She has separated us. *She* has caught you in the net of her wantonness. You, too, Ingolf, you, too.... When I looked at you, you could see my love in my eyes. But she, she looked at you through a veil of wantonness, so that your imagination might create what it liked behind it—? was that what attracted you? I gave you all that I had. She took back with the left hand what she had given with her right—was that what attracted you? Ingolf, do you value such a character? Don't you know how she is? I know you think she loves you. So she has told them all. Her love is a remorseless beast of prey. She does not even spare her sister, though she knows you are the only man I ever loved. But she **MUST** have this triumph—this one, too. Are you going to yield to it?

INGOLF. You are mistaken, Hrafnhild. It is not she who parts us. I feel that even if she did not exist, I could no longer love you as before.

HADDA PADDA. Haven't I seen you in each other's arms? Had it been any one else, Ingolf, any one else, I might have tried to bear it; but **SHE**, in **YOUR** arms, that thought I cannot endure... I have no enemy but her. The blood that flows in her veins deceives. It understands the secrets of kinship, and knows what weapons can beat me.... She was but a little girl when I saw the smile of the conqueror in her look, if she felt that young men who called on us paid her greater attentions than me. But it did not touch me. I was no rival. In my heart, there was only place for you. Don't you see what life would be for me, should she triumph now, too.

INGOLF [keeps silent.]

HADDA PADDA [kneels down, grasping his knee]. Ingolf, for nine years have I run up the stairs at home,

just as you did, on the day you went away—two steps at a time.

INGOLF. Get up, Hrafnhild. [He moves a step nearer to the door. Hadda is dragged along on her knees.]

HADDA PADDA [strokes her hand over his knee]. Ingolf, Ingolf,—

INGOLF [takes a step back]. Get up, Hrafnhild.

HADDA PADDA. Ingolf, I laid bare my love, to clothe yours. I did it, so that no one could take you from me. Do you remember when I gave you all a woman can give? The past closed behind me, and I was a different being. I took your head in both my hands. "Now you must always be kind to me," I said. "Always," you said. You are not kind to me now, Ingolf. Had you not stripped me of the only support which a woman must have to bear life alone, I might have been able to endure it. But you have awakened passions hidden in me, from the very depths of my nature. Whenever you were away, they cried out for you with voices like children.

INGOLF. Stop, Hrafnhild. I gave you my word, it is true; but since I no longer care for you, will you still hold me to an old promise that was made when I loved you? HADDA PADDA [gets up]. Not an old one, Ingolf. You aren't telling the truth now. [Pointing out of the window.] Is it old, the water that flows down the river? Hasn't every day we have lived together been a renewal of this promise?

INGOLF. Maybe, but one day the water stopped flowing.

HADDA PADDA. Now you have spoken the terrible truth. Your love was not rich enough, and you knew it from the first. You are not deceiving me to-day. You deceived me the day you made me believe that you loved me, but you were not strong enough to be sincere. You felt that the burning love of a devoted woman would give you a new spirit; that is why you betrayed me. [Sinks bending over the table, bursting into tears.]

INGOLF. You accuse yourself with these angry words. Why did you accept this insincerity for so long?

HADDA PADDA. Because I saw it too late. My soul was spirited up into the mountain, so that no disappointment could take me from you. But so it was. Often when you were satiated with pleasure, you failed to show me any regard. What could I do? Nothing but continue to believe that I would keep your love alive by the strength of my own. I know now, why you didn't dare to meet my look openly. Ingolf, you knew from the beginning, that you might meet a woman you could love more, but meanwhile you took me, intending to turn from me when that time came. [Weeps.] If only I had never known you.

INGOLF. I remember a great many times—you said that you didn't understand how rich life was before you knew me, and that whatever fate would be, you would never regret having given yourself to me. Now I know how sincerely you meant those words.

HADDA PADDA. You don't hear how cruel your words are.—I know, Ingolf, I said it. I said it when I couldn't control my tongue for gladness. But we never know ourselves until we stand on the edge between joy and sorrow, and now, having touched happiness, I cannot live without grasping it. I cannot, Ingolf, I cannot live without you.

INGOLF. Could you get any happiness out of life with a man who does not love you?

HADDA PADDA [silent, gets up, and walks up to the piano, leaning heavily against it].

INGOLF [takes out the ring, and puts it on the table].

HADDA PADDA [does not stir]. Ingolf, this is my last request. Don't make our separation harder than necessary. I cannot remain in your home when they all know it. Do me the favor of wearing the ring till I leave for home. You won't have to wait long. Will you promise me that?

INGOLF [holds the ring in his hand without answering].

HADDA PADDA. This is my last request.

INGOLF. I promise. [Puts the ring on his hand.]

HADDA PADDA [watches him as he puts it on].

CURTAIN

ACT III

(Slope of a valley overgrown with brush and heather and flowers. Toward the rear on the left, a beautiful cataract rushes down from a great height between steep cliffs. On the right, a rock shuts out the bottom of the falls, and part of the river. In the background is a mountainous landscape. It is an exquisite summer evening and the sun is playing on the water in ever changing colours. The stage is empty. From beneath the falls a song is heard, even before the rise of the curtain.)

(A little before the song ends, Hadda Padda enters from the left, accompanied by the children. She wears a light summer dress with a chiffon scarf thrown over her shoulders. The children have come prepared to gather berries. One has a wooden box, one a coloured glass bottle half filled with berries, etc. They stop to listen until the song is finished.)

MAGGA. Who was singing?

HADDA PADDA. The summer guests down at the falls.—Well, children, hurry now and gather your berries. We'll be going home soon. [Pointing to the right.] See that hollow? There must be lots of berries in there. [Sits down on a stone.]

SIGGA. Aren't you coming along with us, Hadda Padda?

HADDA PADDA. No, you bring your berries back to me.

SIGGA [turning the bottle over in her palm]. Do you want some?

HADDA PADDA [staying her off]. No, no—not now.

DODDI. Oh, Hadda! I'll gather the bluest berries for you.

LITTLE SKULI. When *I* come back I'll bring you berries and flowers too.

MAGGA. You won't wait for us, Hadda Padda.

HADDA PADDA [*nodding assent—hand under cheek*]. No—no.

ALL THE CHILDREN. Aren't you going to wait for us?

