

# DORA:

FRAGMENT OF AN ANALYSIS OF A CASE OF HYSTERIA

book, music, and lyrics by Larry Bortniker

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# **DORA: FRAGMENT OF AN ANALYSIS OF A CASE OF HYSTERIA**

an adaptation of the Freudian case history

Time: October through New Year's Eve, 1900  
Place: Freud's office and Dora's home, Vienna; Dora's mind

## **CAST OF CHARACTERS**

Dora	an attractive 17-year-old girl
Freud	at age 44
Philip	Dora's father, a commanding man in his 40s
Katherine	Dora's mother, a plain woman, early 40s
Frau K	a voluptuous woman in her mid-30s
Herr K	her husband, early 40s
Chorus	Emmy von R, Lucy R and Elisabeth von R (Three Hysterical Women once treated by Freud. *They also play various cameo roles.)

## **MUSICAL NUMBERS**

### Act One

FRAGMENT OF AN ANALYSIS...	Three Hysterical Women
IN THE DEAD OF NIGHT	Dora
THE DEAREST OF FRIENDS	Philip and the Ks
EVERYONE IS HAPPY AT THE SPA	Three Hysterical Women, The Ks, Philip
SECOND FLOOR, ADJOINING	Philip and Frau K
HERR K's PROPOSITION	Herr K
MOTIVES FOR ILLNESS	
SICKEST WOMAN IN VIENNA	Aunt Malvine*
MERANO	Philip
REBECCA's MOTIVE	Rachel and Rebecca*
FRAU K's MOTIVE	Frau K and Dora
POSTCARDS	Dora and Herr K
NEVER FELT SO BAD	Ensemble
TENDING TO FATHER	Dora and The Hysterical Women
THE PHYSIOLOGY OF LOVE	Dora and Frau K
WHAT HE MUST THINK OF ME	Dora and Freud

### Act Two

A PACK OF LIES	Philip and the Ks
WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A WOMAN	Katherine
TELL ME, DR. FREUD	Dora
A MAN AND A WOMAN ALONE IN A ROOM	Hysterical Women and Ensemble
FREUD'S SOLILOQUY	Freud
WHO IS DORA?	The Ensemble

## ACT ONE

DORA's RECURRING DREAM unfolds: PHILIP, DORA, and KATHERINE are asleep in their respective beds. Their house bursts into flame. PHILIP wakes up and rushes to KATHERINE's bed.

PHILIP

Wake up! There's a fire!

KATHERINE

Dear god!

HE rushes to DORA's bedside.

PHILIP

Wake up! Quickly! There's a fire!

DORA

Poppa!

PHILIP

Quickly!

THEY throw on robes and run for the door. KATHERINE suddenly stops short.

KATHERINE

My jewelry box! I have to get my jewelry box!

PHILIP

I will not allow us to be burned for the sake of your jewelry box!

HE forces them out of the house and the dream evaporates in its smoke.

THREE HYSTERICAL WOMEN—FRAU EMMY VON R, MISS LUCY R, and FRAULEIN ELISABETH VON R—appear, clearing their way through the smoke.

As THEY sing to the audience, a tableau unfolds behind them: DORA's house reappears. DORA is tossing in her sleep. SHE will rise from her bed, pace a bit, then go to her writing desk to write a note, crumpling draft after draft. SHE coughs incessantly.

KATHERINE is on her knees silently scrubbing the floor. PHILIP is not home.

### SONG: FRAGMENT OF AN ANALYSIS OF A CASE OF HYSTERIA

FRAU EMMY VON R, MISS LUCY R, FRAULEIN ELISABETH VON R  
(variously)

Fragment  
Of a case of hysteria.

Fragment of an analysis  
Of a case of  
Hysteria.  
A fragment of a case.  
A case of hysteria.  
A case of hysteria.  
A fragment of  
An analysis of  
A fragment  
Of a case  
An analysis  
Fragment of a case of hysteria.  
It's a very upsetting tale  
Of a very annoying girl  
Whose claim to fame  
Is a hacking cough.  
A cracking voice  
And a hacking cough.

A little limp  
And a slight fatigue.  
A recurring dream  
And a light catarrh.

With a history of a dragging foot.  
And a vicious tongue.  
An occasional deep depression.  
And hemicranial migraines.  
But, most of all, it's a hacking cough.

And, really, there you have it.  
Really, there you are--  
Where's the drama?  
What's the fuss?  
Clinically speaking, not much to discuss.  
All in all, un petite hysteria,  
Not complete hysteria,  
Not like us!

I couldn't see.  
I couldn't hear.  
I couldn't walk.  
And then Dr. Freud had us talk.

I couldn't breathe.  
I couldn't feel.  
I couldn't smell.  
And then Dr. Freud cast his spell.

He wouldn't stop.  
He wouldn't quit.  
He wouldn't sway.  
Till all of the cobwebs were shaken away.  
And true, now and then, there's a miserable day.

But along comes this upstart  
You might overlook,  
And we get a chapter  
And she gets a book.

We help discover  
Cathartic technique  
And she sees the doctor  
Sex days a week.  
Six days a week.

Dora.  
Call her Dora.  
That's her nom de plume.  
That's her nom de guerre.  
Dora.  
Simply Dora--  
A rosebud taking bloom.  
A monster in her lair...

THE THREE HYSTERICAL WOMEN disappear. DORA is finishing writing her letter. KATHERINE still silently washes the floors.

### **SONG: IN THE DEAD OF NIGHT**

DORA

I toss and turn.  
I lie awake.  
I shiver and perspire  
My lungs are filled with fire!  
My temples throb.  
My muscles ache.  
My father is a filthy snake.  
I was assaulted at the lake.  
Yet he won't believe me.  
He says, 'There must be some mistake'  
And then he shrugs me off.

I was ravished!  
I was groped!  
I was practically molested!  
It was pressing up against me when I fled.

If my father cared a fig  
He'd've had the pig arrested,  
Which I doubt he'd even do if I were dead.  
I feel angry and betrayed!  
I feel miserably congested.  
And this piss they make me take  
Is doing nothing to relieve me of this cough.  
This dreadful cough.

It's clear he never loved me.  
He never did.  
He never will.  
He's only used me.  
And he would mean to use me still.  
He never loved me.  
So he must lose me....

DORA walks past KATHERINE, who continues scrubbing the floor and places the letter on her father's desk. PHILIP suddenly enters the house. HE is a little drunk and somewhat disheveled.

PHILIP

What are you doing up so late?

DORA

I might ask the same of you. But, then again, I know exactly what you've been doing.

PHILIP

You know nothing.

DORA

And you're a goddamned liar!

PHILIP

(angrily)

Don't you dare raise your voice to me. I will not allow it.

DORA coughs wildly.

PHILIP

(to KATHERINE) Get her medicine. (to DORA) Please. Try to calm down.

KATHERINE

(with medicine)

Here.

DORA

Get that away from me, goddamn it.

DORA knocks the bottle out of her hand.

KATHERINE

(getting bucket and mop)

Look what you've done! And I just scrubbed the floor.

DORA

The rats, Mother! Mop it up quickly before the rats get at it!

PHILIP

Stop goading her! (To KATHERINE) You'll do that later. Go to your room.

KATHERINE

But I have to...

PHILIP

Please. Go to your room.

KATHERINE

But I ...

DORA

You heard him--Go to your goddamned room!

PHILIP

I forbid you talk to your mother like that.

DORA

(screaming) Hypocrite!!

KATHERINE

She left a note on your desk.

DORA rushes to the desk, but PHILIP gets there first.

DORA

No! Give it to me! I don't want you to read it! Give it to me! (to KATHERINE) Who asked you to open your stupid mouth?

KATHERINE exits.

PHILIP

(gently) My darling. Why are you torturing yourself?

DORA

You're torturing me. Every minute of every day.

PHILIP

But I'm devoted to you. You know that. I would do anything to...

DORA

Then stop seeing Clara! Break it off with her! Tomorrow!

PHILIP

I...I can't. You know I can't. It's out of the question.

DORA

(screaming and crying)

Is this how little I matter to you? Is it?

PHILIP

(trying to console her)

My darling...

DORA

Don't touch me. Keep your dirty hands to yourself.

PHILIP

This is all too much! You're going to see that doctor.

DORA

NO!

PHILIP

I'll make an appointment in the morning.

DORA

I refuse to go!

PHILIP

Then I'll drag you there myself.

DORA

You will have to because I'm not going! Do you hear me? I'M NOT GOING!

DORA faints. PHILIP picks her up and carries her to her bed.

KATHERINE slips back into the room and scrubs the floor.

The scene dissolves. THE THREE HYSTERICAL WOMEN appear in FREUD's office, while FREUD is writing at his desk.

**SONG: FRAGMENT OF AN ANALYSIS, pt. 2**

THREE HYSTERICAL WOMEN

(variously)

Fragment  
Of a case of hysteria.  
Fragment of an analysis  
Of a case of  
Hysteria.

A fragment of a case.  
A case of hysteria.  
A case of hysteria.  
A fragment of, an analysis of  
A fragment  
Of a case  
An analysis.  
Fragment  
Of a case of hysteria.

It's a very upsetting tale  
Of a very attractive,  
A terribly handsome,  
A beautifully charming  
Man  
Who made his mark  
With a book on dreams.  
But the book, it seems,  
Isn't catching on.  
And he's on the verge  
Of his middle age  
While he fights the urge  
For a fresh cigar.

And he fears the worst  
As his practice slumps  
And his income drops.  
And the Ministry of Education  
Won't make him a full professor.  
And here he is, in his middle age....

## **SONG: ANOTHER DREAM**

### **FREUD**

Another dream....

I'm dining in a restaurant—  
A common table d'hôte.  
I'm spotted by Frau Margaritte.  
I rise and take her coat.  
We're served a bowl of spinach broth.  
She grins salaciously.  
And underneath the tablecloth,  
She gently strokes my knee.  
A table d'hôte...  
And spinach broth...  
But why Frau Margaritte?

DORA knocks on FREUD's door.

FREUD

Please, come in.

DORA

Let's get right to point, Herr Doctor. I want to know exactly what it is that you do.

FREUD

Do?

DORA

Yes. Your specialty. Hydrotherapy? Electric shock? I've had them both before, you know, so let's save each other a lot of time.

FREUD

I do neither of these. I will ask you to lie down on the couch and talk. About whatever you like. About whatever comes into your head. And I will listen. In time, you will improve.

DORA

In time? How long is this going to take?

FREUD

At least a year.

DORA

A year! You can't be serious!

FREUD

We'll meet every day for about an hour, except for Sundays.

DORA

There's no way on god's earth that I'm going to...Does my father know about this?

FREUD

We've already discussed it.

