

Essay on doll's house

[Family](#), [Parents](#)



Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House* is a highly intelligent play that, in its time of the nineteenth century, stood out against all other dramatic works. The protagonist of *A Doll's House* is Nora Helmer. Nora is perhaps one of the deepest, most internally complicated characters in nineteenth century plays.

At the beginning of the play, Nora behaves in rather a childlike manner. She prances around like a young girl might do, secretly eats deserts which she has bought while out shopping, and when asked by her husband if she has eaten macaroons, she completely denies it. This incident with the macaroons lets the audience know, very early on, that Nora is very capable of telling lies, and of concealment in general.

Nora's childlike qualities are at their most prevalent when she is relating with her husband, Torvald. When interacting with him, she obeys him yet remains playful in her manner. One of the most interesting elements of their relationship is that they do not seem to be as equals. Rather, Nora often asks him for favours and, in turn, he teases and makes fun of her. She reacts well to such chiding, and remains good natured and light hearted towards her husband.

Soon into the play, the audience learns that Nora isn't quite what she originally seemed. It turns out that she hasn't been frivolously spending her husband's money on shopping trips. In fact, she has been harbouring a debt, kept secret from Torvald, and is desperately trying to pay it off. When, a long while ago, Torvald had fallen ill, and Nora managed to secure a loan in her father's name in order to pay for treatment for her husband. This treatment saved his life, but she never confessed to him where she had got the money

from. When the audience learns about this secret debt, their perception of Nora is changed.

Nora's life becomes notably more difficult when Nils Krogstad threatens to let the truth out about her crime. At this point, it occurs to Nora that she could end up damaging her husband's reputation. She begins to rethink her own morality. Until now, Nora firmly believed that she acted rightly in forging her father's signature in order to secure the loan for Torvald's treatment. Now, however, she starts to question whether she acted appropriately, and this affects her thoughts about whether she is fundamentally a good wife and mother as she had previously thought.

In turmoil about the potential dishonour that is about to be bestowed upon her husband, Nora considers taking her own life. Also on her mind is that her suicide will eliminate the chance of Torvald taking the blame for her crime himself, in order to save her from imprisonment. However, to the audience, it seems unlikely that Nora would actually go through with the act of killing herself. In particular, Krogstad does not believe that she is capable.

Furthermore, during the dramatic scene in Act Three, Nora is seen to hesitate and procrastinate before leaving to commit suicide. Her husband manages to stop her very easily, which demonstrates that, really, Nora does not wish to end her life.

Nora's transformation has a very clear turning point. When the truth about the forgery is finally out, Torvald treats her with utter contempt and makes it clear that he has no intention of taking the blame on her behalf. This serves as an epiphany for Nora as she realises that her husband is not who she

thought he was, and certainly does not feel for her in the manner which she previously was so sure that he did. This event results in Nora accepting that her entire marriage has been an misapprehension and that all the affection that she and her husband had previously shown each other was just like they had been playing a game. She realises that she has been behaving as Torvald's doll for many years, and she eventually confronts him in her monologue.

Since A Doll's House was first shown to an audience, there has been a great deal of discussion about the final scene. To many, it seemed unmoral that Nora had left her children as well as her husband. There was such uproar about this resolution that Ibsen was forced to write an alternative ending to the play, in which Nora eventually stays for the sake of the children (Nora).

It is possible that Nora leaves the house and the children because of her own selfishness. As she doesn't wish to be with Torvald any longer, she would prefer to begin her life afresh rather than working on her current one. On the other hand, it is possible that she believes what Torvald says to her, that she is nothing more than a naïve child. If this is the case, then it is possible that she leaves in order to save her children from being burdened with such an inadequate mother.

Nora's final words in the play are optimistic, even though her actions do not live up to the same positivity. She explains to Torvald that they may rekindle their relationship, but only in the occurrence of a "miracle of miracles".

These words fill Torvald with renewed hope, but just as this hope is ignited,

Nora leaves the home. This is her way of showing that, in reality, there is no chance of them getting back together again.

A Doll's House is an intelligent, cutting-edge play of the nineteenth century. The plot and the writing are of exceptional quality. However, the character of Nora is what makes the story's success. She is complex and entirely three-dimensional. Audiences can relate to her as well as be frustrated by her. There have been few characters, before or since, that could live up to her.

Works Cited

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