

Burning down the doll house



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' Until death do us part.' Well, not always. Everywhere one looks, divorce is plaguing society, and it has become widely accepted throughout the world. Now the violent shredding of a family is shrugged off like the daily weather, and the treasured marriage vows have become nothing but a promise made to be broken. In the novel *The Lost World*, a divorce was described along with sports cars and money as success, not failure. The Norwegian play *A Doll's House*, by Henrik Ibsen, is a prime example of a relationship that didn't work. The marriage of Torvald and Nora Helmer had many problems, and was doomed because the husband and wife couldn't match up to the elements of a successful couple-hood. To keep a marriage alive and growing it must hold true to four qualities: love, communication, trust and loyalty, and perseverance. With the incorporation of these qualities any marriage would work. Without love a relationship would probably not even begin. Two people meet, a friendship forms, and soon a romance blossoms. Though the basis for Nora and Torvald's relationship appeared to be centered around love, the needed balance was not obtained. Torvald didn't really love Nora; to him she was just another child to mind. He said, ' And I wouldn't want you to be any different from what you are-just my sweet little song bird. But now I come to think of it, you look rather-rather-how shall I put it? -rather as if you've been up to mischief today' (151). Calling his wife names such as ' skylark,' ' squirrel,' and ' spendthrift,' Torvald does not love his wife with the respect and sensitivity a man should. The main area where Torvald showed his lack of love for Nora was in the way he managed his house. Torvald was the owner of what he believed to be a perfect doll house. This doll house was first controlled by Nora's domineering father, and once Nora entered marriage, the titles and deeds to this doll house were handed over to

Torvald. Torvald manipulated Nora, and then the children through her according to his wants, sure that he could never lose control over his precious doll house. This lack of love and imperious attitude would eventually ruin their marriage. Nora was the only one of the two partners who showed love for the other in this play. Going against all the odds a woman faced in the late nineteenth century, Nora went behind her husband's back, borrowed a large sum of money, forged her father's signature, and went on to pay it off with hopes of Torvald never hearing of it. She refused to be a doll, and would alternate personalities between 'Torvald's little skylark,' and 'Nora the intelligent and strong woman.' A balance of love between man and wife that is needed in any marriage was certainly not reached. This immoderate and unbalanced behavior definitely hurt the relationship of Torvald and Nora, but this was not the only factor that contributed to the break down of their partnership. Two soul-mates need to communicate in a relationship. Before the wife pays the electric bills, she should inform her husband of the monetary situation. In the same sense, before the husband goes to the casino with his friends for beer and entertainment, he should tell his wife. The possibility exists that if Nora had informed Torvald of her plans to borrow money, a conflict such as this would have never happened. But that possibility is unrealistic. Torvald, a stubborn man in terms of money, could never accept the fact that even he, the powerful doll master, would need help from one of his unintelligent dolls. These two did not talk enough, as Nora says, 'We've been together for eight years now. Don't you realize that this is the first time that we two-you and I, man and wife-have had a serious talk together?' (225). The answer was no. The communication throughout their entire marriage was poor, as this quote <https://assignbuster.com/burning-down-the-doll-house/>

illustrates. Throughout the entire play irony becomes a hammer that knocks the reader or viewer on the head, reminding him or her that the plot is ever thicker with each situation that arises. The truth is clear that when all of Nora's secret information is disclosed, something bad is bound to happen. Plainly, without a steady stream of communication a marriage can never hope to live onward. Another problem with the communication was that neither spouse could truly trust the other. Without trust, marriage becomes impossible. Lacking honesty and loyalty, trust cannot be obtained. Two people cannot live together without trust for each other. If one spouse feels like he or she must constantly check up on the other, the marriage will fail. Torvald had almost no trust in Nora. In the first Act, he continually lampoons her for her flirtatious way of spending money, stating, ' It would be (sensible) if you really kept the money I give you, and actually bought something for yourself with it. But if it goes in with the housekeeping, and gets spent on all sorts of useless things, then I only have to pay out again' (150). If a man checks up on his wife like this any type of relationship is doomed from the start. Torvald's lack of trust toward Nora could be justified if she really were a spendthrift. In this case the wife would have to build up trust with her husband. As well as the husband would have to do the same in other circumstances. In order to gain this trust each individual must remain honest and loyal at all times. By being responsible in his or her own actions, trust can be earned through a husband and wife's honesty. With the amount of trust that Nora and Torvald have for each other, no marriage could be possible. But even united together these elements alone cannot completely hold a couple as one. Life is a rough and tough road, and in order to navigate down its treacherous curves a pair must be able to persevere in difficult

times. A couple can have a great bond, but in a time of pain or dilemma that bond can be forgotten and all their problems shadow the great relationship they have. If the two cannot pick up the pieces and move onward, only one fight or hard time can cause a couple to break up, . An attitude must be adopted in these times that simply says, ' I'm angry with you, but I will forgive you.' Hard events in life are inevitable, but not unbeatable. Torvald and Nora didn't have problems persevering because Torvald did all of the problem solving for them both, and took care of Nora's problems himself. Torvald did not act like this out of selfishness, but rather to be the dominate male in the relationship, not allowing Nora to think and act for herself. Because of Torvald's lack of love and trust, and abundance of control, Nora decided that to persevere would only result in more problems. Perseverance is only a good idea if the other three qualifications are met, because at that point only more problems will arise. Nora and Torvald's marriage failed because they lacked in all of the qualifications for a successful marriage. And the marriage failed because of Torvald's imperious control over his family. If any type of doll house is present in a marriage such as that of the Helmers', it would be a serious impediment to any attempt at success. Before Nora leaves, she tells Torvald, ' I've been your doll-wife here, just as at home I was Papa's doll-child. And the children have been my dolls in their turn... That's what our marriage has been' (226). In order to ensure a wonderful and happy life together, any doll house must be burnt to the ground, and the lighter fluid must be the fuel bearing the names of love, trust, communication, and perseverance. When the smoke is cleared, the wonderful bond of marriage can be enjoyed to it's fullest extent, and until ' death do us part.'