

# **A Doll's House Book Notes**

## **A Doll's House by Henrik Ibsen**

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# Author/Context

## Henrik Johan Ibsen (1828-1906)

Born in the small town of Skien in Southern Norway, Henrik Ibsen was no stranger to social isolation and self-discovery. As the second son in a large family of six children, Henrik spent his youth gallivanting the countryside as a child of a wealthy family, for his father found early success as a merchant. However, his father suffered great financial woes and lost his entire fortune when Henrik was only seven, forcing the family to move to smaller and more obscure towns. He left school in 1843 and worked as an apothecary's assistant for seven years in Grimstad. During his time there, Ibsen began to write. He also fathered his first illegitimate son by one of the maids at his station.

Ibsen then went to Christiania (which eventually became Oslo) planning to attend the university. After so many years working as an apprentice, Ibsen intended to pursue and develop the literary talents he discovered while working with the apothecary. While he never matriculated, Ibsen did continue to write and he published his first play, *Catilina*, under the pseudonym of Brynjolf Bjarme. His second play, *The Warrior's Barrow* (also known as *The Burial Mound*), was produced by the Christiania Theater in 1850. People began to take notice - notably venerated violinist Ole Buff - who gave Ibsen an in at the National Theater, where he soon found a niche. Ibsen worked in the theater for years, moving around, and eventually becoming the artistic director of the Norwegian Theater in Christiania. During his theater years, he married Suzanna Thoresen and fathered their only child, Sigurd. Together, the Ibsens worked in the theater until it went bankrupt in 1862, forcing them to leave Norway. Like his father, Henrik Ibsen found financial success and soon lost it. He spent the next twenty-seven years living in various cities throughout Europe - in Germany and Italy - until he suffered a terrible stroke in 1900 rendering him incapable of working as a writer.

Ibsen is known in the literary and theatrical worlds for his contribution to the study of social isolationism and the study of individualism. His most famous works invariably illustrate strong women imprisoned by the dictates of society, trapped inside a doll's house, unable to truly find their own voices. It is this theme that has brought Ibsen international acclaim and respect, with his plays perpetually produced throughout the world since their initial production over a century ago.

According to Ibsen scholar James McFarlane, "In the group of plays of which *A Doll's House* and *Ghosts* are the defining achievements, Ibsen's attention was thus chiefly drawn to those problems stemming from the inhibitions set upon individual freedom and self-realization by social and institutional forces: by commercial hypocrisy, religious intolerance, political expediency, and all the accumulated pressures of conventional morality and established authority."

Although his themes of social isolationism in the 1879 *A Doll's House* and 1890 *Hedda Gabler*, brought him wide acclaim, he has a wide body of theatrical work. It also includes *Brand*, *Emperor and Galilean*, *An Enemy of the People*, *The Wild Duck*, *The Master*

*Builder , John Gabriel Borkman, League of Youth, The Lady from the Sea, The Master Builder, Peer Gynt, Rosmersholm, When We Dead Awaken, and The Wild Duck.*

After his stroke in 1900, Ibsen was unable to write, work in the theater, or continue his normal lifestyle. He died in 1906.

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# Plot Summary

The play begins as Nora Helmer enters her home after an exhaustive day of shopping for the holidays. She is thrilled that her husband, Torvald, has recently been promoted to the position of Bank Manager at the Savings Bank, for now she can continue her carefree lifestyle of spending and shopping. Torvald calms her down, calling her a songbird and skylark, and reminds her that they must not spend too much money, for he does not yet have his position and all the money.

Their friends, Dr. Rank and Kristina Linde, arrive at the same time for a daily visit. Dr. Rank is the Helmers' mutual friend who helped Torvald regain his health years earlier and Mrs. Linde is an old school friend of Nora's who has come to town to ask Torvald for a job. Her husband passed away three years earlier, leaving her penniless and childless, despite her initial marriage to him solely for money. While they are inside, Nils Krogstad, a barrister from Torvald's bank, comes to speak with him. Dr. Rank enters the study to speak with Torvald as soon as Krogstad exits. While the two men speak, the two women catch up on years of absence. After Kristina lectures Nora on the frivolousness of her life, Nora reveals a deep secret to her friend. The year in which they lived in Italy was not funded by her father, but rather through Nora's own business negotiations. She borrowed a large sum of money from a creditor, Nils Krogstad, and constantly must worry about repaying him at the same time as carrying on her typical life of shopping and caring for the house and children. Kristina does pity her. When the men come out of the study, Nora asks Torvald to find a job for Kristina, and the two men leave with Kristina.

Nora is left alone in the house and begins to play with her three children. In the midst of a loud game, Krogstad enters the living room. He threatens to tell Torvald everything, about the loan, and even worse - about the forged bond Nora signed - if he loses his job to Mrs. Linde. Krogstad and Mrs. Linde used to be a couple before she married her late husband. He leaves her frightened for her husband and family's reputation. When Torvald returns, he catches Nora in a lie. She tells him that nobody stopped by. Torvald, however, saw Krogstad leave the house and lectures her on the importance of telling the truth.

Nora waits for Kristina on the couch with her sewing materials and torn dress. Kristina arrives to help fix the dress for the Tarantella, which Nora is to dance at the party later that evening. Initially Kristina believes Dr. Rank to be the man from whom Nora borrowed the money, for he seems especially caring towards her. Nora explains that he is absolutely not the creditor. He is simply a very close friend with whom she discusses everything. She does not speak with her husband about other people - man or woman - because Torvald is jealous of anyone who speaks with her. As Nora begins to divulge the conversation she had with Krogstad, Torvald enters. Nora sends Kristina away, for Torvald does not like to see women sewing. She pleads with him to keep Krogstad at the bank, but he does not pay her any attention intellectually. He just comforts her as one would a pet.



Dr. Rank enters to see Torvald who is awaiting him in his study. Dr. Rank sits with Nora, who appears to be extremely worried. He tries to calm her, by telling her that he would do anything for her and he also has deep feeling for her. He is on the verge of death and wanted to tell her how he felt before he left. He wants to be able to give her something that they could remember him by. Nora is about to ask him for the money when he divulges his feelings for her. She is shocked and angry by his candid honesty.