HADDA PADDA [*with a start, recovering herself*]. Wait for you, yes—yes, of course—do you think I would run away from you? I will wait here till you come back. [*The children go off to the right. Hadda remains seated for a moment, rises absent-mindedly, walks to and fro thoughtfully, sometimes stumbling. Then she sits down again, hiding her face in her hands.*]

AN HERBORIST [*enters from the right. On her shoulder she is carrying a canvas bag, half filled with herbs. She wears a knitted shawl and a parti-colored kerchief on her head. In her hand, she holds a large knife in a leather sheath*]. Good evening, young lady!

HADDA PADDA [*startled*]. Good evening, Arngerd!

HERBORIST [*putting the bag aside*]. I seemed to recognise one of the sisters. It is you they call Hadda Padda.

HADDA PADDA. I came berrying with the children.

HERBORIST. I saw them down in the hollow.—It is lucky to visit the falls to-night.—I heard the song.—What a beautiful day! [*Sits down*]—Just look at the evening glow on that rock! [*Smiles.*] Its furrows seem like ruddy smiling lips!

HADDA PADDA [*looking up*]. Like bleeding wounds.

HERBORIST. Is the young lady in low spirits?

HADDA PADDA [*keeps silent*].

HERBORIST [*looking at the slope*]. What a host of blessed flowers! I'll soon get my bag filled here. There are some of the right kind among them I'm sure.

HADDA PADDA. That is a pretty bag you have.

HERBORIST. I thought it an insult to the flowers to put them in a coarse sack, so I took my pillow case.

HADDA PADDA. Are there only flowers in it?

HERBORIST. They are healing plants.

HADDA PADDA. That's true. You heal with herbs.... You believe in their power?

HERBORIST. I believe in a fact that cannot be doubted. And I am quite sure that there is no disease that could not be healed by herbs, if people knew enough about their mysteries.

HADDA PADDA. There are wounds, I suppose, that only death can heal.

HERBORIST [*looking down into the bag, she takes out an herb*]. I think the young lady is very depressed, Shall I show her an herb that can heal many ills?

HADDA PADDA. A lady-slipper?

HERBORIST. It is also called the love flower.... If you would gain a man's heart you slip it under his pillow.

HADDA PADDA. Don't you see the ring on my finger? Don't you know my sweetheart?

HERBORIST. Yes, certainly.—He was a handsome boy. [*Plays with the bag, as she hums.*]:

"When love is the strongest, it leads to your fall, A maid's happy longest, who heeds no man's call."

HADDA PADDA [*drawing her scarf more closely around her*]. Do you hear the flies buzzing?

HERBORIST [*looking deep down into the bag*]. Yes.

HADDA PADDA. It is like the sound of a burning wick.

HERBORIST [*does not hear*].

HADDA PADDA. Now there is only one left.—It is buzzing around my bead. [*Putting her hand on the arm of the herborist.*] Say something to me, good healer.

HERBORIST. Pretty are her hands! Were they chapped or sore I would heal them with yarrow ointment. [*Taking up a yarrow.*]

HADDA PADDA. Can that be done?

HERBORIST. Oh, yes, with finely cut yarrow, boiled in fresh new butter. [*Puts the plant aside, picks up a dandelion.*]

HADDA PADDA. What do you use the dandelion for?

HERBORIST. If the young lady had warts on her hands, I would rub them with the milk of the dandelion, and the warts would vanish. [*Takes up a new plant.*]

HADDA PADDA. What do you call this flower?

HERBORIST. Doesn't she know the sun-dew? It is a cure for freckles.

HADDA PADDA [*taking the flower*]. Ah! I know this.—You cruel pretty little flower! With your beauty you lure the insects to you. Then you close on them, and kill them. You cruel pretty little flower! Do you know my sister? [*Puts the sun-dew aside.*]

HERBORIST [*holding a new plant in her hand*]. This is the grass of Parnassus. It makes a good hair-ointment.—Pretty is the young lady's hair.

HADDA PADDA. You have dug up all the flowers by the roots.

HERBORIST [*pointing to the knife*]. I cut them up by the roots. They must not lose their power. They are all alive.—Shall I tell you more?

HADDA PADDA. Not now, thank you.

HERBORIST [*puts the flowers into the bag; points to the sky*]. Look how red the clouds are!—I think we'll have fine weather to-morrow.

HADDA PADDA. Do you think so?

HERBORIST. Evening-glow means warm, morning-glow means storm.

HADDA PADDA [*is silent*].

HERBORIST. Why do you look at me so long?

HADDA PADDA. You have such a peaceful smile on your face. Are you always so contented?

HERBORIST. I have no reason not to be.

HADDA PADDA. Have you never been discontented with life?

HERBORIST. Yes, when I deserved it. But when one is kind to every one, life brings peace and happiness.

HADDA PADDA. Has kindness never taken revenge?

HERBORIST. Kindness does not take revenge. It is only evil that takes revenge.

HADDA PADDA. Then you have been obedient to your fate?

HERBORIST. What I say is true, my girl. Life treats us as we deserve. We cannot get rid of our past. Nature is a righteous judge.

HADDA PADDA. Nature is heartless and blind.

HERBORIST. Nature IS a righteous judge. I shall never forget something that happened thirty years ago. I lived at the sea-shore then. One day, when I was washing fish with some other girls, we saw a woman from the farm take her child by the hand and lead her out to a jutting rock—when the flood tide came it took her....

HADDA PADDA [looking up].

HERBORIST.... The case was brought before the judge. The mother insisted that she had left the child on the ridge, and that it must have walked down to the shore while she was gathering some dulse. Each of us had to point out the spot where she had left the child, but the mother pointed to the ridge. As she raised her three fingers to swear that it was true, a wave rose, and out of it shot a white column of foam. It stretched like an arm into the air—like an arm with three swearing fingers. The sea itself swore against her.

HADDA PADDA [A cold shiver runs through her. She draws her scarf more closely around her]. It is so strangely cold here.

HERBORIST. The sun is going down. I had better be going. [The bag upsets, and some plants slip out.]

HADDA PADDA. The dandelion is slipping out of the bag. Grant the dandelion its life.

HERBORIST. I can't grant the dandelion its life. Perhaps to-morrow a mother will come with her little girl. "Rid her of her warts," she will say, "for her hands are so fine."...

HADDA PADDA [takes the dandelion in her hands]. Grant the dandelion its life. Do you see how it stretches its thousand delicate fingers to the fading light? If you plant it again, it will close up and be silent a whole night with joy.