DORA

How marvelous! So it's all settled! And what in the name of hell am I supposed to talk about with you six days a week?

FREUD

About whatever comes into your head.

DORA

While I lie there.

FREUD

Yes.

DORA

And you listen.

FREUD

Exactly.

DORA

And will you be serving tea? Or refreshments?

FREUD

That can be arranged, if you think they can help us understand why you wish to kill yourself.

DORA

(nasty) Hasn't he told you that also? Because I'm completely out of my mind! Because I'm deranged! Why is he keeping you in the dark?

FREUD

Then enlighten me.

DORA

(a beat) You were his doctor, weren't you?

FREUD

Yes.

DORA

You treated him for syphilis.

FREUD  
(surprised)

Yes. I did. Several years ago.

DORA

I know you did. So why the hell should I trust you?

FREUD

Because I'm no longer his doctor. Now I am yours.

DORA

Goddamn him and goddamn you.

DORA lies on the couch and FREUD sits in a chair.

THREE HYSTERICAL WOMEN

And, really, there you have it.

Really, there you are--

See her grumble,

Hear her grouch.

Clearly the girl needs some time on the couch.

All in all, un petite hysteria,

Not complete hysteria,

But this we vouch—

Fragment  
Of a case of hysteria  
Fragment of an analysis  
Of a case of  
Hysteria!

Dora.  
Call her Dora.  
Dora.  
Of a case of  
Hysteria!

DORA

...the reasons for my unhappiness...I'll tell you what they are in a word! It's him. My father. He sickens me. (crying) I see how little I matter to him. He would see me raped and dead before giving up one moment of his dirty pleasure! (sharply) Listen. I don't know what he did or didn't tell you, but it's all lies! He's a goddamned liar.

FREUD

He told me about your suicide note. And how you want him to break off all relations with a certain Frau K.

FRAU K and PHILIP appear. THEY are kissing passionately.

FRAU K

Darling, please! They'll be home any minute!

PHILIP

We still have time...

THEY disappear.

DORA

Clara. Yes.

FREUD

He said you imagine that they are having a sexual...

DORA

Imagine? Of course they are! And did he tell you that her husband tried to molest me?

HERR K appears with PHILIP and FRAU K.

HERR K

On my honor, I never touched the girl.

FREUD

Yes, he told me. Your father said you imagined this as well.

DORA

Of course he'd say that. The pig.

FREUD

He said you were all once very close...

**SONG: THE DEAREST OF FRIENDS**

PHILIP, FRAU AND HERR K  
The dearest of friends.

PHILIP  
Rather more like family.

FRAU K  
Picnics in the countryside.

HERR K  
Summers by the shore.

PHILIP  
Since the girl was four.

ALL THREE  
The dearest of friends.

FRAU K  
Intimates and confidantes.

HERR K  
Absolutely innocent.

PHILIP  
How is it she turned?

HERR AND FRAU K  
We're terribly concerned.

ALL THREE  
The nearest and dearest of friends...

FREUD  
Your father said Herr K was like an uncle to you. That you adored him.

DORA  
The little worm forced himself on me. Make no mistake about that. But the worst of it is my father refuses to believe me! How is it a father refuses to believe his own daughter? Refuses to defend her honor!

DORA coughs. PHILIP and THE Ks disappear.

FREUD  
When did Herr K attempt to molest you?

DORA

Two summers ago. At Capo di Lago. He and Clara rented a cottage for the season and father and I visited them. We went for a walk one afternoon. Around the lake.

FREUD

You and Herr K.

DORA

Yes.

FREUD

What happened?

HERR K reappears. HE is reaching for DORA.

HERR K

Come into my arms, Dora.  
Come into my arms.

DORA

I told you. He tried to molest me. What more do you need to know? (she coughs) The point is, my father refuses to believe me. Refuses to do what any...

FREUD

Let's try, for the moment, to stay at the lake.

HERR K

Let me have a kiss, Dora.  
Darling, I just have to have a kiss...

FREUD

You said he forced himself on you.

DORA

Yes. He was all over me. Forcing his tongue into my mouth. And grabbing at me. It was disgusting. I pushed him off and slapped him as hard as I could. Then I ran away.

HERR K disappears.

FREUD

How old were you?

DORA

Fifteen.

FREUD

I see. Tell me more about Herr and Frau K.

DORA

Whatever for?

FREUD

So we can more fully understand...

DORA

What is there to understand? She sleeps with my father and he tried to...

FREUD

Your unhappiness is directly linked to these people.

DORA coughs.

And so is your cough.

DORA

How can that be?

FREUD

This is what we must try to find out.

DORA

Alright. Alright.

FREUD

Please. From the beginning. When did you first meet the Ks?

DORA

When we moved to Merano.

FREUD

How old were you?

DORA

Four or five. I was very young. Father had tuberculosis. So we moved to Merano for the cure. And we lived there for ten years.

FREUD

That long?

DORA

You're surprised.

FREUD

I didn't think people actually lived in Merano. I thought they recuperated and left.

DORA

Most people do. We, however, were there for the extended-care holiday. Everyone was sick. Father most of all--first tuberculosis, then his eyes. That's how he met Clara. In the sanatorium.

PHILIP and FRAU K appear seated in chairs and wrapped in blankets.

PHILIP and FRAU K  
(sickly)  
The dearest of friends....

FREUD  
She also had tuberculosis?

DORA  
No. Bad legs. A nervous condition.

FRAU K  
Suddenly a cramp.  
Followed by a twinge....

FREUD  
And Herr K?

DORA  
Sick, as well. Of his wife.

HERR K appears.

HERR K  
She gives nothing....  
She gives me nothing....

DORA  
And let's not forget about Mother and her stomach and her catarrhs. She would've slept in the steam bath had they allowed it.

KATHERINE appears in a steam bath.

KATHERINE  
Clean. Absolutely clean.

FREUD  
And let's not forget about you either.

DORA  
(quietly)  
Yes. Asthma. And laryngitis. Terrible headaches. And then the coughing.

FREUD  
So much illness in Merano!

DORA  
There was. But trust me when I tell you—everyone was having a marvelous time.

THE THREE HYSTERICAL WOMEN appear, dressed as NURSES, and minister to PHILIP and FRAU K and KATHERINE. As the song progresses, PHILIP and FRAU K embrace and kiss, HERR K flirts with a HYSTERICAL WOMAN/NURSE and propositions her, and KATHERINE sits resplendently in the steam bath.

**SONG: EVERYONE IS HAPPY AT THE SPA**

THREE HYSTERICAL WOMEN  
(variously)

Everyone is happy at the spa.  
Listen to that lovely oom-pah-pah.  
If your diagnosis  
Makes you sick with desperation,  
You could wallow in neurosis  
Or enjoy some recreation.  
So you've got tuberculosis,  
Why not make it a vacation?  
Come into the garden for a beer.  
Let everybody know you've made it  
Through another year.  
Everyone will gladly ooh and ahh!  
As everyone is happy at the spa.

THREE HYSTERICAL WOMEN, PHILIP, KATHERINE, HERR AND FRAU K

In the mountains of Merano  
You escape the winter weather.  
You find yourself a bathhouse and you zitz.  
And then it's to the steam room for a schvitz  
Have a lump of pumpernickel  
And a shot of slivovitz.

Every Monday a soprano  
Gets you singing all together.  
Yes, you're frail and at your thinnest--  
Tuesday there's a violinist.  
La, la, la, la, la...

DORA

Clara nursed him through the worst of his illness. And he got better. And then she continued to nurse him, even in good health. And I'm certain he must've done his share of nursing, too, because her health improved as well. And then they were deathly ill all over again, and needed even more mutual nursing.

THREE HYSTERICAL WOMEN, PHILIP, KATHERINE, HERR AND FRAU K

Everyone's afflicted at the spa.  
Membership's restricted at the spa.  
Everyone is grinning  
From the rest and relaxation.

There's a festival beginning,  
Come and join the celebration.  
If you find your head is spinning,  
It's not just the medication--  
Everywhere you look you find romance.  
To think the doctor said you had a fifty/fifty chance.  
Now and then, you hear a loud hurrah!  
As everyone is happy at the spa.

In the valley of Merano  
Every summer's nice and breezy.  
Have yourself a picnic every day.  
Or find yourself a partner for croquet.  
Then spend a lovely evening in an intimate café.  
It's a bit Italiano  
But it's mostly Viennese--  
Every Franz and every Fritzel  
Orders vino with his schnitzel  
La, la, la, la, la...

DORA

And from then on they were inseparable. I remember being very young and asking my mother why he spent so much time with Frau K. Why he bought her so many expensive gifts.

KATHERINE

Your father went into the woods one day to kill himself. He was very unhappy. But Frau K stopped him. That's why. You mustn't ask so many questions.

DORA

And I believed that fairy tale for years. Now the only part I believe is that they went into the woods.

THREE HYSTERICAL WOMEN, PHILIP, KATHERINE, HERR AND FRAU K

Everyone is sickly at the spa.  
None recover quickly at the spa.  
Nothing's more depressing  
Than a quick recuperation.  
If you're really convalescing,  
Try a sudden complication.  
You can keep the doctor guessing  
With a phony inflammation.

Remember that the doctor is your friend.  
And never pack your bags until the season's at an end.  
When you're home, admit to feeling blah.  
An afternoon of wincing  
Can be perfectly convincing.  
And a nasty little swelling  
Can be wonderfully compelling.

And becoming paraplegic  
Can be terribly strategic.

Malingering in your bedding  
And then soon enough you're heading to the spa.  
Soon enough you're heading  
If your system is unthreading,  
Clearly, soon enough you're heading to the spa.

THE THREE HYSTERICAL WOMEN, PHILIP, FRAU and HERR K, and  
KATHERINE disappear.

DORA

And now he tries to deny the whole affair! Ridiculous. It was common knowledge. Even my mother knew all about it.

FREUD

How?

DORA

At the beginning, Herr K complained openly to her. But she didn't want to know, so he dropped it. Listen. You want stories? I can give you stories. Like when we vacationed in the Italian Alps. All of them and all of us. We stayed at an old hotel. In adjoining suites.

FREUD

How old were you?

DORA

Thirteen. I overheard them in the hallway.

FREUD

Who?

DORA

My father and Clara. They were carrying on like two idiots in a comic opera.

PHILIP and FRAU K appear.

**SONG: SECOND FLOOR, ADJOINING**

PHILIP

Where are you?

FRAU K

In the front room, by the pantry.  
Where are you?

PHILIP

In the backroom, by the closet.

FRAU K

Where?

PHILIP

Near the staircase.

FRAU K

Oh.

PHILIP

You've got to switch.

FRAU K

But why?

PHILIP

Meant to tell you, but forgot to.

FRAU K

Tell me what?