He goes into Torvald's study, when Krogstad returns, warning Nora that unless he is promoted to her husband's position, he will reveal all of her past actions. When he leaves, he drops a letter in the mailbox explaining everything that has occurred. Kristina enters and listens to Nora's tearful story. She promises to help Nora by convincing Krogstad to request his letter be returned unopened. Nora must stall Torvald in the meantime by dancing her tarantella with fury.

While Nora and Torvald are upstairs rehearsing the tarantella, Krogstad comes to see Kristina. They discuss the problems with the bond and their past relationship. She tries to explain to him why she left him brokenhearted, yet also urges him to right the wrong he is about to make. In the course of their discussion, Kristina proposes that they both leave the bank and start a new business together - as a new family. She can take care of him, his children, and his home, and therefore feel worthy as a person. Krogstad is weary of her trust. However, she pleads with him that she would not sell herself twice in the same lifetime. Krogstad leaves Kristina alone in the Helmer living room, excited about the future.

When Nora and Torvald return from the party upstairs, Kristina tells him that all will be well, so long as Torvald reads the letter and understands the truth. She cannot bear to let such deception continue in a family. Kristina leaves, Dr. Rank arrives, drops two letters in the mailbox, and leaves again. He has just notified his friends of his impending death.

Although Nora urges Torvald to put off reading his letters, he continues to do so. Upon reading Krogstad's notice, Torvald explodes at Nora, calling her a liar, hypocrite, and hereditary disaster. He blames her for destroying their life, his reputation, and doing something so stupid behind his back. Nora accepts each one of his insults with strength and foresight. In the middle of his tirade, Krogstad delivers another letter - including the returned bond - that absolves them from all financial and legal obligations. Torvald rejoices at the prospect of saving face and returning to his doll's house with Nora and the children. However, it is too late, for Nora has just witnessed his cruel temper and willingness to lose her over his own pride. Although he pleads with her to stay, Nora exclaims that she cannot stay married to such a man - a stranger - and must leave to find her own life, her own independence. Only a miracle would allow them to stay a happy married couple. She leaves their home, releasing him of all husbandly duties, and informing him that all the servants will do a better job of taking care of the house and children than she ever could.

# Major Characters

**Torvald Helmer:** Torvald Helmer is an businessman who has recently been promoted to the position of Manager of the Savings Bank. A scrupulous man, Torvald lives his life according to society's norms - both professionally and personally. He treats his wife, Nora, like a beautiful and treasured doll, who he can dress up, exhibit, and love externally. Torvald was extremely ill several years earlier and recovered in Italy. As the Manager of the Bank, he will earn more money, but still hopes to save some of it so that the family will not want in the future.

**Nora Helmer:** Nora Helmer is Torvald's beautiful young wife, who loves to spend money, dress in elegant clothing, and take care of her children. She wants to keep her life as easy and simple as it appears to be at the onset of the play. Despite the appearance she tries to convey, Nora holds a deep secret that threatens to destroy her happy home as she knows it. When the truth comes out that she borrowed money to save her husband years earlier, her financial and personal doom is imminent. She tries to save face, her husband, and family's reputation, but eventually discovers that she has been living in a doll's house her entire life.

**Dr. Rank:** Dr. Rank is a close personal friend of the Helmers who visits on a daily basis. He has no family or offspring to support, so he has amassed a large savings account. He dislikes Nils Krogstad and hides his deep feelings for Nora. Dr. Rank is the man who helped Torvald regain his strength and health years earlier and has since become part of the family. He is the confidante and friend of both Nora and Torvald. Nora feels as if she can speak with Dr. Rank in a way she can never speak to her own husband.

**Kristina (Mrs. Linde):** Kristina (Mrs. Linde) is an old school-friend of Nora's from their youth. Although they have not seen each other in several years, they instantly rekindle their friendship. Kristina, a widow of a loveless marriage, has come to Nora to beg her husband for a job. She and Nils Krogstad shared a romance in the past, and she ended it to marry her late husband for a large sum of money. At the Helmers, Kristina becomes Nora's confidante and helper as she tries to resolve her problems with Krogstad, the bank, and her husband. She believes Nora must be truthful with her husband and develop a sense of independence, as she has done.

**Nils Krogstad:** Nils Krogstad is a barrister at the bank in which Torvald works. He is a man of loose scruples who has lied and forged documents in the past, losing the respect of Torvald and his co-workers. Although he tries to start his life anew in complete honesty, he is also at risk for losing his job. Torvald plans to give his old job to Mrs. Linde. When Krogstad discovers such news, he threatens to tell Torvald that he is the man who lent Nora the money years earlier, destroying everyone's lives. Furthermore, Mrs. Linde had a romance with Krogstad in the past. Because of her influence on him, she tries to help Nora by urging Krogstad to drop his threats.

## Minor Characters

**The Helmer children:** The three Helmer children run around the house during the course of the play. Nora plays with them and constantly wants to give them presents. They are the binding force between Nora and Torvald.

**Anna-Maria (nurse/Nanny):** The nurse, Anna-Maria, brings news to Nora about the mail and callers. Years earlier, she left her own child and family to raise Nora in a wealthy setting, and now is the trusty nursemaid to Nora's own children. She discusses family and finances with Nora.

**Housemaid:** The housemaid helps the Helmers with the housework, mail, and callers.

**Porter:** The porter helps run the Helmer household and delivers letters for them, including those to and from Krogstad.

**Nora's father:** Although he never makes a physical presence during the play, Nora's father's influence is felt throughout its course. Torvald repeatedly brings up his loose morals and past scandals to compare them to Nora.



## Objects/Places

**The tarantella:** The tarantella is an Italian dance that Nora performs at the neighbor's holiday party on Christmas. She rehearses it throughout the play, using its intense music at times to delay Torvald from discovering the truth of her past actions, and other times to play the dutiful doll to her doting husband.

**Italy:** The Helmers spend a substantial period of time in Italy while Torvald regains his health and recuperates from his illness. Nora finances this expensive medical R&R, although Torvald believes her father is the man behind the money. It is this trip that pushes Nora into the deal with Krogstad.

**The Bank:** When Torvald is promoted in the bank, he becomes the manager and is in charge of hiring and firing employees. He plans to fire Krogstad after discovering of his past lies and forgeries. He intends to hire Mrs. Linde in his place.

**Torvald's Study:** Torvald often retires to his private study when he wants quiet study and discussion time with friends. Nora generally stays in the living room when speaking with friends. Dr. Rank typically walks into Torvald's study when he wants to speak with him privately. It is also the location of Krogstad's initial visit to Torvald.

