

# Power in a doll's house

Sociology



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“ Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely” (Lord Acton). There is much truth in this. The behavior of a powerful person often leads much to be desired. Some of the unsocial things they may do include acting as if they are entitled to get what they want, and expecting others to comply with their requirements without question. However, when one achieves power they tend to lose their values and humanity. In A Doll’s House by Henrik Ibsen, power can dehumanize a person and cause conflict in a relationship. Nora is treated like a doll and a possession by her husband. Torvald rarely calls Nora by her name. Torvald refers to her as an object rather than a human being. Nora is portrayed as a vapid, passive character with little personality of her own. Her whole life is a construct of societal norms and the expectations of others. Until she comes to the realization that her life is a sham, she spends her whole life in a dream world also known as a dollhouse. Nora says “ you arranged everything to suit your own tastes, and so I came to have the same tastes as yours, or I pretended to”. Likewise, Nora is treated as a possession of Torvald. Torvald relentlessly refers to Nora through the use of pet names such as “ my little skylark”(Ibsen) and “ my helpless little squirrel”(Ibsen). Torvald uses the possessive “ my” often to reflect the notion that she belongs solely to him. Torvald treats Nora as if she was not important to him. She is his pet, his toy, and his possession. Torvald even states to Nora that it was “ quite expensive for him to keep such a pet”(Ibsen). Torvald looks down Nora because she is just a woman and nothing else. Nora is controlled by the men in the play and lies behind their back. Torvald continuously acts as a father figure to Nora. Torvald says He does not let her speak and feels only his voice matters. Torvald is not only demanding mentally and physically, but also financially. He does not trust <https://assignbuster.com/power-in-a-dolls-house/>

Nora with money. He feels that she is incapable and too immature to handle a matter of such importance. On the rare occasion that Torvald does give Nora some money, he worries that she will waste it on candy, pastry or something else of childish and useless value. Nora's duties, in general, are restricted to caring for the children, doing housework, and working on her needlepoint. But overall, Nora's most important responsibility is to please Torvald. This makes her role similar to that of a slave.