HERBORIST. You are silent and you don't smile—is it with joy?

HADDA PADDA. You must not ask me that.

HERBORIST. Smile, and I will grant the dandelion its life.

HADDA PADDA. Now I am smiling.

HERBORIST [thrusts her hand into the bag]. Tell me of your joy, young woman. Each time you give an answer you grant a flower its life.—

Of all things,—what is the softest you have ever felt?

HADDA PADDA. The hair on my cheek when my lover stroked it.

HERBORIST [taking a plant from the bag]. Now you have granted the yarrow its life.—Tell me of your joy, young woman. What made your hand so pretty?

HADDA PADDA. Happiness made my hand so pretty. It has smoothed back the hair from the most beautiful forehead.

HERBORIST [taking out another plant]. Now you have granted the catch-fly its life.—What cast the shade of sorrow in your eyes?

HADDA PADDA. Now you are not asking me of joy. Now I will not answer.

HERBORIST [shows her a new plant, fondling the flower]. Why shall the violet die?

HADDA PADDA. Do not ask me why the violet shall die.... I want to be alone.

HERBORIST [gets up, puts the bag on her shoulder, takes the knife and flowers]. God bless thee, young woman! The Lord be with thee, Hadda Padda. [Disappears to the left.]

[The sun sets behind the mountains and twilight gradually descends. Hadda Padda sits gazing into space. Suddenly she is startled by voices, and she disappears into the bushes. Native and foreign tourists come from behind the rock, two by two, crossing the stage, conversing. German and French are heard. Behind them all, comes]

A YOUNG WOMAN [waiting till the others are gone, she calls]. Hadda Padda!... Hadda!... Hrafnhild! [She shades her eyes with her hand.] There they are! [Goes out to the right.]

[Ingolf and Kristrun enter from behind the rock.]

INGOLF [stops]. Look, there are the children gathering berries. ... Do you see Hrafnhild?

KRISTRUN. No, but I see Helga walking toward them.

INGOLF. I wonder if Hrafnhild is down in the hollow?

KRISTRUN. Perhaps she is.

INGOLF. We won't pass there then. Let's rest here for a moment. [Sits down.]

KRISTRUN. You act as if Hrafnhild were still your sweetheart.

INGOLF. What do you mean?

KRISTRUN. I thought you wanted to show me the greater consideration. But it is quite the contrary. Sometimes you are positively hard to me, just to spare Hrafnhild every conceivable annoyance.

INGOLF. Do you remember the day after—. When she walked around trying to smile to every one. She was like a sick butterfly. You didn't complain then that I was too considerate to her.

KRISTRUN [disregarding his remark]. You and she—you wear the rings—you are the lovers in every one's opinion! And I have to endure it.

INGOLF. You gave your consent for us to wear the rings till we leave here.

KRISTRUN. My consent, yes! If it is a consent that you made me pity her. I don't think she needs any pity now.

INGOLF. Yes, it is very strange,—to-day, to-day and yesterday she has been tingling with joy.

KRISTRUN [sitting down]. Now you can see how deeply her love touched her. After ONE week she's as though nothing had ever happened.

INGOLF. Hrafnhild is proud by nature. She would never let it be seen that an unfortunate love affair could make her miserable.

KRISTRUN. Yes, SHE is proud by nature, she is everything fine.—And I—I am nothing. [Tears in her eyes.]

INGOLF. You are the loveliest woman in the world. [Embraces her.]

HADDA PADDA [appears between the bushes, seeing them she stops an instant, then goes toward them]. I didn't know you were here.

INGOLF [gets up]. We have just come from the falls.

HADDA PADDA. And I was just gathering berries. Aren't my lips blue?... Why are you so silent, Runa, dear?

KRISTRUN [does not answer].

HADDA PADDA [in a changed voice]. I am going away to-morrow.

INGOLF. Going away to-morrow?

KRISTRUN. Going away—?

HADDA PADDA. I leave to-morrow. I'm going with Helga.—Let us part friends.—I have only one thing to say to you before I go.

INGOLF. What is that?

HADDA PADDA. You may feel safe now. I won't be the shadow in your sunny path.... I don't love you any longer, Ingolf. [Ingolf and Kristrun look at her amazed.]

HADDA PADDA. Nor do I bear you a grudge... that is why I can tell you this.

INGOLF. I always knew you were high-minded, Hrafnhild, but—

HADDA PADDA. And Runa, dear, won't we be the same friendly sisters we have always been? [Strokes her hair.] Do you want to see that I love you as much as ever? [Takes her hand.] Come, let me take you in my arms.

KRISTRUN [bursting into tears, she throws herself into Hadda's arms]. Hadda, dear—

HADDA PADDA [presses Kristrun violently to her breast].

KRISTRUN [throwing her head back]. Hadda, Hadda, you are hurting me!

HADDA PADDA [lets go of her—turns to Ingolf]. And now I would like to speak to you for a moment. May I?

INGOLF. Yes, certainly.

HADDA PADDA, Oh, there's Helga. She is looking for me, Runa, dear, may I say a few words to Ingolf? You meet Helga, and start for home with her, won't you?

KRISTRUN. I'll do that, Hadda. [Hurries away.]

HADDA PADDA [sits down]. I think I have discovered that you don't really enjoy your new happiness. That is why I want to talk to you.

INGOLF. You have told me all I want to hear.

HADDA PADDA [involuntarily frowning a moment]. It is strange how proud the imagination can be, pretending to be a strong reality. If I had really loved you at all, I would still. I do not. So long as you were free, I made myself believe I had a certain claim to you. But once you were engaged to any one else, the same thing would have happened?—I should have forgotten you in a week.

INGOLF. You need not tell me this, I know it.

HADDA PADDA. What do you know?

INGOLF. I know that you deny your own heart for the sake of others.

HADDA PADDA. Now you think too highly of both of us. I am not so good as you would make me, and it is not so difficult to forget you as you imagine.—You won't believe that I have succeeded in forgetting you. Won't you believe, either, that I have made every effort to do it? The day before yesterday I locked myself in my room, and took out your letters to see whether I could bear to read them. I wanted to test myself,—you know I like to get to the very heart of things. Well, I read letter after letter. It is a remarkable power that is given to a trivial matter. If I had not read the letters, I might still have felt unhappy, but I read and read with ever increasing calmness. I don't believe my feelings. I go walking, searching for all the places where the earth must be scorched with burning pleasures, in order to know whether they enkindle memories so sacred that they can again inflame me. Everything, everything, is extinguished. What is the matter, little Hadda? Does everything leave you cold? Is this death perhaps? And a mixed feeling of joy and pain seizes me, for this came so unexpected—it came so unexpected—it came so unexpected—

INGOLF. What is the matter, Hrafnhild? Are you ill? You are so excited. Why are you so eager to tell me all this?