**Living Room:** The entire action of the play takes place in the open living room of Nora and Torvald Helmer. People walk in and out and have access to both the staircase and Torvald's studio from this central room.



## Quotes

Quote 1: "Nora, Nora! Just like a woman! But seriously, Nora, you know what I think about that sort of thing. No debts, no borrowing. There's something constrained, something ugly even, about a home that's founded on borrowing and debt." Act 1, pg. 149

Quote 2: "It's a sweet little bird, but it gets through a terrible amount of money. You wouldn't believe how much it costs a man when he's got a little song-bird like you!" Act 1, pg. 151

Quote 3: "Torvald has his pride - most men have - he'd be terribly hurt and humiliated if he thought he'd owed anything to me. It'd spoil everything between us, and our lovely happy home would never be the same again." Act 1, pg. 161

Quote 4: "Still it was tremendous fun sitting there working and earning money. It was almost like being a man." Act 1, pg. 162

Quote 5: "Hasn't a daughter the right to protect her dying father from worry and anxiety? Hasn't a wife the right to save her husband's life? I don't know much about the law, but I'm quite certain that it must say somewhere that things like that are allowed." Act 1, pg. 175-176

Quote 6: "Because an atmosphere of lies like that infects and poisons the whole life of a home. In a house like that, every breath that the children take is filled with the germs of evil." Act 1, pg. 179

Quote 7: "Look, Nora, in lots of things, you're still a child. I'm older than you in many ways and I've had a little more experience." Act 2, pg. 184

Quote 8: "'If your squirrel were to ask you very prettily for something...'  
'Your squirrel will scamper about and do all her tricks, if you'll be nice and do what she asks...'

'Your skylark'll sing all over the house - up and down the scale...'

'I'll be a fairy and dance on a moonbeam for you...'" Act 2, pg. 187

Quote 9: "Are you happy now? There - there - there - don't look like a frightened little dove - the whole thing's just sheer imagination. Now, you must rehearse your tarantella - with the tambourine. I'll go sit in the inner room and shut the doors, so you can make all the noise you like - I shan't hear a thing." Act 2, pg. 190

Quote 10: "I promised myself that I'd tell you before I went away, and I could never have a better opportunity. Well, Nora, now you know. And you know, too, that you can trust me - more than anyone else." Act 2, pg. 194



Quote 11: "Yes, now you've been warned, so don't do anything stupid. I shall expect to hear from Helmer as soon as he gets my letter. And remember, it's your husband who's forced me to do this sort of thing again. I shall never forgive him for that." Act 2, pg. 200

Quote 12: "Nora, darling, you're dancing as if your life depended on it!" Act 2, pg. 204

Quote 13: "When I lost you, it was just as if the very ground had given way under my feet. Look at me now - a shipwrecked man clinging to a spar." Act 3, pg. 208

Quote 14: "Nils, when you've sold yourself once for the sake of others, you don't do it a second time." Act 3, pg. 210

Quote 15: "But now a whole day's gone by and I've witnessed things in this house that I could hardly believe. Helmer must know the whole story. This wretched secret must be brought into the open so that there's complete understanding between them. That's be impossible while there's so much concealment and subterfuge." Act 3, pg. 211

Quote 16: "'Mayn't I look at my dearest treasure? At all the beauty that belongs to no one but me - that's all my very own?'...  
'I'll tell you something: when I'm out with you at a party, do you know why I hardly talk to you - don't come near you - only steal a glance at you every now and then...do you know why? It's because I pretend that we're secretly in love - engaged in secret - and that no one dreams that there's anything between us.'" Act 3, pg. 215

Quote 17: "Nora, now that you and I have no one but each other. Oh, my darling, I feel as if I can't hold you close enough. You know, Nora, I've often wished that you could be threatened by some imminent danger so that I could risk everything I had - even my own life itself - to save you." Act 3, pg. 219

Quote 18: "What a terrible awakening! For these last eight years you've been my joy and my pride - and now I find that you're a liar, a hypocrite - even worse - a criminal! Oh, the unspeakable ugliness of it all! Ugh! I might have known that something of this sort would happen - I should have foreseen it. All your father's shiftless character - Be Quiet! - All your father's shiftless character has come out in you. No religion, no morality, no sense of duty...So this is what I get for condoning his fault! I did it for your sake, and this is how you repay me! Act 3, pg. 220-221

Quote 19: "How you must have suffered - seeing no way out except...No, we'll put all those hateful things out of our minds. Now we can shout for joy, again and again: 'It's all over - it's all over! Listen, Nora - you don't seem to realize - it's all over. What's the matter? Such a grim face? Poor little Nora, I see what it is: you simply can't believe that I've forgiven you. But, I have, Nora, I swear it - I've forgiven you everything. I know now that what you did was all for love of me. Act 3, pg. 223

Quote 20: "But you don't talk or think like the man I could bind myself to. When your first panic was over - not about what threatened me, but about what might happen to you - and when there was no more danger, then, as far as you were concerned, it was just as if nothing had happened at all. I was simply your little songbird, your doll, and from now

on you would handle it more gently than ever because it was so delicate and fragile.  
[Rising] At that moment, Torvald, I realized that for eight years I'd been living her with a strange man and that I'd borne him three children. Oh, I can't bear to think of it - I could tear myself to little pieces!" Act 3, pg. 230

## Topic Tracking: Honesty

Honesty 1: When Nora tells Mrs. Linde about the money she borrowed, she also informs her that Torvald knows nothing about it. She has been keeping this information a secret from her husband for years, and continues to do so. When Mrs. Linde questions such dishonesty, Nora explains that Torvald has such great pride, that a story like hers would damage his sensitivity and maleness.

Honesty 2: Nora and her two friends, Dr. Rank and Mrs. Linde, urge her to do something small that Torvald forbids. He wants her to act ladylike and not eat cake nor swear. They urge her to do something opposite of he desires right under his nose. She simply cannot take the first step - in something minor - to act dishonestly towards him, despite the fact that he has already lied to him about something major - money.

Honesty 3: Krogstad comes to the Helmer home to visit Nora, this time, instead of Torvald. He threatens to reveal the truth to Torvald, unless she protects his job at the bank. Nora is terrified of her lie escaping into the open and into Torvald's ears, and tries to convince Krogstad to reconsider. Her dishonesty towards her husband has escalated to a greater level than previously thought.