PHILIP

You've got to switch.

FRAU K

But I...

PHILIP

Take the backroom, by the terrace.

FRAU K

By the terrace?

PHILIP

Down the hallway.

FRAU K

Yes.

PHILIP

And hurry, dear, I'm burning hot!  
The backrooms are connected!

FRAU K

Connected?

PHILIP

Connected.  
We'll never be detected.  
Discreetly connected.

FRAU K

The backrooms are connected!

PHILIP

Imagine.

BOTH

Connected!

PHILIP

I move a desk.  
You move a screen.  
A little door  
Is in between.  
At twelve o'clock  
You'll hear a knock.

FRAU K

I move the screen.

PHILIP

I turn the lock.

BOTH

And won't we be in heaven!

PHILIP

Clara, baby.

FRAU K

Philip, darling!

BOTH

Heaven! Nothing short of heaven!

PHILIP

Let me hold you.

FRAU K

Let me kiss you.

BOTH

Heaven.

PHILIP

I've hungered for you.

FRAU K

Whimpered for you.

PHILIP

Dreamed about you.

FRAU K

Hardly ate.

PHILIP

Lusted for you.

FRAU K

Simpered for you.

Philip, please, we have to wait!

My husband!

PHILIP

Your husband?

Where is he?

FRAU K

In the backroom, by the terrace.

PHILIP

Jesus Christ!

FRAU K

What could I do? Should've told me.

PHILIP

Yes. Meant to tell you.

Now get him out.

FRAU K

But how?

PHILIP

Clara, darling, tell him something.

FRAU K

Tell him what?

PHILIP

Just get him out.

FRAU K

Right now?

PHILIP

To the side room, by the curtains.

FRAU K

With the children?

PHILIP

Move the children!

FRAU K

Oh, Philip, please! My nerves are shot!

PHILIP

The backrooms are connected....

FRAU K

But Philip! My husband!

PHILIP

You feel a draft.  
You hate the view.  
I'm sure you know  
Just what to do.

Yes, Dora's room  
She's right next door.

We should've thought of that before!  
Dora!  
She's all he'll see.  
Dora!

FRAU K

I'll say I'm ill.  
I'm very ill.  
And need a bedroom of my own.  
And Dora's room  
Is right next door.

I'm sure he'd like that even more.

Dora!  
What a useful girl!  
Dora!  
What a perfect pawn!

PHILIP

Now won't we be in heaven!  
Twelve o'clock tonight  
We'll be in heaven.

FRAU K

Philip, look: It isn't even seven!

PHILIP

But, Clara! I'm aching for you.

FRAU K

Thirsting for you!

PHILIP

Have to have you!

FRAU K

Do we dare!

PHILIP  
Shaking for you!

FRAU K  
Bursting for you!

PHILIP  
Have to do it!

FRAU K  
Philip, where?

PHILIP  
I don't care!

PHILIP  
In the pantry, in the closet,  
On the terrace, in the bathtub!  
In the curtains, by the bookcase,  
In the parlor, in the bushes!  
In the pantry, in the closet,  
Won't we be in heaven!

FRAU K  
Heaven!

Heaven!

Won't we be in heaven!

PHILIP and FRAU K disappear.

FREUD  
So they moved Herr K next door to you.

DORA  
Yes. As always, the sacrificial lamb.

FREUD  
How did you first learn of your father's relationship with Frau K?

DORA  
It wasn't very difficult to figure out. They had the same routine for years and years. They would meet every day at two. At Clara's. While Herr K was still at the office.

FREUD  
You knew this for a fact?

DORA  
Of course I did.

FREUD  
How?

DORA  
I was the one to play with the children while they met.

FREUD

You watched the children?

DORA

Yes. I took them out of the house.

FREUD

So in other words, you were an accomplice to their adultery.

DORA

I wouldn't say that exactly!

FREUD

You already have. And so I'm confused. How is it that you were once their accomplice and now you want to break them apart by threatening suicide?

DORA  
(angry)

I never had the slightest intention of killing myself.

FREUD

My question still stands. How is it you once encouraged their...

DORA

I never encouraged anything...

FREUD

But you never objected either. At least not up until recently.

DORA

Things were different then. Everything was different. Before Capo di Lago.

FREUD

When Herr K propositioned you.

DORA

When he attacked me. Yes. Everything changed.

FREUD

I see.

DORA

My eyes were opened...to..to my father's true character. How he would see me raped before jeopardizing his ugly little affair.

FREUD

Which you previously approved of.

DORA

Yes. Yes. Yes. I told you. Things were different then. I was very close to my father. And to Frau K. I wish that she and I could still be friends. But that's impossible now. Impossible.

FREUD

And what of Herr K?

DORA

What of him?

FREUD

Were you close with him as well?

DORA

(quietly)

Yes. I was. Since I was a little girl. I loved him. He was always very kind to me. He would buy me gifts and birthday presents. And flowers. I remember when I turned thirteen, he bought me flowers every day. For a year.

FREUD

Really?

DORA

Yes, really. And it was always sweet and innocent. Or at least I thought so. We would play games with the children and go on long walks and...

**SONG: THE PICNIC**

HERR K

Dora, my darling.

DORA

Dearest Hans.

HERR K

The children are waiting.

DORA

We can't keep the children.

HERR K

What say a picnic?

DORA

That would be lovely.

HERR K and DORA

Let's have a picnic

Then stroll into town.

DORA

But then it all turned ugly.

HERR K

Come into my arms, Dora.  
Come into my arms.  
Let me have a kiss, Dora.  
Let me have a kiss.

HERR K disappears.

DORA

He sickens me, I tell you. And I'm quite through with him. Quite through. But keep in mind that this is the sort of man my father's been trading me off to for years! All that ever matters is his own dirty pleasure. He even moved us to Vienna because she moved here.

FREUD

The Ks live in Vienna?

DORA

Yes.

FREUD

Have you seen them? Since the lake.

DORA

Yes. I've seen Clara several times. Always with my father.

FREUD

And Herr K?

DORA

Yes. Twice. Out in the street. Both times he watched me walk past him and then he watched me from behind. As I walked.

FREUD

So you have eyes in the back of your head.

DORA

Please. A woman knows these things.

FREUD

I see.

DORA

The second time, he actually followed me for half an hour.

FREUD

Did it excite you when he looked at you? When he followed you?

DORA

No. Not at all.

FREUD

You say that so quickly.

DORA

Because it's the truth.

FREUD

Women are naturally excited by the attention of men. Why should you be different?

DORA

I was not excited.

FREUD

(lacing into her)

Of course you were. As you were at the lake.

DORA

I was not excited. I was disgusted, nauseated...

FREUD

Yes, yes, yes. Thoroughly disgusted. I could let you go on and on all day, but I know that at least some part of you was thrilled by his look, his touch, his attentions...

DORA

You know nothing of the kind!

FREUD

...thrilled by his attentions and intentions.

DORA

What do you mean by that?

FREUD

There's no doubt in my mind that your father didn't want to upset his love affair by looking too closely at Herr K's actions to you.

DORA

I'm glad you agree.

FREUD

But the same may be said about you. For a time, you didn't want to look too closely into your father's affair, either. After all, you herded the children out of the house during his liaisons.

DORA

What is your point?

FREUD

You wanted them to be together. So that Herr K would be free for you.

DORA

That's a lie!

FREUD

Tell me what happened at the lake.

DORA

There's nothing more to tell.

FREUD

I think there's a great deal more to tell. What were the two of you talking about?

DORA

I don't remember.

FREUD  
(sharply)

What happened at the lake?

HERR K appears.

HERR K

...so this is my lot in life. I'm sacrificing my happiness for the sake of my children. If it weren't for them...

DORA

He told me he wanted to divorce her. But for the children.

FREUD

And then what happened?

DORA

He picked some flowers for me. And put one in my hair.

### **SONG: HERR K'S PROPOSITION**

HERR K

A quiet afternoon with you, Dora.  
And everything is clear.  
The misery you put me through, Dora,  
The moment when the two of us are near.

I think about my sorrow,  
My anguish,  
My hollow little nothing of a life.  
I think about my children.

It cheers me.  
But then, of course, I think about my wife.

I see the bleakness of my days.  
I see the sadness of my ways.  
I see the softness of your smile.  
I see the sparkle in your eyes.  
I see a flower  
A simple flower in your hair.  
Let me take your hand.

A thousand things I want to say, Dora.  
I tremble if I try.  
They'd only frighten you away, Dora.  
You'd leave me and I'm certain I would die.  
The words well up inside me.  
I fight them.  
I stopple them and then I let them go.

My heart explodes inside me.  
I kill it.  
I tell myself I mustn't let it show.  
And we continue on our stroll.  
And when I think I'm in control.

I see the softness of your smile.  
I see the sparkle in your eyes.  
I see a flower,  
A simple flower in your hair.  
I smell your delicate perfume.  
I hear you whispering my name.  
I thank the heavens,  
The blessed heavens you are there...

Come into my arms, Dora.  
Come into my arms.  
Let me have a kiss, Dora.  
Darling, I just have to have a kiss.  
My wife gives nothing.  
She gives me nothing.  
She gives me nothing.

DORA

He kept kissing me, forcing his tongue into my mouth. Like I told you, I slapped him in the face and ran away.

HERR K disappears.

FREUD

He was in love with you.

I hardly think so! All he wanted was...  
DORA

He was in love with you and you knew it.  
FREUD  
(sharply)

I was fifteen!  
DORA

And you loved him.  
FREUD

That's a lie!  
DORA

All those hours together. Just the two of you.  
FREUD

Stop saying that. It wasn't like that at all.  
DORA

But I'm afraid we'll have to leave it at that. Our time is up for today.  
FREUD

DORA exits.

FREUD  
(recapping his earlier dream)  
I'm dining in a restaurant—  
A common table d'hôte.  
I'm spotted by Frau Margaritte.  
I rise and take her coat...  
The girl will crack...  
She's clever, yes, but still she'll crack....

BLACKOUT. Lights up. It's another session.

My Aunt Malvine died last night. I'm very distraught.  
DORA

My deepest condolences.  
FREUD

Thank you, Doctor. I will not be able to see you tomorrow. The funeral.  
DORA

Of course. How did she die?  
FREUD

DORA

A mysterious illness no one could quite explain.

AUNT MALVINE appears. SHE is moaning.

**SONG: MOTIVES FOR ILLNESS**

**1. SICKEST WOMAN IN ALL OF VIENNA**

AUNT MALVINE

I'm the sickest woman in all of Vienna.  
The same can be said when I winter in Sienna.  
Every day they bring a tray.  
It might be fish.  
It might be meat.  
They make it tart.  
They make it sweet.  
It doesn't matter, I won't eat.  
One taste and I prefer to waste away.

