

A doll's house midterm

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Erin Edwards Script Analysis 3/24/08 A Doll's House Midterm In the play, A Doll's House, by Henrik Ibsen, you will find numerous incidents, comprised of numerous beats. Inside each and every beat you will find exponential amounts of subtext, exposition, and character development. Nora Helmer, the main character, makes the most significant changes in her disposition, based on various discoveries throughout the play. It is through the discoveries that Nora eventually finds her true self. Some of Nora's discoveries are involved in complications; some are even climax points. In the end, everything comes to a resolution, whether they are good or not. Nora's very first discovery takes place during the second incident of the first act. Nora finds out that Christine has come to visit in hopes of finding a job (p. 401). Nora takes it upon herself to make sure that Christine is secured with a job. There is a resolution to this complication on p. 404, when Nora does indeed convince Torvald to give her a job. This, however, eventually leads to a complication. Nora knows that she will be able to convince her husband to hire Christine. However, this also means that someone will be out of a job. Eventually, this discovery (and the decision she has made about the discovery) lead to Krogstad losing his job, and he blackmails her because of it. The second discovery Nora makes takes place, again, in the first act (p. 402) when Christine informs Nora that she used to know Krogstad. This doesn't have much effect on Nora when she first learns about it. However, later in the play, we find out that the two were once lovers and that Christine left Krogstad for another man with money. This works to Nora's advantage, and she doesn't even know it when she first learns about it. Christine, a widow, eventually has the power to solve all of Nora's problems, and Nora

doesn't know it until the last scene of the play. Christine takes Krogstad back, and Krogstad takes back all of the problems he put on Nora. Unfortunately, this comes too late to save her marriage. Nora's third discovery takes place in the second incident of the first act. Nora is talking with Krogstad (p. 403) after he sneaks into the house. Her discovery is that Krogstad is not there to inform Torvald of the money she borrowed. Instead, Krogstad is at their home to discuss business with Torvald about the bank and his new position of authority. This is an important discovery because it shows just how much guilt Nora feels about the loan. It not only builds character in Nora, but it also puts more pressure on her. As more and more pressure is put on her, her character slowly changes. Eventually, this pressure builds so much that Nora can't take it anymore. Nora's fourth discovery takes place not long after the last. On p. 403, Nora makes another discovery that Krogstad has something to do with the bank. She learns from Dr. Rank that he was speaking with Torvald about business with the bank, and that he has some sort of job there. Torvald has recently taken on a position at this same bank. Therefore, Torvald has authority over Krogstad's position. This discovery also plays a part in Krogstad's blackmail later in the play. Nora makes a fifth discovery when she learns from Krogstad that she has committed a crime. On p. 406, Krogstad explains to Nora that forgery is a serious crime and if she is found out, it could ruin her life like it ruined his. Krogstad once committed forgery and it ruined his reputation forever. If Nora were turned in, she could lose not only her reputation, but also her husband and children. Nora has a strong desperation to keep everything the way it is. Krogstad blackmails her to keep his job secure at the bank, and this

complication is dragged out throughout the rest of the play. There are major discoveries on p. 408, where Nora finds out that Krogstad was right to be worried for his job at the bank. This means that Nora does have to worry very seriously about being blackmailed. It is becoming very obvious to her that Torvald does not trust Krogstad, and wants to get rid of him at the bank. Nora is feeling more and more nervous and pressured. Nora also finds out that Torvald hates liars like Krogstad. Torvald explains to her that liars are corruptive and they ruin everything they touch. This convinces Nora that she will corrupt her children. This drives a wedge in the relationship Nora had with her children, since we never see Nora with her children again throughout the rest of the play. In the second act, Nora makes the discovery that her children would have someone to take care of them if she were to leave. On p. 409, Nora and the nurse are talking about how she used to take care of Nora when Nora was growing up. Nora comes to the realization that if she were to leave, the nurse would go on taking care of her children just as she took care of Nora when she was young. Nora dismisses her brief idea of escaping, but the discovery is still there. This is part of a later resolution- when Nora leaves at the end of the play, the children will be left to the care of Torvald and the nurse. When Nora and Christine are discussing Nora's problem in the second incident of the second act, Christine believes that Nora had borrowed money from Dr. Rank. On p. 410, Christine expresses that Nora shouldn't involve herself with a man like Dr. Rank, because it is obvious that he is in love with Nora. Christine assumes that his feelings for Nora have something to do with the money that Nora borrowed. This puts the idea in Nora's head that she could borrow the money from Dr. Rank to

pay off Krogstad. Then she would no longer need to worry about working so hard to pay off Krogstad herself. Nora's major complication comes to a climax on p. 411, when she finds out that Christine will be replacing Krogstad at the bank. Nora's hope is quickly dwindling, and she is running out of ideas to stall Krogstad from telling her husband about her loan and her crime.

Torvald mails the dismissal letter to Krogstad. Krogstad then receives the letter which determines that he has no hope of keeping his job, and comes back to harass Nora even more. However, Krogstad is still unaware of who is replacing him. Once he learns that it is Christine, he doesn't feel as badly because he is still in love with her. If he had found out that Christine sooner, Krogstad's letter may have never been written, and Nora may have never confronted Torvald about their problems. Nora finds out a tiny bit more about the history between Christine and Krogstad on p. 415, when Christine exclaims " Once upon a time he'd have done anything for my sake. "

Christine asks her where Krogstad lives, giving Nora some small ray of hope in preventing Torvald from receiving the letter. Christine's help is key to Nora's continuation in her endeavor to save her marriage. Without her help, Nora may have given up on trying to cover her mistakes a lot sooner. At the end of the second act, Nora finds out that Krogstad has left town. Her final statement to herself is " 31 hours to live. " This adds another complication to the plot. Nora has been considering suicide for a while. It seems with this statement that she has come to the realization that she doesn't have any other choice but to end her life. Nora is finally beginning to change her outlook on this situation. At the beginning, she was intent on keeping things " normal. " But now, she is giving up little by little. She is now choosing what

she believes is going to be the easier way out. On p. 420, Dr. Rank and Nora are talking, and he confirms to her that he is going to die soon. This disturbs Nora deeply, and she doesn't want to hear about it. This could indicate that Nora doesn't seriously want to think about death, specifically her own. Nora (p. 421) has a moment to herself, after Torvald goes to get the mail, where she realizes that she must leave her husband and children. This is her final maturing point. In the final argument of the play, after Torvald has shouted and threatened her, Nora has completely changed in character. She discovers that the "miracle of miracles" has failed to happen, and Torvald isn't who she thought he was. Then (p. 422), Krogstad's second letter arrives, and Torvald forgives her completely, since his reputation is no longer on the line. Nora decides that they must have a talk. She makes the discovery that she never really knew Torvald, and he never really knew her. She finds that they have been married for eight years, and have never once had a serious conversation. Nora feels wronged by both her father and Torvald; they both never really knew her. She blames Torvald that she hasn't ever done anything with her life. Nora discovers that she's never been happy. In the end, Nora finds her true self because of all of the things she has been put through over a matter of days. Most of her problems were surrounding her issues with Krogstad, and going behind her husband's back. She had good intentions, but unfortunately they were not justifiable to her husband. Most of the discoveries she makes have future complications, but are resolved by the end of the play. The major resolution to all of Nora's problems is her leaving Torvald at the end of the play. His controlling and dominating nature was forcing her into the role of a "doll." She was his "

doll, " and her children were her " dolls, " as well. It isn't until she is faced with these major complications to fix that she realizes how unhappy she is. It isn't until the end of the play that she discovers the most important thing of all- that she is a human being, and not just a doll in a doll's house.