Honesty 4: Krogstad reveals proof of Nora's ultimate dishonesty with the bond. She had forged her father's signature years earlier to get the loan to save her husband. Krogstad proves this by asking the date of her father's death and then presenting the papers that Nora signed - as her father - several days after her father's death. This lie is not only devastating to her marriage, but to society and the law. She now realizes the gravity of her situation caused by lies and dishonesty.

Honesty 5: When Nora questions Torvald about Krogstad's character, he explains that Krogstad is a moral outcast, for he lied and forged a legal bank document. He continues to say that any household that contains lies (and dishonesty) is tainted, infecting the entire household and family with evil.

Honesty 6: Nora lies to Dr. Rank so that she may be alone to discuss the loan with Krogstad. He tells her that he has been honest and trustworthy for nearly 18 months and cannot be pushed back into the gutter of dishonesty. He has worked too hard to become legitimate and honest, and will not be discharged by her husband. He continues to threaten to bring the Helmer family down with him, by telling Torvald the truth about the loan and the forged bond.

Honesty 7: Kristina knows that Torvald must know the truth behind all of Nora's actions. She realizes that everything will be fine and that she had prevented Krogstad from destroying Torvald's professional reputation. Regardless, she understands that the Helmer home cannot continue as it has been. He must know the truth so that Nora can be the person she truly is, without acting as his doll, his skylark, and his scatterbrain.

Honesty 8: Upon her exit, Kristina tells Nora that everything will be fine. However, she *must* tell Torvald the truth about the loan. Nora refuses, yet again, and Kristina leaves.

Honesty 9: When the truth finally comes out through Krogstad's letter, Torvald explodes with a venomous tongue. He verbally abuses Nora, who accepts each harsh word willingly. His reaction is exactly what Nora feared when faced with honesty herself. Perhaps this reaction is the true and honest character behind Torvald, when under pressure.

Honesty 10: Nora realizes that she has never truly been honest with herself. Although she lied to her husband about the money, she has always been lying to herself, for she has never given herself the option of discovering her own strength, personality, or independence. When she thinks of continuing to live the same life she has led with Torvald for the past eight years, she cringes.

# Topic Tracking: Independence

Independence 1: Nora reminisces about the past times she worked to make money. When she and Torvald were going through difficult financial times, she was forced to work a little bit. She thinks back to those times with fond memories, and also refers to her working world as acting like a man. Women are still not allowed to become independent workers.

Independence 2: Torvald inquires as to Mrs. Linde's marital status. Only if she is a widow, can she work independently in his bank. When he realizes that she is a widow, he can then accept her into his society and his bank as a co-worker. If she were still married, she would be unable to assert her professional independence.

Independence 3: Nora discusses raising children with the nursemaid, Nanny. She questions her ability to leave her own family to raise her and her children. Nanny responds that it was such a great opportunity to raise Nora, that she left her own family with little problem. For better or worse, Nanny asserted independence by going after the best job at the time. Nora looks upon her with admiration and trepidation at the same time.

Independence 4: Nora pleads for money from her husband. She does so by acting into his method of flirtation and communication, by illustrating her complete and utter dependence on him. By calling herself a skylark (and all other pet names deemed appropriate by Torvald), Nora plays into her husband's form of communication. Furthermore, she becomes dependent by begging for money from her husband, for she has no other method of getting money.

Independence 5: Torvald cannot bear to let any form of dependence or non-individuality be exposed. He could not let it be known that any action or word would be influenced by his wife. He must act completely on his own, individually, and in his mind, independently. He does everything professionally independent of his wife's opinions, desires, and thoughts.

Independence 6: The tarantella is a dance that showcases a single dancer - independent of those around her. Nora dances the tarantella alone, highlighting her ability to work by herself and illustrate her individual values and strengths. It is the tarantella that traces her individual abilities throughout the play, from the crazed rehearsal to the final performance at the Christmas party upstairs.

Independence 7: Mrs. Linde suggests to Krogstad that they leave town and leave the bank and the Helmers together and form an independent team. She does not feel whole unless she works and helps others. Although this may seem like independence to her, in the sense that she must work, as an independent soul, to feel whole, she is also saying that she must work for others - dependent on their use and financial retribution - to feel whole. The two can become dependent on one another, yet independent of all others.

Independence 8: When Dr. Rank teases Nora about coming to the next costume party as a mascot in her own daily attire, he is subtly making a strong statement about her lack of identity and independence. He is planting the seed in Nora's head that she must find her own identity and independence and stop playing the doll and the mascot to her husband.

Independence 9: For the first time, Nora asserts her independence in spirit. She verbally expresses her own mind and opinions to Torvald. She cannot believe that she has let herself stay so dependent and childish for so long. She realizes that she has never even had a normal conversation with her husband. At this point, she speaks back to her husband as an independent person, with a brain and a personality. She knows that the next step is to assert her independence not only in thought, but in action.

Independence 10: When Nora walks out on Torvald and her family, she has asserted the final step on her first course to independence. This active step towards independence leads her into new and uncharted territory. However, it is a place that she knows that she must enter, scared and excited at the same time. She leaves her husband to find a new and independent life on her own.



## Topic Tracking: Money

Money 1: Torvald expresses his frustration with Nora over her shopping and spending habits. She goes through money entirely too quickly, rendering the family a team of spendthrifts. Nora continues to ask for money, despite Torvald's warning that he has not yet begun his new job that pays a larger salary. Nora is thrilled to have her husband earn more money than he used to, so that she can spend as freely as she desires.

Money 2: Nora continues to ask for money, much to Torvald's dismay. He tells her that he is worried that she inherited some bad (financial and scrupulous) traits from her father. He also treats her as a pet and a doll, as if she is extremely costly to have around. He loves buying her things, but knows that he cannot always afford to do so at her high and expensive taste.

Money 3: Nora cannot contain her excitement at the prospect have having more spare money. She gloats to her friend about Torvald's promotion at the Savings' Bank - a center of finance and money - and how she will now have enough money to do what she wants all the time. Nora also expresses her frustration over how much money the Helmers spent while away in Italy.

Money 4: Mrs. Linde explains to Nora why she married her late husband. It was solely because of money. He offered her security, and at that time, she desperately needed a large source of money, for her mother was ill and she had to take care of her two younger brothers. However, his finances soon depreciated and he died penniless and poor, leaving her the same.