It's the veins in the meat.  
It's the guts in the chicken.  
The shit in the pig.  
It's the eyes on the fish.  
It's the worms in the fruit.  
It's the rats in the garden.  
Whatever you do, just get rid of that dish!  
I'm the sickest woman in all of Vienna.

AUNT MALVINE disappears.

DORA

I loved her dearly, but she was quite impossible the last few years. The sicker she got, the more she demanded of everyone. And she used her illness to get what she wanted.

PHILIP appears. HE is moaning.

Huh.

FREUD

What comes to mind?

DORA

That's exactly what my father does. Plays up the illness to get what he wants.

FREUD

How so?

DORA

Before we moved to Vienna, we lived near one of father's factories. In Bohemia. The K's still lived in Merano. The slightest change of weather required an immediate change of venue.

PHILIP appears. HE is moaning.

## 2. MERANO

PHILIP

There's a chill in the air.  
I can feel it cutting through me.  
The rawness of December is beginning to undo me.  
There's a thump in my chest.  
Why, I practically can time it.  
So I need a change of climate like

Merano. Merano.  
Restorative Merano.  
Delectable Merano.  
And ever so respectable,  
There's no place like Merano.

It's a risky proposition  
For a man in my condition,  
Not to pay his symptoms any heed.  
If I'm going to survive it,  
Then I need a semi-private  
Pensione in darling Merano.

PHILIP disappears.

FREUD

This seems to be a family trait.

REBECCA appears, moaning.

DORA

Ha!

FREUD

What comes to mind?

DORA

Oh, nothing really.

FREUD

Say it. Please.

DORA

My cousin Rebecca. Her sister Rachel was married a month ago.

RACHEL appears in a wedding gown.

Rebecca's older than Rachel and she's still not married. Well. She was livid. And she suddenly became very ill on the day of the wedding.

### 3. REBECCA'S MOTIVE

RACHEL

Today  
I marry  
The man  
I love.  
Today  
My love  
And I  
Are one.

And when  
I vow  
To be  
His Frau

That's when  
The honeymoon's  
Begun.  
They're entering the synagogue.

She's irritating!  
No sense in waiting.  
I highly doubt that she'll be mating.  
Which is why  
My love and I  
Are getting married

REBECCA

My stomach's turning.  
I feel it churning.  
What with the acid and the gas  
It feels as if my guts are burning!  
  
It isn't proper.  
I'd like to whop her.  
She's just a selfish little bitch  
And even Poppa couldn't stop her.

Let them rejoice!  
No way I'm showing up!  
I have no choice  
Since I keep throwing up.

I will not stand beside the chuppa  
Looking absolutely stupid .  
And completely in a fog.  
They're entering the synagogue.

I'm constipated!  
She should've waited!  
At least until the time I mated.

And that is why  
I'd rather die  
Than watch her getting married.

PHILIP and AUNT MALVINE reappear.

RACHEL

Today  
I marry  
  
The man  
I love.

Today my love....

REBECCA

Today my stomach's turning.  
I feel it churning.  
What with the acid  
And the gas it feels  
As if my guts are burning.

It isn't proper...

MALVINE

I'm the sickest  
Woman in all of  
Vienna.  
The same can be said  
When I winter in  
Sienna...

PHILIP

Merano  
  
  
  
Merano!

RACHEL, REBECCA, MALVINE and PHILIP disappear.

FREUD

So much illness. So many motives behind it.

DORA

What do you mean?

FREUD

You stated it perfectly before. Playing up illness to get what you want...

FRAU K appears, moaning.

FREUD

What comes to mind?

DORA

Clara. Her legs. Whenever Herr K returned from one of his business trips, her legs would go bad. Like clockwork.

FREUD

Was he away very often?

DORA

Yes. Several trips a year.

#### 4. FRAU K's MOTIVE

FRAU K

Suddenly a cramp.  
Followed by a twinge.  
Strong enough to cringe from  
In torment and agony.  
Then it goes away,  
Maybe for a day.  
Then I need a nurse.  
Jesus, I could curse!  
If I weren't busy sobbing.  
From the spasms and the throbbing.  
Up and down my leg.  
Into every toe.  
And to make it worse,  
All he wants to do is fuck me.  
I'd prefer it if he struck me.

But he starts to beg.  
And he won't take no.  
So I push him off.  
And I make him go!

Spare me from his passion!  
Save me from his lust!  
Can't he see my anguish  
As I languish in disgust!

Suddenly an ache.  
Suddenly a pinch.  
Suddenly I shake.  
Suddenly I flinch.  
Then another jab.  
And another pain.  
Then another stab.  
How can I explain?  
Just as he comes back from traveling,  
How my nerves begin unraveling...

FREUD

And when he departed?

DORA

An instantaneous recovery.

FRAU K

Isn't it amazing, but that's how it happens!  
Suddenly I'm feeling revived and restored.  
I was on the brink of dissolution,  
Withering away for weeks and weeks.  
Suddenly my trusty constitution's  
Giving me the blush that's in my cheeks.

Isn't it amazing?  
Everyone's astounded!  
Not to mention my doctor's completely confounded!  
Isn't it a wonder?  
Isn't it a sight?  
Never felt so grand as I'm feeling tonight!

Wouldn't it be lovely to plan an adventure?  
Suddenly I'm feeling impossibly bored.  
What I wouldn't do for some diversion.  
Maybe just a stroll up to the square.  
Maybe what I need's a brief excursion.  
Maybe what I need's a love affair.

Wouldn't that be charming.  
Isn't that appealing?  
Isn't it unsightly how sprightly I'm feeling.  
Isn't it a wonder?  
Isn't it a sight?  
Never felt so grand as I'm feeling tonight!

FRAU K disappears.

DORA

And the moment I told her when he was returning, the cycle would begin anew.

FREUD

The moment you told her? You knew when he would return and she did not?

DORA

Yes.

FREUD

How did you know this?

DORA

We would write each other postcards.

HERR K appears.

## 5. POSTCARDS

HERR K

Dora, my darling.  
A kiss to the children.  
Tell them I miss them.  
And tell them to tell you  
I miss you as well.

Dresden is dismal.  
And business abysmal.  
Tomorrow it's Frankfurt  
And then to Cologne  
And I'm perfectly miserable  
Here all alone.

How I long for your smile.  
How I yearn for your laugh.  
Than god I return  
In a week and a half...  
Just a week and a half...

HERR K disappears.

DORA

Dearest Hans.  
A kiss from the children.  
All of us miss you.  
Deeply.  
But me most of all.

Merano is dreary.  
I try to be cheery.  
Your postcard from Paris  
Was truly a lift.  
I'm delighted to read  
That you bought me a gift.

Some expensive perfume?  
Or same fancy couture?

FREUD

And what was the state of your health when he was away?

DORA

Suddenly I hack.  
Suddenly I rasp.  
Suddenly I crack.  
Suddenly I gasp!  
Every little word!  
Even when I shout!

None of it is heard!  
Nothing's coming out.

FREUD

You would lose your voice?

DORA

Yes.

FREUD

For how long?

DORA

For two or three months at a time.

FREUD

And how long was Herr K usually away on business?

DORA

For two or three months at a time.

FREUD

In other words, you were imitating Frau K's cycle of illness. Indeed, what use did you have for your voice when the man you secretly loved couldn't hear it?

FRAU K reappears.

DORA

Suddenly I hack.  
Suddenly I rasp.  
Suddenly I crack.  
Suddenly I gasp.  
Every little word!  
Even when I shout!  
None of it is heard!  
Nothing's coming out!

Just when he  
Departs  
For traveling,  
How my voice  
Begins  
Unraveling

FRAU K

Just when he  
Comes back  
From traveling,

How my nerves  
Begin  
Unraveling!

Suddenly an ache.  
Suddenly a pinch.  
Suddenly I shake.  
Suddenly I flinch.  
Then another jab.  
Then another pain.  
Then another stab.  
How can I explain?

FREUD

It's a good thing that your father brought you here to me. Quite a good thing! Otherwise, might you not spend the rest of your life in the thrilling misery of illness? Our time is up for today.

ENSEMBLE

Isn't it a pity how dreadful I'm feeling.  
Every little muscle is ready to snap.  
Isn't it a fate too cruel to mention--  
Suffering in pain each time I move!  
Isn't it a sin, so much attention!  
Isn't it a shame I don't improve!  
Wouldn't that be awful?  
Wouldn't that be dreary?  
Just the thought of improving is making me weary.  
Isn't it a horror? Isn't it a fright?  
Never felt so bad as I'm feeling tonight!

Isn't this a nightmare--I'm flat on my deathbed!  
Suddenly I've taken a turn for the worse!  
Isn't a joy to watch them hover.  
Isn't it a thrill to make them fret.  
Isn't there a chance that I'll recover?  
Maybe in a bit, but not just yet.  
Isn't it a horror? Isn't it a fright?  
Never felt so bad as I'm feeling tonight!

THE ENSEMBLE disappears. DORA charges into the office and onto the couch.

DORA

He did it again. He's back in Merano. He tore out last night. And I happen to know that Clara has returned there as well. 'Sick relatives.' How could he? His sister is dead not even a week! And he did it exactly as I've described it to you. 'I'm ill. I'm ill.' And off he goes...I don't know what she sees in him....or, rather, I do know. I know exactly. He's a man of means. He buys her gifts. Expensive ones. And throws his money at her. A man of means.

FREUD

You make it sound as if that's all he has to offer Frau K. Money and nothing else.

DORA

I don't understand.

FREUD

That without money he would be a man of no means. He would have nothing else to offer her.

DORA

What is this? A parlor game?

FREUD

You know your father has syphilis.

DORA

Yes. Of course. But why does that have to do with...

FREUD

I suspect you know other things about him as well. I suspect that you know your father is impotent.

DORA  
(quietly)

Yes. I do.

FREUD

How did you discover this? Did he tell you?

DORA

Of course not.

FREUD

So how do you know?

DORA

I just know! Stop badgering me.

FREUD

Alright. So you know he's impotent. Yet you imagine this wild affair between him and Frau K. How can this be?

DORA

Well, Doctor. There are other ways to pleasure.

FREUD

I see. Would you care to amplify?

DORA

With their mouths, Doctor. I'm sure I'm not telling you anything you don't already know.

FREUD

So maybe, possibly, you've imagined your father using his mouth on Frau K.

DORA

Stop it this instant! Do you hear me? The very idea...

FREUD

I think you have.

DORA

You don't know what goes on in my mind.

FREUD

I'm beginning to. Consider, for a moment, the general location of your ailments. Your mouth. Your throat. Think of your cough. Your voice.

DORA

What are you talking about?

FREUD

There's tremendous excitement every time you imagine your father and Frau K...and their tongues and genitals...