HADDA PADDA. Because I don't want you to think I am making any sacrifice. You think so, but I am not.

INGOLF. I understand.

HADDA PADDA. No, you don't understand. There was still one place where I was afraid to go, because it meant more to me than any other. I grasped my heart with fear, and there I seemed to find the place. It was the Angelica Gorge,—where you had put your life in my hands. I was afraid that if I went there, I would instantly lose the peace of mind I had gained. But if I could not bear that, then this peace was nothing but an illusion. I wanted to be sincere with myself—so I went up there last night.

INGOLF. We saw you walking up the mountain.

HADDA PADDA. I lay down on the edge of the cliff and looked down into the depth from which I had seen you come up. "Little heart," I said, "try to be calm while I am tormenting you: Here it was that he raised himself up on the rope I held. Here it was that he showed me how well he loved me." But instead of feeling pain, my whole frame quivered with trembling joy. Here, too, I had conquered. Tears of gratitude came into my eyes, I stretched myself farther out on the edge to make my tears of joy fall into the chasm, down to the very bottom.—Do you see now that I am not going to make a sacrifice. Now tell all this to Runa, for she should know it too.

INGOLF [very much moved, throws himself at her feet]. When you have risen I will kiss the ground your feet have marked.

HADDA PADDA. Then I shall never rise.... Don't lie down like that. Get up, Ingolf, INGOLF. I will lie down and forget. Let me dream of death for one moment.

HADDA PADDA. Death! You who are happy!

INGOLF. Death is not unhappiness.

HADDA PADDA. Come, sit down again. I will tell you what death is. Last night I was only a hair's breadth away from it.

INGOLF [starts, terror stricken, he half arises]. What are you saying?

HADDA PADDA. When I lay there on the edge of the gorge, looking down, something dazzlingly white flashed before my eyes. Quite instinctively I reached out for it. It was as if my hands perceived what it was, before my eyes had had time to make it clear to me. It was the string of pearls which had loosened from my hair. I reached for it without considering how unsafely I was lying there, when suddenly I felt myself slipping down. The sensation cannot be described. While my right hand reached for the pearls which were dropping down into the gorge, my left caught hold of the turf on the brink. I was losing my balance and nothing held me up but a few blades of grass. I felt my heart in my throat, and a cold perspiration over my whole body. Now the grass was giving way, now I clawed my fingers down into the earth and dug my feet into it, but it was too hard; I tried to press my knees down into the turf—nothing helped, I was slipping. Life or death! To the right there was a stone. I let go of the grass, and blindly swung my body to the right, my feet slipped beyond the edge,—but my hands had caught hold of the stone. When I got to the edge again, I lay in a stupour for a long time, and I did not know whether I was at the bottom of the gorge or at the top.—Never have I loved life as I do to-day.

INGOLF. How horrible! But what made you wear the pearls?

HADDA PADDA. It was foolish, but I don't know whether you can blame me. One day, when I was almost melancholy, and I could not talk to anybody, I was seized with an unconquerable home-sick feeling. I yearned for mother, and felt how much I loved her. I took the pearls out and looked at this precious heirloom, which she had given me. I fastened it in my hair,—and immediately I felt better. That was why I wore them the next day too.

INGOLF. And now they lie at the bottom of the gorge!

HADDA PADDA. Yes.

INGOLF. What are you going to tell your mother?

HADDA PADDA. I won't tell her anything before I know whether they will be found.

INGOLF. Have you asked any one to search for them?

HADDA PADDA. I just thought of asking Steindor, but I can hardly bring myself to tell him,—if afterwards they should not be found.

INGOLF [A vague disquietude takes possession of him. He is silent for an instant, then stares at Hadda, trying to read the influence of his words upon her]. Well, you are going to-morrow, and the very next day I will go down into the gorge and look for them.

HADDA PADDA. Will you really, Ingolf? And not tell Runa that I lost them? Mother must not know that I have treated the pearls so carelessly.

INGOLF. I won't tell any one.

HADDA PADDA [looking at him with wide-opened eyes]. I'd like it even more if you would do it before I left. If you looked for them to-morrow morning while I am getting ready to go. Then you'd spare me the anxiety. Take Steindor with you, will you?

INGOLF [gets up. All doubt leaves his mind as he looks into her face and he is ashamed of the unworthy suspicion that had touched his soul]. Yes, Hrafnhild, don't be distressed. We shall find your pearls.—Aren't you coming with me?

HADDA PADDA. No, I will wait for the children.

INGOLF. Good-night, Hrafnhild. [Goes.]

HADDA PADDA. Good-night. [Looks after him for a long time. Her eyes fill with tears, and she throws herself down weeping violently. Soon the voices of children, laughing, are heard near by. She looks up, passes her hand over her eyes, hears the children's footsteps and lies down again as if asleep.]

THE CHILDREN [enter. In addition to the berries, each of them carries a bouquet of flowers].

LITTLE SKULI. She's asleep. [He takes his bouquet, and those of the others, placing them around her head.]

The children sit down quietly, eating their berries.

CURTAIN

ACT IV

(A deep gorge viewed from the side, its walls running obliquely down from right to left. The upper end of the outer edge merges into the mountain slope, which shuts out the view to the left. It is foggy. On the left, as the fog lifts, a waterfall glistens in the distance, like a broad white streak in the air. The sides of the gorge are abruptly terminated by a cliff, the top of which is grass-grown. Here, Ingolf and Steindor are sitting. Beside them is a long rope.)

STEINDOR. Just look how it is drizzling!... I can write on my clothes. [Forms letters on his sleeve.]

INGOLF [strokes his finger along his sleeve]. My suit just matches the drizzle.

STEINDOR [is silent].

INGOLF [is aroused, as from a reverie]. Are you rested?

STEINDOR. Oh, very nearly.

INGOLF. You should have let me pull you up. It is too tiring to raise oneself.

STEINDOR. I have been lowering myself into this gorge for fourteen years now, to get angelica, and always without help. This is no height at all.