Money 5: Nora discusses her methods of financing the trip to Italy on her own. She borrowed money from creditors and worked a bit to pay it back. She is in constant fear of her husband discovering her secret business past, and always buys the cheapest clothing and accessories, so that she may continue to pay back her loan.

Money 6: Money is not the only thing that Krogstad is after. Nora begs him to stay quiet and not tell Torvald about the loan. However, Krogstad no longer simply wants his money back. He wants to become the right-hand man at the bank and eventually take over Torvald's job. Money, and consequently power, are the motivating forces behind Krogstad's actions.

Money 7: Kristina explains to Krogstad that she left him solely to marry her husband for money. She desperately needed it at that time for her mother and brothers and did not want to break up with him. She had to do it. Money dictated her actions, as it continues to do for so many people.

Money 8: When Torvald is excused from his wife's loan and bond, he is overjoyed! The problems that the money-loan could have caused him, cost him more than a temper. They cost him his wife and his regular lifestyle.

Money 9: Nora excuses Torvald from all financial duties he owes her as her husband. When she walks out the door, she walks away from his new large salary, comfortable home, and convenient servants. She looks forward to developing independence and her own method of making money.

# Act 1

The living room of Nora and Torvald Helmer is described in great detail: inexpensive, yet tasteful and elegant. Nora enters, gay and happy, dressed in outside attire and carrying several parcels. The maid opens the door for her as the porter holds a Christmas tree and hamper. Nora claims that the children should not see the Christmas tree until later that evening when it is decorated. She pays the porter and changes out of her outside clothes. She walks to the door of the study to listen and see if her husband is in. He is, much to her contentment.

Torvald calls to her initially from inside his study, calling her a skylark, squirrel, and featherbrain. He obviously adores her, but treats her as someone beneath him. Nora wants to show him her new purchases for the children and also for him. Torvald is bothered and concerned about Nora's shopping habits, for he does not begin his new position until after the New Year. Nora is thrilled about his new pending salary and wants to spend his money at her free will. Torvald, however, reminds her that they have had economic problems in the past and are not in the clear as yet. He speaks down to her and her frivolous methods of spending money and planning.

*"Nora, Nora! Just like a woman! But seriously, Nora, you know what I think about that sort of thing. No debts, no borrowing. There's something constrained, something ugly even, about a home that's founded on borrowing and debt." Act 1, pg. 149*

## Topic Tracking: Money 1

Torvald continues to call Nora a song-bird, a prodigal, and other such pet names, as he playfully lectures her on the importance of saving money. After they flirt with one another to the point of exhaustion, Nora shows Torvald all the gifts she has bought that day. She shows the playthings and toys for the children, yet will not reveal his gift, which she claims she will give him later that night. Torvald then asks Nora what she wants for Christmas. Torvald opens his wallet to give Nora the gift of money. He hands her paper bills that he hopes will tide everything over in the household and with Nora until Christmas. She is thrilled. He warns her that this is all that she will get. Then, he asks her what she wants for Christmas. She willfully says that all she wants is money. Just a little bit of money so that she can get what she wants for herself. Torvald teases her by saying that she has no idea how to save money. He puts his arm around her waist and says to her: "It's a sweet little bird, but it gets through a terrible amount of money. You wouldn't believe how much it costs a man when he's got a little song-bird like you!" Act 1, pg. 151 Nora accepts her subsistence and role as Torvald's pet bird and continues to play with him. He tells her that she is a spendthrift because of her father. He claims that such actions are hereditary traits. Nora wishes that she inherited some of her father's better qualities instead of his tendency to squander money.

## Topic Tracking: Money 2

The couple changes the subject to the party later that evening and reminisces of past Christmases. Torvald comments on how hard Nora worked the previous year to please the family, despite her errors and failures. She loved that time, despite Torvald's excessive boredom. They are both happy that the rough times seem to be behind them.

The doorbell rings and the maid answers it. Torvald has no desire to meet with any callers that afternoon. She announces that a lady has arrived to see Nora and that the doctor has also arrived and placed himself in the study. Torvald goes to his study and leaves the two women alone.

Initially Nora does not recognize the woman. She is Mrs. Kristina Linde, an old friend whom Nora has not seen in nearly ten years. Nora catches her up on her happy life and realizes that she has forgotten to offer her condolences to Mrs. Linde. Kristina's husband died three years earlier, leaving her paler, thinner, childless, penniless, and alone. Despite all her sorrow, she admits that she never loved her husband. When Nora hears such news, she immediately declares her sorrow and utter devotion to hear only about Kristina for the remainder of the day. However, she cannot listen for more than a moment before she burst out with her own secret. She tells Kristina that Torvald was just promoted to Manager of the Savings Bank. She goes on to talk about how much money he'll make and how he thought he would never make much money as a barrister when he married Nora. They spent so much money (from her recently departed father) during their time in Italy, where Torvald worked for a year. Nora claims this was the hardest time of her life, for she was pregnant with their first child, her father was dying, and Torvald was extremely ill. Dr. Rank, the man who arrived with Kristina, had become the Helmers' best friend since that time and visits almost daily.

#### Topic Tracking: Money 3

Nora again remembers that she has become a chatterbox on her own happy life and has neglected the sorrows of her friend. She inquires as to why her dear friend never loved her departed husband. Kristina admits that she could not refuse Mr. Linde's offer of marriage back then because he had a large sum of money and her poor ill mother and younger brothers needed the support. However, when he died three years ago, his businesses had fallen apart and he was broke. Her mother passed away and her brothers were now working.

#### Topic Tracking: Money 4

Miserable and desperate to find meaningful work, Kristina came to visit Nora because she had heard of her good fortune and hopes that Torvald can give her a job of some sort. Nora is thrilled to be able to help her friend. Kristina speaks down to Nora for having such an easy life, much to Nora's anger and resentment. She does not feel that her life is free from troubles and reveals a large secret to Kristina. The money that they used in Italy was not, in fact, from her father; but rather, she raised the money herself as a subtly shrewd businesswoman. Nora admits that she funded the entire wellness trip to Italy for her husband, by playing the dutiful quiet wife. Now, she owes a large sum of money to creditors, and worries constantly how to find the money, yet still dress up and

amuse her husband. She frets of the difficulty of playing the same naïve wife and mother, all the while trying to save the money Torvald gives her so she can repay her debt. It is difficult to use the money he gives her to pay back the loans and not take anything away from her children and the housework. Torvald does not know the truth. "Torvald has his pride - most men have - he'd be terribly hurt and humiliated if he thought he'd owed anything to me. It'd spoil everything between us, and our lovely happy home would never be the same again" Act 1, pg. 161. Kristina pities her after hearing her story.

