

# Nora helmer character analysis

Business



Nora Helmer is one of the main characters in the play *A Doll's House*. The story revolves around her personality, her house and her relationship with the people living in and entering her home.

She is portrayed as an average middle-aged housewife who is surrounded by tasks given to her by society. For instance, Nora keeps herself busy by taking care of the house, entertaining her husband and friends and spending smiling moments with her children. She is not expected to deal with the "outside" world and its worries as the men are required to fulfill it. As long as she obeys her husband's orders and delivers exactly what society asks her to, she receives everyone's approval. In the beginning of the play, Nora is exactly seen carrying out her motherly and wifely duties as well as being ever so cheery hostess to guests. However, as the play progresses, the audience receives a deeper look into her personality and past.

It is revealed that Nora is much more capable than she seems. She is not meek and obedient wife after all. Her little acts of rebellion such as cursing or eating the macaroons unravel her desire to break free from the rigid rules surrounding her. It also shows that she has experience of breaking rules, thus keeps dark secrets like the clandestine borrowing of money from Krogstad for her husband's medical treatment. Once she was ready to forget the past and move on since she was almost done repaying Krogstad, her life changes for the worse.

She is presented with a challenging twist in circumstances and therefore, has to reevaluate herself and her life. Throughout the play, Nora tries to keep her past in a secret from her husband and fears the possible consequences if he

finds out. She is so obsessed with pleasing him as she does not want to jeopardize their relationship. It is interesting to note that she knows and understands his expected reaction about finding out the truth realizing that she will be punished somehow. The constant fear forces her to get deeper in lies like telling everything to Mrs.

Linde and wrongly trusting her. She becomes even more drowned in trouble as Krogstad starts blackmailing her because of the twist of circumstances which brought him and Nora's husband against each other. Her constant fear and unease makes Nora reevaluate herself and the life around her. The tension builds up in her inner world and she experiences many emotions. For example, she faces confusion and betrayal when she realizes that Torvald, despite being her husband of eight years, is still a stranger to her as he does not trust her, never sees her true value and abilities, nor does he appreciate her sacrifice. She says: " We must come to a final settlement, Torvald.

During eight whole years . . . we have never exchanged one serious word about serious things." Even though she foresaw Torvald's angry reaction upon finding out the truth, it was her own reaction that astonished her. Nora told Torvald: " I have been performing tricks for you, Torvald.

That's how I've survived. You wanted it like that. You and Papa have done me a great wrong. It's because of you I've made nothing of my life." This is the climax at which Nora finally breaks away from society's bonds and reveals her true personality. These lines tell the audience along with the characters in the play that she is more than just a displayed puppet who is

pre-set to obey others' orders and do tricks for them with various means of entertainment.

At this point, the audience is able to look back and see Nora's two different worlds (her own and the one she displayed) yet also connect the two halves together to make a whole. Nora suffered from a conflict between her revealed self and alter ego displaying merely a facade. The real Nora disclosed courage when she forged her father's signature and took the loan from Krogstad. The real Nora was intelligent because she understood the men's business transactions and was also highly ambitious because she took care of her husband, and was in fact his chaperone for their trip to Italy. She provided her husband with genuine ardent love and that passion was awoken again at the end when love had turned into resentment.

At the end, Nora decided to break away from the invisible bonds holding her down and this made her destroy women's stereotype, giving hope to others around her. She shattered her glass house, filled with external beauties but void without real emotions and equality. She also broke away from her identity as Nora Helmer and decided to become simply Nora. She got rid of Nora one might name a doll (as the name is very "doll-like") but became a woman Nora who needed to physically escape from her boundaries in order to re-evaluate and re-discover herself. The rebellion boils up to the point where Nora rejects all the roles she is forced to play in life, including a mother's. This was in a way easier to do since she was always distant from her children as they were in the care of a nanny.

This was another injustice done by society to her as she was forced to suppress her motherly love and affection because she had to carry out other duties such as being a devoted hostess and entertainer. Even though Nora is portrayed as a dynamic character throughout the play, she is actually quiet passive. She demonstrates the same type of emotions and follows the same patterns. For instance, she constantly puts on a mask that she is cheerful and happy despite inner fighting with herself. Her intense demeanor continues to annoy the audience as there is no balance of emotions. All her feelings are always at their extreme.

Her sudden outburst at the end is another extreme showing the true dynamic point of her character development. From one extreme of being completely absorbed with the “doll house” and her role as the “doll” she goes to another extreme of totally rejecting those roles and becoming a completely different person, literally walking out of her past life.