INGOLF. How high do you think it is?

STEINDOR. Only half a rope-length.

INGOLF. How long is a rope-length?

STEINDOR. A hundred and twenty feet.

INGOLF. Have you lowered yourself that far?

STEINDOR. I guess even a little more. One summer on the Westmen Isles, I went down three rope-lengths, for fowl; but then, I tied the rope around my waist, and took a stick along, to push myself off from the rock, so that the rope wouldn't turn.

INGOLF. The rope turned round with me before.

STEINDOR. Only practice can prevent it.

INGOLF [*gets up, walks out to the brink, and looks down into the gorge*]. Did you look everywhere possible?

STEINDOR. I did.

INGOLF. So did I. But it is very dark in some places, and there are so many holes. Did you look in the holes?

STEINDOR. Well, I wasn't going to crawl into every pit—that would be an endless job. Besides, I think it serves these women right, once in a while, to have themselves to blame. It teaches them to take better care next time.

INGOLF. Don't speak to any one about it. She asked me not to tell anybody. I wouldn't have told you, if I'd had any luck in my search. But I thought perhaps you might be able to find them.

STEINDOR. You told the family that you had lost your diamond ring.

INGOLF. Yes, then we will say we have found it. [*Looks down into the gorge*]. How uncanny it looks down there! It is as if the fog were shunning the gully, so inky black!... See how sombre the ravine looks!

STEINDOR [*gets up, and walks out on the brink*].

INGOLF. It looks uncanny down there! [*Warning him*]. Don't go too near the edge.

STEINDOR [*laughing*]. Steindor can take care of himself!

INGOLF. Have you ever fallen, Steindor?

STEINDOR. Oh, well, I've had my share of that.

INGOLF. How did it affect you?

STEINDOR. I don't wish myself a better death, if the fall is high enough. One winter I was going over a gully, clogged with a frozen snow-pile. I had to pass it; so I forced my stick down into the pile, and leaped over it. I tried to pull it out as I came over, but it stuck tight, and threw me backwards. I knew nothing more, until I woke up at the foot of the rocks, and saw the blood stains on the snow. I had scratched myself on the edge as I grazed over it.

INGOLF. And otherwise you got off alright?

STEINDOR. Quite alright. I landed on the soft snow. Had it been rocky below, I would have died instantly. Since that day, I say falling from a height isn't the worst death. You lose all consciousness in falling.

INGOLF. To fall from here would be horrible.

STEINDOR. It's more horrible thinking about it than anything else.

INGOLF. It would be quite a fall.

STEINDOR. Oh, yes—I think you would get your fill.

INGOLF. Here, take the rope, Steindor. Let us go.

STEINDOR [looking around]. Some one is coming up along the ravine.

INGOLF. Where?

STEINDOR. There—why, it's Hrafnhild. She is nearly here now.

INGOLF. What is she carrying over her shoulder?

STEINDOR. It looks like a spade.

INGOLF. Come, let's go and meet her. [They take a few steps.]

HANNA PADDA [is heard calling]. Wait!

INGOLF. What do you think she wants with a spade?

HADDA PADDA [is heard calling, almost out of breath]. I wanted to catch you before you went down. [Enters.] There was nobody else at home to bring the spade, so I offered to do it.

INGOLF. Did you tell mother we were coming here?

HADDA PADDA. She asked. She saw you walk up the mountain. I told her you had lost your diamond ring in the gorge, and you and Steindor were going down to look for it.

INGOLF. Did she send you with the spade?

HADDA PADDA. No, she said, that if she had known it, she would have asked you to take a spade along, and get some angelicas for the garden. That is why I followed you. [Walks out and drives the spade in the ground.] Have you been down already?

INGOLF. Yes, we have.

HADDA PADDA. Did you find your diamond ring?

INGOLF. We did not find your pearls.—Yes, I had to tell Steindor. I went down first and searched very carefully; then I asked Steindor to go down,—I thought he might have better luck.

STEINDOR. They will never be found.

HADDA PADDA. They MUST be found; they SHALL be found.

INGOLF [looks questioningly into her eyes]. Are you sure they did not fall beyond that lowest rock? [Points in the direction.]

HADDA PADDA [eagerly, and returning his glance calmly]. No, no. I saw them fall, just by the big stone. You haven't looked carefully enough. It has really taken you no time at all.

INGOLF. I hunted for them everywhere, as if I were searching for a needle.

STEINDOR. I can't search any better than I have.

HADDA PADDA. Then it is due to the fog. Probably I have to wait till later... No, I can't go home without them.

STEINDOR. The fog is not so dense, that they couldn't be found on its account. You can see all around, down in the gorge. Just look!

HADDA PADDA [walks out to the edge, looks down, turns round abruptly]. Did you search in the pool near the big stone? It might have fallen there.

STEINDOR. I took a look at it, but I didn't see anything.

INGOLF. I would have seen them glitter in the water, if they were there.

HADDA PADDA. Glitter in the water! And the pool covered with duck-weed! So that's how you searched!—Did you look all through the duck-weed, did you fish it out of the pond, to see if the pearls were hidden in it?

INGOLF. No, I didn't do that.

STEINDOR. No, it may be possible—

HADDA PADDA. Yes, it is possible, to be sure. Hundreds of women might have lost their pearls down there, without your having found them.

STEINDOR. No, I think you are the only one...

HADDA PADDA [turns quickly toward Ingolf]. What do you think mother will say when she hears that I have lost the heirloom?—[Resolutely.] Men never can find anything, men do not understand how to search. [Tears the rope from Steindor.] I had better go down myself.

INGOLF. You don't really intend to go down?

HADDA PADDA [ties one end around her waist]. I intend to do what I can to find my lost treasure again.

STEINDOR. You will not go far, I think, before you ask us to pull you up.

HADDA PADDA. I have been lowered into this gorge before.

INGOLF [takes the loose end]. I forbid you to go down, Hrafnhild.

HADDA PADDA. You forbid me?... I forbid you to touch this rope. Or, shall we see who is stronger? [pulls the rope.]

INGOLF [coming nearer to her, he lets the rope slip] I know what you are thinking, Hrafnhild. You want us to go down again, and you know this is the only way you can get us to do it.

HADDA PADDA. Do you think I am afraid to go down? It would only give me joy. And if you didn't find the pearls, when you looked for them the second time, I would go down, anyhow. I would never be at rest until I had searched myself. (Ingolf lets go of the rope, takes Steindor aside—he nods. They both look at Hrafnhild while she fastens the rope around her waist more securely.)