Topic Tracking: Honesty 1

Nora goes on to dispel the pain and hardship it has been to save and repay the money she owes for her husband's life, all the while keeping it from her husband. She only spends half of what he gives her on herself, and buys the cheapest things that she believes still look wonderful on her. She knows how frustrating this is because it is so much fun to dress nicely. Nora finds different ways of making money. Writing is one way that Nora enjoys working. "Still it was tremendous fun sitting there working and earning money. It was almost like being a man" Act 1, pg. 162. Now that her husband will be making much more money, Nora believes all her troubles will go away and she can enjoy her happy life with her family.

Topic Tracking: Money 5

Topic Tracking: Independence 1

The doorbell rings and the maid answers it. The man at the door is Nils Krogstad, a lawyer from Torvald's bank. Nora seems worried about this meeting. When Krogstad goes into the study to see Torvald, Dr. Rank exits, for fear of being in the way. He feels as though he is also in the way with the women; however, they allay his fears by inviting them into their conversation. Dr. Rank and Kristina discuss her presence in town, flirt, and exchange opinions on society. Kristina informs him that she is seeking work, so that she may live. Dr. Rank comments that the community is being turned into a hospital, with so many sick people and invalids. He then claims that Krogstad is a moral invalid. Nora inquires as to why he believes that to be true. Dr. Rank and the women continue to chatter, about society and macaroons. Nora eats one, much to Dr. Rank's dismay, for Torvald has outlawed the cakes so that Nora does not ruin her teeth. Nora claims that she wants to do something 'wrong' in front of Torvald. Her friends urge her to do so when Torvald enters the room, but she shies away.

Topic Tracking: Honesty 2

When Torvald enters, he informs everyone that Krogstad has gone. Nora re-introduces her childhood friend to her husband, stating that she has come a long way just to see him. Nora explains the situation and that Kristina - Mrs. Linde - is looking for good office work under a capable man. As a widow with commercial experience, Torvald believes that he can help her. He puts on his coat to leave for an hour, and Dr. Rank and Kristina accompany him, for she must find a room. Nora bids goodbye to her friends and awaits her children to come down the stairs.

### Topic Tracking: Independence 2

Nora speaks to her children in adoration, showing them the presents she bought for them. They play hide and seek, running around the house, laughing and shouting. During the game, someone knocks on the door. After a while, the door opens halfway, revealing Krogstad. He has come to see Nora - not Torvald. Nora claims that she does not owe him any money yet, for it is not yet the first of the month. He has returned to speak with her about his position as a subordinate at the bank, not about the money he is owed. He tells her that he just noticed Torvald walking down the street with Mrs. Linde, a woman with whom he had a bad relation in the past. He warns Nora that he better not lose his job at the bank just because she has come to work there. He will protect his job at any cost, even if it means telling Torvald the truth about the borrowed money.

### Topic Tracking: Honesty 3

He brings up the contract that Nora signed years earlier to pay back the money. Krogstad illuminates the error in dates. The date on which her father was supposed to sign the papers to guarantee the loan, does not match up, for he died three days prior to the date on the contract. Nora admits that she signed the contract - falsely - and is liable for all problems that come along with her deceit. Krogstad threatens to take her down with him if he loses his job at the bank because of Mrs. Linde's presence. In tears and frustration, Nora claims: "Hasn't a daughter the right to protect her dying father from worry and anxiety? Hasn't a wife the right to save her husband's life? I don't know much about the law, but I'm quite certain that it must say somewhere that things like that are allowed" Act 1, pg. 175-176. Krogstad bows his head and leaves Nora in tears.

### Topic Tracking: Honesty 4

The children come to comfort their mother after Krogstad's exit. Nora tells them that she cannot play with them, and instead begins to work on her needlework. She is so frustrated that she cannot sew and throws the needle-and-thread on the floor, hoping that what Krogstad said could never happen.

In the midst of her fear and frustration, Torvald returns with a bundle of papers in hand. He speaks lovingly to his little songbird, again, as if she knows nothing of business. She lies to him by saying that nobody came by while he was gone. Torvald catches her in this lie, for he saw Krogstad leave the house as he entered. He lectures her on the problems and maladies that come with lying. Nora wonders why Krogstad is having problems at the bank. Torvald tells her that he forged a signature, one of the worst actions one can do, for he claims that it breeds deception and lies throughout an entire family. "Because an atmosphere of lies like that infects and poisons the whole life of a home. In a house like that, every breath that the children take is filled with the germs of evil" Act 1, pg. 179. Torvald believes Krogstad to be a moral outcast. He leaves the room, allowing Nora to brood in her fear and anxiety of her past actions, children's moral safety, and impending future crises.

## Topic Tracking: Honesty 5

## Act 2

Nora nervously sits alone on Christmas Day, holding onto her cloak, with her casual clothes on the couch. She nervously speaks to herself, hoping that nothing bad would happen, that people do not come to the party to ruin it (and her perfect life), and thinks of her children. She speaks with the nurse - Nanny - about her own life. Nora asks Nanny how she could leave her own children to come and raise her years ago. Nanny responds that raising Nora was such a wonderful opportunity for a poor girl and that she still keeps in touch with her own daughter. Nora nervously tells Nanny that if she were not around, she would want her to raise her three children. Nanny blows off such conversation as silly when the doorbell rings and Mrs. Linde arrives.

### Topic Tracking: Independence 3

Kristina has come to see Nora immediately after hearing of her calls. Nora desperately needs help sewing a dress she needs for the following evening. Their upstairs neighbors are throwing a fancy holiday party and Torvald wants Nora to dance to Tarantella (that she learned in Italy) for the guests at the party. The dress is in shambles and she needs Kristina's help putting it back together. Kristina immediately helps Nora, but also questions her about Dr. Rank. Kristina wonders if he is sincere of all his comments and normally as depressed and somber as he was the day before. Nora informs her friend that he was especially upset yesterday because of his painful consumption of the spine. Nora also responds to Kristina's inquiry about their friendship by telling her that he is best of friends with Torvald and herself, and visits the house daily. Nora talks to him about Kristina because Torvald is terribly jealous and cannot bear to hear about any other people with whom Nora associates - man or woman. Kristina believes that Dr. Rank, with his money and solitary lifestyle, may be the person from whom Nora borrowed the money. She lectures Nora on the norms of society. "Look, Nora, in lots of things, you're still a child. I'm older than you in many ways and I've had a little more experience" Act 2, pg. 184. Nora explains everything to Kristina and is in shock that her friend notices that she is holding something back. Kristina can tell that something happened to her after she left earlier and wants to know everything. However, as soon as Nora is about to tell her about Krogstad, Torvald walks into the living room.