DORA

Stop it...

FREUD

Tremendous excitement. And terror. So the excitement disguises itself as irritation and transplants itself to your throat.

DORA

How do you arrive at such a ridiculous...

FREUD

Your hacking cough. For which there is no medical explanation.

DORA

None any of you great men of science can think of.

FREUD

Until now. If you think about what I've told you today, I'm certain your cough will disappear. Our time is up.

BLACKOUT. DORA's recurring dream unfolds again.

PHILIP

Wake up! There's a fire!

KATHERINE

Dear god!

HE rushes to DORA's bedside.

PHILIP

Wake up! Quickly! There's a fire!

DORA

Poppa!

PHILIP

Quickly!

THEY throw on robes and run for the door. KATHERINE suddenly stops short.

KATHERINE

My jewelry box! I have to get my jewelry box!

PHILIP

I will not allow us to be burned for the sake of your jewelry box!

BLACKOUT. DORA rushes into FREUD's office and onto the couch.

DORA

They're back in town. My father and Clara. They returned last night. And he was completely straight-faced! It sickens me how he can look me directly in the eye and...

FREUD

You have railed against your father incessantly since you started here in October. In one way or another, session after session.

DORA

Are you defending him?

FREUD

Not in the least. But judging from the way you go on and on and on about him, I think there's something here that merits...

DORA

What's here is a deceitful, selfish man, a married man, carrying on with a--

FREUD

You act as if you were his wife. His jealous wife. (DORA is silenced.) Your mother is the injured party here. And she doesn't seem to care. Why do you?

PHILIP appears almost unconscious in a big bed.

DORA

I...don't know...I...just....

FREUD

You became quiet a moment ago when I said you were acting like his jealous wife. What came to mind?

DORA

I actually remember imagining it. Being his wife. When I was very young. Father was ill. Bedridden. He could barely move. Tuberculosis. I was terrified. I thought he was going to die.

DORA rises from the couch and goes to her father's bed.

**SONG: TENDING TO FATHER**

I hate to see you lying there,  
So small and helpless.  
You've gotten pale.  
You look so frail.  
It breaks my heart.

I guess I've always thought of you  
As something of a giant.  
So big and strong,  
But I was wrong.  
I'm torn apart, Poppa.  
I'm torn apart.  
And if I could only cast a magic spell,  
I'd have you sitting up and feeling well.  
But you're not, Poppa.

THE THREE HYSTERICAL WOMEN appear around PHILIP's bed.

THREE HYSTERICAL WOMEN

No, no, you're not.  
You aren't well.  
You're simply not.

DORA

You feel so hot, Poppa.

THREE HYSTERICAL WOMEN

You're burning up.  
You're very hot.

DORA

And so I worry.

THREE HYSTERICAL WOMEN

I worry.

ALL FOUR

I worry.

THREE HYSTERICAL WOMEN

Ah...

DORA

Poppa, let me plump your pillow.  
Poppa, here's another blanket.  
Poppa, shall I help you to your chair?  
Poppa, take your medication.  
Poppa, finish up your supper.

ALL FOUR

Poppa, won't you let me brush your hair?

HYSTERICAL WOMAN #1

I'll do it.

HYSTERICAL WOMAN #2

Give me the brush!

ALL FOUR

No one loves you like I do, my love.  
All the others drift away.  
I will always care for you, my love.  
My Poppa. My Poppa.  
My darling Poppa. My dearest angel.

Poppa, shall I read the paper?  
Poppa, would you like a sweater?  
Poppa, won't you rest your weary head.  
Poppa, have a little brandy.  
Poppa, won't you let me kiss you?  
Poppa, can I climb into your bed?

No one loves you like I do, my love.  
All the others can't compare.  
I will always care for you, my love.

My Poppa. My Poppa.  
My darling Poppa. My dearest...

KATHERINE knocks at the door.

DORA

Mother!

KATHERINE

Let me in! I insist you let me in!

DORA

Go away, please!

KATHERINE

But it's been two weeks already. I have to clean the room! You must let me in.

PHILIP  
(moaning)

Oh....

DORA  
(screaming)

Go away! You're upsetting him! Just go away!

KATHERINE leaves.

Mother doesn't comfort you.  
She doesn't even try.

Mother doesn't understand you  
Half as well as I.  
When I see the way she treats you,  
Poppa, I could cry.

ALL FOUR

Wouldn't it be wonderful  
If mother were to die?  
If only she would die!  
Ridiculous fool!  
If only she would die.  
Idiot!  
We'd be together.  
Together forever.

THE THREE HYSTERICAL WOMEN

Poppa isn't feeling better.  
Poppa, isn't getting stronger.  
No one must disturb him while he rests.  
Poppa, would you like some water?  
Poppa, would you like a blanket?  
Poppa, would you like to see my breasts?  
They're so lovely and so pink.  
Won't you tell me what you think

ALL FOUR

For no one loves like I do, my love.  
All the others drift away.  
I will always care for you, my love.  
My Poppa. My Poppa. My dearest love.

DORA returns to the couch.

DORA

That's disgusting!

FREUD

All little girls feel this way about their fathers. It's inevitable. You're no different. But why remain in childhood? You're still acting like his wife--burning with jealous rage. Imagining him and his mistress, in bed, satisfying each other...

DORA

Stop that. Please. You are unrelenting.

FREUD

You have revived these old, passionate feelings for your father because they are safer to feel than the passion you feel for Herr K.

DORA

Him again? You've quite worn me out on the subject, Doctor. I feel nothing for him. Yes, perhaps, when I was young and foolish, I maybe felt a naive little something. But I'm through with him, I tell you. Quite through.

FREUD

(a beat) Then let's talk about Frau K.

DORA

Why do you bring her up?

FREUD

Because you barely mention her.

DORA

I've told you enough.

FREUD

All you've told me is what a wonderful woman she is and how you wish that you could still be friends.

DORA

Yes.

FREUD

And that you miss her.

DORA

Where is this leading?

FREUD

These are very gentle words, indeed, for a woman who is both your father's mistress and the wife of your molester.

DORA

I don't wish to discuss...

FREUD

I know you don't. But you must.

DORA

I seem to remember your telling me that I could talk about whatever comes into my head and you've been talking about whatever comes into your head ever since.

FREUD

Why don't you want to talk about Frau K? Does your hatred of her stop up your tongue?

DORA

Hatred? Never. Allegiance, affection, kinship--yes. But never hatred. We were the best of friends. I adored her. We were confidantes. I practically lived with her.

FRAU K appears, wrapped in a towel.

FREUD

You slept at her house?

DORA

She wasn't going to sleep at mine.

FREUD

How often were you there?

DORA

Often. Especially when Herr K was away on business. But when he was there, too. We sent him to sleep in the guest room.

FREUD

I see. So you slept in the same bed as she.

DORA

Yes.

FREUD

I see.

DORA

What do you see? You keep saying that--I see, I see.

FREUD

It's a rhetorical expression.

DORA

Not the way you say it.

FREUD

Really. I meant nothing by it.

DORA

Don't lie to me. You meant something.

FREUD

You'd rather talk about me than about Frau K. Why?

DORA  
(softly)

Because it hurts.

FREUD

You miss her.

DORA

Yes. Terribly.

FREUD

What exactly do you like about her?

DORA

Everything. She's always so sharp and clever. And beautiful. Such beautiful white skin. And her adorable white body.

FRAU K steps out of the towel and into a robe.

DORA

Men are drawn to her. And she's so funny. We laughed all the time.

FREUD

About what?

DORA

About everything--things we'd heard. Or read.

FREUD

You read together?

DORA

Yes. And since you're going to ask what sorts of things, I'll tell you in advance--racy things, naughty things. Late at night.

FRAU K

Are they asleep?

DORA

Yes.

FRAU K

Thank god. It seems only you can handle my little barbarians. In fact, you deserve a reward. I thought tonight would be a perfect night for our reading club to reconvene.

DORA

You found it?

FRAU K

I certainly did. Volume Two. And you're not going to believe the chapter titles.

DORA

Oh, my. 'The Depths and Heights of Love.' 'The Frontiers of Love.' 'Love's Inferno?' Clara, let's begin with that one.

FRAU K

'Love's Inferno?' No. I think we ought to progress to that. Start at the beginning, dear.

DORA

That would be 'Love Among the Animals.'

FRAU K

It always is.

**SONG: PHYSIOLOGY OF LOVE**

DORA

'Whoever has seen the caresses of two butterflies can easily imagine how the angels themselves would love. The female butterfly unfolds her wings to show the splendor of her jewels and velvets. Nor is the man less seductive, displaying his thousand colors and the witchery of his golden eyes. And, in a flash, they caress each other slowly and gently with the velvet touch of their wings....

Is it really all he says it is?  
The velvet touch? The golden eyes?  
The fluttering of butterflies?  
It's hard for me to fantasize--  
I've never been in love,  
Not even faintly smitten.  
His words are overwhelming...

FRAU K

What they are is overwritten,  
My precious little kitten.  
Really! Butterflies!  
Dora, you surprise me.  
Really! Butterflies!

DORA

And yet, each night, I fall asleep  
And find I'm dreaming of.  
What's here in Mantegazza's Physiology of Love.

FRAU K

Dora, don't be fooled.  
Dora, you're unschooled.  
Try to pay attention to the facts--

A woman is a captive  
And her husband is the captor  
And the butterfly is stuck inside a crypt.  
The moment that they marry  
Is the moment that he's trapped her  
And the moment when her lovely wings are clipped.

And though some would call it marriage,  
I think prison would be apter  
And I'm certain I'd prefer it  
If we read a different chapter.

Nothing too complex.  
Something more with sex.  
Dora, you're impossibly naive.  
I marvel at the nonsense you believe.  
There are no butterflies.  
There is no ever-after.  
There are no seraphim regaling from above.  
There's pleasure where you find it.  
Do be sure to use discretion  
And to hell with Mantegazza's Physiology of Love.

DORA

But what about love, Clara? Have you soured on love?

FRAU K

Not on love, dear. Only on husbands.

DORA

I imagine Dr. Mantegazza is a marvelous lover.

FRAU K

I do too. That is, if he ever stops playing with his butterflies.

DORA

I fancy Dr. Mantegazza  
All alone in a piazza--  
Brandy to his lips,  
Flicking a cigar,  
Breathing in the countryside  
While gazing at a star.  
And then he sees his lover  
As she rushes from afar.

FRAU K

(mock-romantically)

And heavens! There they are!

DORA

Yes, heavens! There they are!

FRAU K

He pulls her gently to his chest.

DORA

Her heart is pounding in her breast.

FRAU K

He strokes her hair

DORA

And, oh, the bliss!

FRAU K

Now let me guess--a single kiss?