INGOLF. What are you going to do now?

HADDA PADDA (having finished tying the knot, holds the rope out to them). Will you hold the rope while I go down?

INGOLF. No, I won't.

STEINDOR. I won't either.

HADDA PADDA (bites her lips, stares at the men). Go on home! (Starts to wind up the rope.) I don't need you. You think I can't do without you? You think the mountain hasn't stones heavy enough to keep me up? (Runs away, and disappears toward the mountain.)

INGOLF. I don't remember exactly—it's quite impossible to enter the gorge from below, isn't it?

STEINDOR. So far, only the birds have that privilege. It's a headlong precipice on three sides!

INGOLF. I won't let Hrafnhild go down.

STEINDOR. She says she has gone down in the gorge before. Is that true?

INGOLF (nods reluctantly). Yes.

STEINDOR. When was that?

INGOLF. Last summer.

STEINDOR. Did you hold the rope?

INGOLF. I did.

STEINDOR. Well, then I don't know what you are afraid of.

INGOLF. It seems strange that Hrafnhild should come up here.

STEINDOR. She came with the spade.

INGOLF. It seems strange we didn't find the pearls, if they were in the gorge.

STEINDOR. She'll be lucky if they are ever found.

INGOLF. It seems strange that she dropped them. When I saw that she herself was coming here, it flashed across my mind, that she hadn't dropped the pearls in the gorge after all.

STEINDOR. I don't understand—what are you driving at? Do you think it is something she invented? Why should she?

INGOLF. I am afraid to let her go down.

HADDA PADDA [enters with a large stone in her arms which she places on the edge. She has the coil of rope thrown over her shoulder. Laughs]. So you haven't gone yet! [Takes the spade and starts to dig.] Don't you think I can do without you now? I will dig a deep, deep hole. Then I'll tie one end of the rope around the stone, and place it into the hole.—Then I'll go and get more stones up in the mountain and pile them up. You will see how well it will hold.

INGOLF [examining the stone]. So you think it will hold? Well—[Takes the stone and flings it into the ravine.]

HADDA PADDA [smiling, she looks at Ingolf]. I shall take better care next time. [Running away, Ingolf and Steindor look after her.]

STEINDOR. She is determined to go down.

INGOLF. I will offer to go down again. Let us both offer to go down.

STEINDOR. She said she would go down anyhow, if we didn't find the pearls.

INGOLF. Just look how fast she is running! She is holding her hand to her breast.

STEINDOR. Now she is stopping... She is lifting a stone... Now she has thrown it away.

INGOLF. She runs without stopping.

STEINDOR. Now she has found a new stone.

INGOLF. She is bending over it. What is she doing?

STEINDOR. She is tying the rope around it. She won't let you hurl this one over.

INGOLF. She is lifting the stone, and carrying it in her arms.

STEINDOR. She is strong, Hrafnhild is. Now she is running with it.

INGOLF. See how the earth is slipping from under her feet. See how the pebbles pursue her! She is running away from them with the big stone. She is holding it in her arms as if it were a child she were rescuing.

HADDA PADDA [enters, carrying the stone which she cautiously places on the edge. Smiles]. You haven't gone yet! What are you waiting for? [Takes the spade, and starts to deepen the hole.]

INGOLF. Steindor and I will go down for you. We will search as thoroughly as possible.

HADDA PADDA. You are kind. But now I will let nothing prevent me from going down. Had you offered to do so before, I would have accepted; but when you say you forbid me to go down, I intend to go. [Steindor walks restlessly near the edge.]

INGOLF. You know that we can prevent you from going down.

HADDA PADDA. You can—how?

INGOLF. We can take the rope from you and go home.

HADDA PADDA. Yes—you can do that. [Turns away.]

INGOLF. What would you do then?

HADDA PADDA [in same position]. Go home and get another rope.

INGOLF. Don't be so obstinate, Hrafnhild.

HADDA PADDA [in a low voice]. Why don't you call me by my pretty name any more? We aren't enemies. Promise to call me Hadda Padda always. When I leave to-day, when I mount my horse, and ride away, wave your hat to me and call: Good-bye, Hadda Padda.

INGOLF. Are you determined to go to-day?

HADDA PADDA. Determined. [Rolls the stone into the hole, takes it up again, and digs deeper.]

INGOLF. You won't accept our offer?

HADDA PADDA. No, I won't.

INGOLF. Then stop your digging. It is useless.

HADDA PADDA [looks at him, puzzled].

INGOLF. You must understand that we will not stand by, and let you go down with only a loose stone to hold you up.

HADDA PADDA. True, I wouldn't be as nervous, if I knew you were holding the rope. [Puts the spade aside, and looks down into the gorge.]

INGOLF [unties the rope from the stone].

HADDA PADDA. I don't know whether I dare go down, Ingolf.

INGOLF. Don't go—give it up.

HADDA PADDA. I never saw the gorge so hushed. How it stretches its cold, greedy stone-fingers into the air!—But imagine my finding the pearls! [Determined.] I must go down. Is the rope safe?

STEINDOR [standing near them]. Even if there were three Hadda Paddas—

HADDA PADDA. Ingolf! I am not afraid to be lowered down by your hands. [Lies down with her feet over the edge.]

STEINDOR. There are others beside Ingolf, to be sure, who could hold up one woman.

INGOLF. I hate to see you go down.

HADDA PADDA [is silent for an instant, turns abruptly around, looks down the gorge, gets up and takes the spade]. You aren't sitting safely, Ingolf. I will deepen the hole, so that you can have something to push your feet against. [Digs.]

STEINDOR. [with an amused smile]. You believe you are heavier than you are, Hadda Padda.

INGOLF. I ask you once again, to give up the idea.

HADDA PADDA. Are you afraid you will lose me?

INGOLF. You can spare your scoffing.

HADDA PADDA. I am not scoffing. I'm the one who is afraid. You are not so strong as you pretend. Steindor, will you hold the rope with him?

INGOLF. You don't have to sneer at me. [At his glance, Steindor turns away.]

HADDA PADDA. Now set your feet securely, Ingolf, and both of you hold the rope. Do that for me, and I'll go down quite fearlessly.

INGOLF. Well, we will both hold the rope. [Steindor sits down, catching the rope too.]

