

Hiding and seeking the truth in a doll's house

[Sociology](#), [Women](#)



When reading a play, the purpose is to use words and written stage directions to allow both the performer and the reader to visualize the movements of the characters and the setting. In his play, *A Doll House*, Henrik Ibsen uses tones to set the mood of the characters, the single room in the residence for setting, and minimal symbols to interpret alternate agendas. Most importantly, Ibsen uses chaos to end it all. For the most part the mood of the characters is that of glee. Very seldom in the beginning there are any arguments or misunderstandings. Ibsen uses jovial tones to show that good times are about. The symbol used here is that of a Christmas tree delivered by a young man, and Nora more than happy to pay for his services. This is all set up wonderfully to make the audience feel comfortable and gives the setting a warm and cozy feeling. Everything is all right at the Helmer household. Most, if not all the action occurs off of Torvald's study. This could mean that Nora is isolated from everybody. An alternate meaning could be that all characters act off of Nora. With Nora being the center of the universe, she controls the moods, who comes and goes, she is the quarterback. All other characters are related to her. Examples of this are: Torvald, Nora's husband. Dr. Rank, Torvald's dear friend, also an admirer of Nora's. LaDoucer 2 Mr. Krogstad, Nora's loan shark. Finally, Mrs. Linde, Nora's longtime schoolmate. When something affects Nora, like the Butterfly effect, the entire dynamic of the play is shifted. The focus at the beginning is that of the upcoming holidays. Nora is so gratuitously reminded that Mr. Krogstad's position at the bank is in peril, that this forged document makes its grand entrance on center stage. As if a domino had been knocked over far, far away, a chain reaction ensues throwing the holiday cheer aside. Now

the focus has been transferred in such a way that life changing options are being weighed. Mr. Krogstad is about to lose his job, he demands that Nora fix this. Nora is now the link that carries the greatest burden, affecting all involved, like a wave in the ocean. Nora is linked with the setting as if it were her personal prison. This is the greatest stability in the play. Everything changes around Nora, attitudes, ideas, desires, but her room off to the side never changes. Why? Is Ibsen suggesting this is her place in society? She is to be seen and not heard. She is confined to these walls, never advancing to anything more than Mrs. Torvald Helmer. With Nora being the center of attention and her imprisonment in the room suggests that the customs of the outside world are due for a change. It is for only so long that Nora can stand being enclosed by her oppressor; at the same time she has no power to change her dependency. Ibsen uses delaying the inevitable to transition his grand finale. Nora insists that Torvald dances to death, to avoid him reading this letter. The climax is drawn out. It's coming and it's well mapped to the audience that the shit's about to hit the fan. LaDoucer 3 Shrewdly, Ibsen merely leaves a nugget at the foot of a greater boulder. This is not the end, it's a detour. The interpretation could be that Ibsen wants something to change around him, but it is taking too damn long. Nora's feverish dancing hoping that Torvald will wait just for a few moments longer suggests Ibsen is sick of the charades and feels it's time to act or get out (next!!!). Nora continuously elongates the moment of truth in hopes to sneak in a solution before Torvald becomes "educated" that his "... little lark..." (210), has been doing something he may not approve of. After the cards are placed on the table, Ibsen jams everything up, causing mass chaos. Has society reached its

breaking point now that everything around us will never function properly again? Change needs to come about now, and implemented immediately. From Nora's suicidal tendencies, to self discovery, the entire road we traveled to get here has taken a turn for the worse. What the hell just happened? From a damsel in distress to a woman fighting for her personal freedom, Nora no longer will take part in this classical relational structure. She is now Nora, the person, not Nora, Torvald's wife. Nora refuses any and all help from her "stranger" husband, leaves her children for Christ sakes, all in the name of self discovery. Ibsen has created a paradox, what does his audience do? Are they to protest social structure in place for many generations? The written word has slayed the spoken one. As of the early 21st century, these ideas that a woman is an individual that have the same unalienable rights as every man enjoys, is not a philosophical discourse or reinventing the wheel. LaDoucer 4 With the Woman's Movement in the late 19th and early 20th century, these issues are no longer a foreign idea. If A Doll House contributed to the Woman's Movement than Ibsen should be recognized as a participant or a gypsy that foretold the future right around the corner for Western society. With the 19th amendment, the United States Constitution gives women the power to vote, making women a full participant in society. All in all, this wonderful play had me entranced. I was sucked into this comfort of knowing what was coming, about to find out that what I expected to happen, not only never happens, but took me for a complete loop. When I read on that Nora up and left everything, and I do mean everything, I could have been knocked over by a feather. I was absolutely floored. I was not shocked by the message, but with the way

Ibsen manipulated me into thinking I knew what was going to happen, and then hitting me with the " I told you so." Excellent...