Nora sends Kristina away, for Torvald hates seeing women making dresses and sewing. Torvald and Nora play a game of teasing, flirtation, and pleading for money.

*"If your squirrel were to ask you very prettily for something..."*

*'Your squirrel will scamper about and do all her tricks, if you'll be nice and do what she asks...'*

*'Your skylark'll sing all over the house - up and down the scale...'*

*'I'll be a fairy and dance on a moonbeam for you...'"* Act 2, pg. 187

### Topic Tracking: Independence 4





Nora begs Torvald to reconsider Krogstad and allow him to stay on in the bank. When Torvald explains that Krogstad is immoral, is to be replaced with her friend, Mrs. Linde, and is an old schoolmate of his, with whom he is annoyed, Nora calls him petty. She cannot believe that he will fire this man because he calls him by his first name at work. Torvald explodes at such conversation and will not allow himself to be influenced by a woman - let alone his own wife. This information could and should never get out into the business world. In response, Torvald goes to his study and calls the porter to mail a letter. The letter is a notice to Krogstad relieving him of his duties at the bank. Nora is terrified by such an action, pleading to her husband, showing her love to him by doing so. Torvald holds her and forgives her of her nonsense worrying.

#### Topic Tracking: Independence 5

*"Are you happy now? There - there - there - don't look like a frightened little dove - the whole thing's just sheer imagination. Now, you must rehearse your tarantella - with the tambourine. I'll go sit in the inner room and shut the doors, so you can make all the noise you like - I shan't hear a thing."* Act 2, pg. 190

He goes into his study to await Dr. Rank. When Dr. Rank arrives, he sits and talks with Nora about his depreciation and disease-ridden body. He believes himself to be his most ill patient and one near-death. Nora cannot bear to listen to such horrible words and tells him how dear he is to her and Torvald. He is their best friend. Dr. Rank believes he is already being replaced by Mrs. Linde, who is in the next room mending Nora's dress. Dr. Rank thinks that once people are dead, the living easily move on to make new friends. He wishes he could leave them something - a token of his friendship - that would show them how much he loves them and cares about them. Nora hesitates to ask him for the large sum of money she needs to repay her debt to Krogstad. As she begins, Dr. Rank erupts with his feeling towards Nora. He tells her that Torvald is not the only person who would gladly give his life for her. "I promised myself that I'd tell you before I went away, and I could never have a better opportunity. Well, Nora, now you know. And you know, too, that you can trust me - more than anyone else" Act 2, pg. 194.

Nora is shocked, hurt, and appalled by Dr. Rank for telling her of his feelings. Now, she claims, she cannot ask him for help, nor can things be the same. She tells him that he must continue to come and visit them, for Torvald's (and her own) sake, as if nothing has changed. Dr. Rank is confused by Nora's actions, for she had always seemed thrilled to see him, and he wondered that she could be with him just as easy as with Torvald. Nora tries to explain how one can be with someone for certain reasons and that being with Torvald is almost as if she was with her father - gaining his love and respect.

The maid enters with a note for Nora. She tells Dr. Rank that it is about a new dress, and that he must go into the study to see Torvald. When he leaves, Nora is terrified of what will occur in the next few moments when Krogstad enters in traveling clothes. He informs Nora that he has been let go by the bank. Nora desperately tries to stop Krogstad from ruining her life and Torvald's reputation, telling him that somehow she will get him the money. He claims that now he wants more than just the money. He wants his reputation and professional standing back. He wants to be the manager's right-hand



man at the bank, and soon run it - instead of Torvald Helmer. After being honest and trustworthy for nearly eighteen months, he cannot believe that he has been thrown back down in the gutter, and plans to bring the Helmer family down with him. Nora begs him not to do so, for he will never get away with it, but he does not listen to her.

*"Yes, now you've been warned, so don't do anything stupid. I shall expect to hear from Helmer as soon as he gets my letter. And remember, it's your husband who's forced me to do this sort of thing again. I shall never forgive him for that."* Act 2, pg. 200

Topic Tracking: Honesty 6

Topic Tracking: Money 6

As he leaves the house, he drops the letter into the mailbox explaining everything to Torvald. Nora is frantic, realizing that her future and her life as she knows it is now destroyed.

Nora and Kristina discuss what has just occurred. Nora tells her it is Krogstad from whom she borrowed the money, and he has just dropped a letter in the locked mailbox telling Torvald all that has happened. Kristina believes she can convince him to retract the letter, and runs to his house to discuss it with him. In the meantime, Nora must keep her husband away from the mailbox. She does so by asking him to help her rehearse the dance - the tarantella - that she must perform the following evening. She makes him promise to ignore all paperwork and letters and focus only on her and her dresses until the following evening at midnight (when the party is over). She believes that Krogstad will have requested the letter be returned by then and all will be over - it will be a miracle.

Topic Tracking: Independence 6

While Nora waits for Kristina to return with good news of her conversation with Krogstad, she rehearses the dance with Torvald. He tells her how she is dancing incorrectly, but she continues to dance with fervor, wildness, and passion. He tells her, "Nora, darling, you're dancing as if your life depended on it!" Act 2, pg. 204

## Act 3

Mrs. Linde waits for Krogstad in the Helmers' living room, worried that he will arrive before they return from the party upstairs. When he enters, he is curious as to her letter and inquiry. They discuss their relationship of the past, Krogstad's heartbreak, and Kristina's reasons for breaking off their relationship so that she could marry rich and support her sick mother and two younger brothers. He tells her of his deep pain after losing her: "When I lost you, it was just as if the very ground had given way under my feet. Look at me now - a shipwrecked man clinging to a spar" Act 3, pg. 208. Kristina tells him to right the wrong he has done.