HADDA PADDA. Now I am safe. [Disappears below the edge. The rope is seen sliding slowly and firmly through their hands.]

INGOLF [pushing Steindor away]. Get up! I won't accept an affront like this—not to let me hold the rope alone! Get up and keep an eye on her,—but don't let her see you. [Steindor gets up. The rope slides down for a time.]

THE VOICE OF HADDA PADDA. Ingolf!

INGOLF. Well? [Stops the rope.]

THE VOICE OF HADDA PADDA. Are you both holding the rope?

INGOLF. Yes.

THE VOICE OF HADDA PADDA. Tell me the truth, Ingolf.

INGOLF. We are both holding the rope.

THE VOICE OF HADDA PADDA. Tell me the truth. Is Steindor holding the rope?

INGOLF [to Steindor]. You have let her see you.

STEINDOR. No, no!

THE VOICE OF HADDA PADDA. Why did you deceive me, Ingolf! Pull me up! [Ingolf pulls up the rope.]

HADDA PADDA [reappears over the edge]. Why did you deceive me?

INGOLF. I felt ashamed to hold the rope with some one else.

HADDA PADDA. The idea flashed upon me. That is why I called. I knew your pride. But suddenly I grew nervous. I seemed so far from all human life. Since you don't want Steindor to hold the rope, he must stand some place where I can always see him. Steindor, stand where I can see you. Now and then you'll call to me. You'll just call: Hadda Padda! and I will answer: Yes. Then we will get word from each other. Here, on the edge, you can see me—[points to the farther edge]—down there on the ledge, I can see you perfectly.

INGOLF. Yes, do that, Steindor.

STEINDOR. Alright. [Goes there.]

HADDA PADDA. Why don't you place your feet in the hole, so that you will sit more securely?

INGOLF. Are you afraid I'm sitting too near the edge?

HADDA PADDA [takes the end of the rope]. There is no knot on the end. Fancy, if the rope slipped out of your hands. [Ties a knot in it.]

INGOLF. Why are you so frightened?

HADDA PADDA. I don't know....It wasn't fair to prevent Steindor from holding the rope with you.

INGOLF. If you are so afraid, of course we will both hold the rope.

HADDA PADDA. I don't know....Oh—no, hold it alone. I also want to see some one, to see him stand there, and hear him call to me.

INGOLF. I prefer that.

HADDA PADDA. But now if it should slip from you—! If you open your hand a hair's breadth too much, you will lose the rope! [She starts with a shudder.]

INGOLF. I shall let the rope slide over my shoulder—will you be more at ease then?

ACT V

HADDA PADDA. If you tie it around your waist, so that it will be impossible for you to let go of me—then I will be at ease.

INGOLF (gazes intently at her, as if to penetrate the mysterious veil which envelopes her manner, her words, and her actions. Suddenly he grasps the end of the rope and ties it around his waist).

HADDA PADDA [sits down on the edge]. I nearly forgot the spade. I will dig up an angelica, and take it along with me. (Disappears below the edge. The rope slides for a time.)

INGOLF. You can see her, Steindor?

STEINDOR. She is like an expert rope-climber. She is keeping herself from the rock with the spade.

INGOLF. Don't lose sight of her. Tell me how she is getting along.

STEINDOR. I am not anxious about her going down. Now she is about passing the ledge. There, now you can let the rope slide quicker.

INGOLF. It is strange how the rope slides out of my hands. It is as if a living worm were boring out through them.

STEINDOR (calls). Hadda Padda!

THE VOICE OF HADDA PADDA. Yes.

STEINDOR. She is flying down... Now the rope is turning... It is strange to see some one else lowered down.

INGOLF. Is it still turning?

STEINDOR. Now it is turning to the other side.—Hadda Padda!

THE VOICE OF HADDA PADDA (just audible). Yes.

STEINDOR. Lower her faster, it amuses her. She waved her hand to me.

INGOLF. She waved her hand to you?

STEINDOR. Oh, she lost the spade.

INGOLF. She lost the spade! Didn't she throw it?

STEINDOR. I think she lost it.

Act IV

INGOLF. What is she doing now?

STEINDOR. I can't see.

INGOLF. Is she doing anything?—It isn't possible. Has she a long way left? (Gives the rope as quickly as possible.)

STEINDOR. No.—Hadda Padda!

INGOLF. Now I don't hear her answer.

STEINDOR. Nor I. (Calls louder.) Hadda Padda! (Listens.)

INGOLF. Do you hear her answer?

STEINDOR. No... Yes, yes, now she has heard—she is waving—she is waving with both hands.

INGOLF. Good—she is alright then.

STEINDOR. Now I think she is down!

INGOLF. The rope does not slacken—

STEINDOR. I don't see her moving any more.

INGOLF [as the rope slackens]. Well, now she is down! Do you see her?

STEINDOR. She just picked up the spade. Now she is going with it way under the rock.

INGOLF (He holds the rope so loosely, that it runs freely through his fingers). She evidently intends to dig up some angelica before searching.

STEINDOR. The rope is dragging along with her, she has not untied it.

INGOLF. Do you see her?

STEINDOR. No.

INGOLF. Let us wait calmly. (Rests his chin in his palm.)

INGOLF. Do you see her?

STEINDOR. No.

INGOLF. I wish she would come out soon.

INGOLF. Do you see her?

STEINDOR. No.

INGOLF. I can't understand what is keeping her so long.

STEINDOR. You couldn't expect her any sooner. (Peers down.) She has just come from under the rock. She has an angelica with her.

INGOLF. She is jerking the rope—she jerked three times.

STEINDOR. She tied the spade and angelica to the rope. Pull it up! (INGOLF pulls the rope up quickly.)

STEINDOR. Now she is going to look for the pearls.

INGOLF (The fear and anxiety seen on his face all this time give place to a more cheerful expression). Now we can be at ease. Who knows, maybe she will find the pearls!

STEINDOR. She is searching in the pool. She is pulling out the duck-weed.

INGOLF (draws the spade and angelica up over the edge, loosens the rope, coils it up, and throws it down

again).

STEINDOR. She is walking around the pool. Now she has turned her back to me. I can't see—I think she is looking around... she is bending over the pool.

INGOLF. Now I am at ease—

STEINDOR. Now she jumped up! She is raising her arms—she is waving the pearls at me!

INGOLF. Bravo, bravo!