DORA

Oh, Clara, yes, a single kiss.

DORA kisses her tentatively.

FRAU K

No, Dora dear,  
It's more like this.

FRAU K kisses her passionately.

FRAU K

And I see Dr. Mantegazza,  
Sneaking off to that piazza--  
Quiet as a mouse.  
Not a single peep.  
La signora has a headache  
And she's finally asleep.  
He's hungry for his mistress  
Who's as vulgar as she's cheap.  
They fall into a heap,  
A sweaty little heap.

He tears her dress.  
She yanks his hair.  
He puts his fingers  
Here and there.  
He bites her nipples  
Till they're sore  
And then he does her on the floor.  
The dirty whore!  
The dirty whore!

FRAU K gets a bit rough; DORA starts coughing wildly.

FRAU K

My poor darling, I've scared you half to death. Here, please, drink more water. You mustn't listen to me. No possible good will come of it. What do I know of love or happiness? I'm just an old, bitter woman.

Yes, it will be all he says it is--  
The velvet touch.  
The golden eyes.  
You've every right to rhapsodize,  
One day you'll fall in love.

DORA  
One day I'll fall in love.

FRAU K  
And feel the lovely rapture  
Which Dr. Mantegazza couldn't ever hope to capture...

DORA  
Oh, Clara. Do you think so?

FRAU K  
I have no doubt.  
You'll have butterflies.

DORA  
Yes, butterflies.

FRAU K  
And happiness.

DORA  
Yes, happiness.

BOTH  
And seraphim regaling from above,  
Like here in Mantegazza's Physiology of Love.

THEY climb into bed together. The lights fade. DORA returns to the couch.

FREUD  
Your father mentioned this book to me. The Physiology of Love.

DORA  
When was this?

FREUD  
In October. Before he brought you in.

DORA  
Why didn't you tell me he...

FREUD  
He said you'd been reading it that week at the lake, when Herr K forced himself on you.  
He said it overstimulated you, that you imagined...

DORA  
I know what he said! And every bit of it's a lie.

FREUD  
But how could he have known about that book unless Frau K told him about it?

DORA

What of it?

FREUD

She sacrificed you, didn't she? She told your father about your secret reading club so that it could be used against you. The woman sacrificed you for her affair.

DORA

She...she never meant to...

FREUD

(lacing into her)

Of course she did! And yet you can't find one unpleasant word to say about her? In fact, you're defending her. How is this possible? She betrayed you!

DORA

(screaming at him)

Stop saying that!

FREUD

This is the deepest cut of all, isn't it? You rant and rave incessantly against your father, about how he's betrayed you, and beneath all of it is the hurt she has caused you. And here, at last, is your passion. Here is your deep, dark secret—you love her.

DORA

Of course I love her.

FREUD

I mean that you desire her.

DORA

What? Are you crazy?

FREUD

And you always have.

DORA

That's the most disgusting thing I ever...

FREUD

Her adorable white body. Your sleepovers. Your intimacy with her. Like lovers!

DORA

That's preposterous! How can you even say such a thing? We were friends. You make it all sound so sick and disgusting!

FREUD

You and your father share a lover!

DORA

Stop it! This is all too much for me. First you tell me I'm in love with Herr K and then with my father. And now I'm in love with Clara.

FREUD

You have that exactly right. You're in love with all of them. (sharply) All of them! You're drawn in all directions. And even if you and your father had never been involved with the Ks, your conflicts would've involved other players. The Ks just happened to play along.

DORA

You make it all sound as if I was responsible. They involved me. They were the ones who treated me so miserably.

FREUD

No doubt. I never said I didn't believe you. Because I do believe you. Every word you've said. What I'm saying is, look to your own participation in the matter. Our time is up for today.

### SONG: WHAT HE MUST THINK OF ME

DORA

What he must think of me.  
My skin could crawl.  
What he must think of me.  
When he thinks of me.  
If at all.  
As for sympathy—Not a trace.  
How I'd like to get up off the couch and slap his stupid face.

DORA

How he accuses me.  
That awful man.  
Each time he looks at me,  
He aims his hooks at me  
Best he can.  
He will torture me  
Till I crack.  
What I ought to psychoanalyze  
Is why do I go back?  
Why do I go back?  
  
I hate his eyes.  
His piercing eyes.  
He lets me in the door  
And I can see them blazing red.  
And when I'm on the couch,  
They're burning holes into my head.  
  
Why is he doing this?  
What does he get from it?  
Why does he hate me so?

FREUD

It's seven weeks.  
We've come a distance.  
The symptoms fade.  
But such resistance.  
  
I will break her  
By degree.  
Some doors  
Won't open.  
I will find the key.  
I will find the key.  
  
She's hiding things from me.  
How could she not?  
A memory.  
A fantasy.  
A dream.  
Perhaps a dream.  
  
I'm getting closer.  
She's come undone.

What he must think of me!

She could be the one.

She could be the one.

BLACKOUT. THE RECURRING DREAM unfolds once again.

PHILIP

Wake up! There's a fire!

KATHERINE

Dear god!

HE rushes to DORA's bedside.

PHILIP

Wake up! Quickly! There's a fire!

DORA

Poppa!

PHILIP

Quickly!

THEY throw on robes and run for the door. KATHERINE suddenly stops short.

KATHERINE

My jewelry box! I have to get my jewelry box!

PHILIP

I will not allow us to be burned for the sake of your jewelry box!

DORA

I had a dream last night. One I've had before.

FREUD

A dream?

BLACKOUT. End of Act One.

## ACT TWO

PHILIP and HERR and FRAU K appear and address the audience.

### SONG: A PACK OF LIES

ALL THREE

It's a pack of lies!

HERR and FRAU K

From a sick little wretch!

PHILIP

From the very start, it's a pile of shit!

FRAU K

You're a fool to fall for a word of it!

HERR K

She's a sick little wretch.

FRAU K

In a sick little snit

ALL THREE

And we're maligned  
For being kind,

PHILIP

For being sensitive

HERR AND FRAU K

And generous

ALL THREE

For being dumb and blind!

FRAU K

And it's no surprise

HERR K

That a sick little wretch

FRAU K

Should come up with half of the things she's said

PHILIP

While the other half's being bottle fed

HERR K  
By a certified quack  
Just as sick in the head!

ALL THREE  
And even he  
Can plainly see

HERR K and PHILIP  
She wasn't forced

FRAU K  
Or put upon

HERR AND FRAU K  
She led me on.

PHILIP  
She led me on.

HERR and FRAU K  
You should have seen the fire in her eyes!

PHILIP  
We had an understanding,  
Which I'm sure she understood.

HERR and FRAU K  
She led me on.

PHILIP  
She led me on.

HERR AND FRAU K  
You could've felt the burning in her thighs.

PHILIP  
She encouraged the arrangement,  
No one told her that she should.

HERR K  
I smelled her delicate perfume...

PHILIP  
And I thought, 'Dora, very good.'

HERR K  
I heard her whispering my name...

PHILIP

Silly me.

HERR K

I know I'm not mistaken...

FRAU K

Such a marvelous arrangement...

PHILIP

And then it all turned grim.

FRAU K

I miss the way things were.

HERR K

Of course I wanted Dora...

FRAU K

I was getting Philip...

PHILIP

Clara.

HERR K

Innocent...

FRAU K

Masterful...

PHILIP

Tantalizing...

FRAU K

Mesmerizing...

HERR K

Dora...

FRAU K

Philip...

PHILIP

Clara...

FRAU K

Philip...

HERR K

And Dora wanted me!

PHILIP and FRAU K  
Then he assaulted her.

HERR K  
I did not!

FRAU K  
Of course you did.

PHILIP  
I ought to thrash you to a...

HERR K  
Oh, please! Don't act so naive!

PHILIP  
My poor little girl.

HERR K  
She was a woman.

PHILIP and FRAU K  
She was a girl.

HERR K  
Demonstrably a woman.

PHILIP and FRAU K  
But apparently a girl.

HERR K  
Her blazing passion!

PHILIP  
Her painful shyness!

HERR K  
Her burning looks!

FRAU K  
Her silly books!

HERR K  
Her teasing!

PHILIP  
Her reticence!

HERR K

Her slyness!  
Yes, a woman!

PHILIP and FRAU K

A helpless girl!

PHILIP

With all the giggling

FRAU K

And the gushing...

HERR K

All that overwhelming hunger!

FRAU K

But then you would know the difference,  
Having had them even younger.

HERR K

How dare you accuse me of...

PHILIP

Monster!

HERR K

It's a goddamned lie!

FRAU K

Have you forgotten the chambermaid?

HERR K

Which chambermaid?

FRAU K

Which chambermaid, indeed! Yes. I know. So many to choose from. Which one could it have been?...

PHILIP

Degenerate!

HERR K

And what about you? I seem to recall a few of your...how shall I put it?...questionable acquaintances...

PHILIP

Really?

FRAU K

What other choice did I have? Tell me, what other choice have you given me?

That's your sickness--little girls!

HERR K

Clara, I'm warning you!

FRAU K

Ugly sickness--little girls!

HERR K

You seem to like them, too!

FRAU K

Liar!

HERR K

Liar!

ALL THREE

Filthy liar!

It's a pack of lies!

THEY disappear. FREUD and DORA reappear in FREUD's office. DORA is on the couch; FREUD is in his chair.

DORA

Our house is on fire. Everyone is asleep.

The burning house reappears with PHILIP and KATHERINE in their beds.

It's blazing everywhere. Father wakens first and rushes to Mother's room.

PHILIP

Wake up! There's a fire!

DORA

Then he rushes to my bedside.

PHILIP

Wake up! Quickly! There's a fire!

DORA

I dress myself quickly. But then Mother suddenly stops.

KATHERINE

My jewelry box. I have to get my jewelry box.

DORA

Father doesn't let her.

PHILIP

I will not allow us to be burned for the sake of your jewelry box.

DORA

He forces us out. Then I wake up.

PHILIP and KATHERINE disappear.

FREUD

Was there ever a fire in your home?

DORA

A real one? No.

FREUD

And you say this dream has reoccurred.

DORA

Yes. I had it years ago and now I've dreamt it several times over the last few weeks.

FREUD

Do you remember when you first had it?

DORA

Yes, I do. At Capo di Lago. I remember dreaming it several times that week at the lake.

FREUD

Before or after Herr K propositioned you?

DORA

After.

FREUD

Then this is a significant dream. Let's go through it, piece by piece.

DORA

I'd rather not.

FREUD

If we examine your dream, we will be able to—

DORA

You've told me already. It's just so scary.

FREUD

Once you understand it, it won't scare you. You might never have it again.

DORA

Alright, alright.

FREUD

How does it begin?

