

A Doll's House
ACT I

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Setting the Scene

“A room furnished comfortably and tastefully, but not extravagantly.” (Ibsen 3).

- ❖ Mr. And Mrs. Helmer’s home
- ❖ Main living room
- ❖ Connected to the entrance and Torvald’s study
- ❖ Piano, stove, cabinets, chairs, table, sofa, and bookcase
- ❖ Winter time



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Mrs. Christine Linde

- ❖ Old friend of Nora
- ❖ “‘You are a little paler, Christine, and perhaps a little thinner.’
- ‘And much, much older, Nora’” (Ibsen 9).
- ❖ She married for money but when her husband passed away, he had nothing left
- ❖ She has no one to care for
 - Mother died
 - Two brothers on their own
 - Feels life is “unspeakably empty”
 - “No one to live for anymore” (Ibsen 12).
- ❖ She is looking for a job Torvald could give her

Doctor Rank

- ❖ Close friend of the Helmers
- ❖ Previous doctor of Torvald Helmer
- ❖ Often visits their home
- ❖ Foreshadows depression

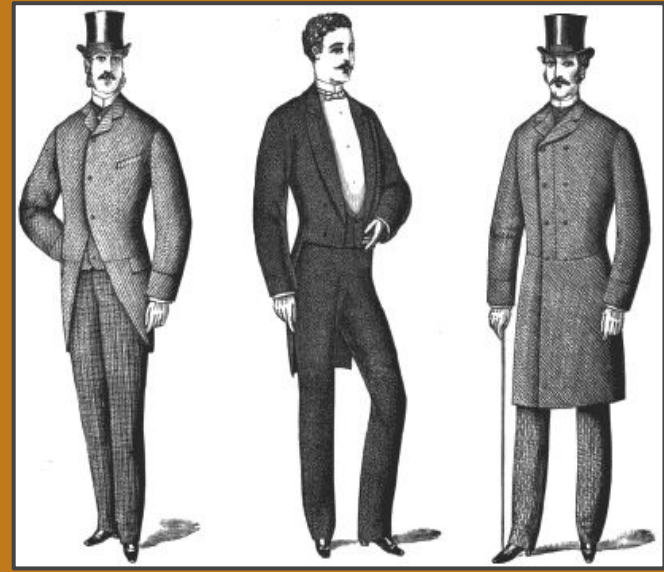
“However wretched I may feel, I want to prolong the agony as long as possible” (Ibsen 19).

Krogstad

“Just think how a guilty man like that has to lie and play the hypocrite with everyone, how he has to wear a mask in the presence of those near and dear to him, even before his own wife and children” (Ibsen 32).

- ❖ Antagonist of the play
- ❖ Lawyer
- ❖ Man of low morals
 - Forged a signature
 - Lied of his mistake
- ❖ Gives Nora a bond
- ❖ Selfish
 - Threatens to expose Nora if he does not keep his position at the bank
 - “If I lose my position a second time, you shall lose yours” (Ibsen 29).

Torvald Helmer



- ❖ Typical Victorian man
- ❖ Recently earned the title of manager at the bank
- ❖ Stingy with his money
 - Another way of controlling Nora
- ❖ Overbearing, treats Nora like a child
- ❖ Believes in the social norm of patriarchal society
 - “That is like a woman!” (Ibsen 5).
- ❖ However..
 - “Well, we will share it, Nora, as man and wife should” (Ibsen 41).

Mora Helmer

- ❖ Wife of Torvald
- ❖ Submissive to men in her life
 - Always relied on father and then husband
- ❖ Big spender
- ❖ Very beautiful
- ❖ Deceitful and mischievous
 - Lies about the macaroons
 - Bond with Krogstad
- ❖ Lacks experience
- ❖ Desires more freedom (Ibsen 16).

“I mean, of course, when Torvald is no longer as devoted to me as he is now; when my dancing and dressing-up and reciting have palled on him” (Ibsen 16).

“It was a tremendous pleasure to sit there working and earning money. It was like being a man.” (Ibsen 16).



Hattie Morahan as Nora

- ❖ Played Nora Helmer in the play in 2012
- ❖ Had to “utterly rewire to get into her fundamental lack of self worth that she has been groomed from birth to believe that the most important thing is to be beautiful, please men, be entertaining and using her intelligent [and judgement] is unattractive and wrong”(Morahan).
- ❖ “On one hand she is trapped, her husband has all financial and legal power over her, but somehow she has maneuvered herself into a situation where she can exert power by manipulative means because she has no other way of being in control of her life”(Morahan).



Themes

- ❖ **Conformity:** Nora plays the role of a wife and mother as expected
- ❖ **Confinement:** Nora is confined to the home
- ❖ **Foreshadowing:** Dr. Rank shows signs of depression and Nora shows signs of independence
 - *“But ‘Nora, Nora’ is not so silly as you think”* (Ibsen 10).
 - *“You are just like the others. They all think I am incapable of anything really serious”* (Ibsen 13).



- ❖ **Appearance vs. reality:** People being seemingly happy or seemingly cruel
- ❖ **Female expectations:** Women stayed at home, took care of children, and looked pretty

Symbols

- ❖ Windows and Doors
 - Nora's freedom
 - Nora's confinement
- ❖ Nicknames
 - "Little lark"
 - "My little squirrel"
 - "Little featherhead"
 - "Poor little girl"
 - Belittling

- ❖ The Christmas Tree
 - Happiness
 - Joy Nora takes in making her home pleasant
- ❖ Macaroons
 - Nora's disobedience and deceit
 - "Not even taken a bite at a macaroon or two?" (Ibsen 7).





Works Cited

Digital Theatre Plus. “Hattie Morahan Interview- A Doll’s House Playing Nora- Digital Theatre Plus.” *YouTube*, commentary by Hattie Morahan, 19 Dec. 2012, <https://youtu.be/swl84kmXStw>.

Ibsen, Henrik. *A Doll's House*. Print.