

Henrick ibsen a doll's house

[Family](#), [Marriage](#)



A Doll's House by Henrik Ibsen is a play that challenges women's rights as a matter of importance during a time period where it was ignored. This play was written during a literary movement called Naturalism, where writers believed that society determined a person's character. Ibsen portrays the role of a woman in the 19th century lifestyle through the main character, Nora Helmer, who stays at home, raises the children, and attends to her husband's every need. In A Doll's House, Nora struggles for an authentic identity in the midst of a time where society oppressed women and their rights with what people believed was a social-norm. Throughout the play, Nora displays an inauthentic identity to the audience and ultimately tries to uncover her authentic identity all throughout the play. The submissiveness Nora shows is an important trait to her character. It shows how oppressed she is because of how society thinks that women are inferior to men. This type of oppression is evident by the way her husband, Torvald Helmer, manipulates her in all aspects of her life. Torvald is very authoritative and tells Nora to act a certain way and even to dress a certain way. He is the type of man who is so focused on social and physical appearance that he cares more about his reputation than his wife that he claims to love.

Although Nora and Torvald's relationship seem to be perfect on the outside, it is not what at all what it appears to be. Torvald constantly treats Nora as if she were a child (or a doll) but nearing the end of the play, Nora realizes how fake her relationship with her husband had been all throughout the years of being married to him. At this point in the play, Nora still struggles to find her own authentic identity, while Torvald establishes an identity for her. In Torvald's eyes, he believes Nora's duty as his wife is to always be loving and

to take care of him and the children. Torvald doesn't take Nora seriously or think she has any sort of wisdom, which can be seen when he refers to her with pet names like " little squirrel"(Ibsen, 1282) Torvald doesn't think that Nora can think for herself and insults her because she is a woman with comments like " Of course you couldn't, poor little girl. " (Ibsen, 1284) In the society they lived in, Torvald was the typical husband who didn't allow their wives to think and act freely, but instead require them to be how they see fit. As Nora continues to search for her authentic identity, her character continues to change. Throughout most of the play, Nora has an inauthentic identity, which means that she starts to honestly believe that her personality and behavior should be the way society and her husband think it should be. However, all her life that is what she was taught to believe. Nora was always treated like a doll-whether it was when she was a young girl controlled by her father or as a grown woman controlled by her husband. This is evident in the end of the play when she says " I have been greatly wronged, Torvald- first by papa and then by you. " (Ibsen, 1328) All throughout her married life, she never questioned her husband, Torvald, and always believed that everything he said was true and for her benefit. Nora is the epitome of what a wife was expected to be during that time-she did everything her husband asked her to do, did her motherly duties, and celebrated at the thought of the comforts in her life now that she is married. Nora has always had the impression that life will be perfect if she does everything that is asked from her. As the play progresses, Nora realizes that she has to part from her inauthentic identity as a " doll" controlled by a master and search for what she has always known has been missing---an authentic identity. An identity

that will discontinue the illusions she had of a perfect life and instead becomes a new person with new beliefs that focus on no one but herself. It has finally been brought to her attention that her whole life has been full of pretending and basically, a lie. When reality hits her in the face, Nora says " Papa called me his doll-child, and he played with me just as I used to play with my dolls. And when I came to live with you-"(Ibsen, 1328) Ibsen refers to dolls because dolls are controlled by their owners and have no say in anything. Dolls cannot do anything with the owner being there to maneuver them-just like Nora when her inauthentic identity was all that she knew. But once Nora stood up to Torvald and does the opposite of what he says, that's when Nora's authentic identity is born. At the end of the play, Nora expresses how she feels to Torvald: " You are not to feel yourself bound in the slightest way any, any more than I shall. There must be perfect freedom on both sides. See here is your ring back. Give me mine. " Finally, Nora cuts all her ties with him and does not tolerate his manipulations and longer. Nora is finally standing up for herself and leads her to a brand new confidence in search for her deserving independence. Nora is finally free from Torvald and her past as a " doll" when the audience hears " The sound of the door slamming. " (Ibsen, 1332) and will never allow anyone to control her ever again. In conclusion, throughout the play A Doll's House, Nora Helmer struggled to find her authentic identity during a time where she was oppressed not only by society, but her husband Torvald as well. Through most of the play, it was Torvald who gave Nora her identity as he basically forced her to act and look a certain way that only he can approve of. However, Nora did allow Torvald to play with her as if she was a doll-he

would play dress up with her, mold her every thought and action, and made sure she presented herself in a way he wanted her to. At the end, Nora realizes she needs to stop being Torvald's doll and leave the "doll house" she was living in to be able to find herself and discover life on her own. Nora decides she is no longer Torvald's doll and sets herself free from her owner.