STEINDOR. It was just a piece of luck!—Now she is tying the rope around herself.—

INGOLF. She just pulled,—now I'll be quick about it. (Starts pulling.)

STEINDOR (after a while). It looks as if she were sleeping on the rope.

INGOLF. What?

STEINDOR. Her body is relaxed... Should I call to her?

INGOLF. No, don't disturb her. I know the pleasure of cleaving the air with closed eyes.

STEINDOR. Now she starts... now she seems to be at rest again. She is crouching like one who is cold in bed.

INGOLF. Tell me when we reach the ledge.

STEINDOR. There isn't much left now. Aren't you tired pulling?

INGOLF. Not very.

STEINDOR (smiling). You will show your sweetheart how strong you are.

INGOLF. Aren't we at the ledge yet?

STEINDOR. Not quite.

INGOLF (pulling on).

STEINDOR. She looks strange now. She is grasping the rope firmly—she is cringing. She looks like a spider winding her way up.

THE VOICE OF HADDA PADDA. Ingolf!

INGOLF. Well!

THE VOICE OF HADDA PADDA. I will rest on the ledge.

INGOLF (continues pulling). You will be up soon!

THE VOICE OF HADDA PADDA. No, no, Ingolf! The rope is too tight.—You must not pull like that.—The rope hurts me so under my breast. (The rope relaxed; Ingolf stops pulling.)

STEINDOR (motions to him). You must hold the rope tight, so that she can raise herself up to the ledge.—Well, now she is there!

INGOLF. What is she doing?

STEINDOR. She is sitting down... she is adjusting the rope around her waist... or, what... yes, she has untied it.

THE VOICE OF HADDA PADDA. You need not stay here any longer, Steindor. I am not afraid any more.

STEINDOR. I am very comfortable here.

THE VOICE OF HADDA PADDA (She is heard laughing). Shall I stone the raven away from his nest? Beware, you blackbird! (A small stone flies through the air, and falls down near Steindor. He starts.)

THE VOICE OF HADDA PADDA. Were you afraid of the stone?

STEINDOR. I think it an unnecessary joke!

THE VOICE OF HADDA PADDA. Ha! Ha! Did you think I would stone you? It is fun to scare you! Shall I try to hit you with the rope?—Ingolf, let the rope go, please. I will try to hit Steindor with it—he is deathly afraid.

STEINDOR (who now wants to show that he understands the joke). I wager you won't reach me.

INGOLF. I bet she hits you.

THE VOICE OF HADDA PADDA. I would have hit before, if the rope hadn't been too short.

STEINDOR. No, you never would have done it—you have to aim better than that!

THE VOICE OF HADDA PADDA. The rope was too short.

STEINDOR. It's easy to lengthen it. Ingolf! Give her full rope. Let us see if she can hit me!

INGOLF (laughing). You must take care, Steindor! (He holds the rope loosely in his hands. Gradually it is pulled down entirely, till it is in a straight line with Ingolf's waist. Soon after the rope-end is seen hitting against the edge, touching Steindor's foot.) THE VOICE OF HADDA PADDA. Didn't it hit?

STEINDOR. Well, we can call it that.

INGOLF. You have to be careful, next time, Steindor!

STEINDOR. What! Won't you try any more? Are you tying the rope around you?

INGOLF. Is she rested?

STEINDOR. She is tying the rope around her and is lowering herself down under the ledge.

INGOLF (looks at him in astonishment). What are you saying?

STEINDOR. But why has she made the rope so taut? (He is amazed.)

INGOLF. What is the matter?

STEINDOR. Hadda Padda is standing on her head in the air.

INGOLF...?

STEINDOR. She is bracing her feet against the rock. Look out! (Ingolf braces his feet against the sides of the hole. Steindor gets up.)

INGOLF. Stay where you are, and tell me—I'll raise her up in a moment, [He pulls the rope with all his

strength. A moment later he is dragged prostrate, out to the edge.]

STEINDOR (runs to him, catching hold of him). Great God! Is she insane? I wouldn't have suspected this.

INGOLF (in a low voice). Where does she get that strength from?

(The rope is pulled still more violently than before; they are both dragged forward. Ingolf rolls on his back, using all his power to draw up the rope.)

INGOLF. Loosen the rope, quick! Ill try to hold on. (Steindor hurries to loosen the rope. While he is doing it, Ingolf struggles to hold fast. Now he is holding his arms high up in the air, rope in hand; now his arms are pulled down. Each time Steindor thinks he is on the verge of giving up, he lets go of the rope, and catches hold of Ingolf.)

STEINDOR. Now it is free! (Supports Ingolf. The rope is once more pulled so violently, that it is drawn through Ingolf's hands right up to the knot. He holds on to the rope beyond the knot as for life, while they are both dragged further forward.)

STEINDOR (frightened). You must let go of the rope. That's all you can do. It is better that she falls alone, than that she drag both of us with her. You must let go. Or I'll let go.

INGOLF (looking directly at him). Let go, then, you coward!

STEINDOR. Why did you want me to untie the rope, if you intend to make her drag you down?

INGOLF (with icy calmness). Have you courage to hold me while I try to get up? (Gets up.)

STEINDOR (still supporting him). She is probably exhausted, now.

INGOLF (starts to pull the rope up. He is bare-headed, his hat is lying on the edge; his hair is wet with perspiration, which trickles down on his face. The very shape of his head seems strangely altered.) Leave me, Steindor, I am through with you.

STEINDOR. I won't stand here idle, and see you dragged into the chasm.

INGOLF. Get out of my sight, do you hear? Or you'll see what's in store for you.

STEINDOR. She's mad, I tell you—she's mad. (Takes a few steps and stops.)

Ingolf pulls the rope up, quickly, and firmly, with caution in each grasp. Hadda Padda's white and beautiful hand appears above the edge of the gorge, holding a large, shining knife, which cuts the rope.

HADDA PADDA (in falling). Ingolf!

INGOLF (is thrown back as the resistance is cut off; he jumps up; rushes to the edge, crying with horror): Hadda Padda!

He gazes down into the gorge for a moment; his knees give way under him; he stretches up his arms, uttering a terrible cry of horror.

Steindor approaches.

Ingolf looks down into the gorge. Listlessly, he lifts the hand which holds the fragment of rope. His eyes are dim with tears which do not fall. Through the moisture of the tears, he looks at the newly cut wound in the rope.

CURTAIN

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK HADDA PADA ***

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