DORA

The house is on fire while everyone's asleep.

FREUD

What comes to mind about a fire in your house?

DORA

Well...Father and Mother have been fighting all week because she locks the dining room door at night. After she washes the floor.

PHILIP and KATHERINE reappear.

PHILIP

I want the door left open.

KATHERINE

I have to lock it. That way no one will dirty it during the night.

PHILIP

Absolutely not. It isn't safe.

THEY disappear.

DORA

I can only get in and out of the house through the dining room.

FREUD

And that made you think of the risk of fire.

DORA

Yes.

FREUD

Perhaps there's a connection to fire when you were in Capo di Lago?

DORA

Yes. There is. An electrical storm was raging the night we arrived at their cottage.

FREUD

You and your father?

DORA

Yes. The sky was exploding.

PHILIP appears, in the storm.

PHILIP

This doesn't look good. The cottage is made of wood. And there's no lightning conductor.

HE disappears.

FREUD

So fire triggered the dream recently and at Capo di Lago.

DORA

Yes. How very strange.

FREUD

How many nights did you dream it at Capo di Lago? Do you recall?

DORA

Distinctly. Three nights in a row.

FREUD

You slept there three more nights before you left?

DORA

Yes....

HERR K materializes. HE stands by the couch.

DORA

Something else...I remember...after the lake...I was so exhausted, I lay down on the daybed outside his room.

FREUD

Whose room?

DORA

Herr K's. I needed to nap. I suddenly awoke and I saw Herr K standing right beside the daybed, looking down at me.

FREUD

Just as your father stands beside your bed in the dream.

PHILIP appears beside HERR K and then fades away.

DORA

Yes.

FREUD

Go on.

DORA

I asked him sharply what he was doing there.

HERR K

I will not be prevented from coming into my own bedroom when I want. I have to fetch something, if you must know.

FREUD

What happened after your nap?

DORA

I was on my guard. First the lake and then this! So I asked Clara for the key to the bedroom door. The next morning I locked myself in while I was dressing. In the afternoon, I wanted to lock myself in, once again, so I could nap. But the key was gone! I knew that he took it. I just knew it. On the following morning and the morning after I was deathly afraid that he would walk in on me while I was dressing.

FREUD

So you quickly dressed yourself. As you do in the dream.

DORA

Yes. And that's when I decided to leave with father at the end of the week.

FREUD

You resolved to escape from his persecution. And for three nights you repeated that resolution in your sleep.

DORA

Yes.

FREUD

What happens next? In the dream.

DORA

I'm outside the house and I wake up.

FREUD

No. After you dress quickly...

DORA

Mother suddenly stops.

KATHERINE appears.

KATHERINE

My jewelry box! I have to get my jewelry box.

FREUD

What comes to mind about her jewelry box?

DORA

Mother's very fond of jewelry. She has dozens of pieces. Father buys her off with them.

FREUD

But what about the jewelry box?

DORA

Herr K once gave me a jewelry box. An expensive one. As a present.

FREUD

Then a present from you in return would've been very appropriate. Perhaps you know that box is an expression for the female genitals?

DORA

I knew you'd say that.

FREUD

Because you knew it was so.

DORA

But the dream is about my father, not Herr K.

FREUD

Because of the danger you felt, you chose a situation which expressed the exact opposite--Herr K ogling you in the daybed becomes your father rescuing you from the fire. And your father put you in danger in the first place. Pawning you off to Herr K. So, in your dream, you reversed it. He's actually protecting you.

DORA

This is all so very peculiar.

FREUD

You wanted to give Herr K your jewelry box.

DORA

Please. Not that again!

FREUD

You should be having romantic dreams. Of dancing and kissing.

DORA

Ich!

FREUD

But kissing disgusts you!

DORA

His kisses do. His slimy, wet kisses. I don't want to talk about this anymore. It makes me feel so dirty.

FREUD

Slimy. Dirty. Filthy. You use these words over and over again. Since you started here. Whose words are they? Dirty. Filthy.

DORA  
(quietly)

My mother's.

FREUD

We've never fully discussed your mother, have we? Nor for that matter, your father's syphilis.

DORA

What? What about it?

FREUD

How long have you known?

DORA

How you throw things at me! I'm not sure...I guess I've always known he had this mysterious illness. I remember when he had trouble with one of his eyes...he couldn't see.

FREUD

How old were you?

DORA

Six or seven. He'd gone to see a doctor. When he returned, all I remember was mother being out of her mind. Screaming and crying. I thought he was going to die. And then, years later, I heard the word for the first time. Syphilis. After his consultation with you.

FREUD

That was five years ago.

DORA  
(suddenly crying)

Oh god.

FREUD

What is it, my child?

DORA

A memory. An awful memory.

KATHERINE appears wrapped in towels and sitting in a steam bath.

FREUD

How old are you?

DORA

I'm eight. I'm with Mother. In a steam bath. She's very ill. Stomach pains and...and...I wasn't sure what it was...

FREUD

Go on.

DORA  
(terrified)

Please, Doctor. Don't make me. Don't make me.

FREUD

It will help you. Were you in Merano?

DORA

No...Fr..Franzensbad. We had to make special trips. She forced me to go. She forced me.

DORA joins KATHERINE in the steam bath.

DORA

How much longer must we stay here?

KATHERINE

At least another half hour. The nurse will let us know when it's time.

DORA

But we've already been here for a half hour...

KATHERINE

And we're only half through. Enough, Dora. Please. This is part of my treatment. I can't live without it.

DORA

You're being ridiculous, Mother.

KATHERINE

How much you sound like your father. It's almost shocking. Always so ready to point out how ridiculous I am. And how foolish. And provincial.

**SONG: WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A WOMAN**

You mustn't be too smug, Dora.  
I'm not above admitting that you're smarter than I  
And far more clever.  
I hear you laugh behind my back,  
I know you'll laugh right to my face  
Before too long.  
Before too long.  
Yet there are things beyond your understanding,  
Things you do not know.

The steam is like a drug, Dora.  
It penetrates the skin

And stops the poison inside,  
The burning poison.  
It's but a moment of relief  
And yet regardless of how brief--

I am clean!  
Absolutely clean!  
Purified within,  
Underneath the skin...  
And I come back to my senses...  
All at once I can remember...  
I remember I'm your mother.  
I remember you're my daughter.  
I remember there are things you do not know...

What it means to be a woman.  
This is something only I can teach you.  
What it means to be a woman  
Is to move among the shadows,  
A figure in the darkness.  
It means you're nothing more than just a blur.  
And the poison spreads within you,  
So you struggle to continue,  
As a shadow of the shadow that you were.

I don't know what more there is that I can tell you.  
I don't know what more there is that I can say,  
Only,  
Don't become a woman, Dora.  
This is my advice.  
Don't become a woman.  
Try to fight it if you can.  
The devil will misguide you  
And he'll put his filth inside you,  
For this is what it means to be a man.

I hesitate to tell you, Dora.  
Still it's time you knew--  
From him to me.  
From me to you.  
Your legacy.  
You have it, too.  
You mustn't be too smug, Dora.

KATHERINE disappears. DORA returns to the couch, sobbing.

FREUD

Your father did not infect you. Your mother was wrong. In her ignorance, she confused diseases.

DORA

Are you certain?

FREUD

Yes. Completely. Your father did not infect you.

DORA  
(crying)

I can't believe it. I always assumed...I thought that...

FREUD

You were wrong. You are not infected.

DORA  
(laughing and crying)

Thank you, Doctor. Thank you. Thank you.

FREUD

You're welcome. I'm afraid this is the lesson your mother taught you--all men will poison you. This is your terror. It will take time to undo.

DORA

I...I don't know what to say, Doctor. These...leaps of yours. They're like magic. But look where they've led.

FREUD

I am not a magician. And they are all your own illusions. How you suffer, my child. From an illness you've never had!

DORA leaves the office and returns home. SHE walks quietly past KATHERINE, who is washing the floor. DORA goes up to her room and sits by the window.

**SONG: TELL ME, DOCTOR FREUD**

DORA

I remember I was happy  
In this very room.  
I recall the faintest glimmer  
Back before the gloom.  
I felt the sunlight at my window.  
I watched the world below.  
I dreamed that I would love to live there,  
But how was I to know?

I remember feeling peaceful  
Up until the storm.  
Every star was shining for me,  
I was safe and warm.

I know it vanished suddenly,  
But can't remember when.  
I never noticed it was gone  
Until I felt it once again--

The bliss.  
The lovely bliss.  
To know, somehow, tomorrow  
Will be different from today.  
To think a scrap of happiness is not so far away.  
The bliss.  
The quiet bliss.  
To feel the sunlight at my window.  
There's the world below!  
Even though I'm scared to death,  
I want to go.  
I want to go.

He asks so many questions,  
And I loathe him when he does,  
And yet the person I've become  
Is not the person that I was,  
I want to go.  
I need to go.

Tell me that this happiness will keep.  
Promise me it's safe to fall asleep.

Prove to me the feeling lasts forever.  
Tell me that I'm not mistaken.  
Will I feel it when I waken?  
Tell me, so my heart won't be destroyed!  
You who ask a million questions,  
Tell me, Dr. Freud.

DORA returns to the couch. SHE is holding a purse which SHE frequently opens and closes.

DORA

...I'm not exactly sure when they began, but I know that I've been having these pains for years. Sharp ones. In my stomach. I thought there might be a connection...to what we were talking about the other day. I thought that there was a certain similarity...

FREUD

Are you aware that you have been opening and closing that bag of yours from the moment you got on the couch today?

DORA

Have I really?

FREUD

Yes. You open it, put your fingers in it, and close it. Over and over again.

DORA

It's a purse. That's what women do with purses.

FREUD

It's also what women do when they play with their genitals.

DORA

What are you suggesting?

FREUD

That you're so excited, you're masturbating. Symbolically.

DORA

Well, then. That's quite enough of that!

DORA throws her purse away from her. FREUD erupts with laughter.  
DORA joins in. Then there is a silence.

FREUD

What are you thinking?

DORA

You never laughed before. Like that.

FREUD

Nor you. What comes to mind about that?

DORA

Only that it's unusual. That's all. And it's well past time.

FREUD

So it is.

DORA

Funny. My telling you our time is up.

FREUD

So it is. Till tomorrow, then.

DORA rises from the couch, returns home and falls asleep. THE THREE  
HYSTERICAL WOMEN materialize. As they sing, PHILIP appears, smoking a  
cigar. DORA rises from her bed and waltzes with him.

**SONG: A MAN AND A WOMAN ALONE IN A ROOM**

THREE HYSTERICAL WOMEN

A man and a woman alone in a room.  
A whiff of cigar.  
A sniff of perfume.  
And if we assume what is safe to assume,  
There's a spark.  
There's a draw.  
There's a strong undercurrent.  
And, in fact,  
We'd remark  
If we thought that there weren't.  
So the question, exactly is  
What's the deterrent?  
When a man and a woman are alone  
In a room.

