

"The Steppe"

By

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It is dark and raining outside. Straight onto the entrance MR. ROBERT and MRS. NORA enter with a large yellow umbrella over their heads. Dripping wet, Nora turns on the light and takes off layers of clothes and places them on a coat rack near the door.

NORA

Oh god ever so cold! Not one beacon
of hope. Do you think anyone would
come with this kind of weather?

Robert unsuccessfully attempts to close their umbrella as he starts. Annoyed Nora takes it from him. She knows he can't do anything right. He then carelessly hangs his coat.

ROBERT

You beastly little thing, quavering
over this and that.

Heading for the kitchen.

ROBERT (O.S.)

Tomorrow will be tomorrow, just let
it be. Anyway, it's just our
neighbors and it's not like they
have very far to walk. They live
next door for God's sake. You want
some coffee?

Off-screen we can hear Robert moving stuff around the kitchen. Crouching for her heels she listens to Robert, rolling her eyes, nodding as he inquires. Of course she wants some coffee. She rises as:

Drying her hair Nora looks in the mirror as Robert gets ready for bed in the b.g. She turns off hairdryer and talks making her way to the hairdresser taking off her earrings.

NORA

I hate it. I hate it how you think
that just because we've got a
marriage it entitles you to assign
my feelings one of your epiphanies.
I'm not just one of your poems.
(beat) I have feelings for Emma...

(CONTINUED)

ROBERT
Nora, we talked about this--

NORA
(angry)
I want to have sex with her, now
does that mean anything to you?

ROBERT
God! Why do you have to say it like
that?

NORA
(facing Robert)
Like what? I only say it because I
mean it, you're so ignorant.

ROBERT
She's married! This is ridiculous.
Let's just discuss this some other
time. Can I turn off the light?

NORA
(cleaning her face)
Of course not. I still haven't
finished my coffee.

Robert turns over somewhat annoyed. Beat. She stops cleaning
her face, drinks coffee and sits on the bed.

NORA
You know, now that I think about
it...it was you who got me into the
whole drinking coffee deal.

ROBERT
And why do you say it like that?

NORA
Like what?

ROBERT
As if you hated it.

NORA
I don't hate it Robert. (sarcastic)
I think I might even hate more the
fact that you don't even have sex
with me anymore.

She looks at him expecting a response. They're silent. She
sets the coffee on the night table and turns off the light.

3 INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

3

As though waking from a dream, the music faintly drowning everyone's voices, their conversation becomes more distinct as we close in; EMMA is chatting with Nora, Robert is chatting with Nora's husband, MARK.

Midst the laughter, Robert offers Mark a cigarette. Emma bids them to retreat somewhere else.

EMMA

Oh dears, some respect for the women...

NORA

What, women can't smoke?

EMMA

Oh you know that's not what I meant.

Left alone, Emma begins some gossip of her husband's enterprise. Taking no interest, Nora can't help but to divert her glance, craving every bit of Emma.

EMMA (CONTD)

You know, next month is a year since our marriage--and Nora he's so perfect. He doesn't let me do anything, he's like my own housewife and he wants us to have kids, isn't that wonderful? You and Robert should try and have kids Nora, it'll change you guys.

NORA

Oh! What am I? Your cup is empty! Some more coffee?

Nora heads for the kitchen.

4 INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

4

In the kitchen Nora sees Robert and Mark kissing passionately. Nora drops the cup of coffee, as the men back away from each other. Nora, in shock, backs into the dining room and faces Emma. Her mouth cannot form words.

5 INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT 5

Gasping for air Nora can't recoil, she has to cry. She has to break. Robert just trots behind in silence but in shock.

6 INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT 6

Mark is in the kitchen petrified.

7 INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT 7

NORA

Don't touch me! Don't touch me! How could you! I told you my things and you...oh god! you are so selfish! you are so self-centered!

Emma is confused--she can't understand what's happening.

EMMA

What's going on?

In the b.g. emerging from the kitchen Mark grabs Emma and drags her out of the house as she keeps inquiring.

Nora and Robert ignore, staring at each other so intently, in complete disbelief.

The front door slams; Mark and Emma have exited.

Nora stands and slaps Robert across the face several times, then kisses him, but he does not react. He just pulls her hands down. Robert walks past her and grabs his coat and exits out the front door. Nora breaks down in silence.