HERR K appears, also smoking a cigar, and taps PHILIP on the shoulder.  
PHILIP steps aside and DORA dances with HERR K.

THREE HYSTERICAL WOMEN

A man and a woman exchange repartee.  
The impulse is there  
In the words that they say.  
Examine those words  
And the wish they convey is  
Caress me.  
My, darling, undress me.  
My angel, possess me!  
Oh my god, you impress me!  
La, la, la, la, la, la...

FREUD appears, smoking a cigar, and taps Herr K on the shoulder.  
FREUD and DORA now waltz together.

And there,  
In the air,  
From the couch  
To the chair.  
In the sound of his voice  
In the shine of her hair.  
Everywhere—

Those electrical surges  
We try to contain,  
And those primitive urges  
We have to restrain,  
Till the devil emerges  
With too much champagne.  
Yes, these are the things that loom  
When a man and a woman are alone in a room.

FREUD kisses DORA passionately and the scene suddenly erupts into fire.  
THE DREAM unfolds again. This time, FREUD and HERR K are in it.

PHILIP, FREUD and HERR K

(in quick succession)

Wake up! There's a fire! Wake up! Quickly! There's a fire!

KATHERINE

My jewelry box!

KATHERINE and DORA

I have to get my jewelry box!

PHILIP

I will not allow us...

PHILIP and HERR K

...to be burned for the sake of...

PHILIP, HERR K and FREUD

...your jewelry box!

The scene evaporates. DORA reappears on the couch.

DORA

I dreamed it again. Last night. There was another dream with it, but I don't remember that one.  
Just the fire dream.

FREUD

So what is the current danger?

DORA

I don't know. I don't know. But this time I remember smelling smoke.

FREUD

When you woke up?

DORA

No. During the dream.

FREUD

What about smoke?

DORA

Well. Father smokes. Avidly. Even when he was sick. And so does Herr K. I was smoking that  
week at the lake. Herr K would roll cigarettes for me.

FREUD

Anything else?

No. DORA

Perhaps you've noticed that I also smoke. FREUD

Yes. Well. What of it? DORA

You didn't mention this. FREUD

It didn't occur to me. DORA

I think it did. I also think you've possibly had a dream involving me. FREUD

You? That's comical! Isn't it enough that you analyze my dreams? Do you now insist on being in them too? DORA

Only if you do. FREUD

Well, I don't! DORA

You've had at least a few smoky kisses in your life. From your father. Possibly your kiss from Herr K tasted of smoke. I think you want one from me. FREUD

That's outrageous! I certainly do not! How do you presume that I... DORA

Perhaps we could discuss this a bit... FREUD

DORA  
(rises from couch)

There's nothing to discuss, Doctor. In fact, I must tell you that I've come today for the last time.

I see. FREUD

Yes. I made up my mind to see you up until the New Year. But I would wait no longer to be cured. DORA

FREUD

But we...we have some time left to this session. Perhaps, for today, we can continue our work?

DORA

(returns to the couch)

Very well, then.

FREUD

As I told you at the beginning, you are free to stop whenever you like. I will not coerce you. Nor will I see you at your father's coercion. But tell me, when did you decide to leave?

DORA

A fortnight ago, I think.

FREUD

That sounds like a maidservant or a governess. A fortnight's notice.

DORA

There was a governess who gave her notice to the K's, that week at the lake.

FREUD

You never mentioned her.

SARAH appears.

DORA

Sarah. A young girl. She was the children's governess. I was struck by her behavior to Herr K the moment I got there. She never said good morning to him or responded to his remarks. Nor was he any more polite to her.

FREUD

Was this before or after the episode at the lake?

DORA

Before. She asked to speak with me one morning.

SARAH

(crying)

He made advances on me. All last month. When she was away. Grabbing at me. He wouldn't stop.

HERR K appears.

HERR K

Come into my arms, Sarah.

Come into my arms.

Let me have a kiss, Sarah.

Darling, I just have to have a kiss.

My wife gives nothing.

She gives me nothing.

HERR K and SARAH disappear.

FREUD

'My wife gives nothing.' That's exactly what he said to you.

DORA

Yes.

FREUD

And the girl?

DORA

She said they had made violent love, but then he was through with her when Frau K returned. She hated him.

FREUD

So she gave her notice.

DORA

No. She meant to. But she didn't. She told me she wrote to her parents in Germany, respectable people. They told her to leave immediately. They were angry with her for remaining there.

FREUD

Why didn't she go?

DORA

She was hoping to see some change in his affections.

FREUD

What happened to her?

DORA

I don't know.

FREUD

Now I know why you slapped Herr K in the face. You were jealous. And angry. He used the same words on you that he used to seduce the girl. 'My wife gives me nothing.' He was treating you like hired help.

DORA

I suppose...

FREUD

You understood this girl very well. You also didn't leave Herr K's roof until several days after he propositioned you.

DORA

I was waiting till my father had to go.

FREUD

You could've gotten him to leave that day. But you also wanted to see if Herr K would repeat his proposal. To see if he was in earnest. But he did to you what he did to the governess. He dropped you.

DORA

I dropped him.

FREUD

In revenge. Only when you heard 'My wife gives nothing.' And then came the worst disillusionment—when you made your accusations against him and he didn't repeat the proposal. He and his wife called you a liar. A fabricator. Such a blow to your pride!

DORA

(rising from the couch)

You have me quite figured out, Doctor. Or at least you think you have. But I will always be grateful to you. You've helped me so much.

FREUD

Will you allow me one last word?

DORA

Of course.

FREUD

You're going because of what happened here this week. The smoky kiss. The possibility that you had a dream involving me. It frightened you.

DORA

Well, you must admit, that is a frightening thought. But that has nothing to do with it. I want to thank you again, Doctor. For everything. And Happy New Year.

DORA leaves the office. FREUD paces the room and goes to his writing desk to write. HE throws his pen down in anger.

### SONG: FREUD'S SOLILOQUY

FREUD

A courteous dismissal  
By the mistress of the house—  
'Thank you, very much.'  
'How you've helped me so.'  
'Now it's time for you to go.'  
Just as I was getting closer.  
What to do was crystal clear.  
Certainly her cough had vanished.  
Certainly she sensed improvement.  
Certainly she knew that it would take  
At least a year.

Contemptible brat.  
With a spiteful streak.  
Now poppa pulls the purse strings  
And that's ninety less a week.

Impossible bitch.  
With a taste for blood.  
Did I think I could endure her  
Long enough to cure her?

And she took away her dreams.  
She permitted me one look  
And then she took away her dreams.  
They were ciphers in the darkness.  
They were unexamined blurs.  
I retrieved them from the darkness  
And set them in a landscape--  
They were mine as much as hers.

Nearly mine as much as hers.

She enticed me with a dream.  
Then she took them all away...

Imagine his excitement  
When he sees her on the daybed,  
As I saw her on the couch,  
He sees her lying on the daybed...  
Sleeping. Dreaming.  
Delicate and innocent  
And seemingly compliant.  
But she wakens in a temper.  
She is angry and defiant.

And she smacks him in the face!  
She smacked me in the face!  
She intended it for me,  
Of course for me,  
But in his place...

A fortnight's notice...  
A fortnight's notice...

Why didn't I see it!

I became Herr K.  
I became her lightning rod.  
I became Herr K.  
I knew that it was happening,  
I let it slip away.

I should've tried to harness it.  
To master it.  
To draw it out.  
To hold it up.  
To make it crystal clear.  
To make it disappear...  
I became Herr K...  
So this hasn't been an utter waste of time!

FREUD returns to his desk to write. THE HYSTERICAL WOMEN materialize.

THE THREE HYSTERICAL WOMEN  
Dora. Dora.  
Who is Dora?  
Who can say for sure?  
You think you've found her in your notes.  
You think you know her from her dreams.  
You've analyzed her anecdotes  
And there she is--  
Or so it seems.  
But your proof is inconclusive.  
She still remains elusive.

DORA returns to FREUD's office and knocks on the door.

FREUD  
Yes?

DORA  
Good afternoon, Doctor. May I come in?

FREUD  
Yes. Yes, of course. Please. It's been some time.

DORA  
Yes. A year.

FREUD  
At least.

DORA  
I wanted to ask you if I...if you thought...

FREUD  
Yes?

DORA  
If I could come back to see you again.

FREUD

Please. Have a seat.

DORA

Thank you, Doctor. Thank you. So much has happened since I saw you last. I'm engaged to be married.

FREUD

Congratulations.

DORA

Thank you.

FREUD

To Herr K?

DORA  
(laughing)

Of course not. I haven't seen him in almost a year. I finally confronted him, you know. Him, my father and Frau K. I brought it all out into the open. They no longer deny what happened at the lake. Do you remember?

FREUD

Yes. And your cough?

DORA

It never returned.

FREUD

Why are you here now?

DORA

I've recently developed this pain. Across the right side of my face. It's lasted for a few weeks. I've been up with it night after night. I thought I'd come to you.

FREUD

When did it begin?

DORA

Exactly a fortnight ago.

FREUD

I see. That has been an important period of time in your unconscious. A fortnight.

DORA

Yes. I remember.

FREUD

Did you happen to see an article about me in the papers, a fortnight ago?

DORA

Yes, Doctor, I did. You were made a full professor at the University. Congratulations.

FREUD

The pain in your face is connected to this. It is self-punishment for having slapped Herr K in the face. And then for having slapped me in the face when you walked out on me a year ago.

DORA

But I never...

FREUD

You've come for my analysis. And now I've given it. I wish you well.

DORA

But, Doctor, I had hoped to return...

FREUD

I'm afraid that will not be possible. I suspect you aren't really serious about returning for help, so I must refuse you.

DORA

But, Doctor...

FREUD

I'm afraid that is my answer.

DORA

I see. Well, then, this really is goodbye.

FREUD

Yes.

DORA

Then goodbye, Doctor.

DORA leaves the office. THE ENSEMBLE rematerializes.

ENSEMBLE

So, then, Dora. Dora.

Who is Dora?

Who can say for sure?

You think you've held her in your sway.

You think you've seen behind the mask.

Then suddenly she goes away

And only then you think to ask--

Who is Dora?

Such a mystery!

Who is Dora?

Soon a memory!

Dora. Dora.  
Like a half-remembered dream.

But she still eludes detection.  
But she still eludes detection.  
No detection.  
She's the shadow of our own reflection.  
The shadow of our own reflection.  
Dora.

THE ENSEMBLE disappears. FREUD is at his writing desk as the lights fade.

THE END