Topic Tracking: Money 7

She also informs him that she must continue to work...in any way possible. She didn't know that it was his place at the bank she was to take when she came to the Helmers. Kristina proposes a new option: that the two leave together to work as a team. Kristina explains to Krogstad that she must work, she must have people to take care of, a home, children, and a business. If she can take care of Krogstad and his children, she will feel worthy. As she begins to discuss the idea with him, she becomes excited at the prospect of having a new family and a new purpose in life. Krogstad is weary of her emotions and knows that if she sold herself once for someone else, she may be doing it again for the sake of her friend, Nora. Kristina replies, "Nils, when you've sold yourself once for the sake of others, you don't do it a second time" Act 3, pg. 210.

Topic Tracking: Independence 7

The music of the tarantella is heard from the room and Kristina worries that Torvald and Nora will return shortly. Just as Krogstad plans to request his letter be returned from the mailbox, Kristina stops him. She realizes - after seeing everything that has occurred in the Helmer household over the past day - that they must know everything. Although she hopes the situation is resolved with Krogstad, she knows that Torvald must know the truth.

Topic Tracking: Honesty 7

*"But now a whole day's gone by and I've witnessed things in this house that I could hardly believe. Helmer must know the whole story. This wretched secret must be brought into the open so that there's complete understanding between them. That's be impossible while there's so much concealment and subterfuge."* Act 3, pg. 211

Krogstad leaves after declaring his joy. He believes this to be the best thing to ever happen to him. Kristina is also very excited at the prospect of joining her once-love in home and office.

Torvald and Nora return from the dance upstairs. Nora is in full Italian costume and Torvald is pushing her back into the living room, much to her dismay. She wants to stay

longer at the party, against her husband's wishes and their agreement. Torvald is surprised to see Kristina still in their home. She claims that she wanted to see Nora in her beautiful dress. She has been knitting. Torvald tells her how knitting is so ugly and that sewing is much more elegant. Kristina warns Nora that everything will be fine with Krogstad, but that she must tell her husband the truth about everything. She refuses to do so, and Kristina leaves.

#### Topic Tracking: Honesty 8

Upon her exit, Torvald exclaims his contentment, for he believes Mrs. Linde to be quite a bore. Then, he tells Nora how alive he feels and how tired she looks. She attempts to change his mind about doing work, but fails. Then, he looks at her lovingly, and explains his actions from the party.

*"Mayn't I look at my dearest treasure? At all the beauty that belongs to no one but me - that's all my very own?..."*

*'I'll tell you something: when I'm out with you at a party, do you know why I hardly talk to you - don't come near you - only steal a glance at you every now and then...do you know why? It's because I pretend that we're secretly in love - engaged in secret - and that no one dreams that there's anything between us.'" Act 3, pg. 215*

Torvald continues to speak to his wife with tenderness and distant love, as if she were the most expensive item in his house. He wants to hold her and touch her, and she pushes him away. The doorbell rings. It is Dr. Rank stopping by for a cigar. He overheard the Helmers at home and wanted to come inside to say hello. Torvald is frustrated, while Nora is thrilled to see him. They talk of going to future fancy-dress parties and of the costumes worn there. Dr. Rank says that Nora should go as a mascot the next time; she can wear what she wears everyday. Meanwhile, Dr. Rank hopes to be invisible in a large black hat. He is happy with his scientific test of the day, lights a cigar, and leaves. Nora and Torvald believe him to be drunk.

#### Topic Tracking: Independence 8

Torvald goes to his letterbox to retrieve the envelopes from the day. He is concerned when he sees one of Nora's hairpins stuck in the lock, as if someone were trying to pry it open. When he opens the box, he sees two small letters from Dr. Rank with a large black cross on top. Nora knows that they are his death notice. They will never see him again, for he plans to crawl away from the public eye and die. Nora is deeply saddened and Torvald is shocked to hear of such news. He wants to be alone with Nora - intimately - but she cannot conceive of such actions during such a time of impending mourning. He tells her that he almost hopes something bad would happen to her so that he could save her at any cost. "Nora, now that you and I have no one but each other. Oh, my darling, I feel as if I can't hold you close enough. You know, Nora, I've often wished that you could be threatened by some imminent danger so that I could risk everything I had - even my own life itself - to save you" Act 3, pg. 219. After Torvald tells Nora such information, she tells him she is going to bed and that he should read his letters. To herself, Nora says goodbye to her husband and her life as she knows it.

As Nora packs and puts a shawl over shoulders to keep warm, Torvald storms into her room, aghast at what he has just read in the letter from Krogstad. She says nothing throughout his entire tirade putting her down and blaming himself for everything. He should have seen through her and known that when he condoned her father's actions, he accepted her as having loose morals. He tells her she will continue to live in his house to save face, but will have no privileges and will not be able to raise the children. He is excited and angered and hurt and takes all his bitterness out on Nora, who accepts every word willingly.

*"What a terrible awakening! For these last eight years you've been my joy and my pride - and now I find that you're a liar, a hypocrite - even worse - a criminal! Oh, the unspeakable ugliness of it all! Ugh! I might have known that something of this sort would happen - I should have foreseen it. All your father's shiftless character - Be quiet! - All your father's shiftless character has come out in you. No religion, no morality, no sense of duty...So this is what I get for condoning his fault! I did it for your sake, and this is how you repay me!" Act 3, pg. 220-221*

Topic Tracking: Honesty 9

The maid comes to the door with yet another letter. Torvald tells Nora to quickly hide so that nobody sees her. As he reads it, Torvald lets out an enormous cry of joy. He is absolved! Krogstad has returned the bond and tells him that everything is fine now, nobody will find out anything. Torvald comes to his beloved wife, crying with joy, explaining how everything will now be okay and they can go back to their previous life. He hopes to treat the past few hours as if they were a nightmare and a dream and hugs Nora, feeling sorry for all the pain she must have been through in the past few days.

Topic Tracking: Money 8

*"How you must have suffered - seeing no way out except...No, we'll put all those hateful things out of our minds. Now we can shout for joy, again and again: 'It's all over - it's all over! Listen, Nora - you don't seem to realize - it's all over. What's the matter? Such a grim face? Poor little Nora, I see what it is: you simply can't believe that I've forgiven you. But, I have, Nora, I swear it - I've forgiven you everything. I know now that what you did was all for love of me.'" Act 3, pg. 223*

Nora is cold and despondent while Torvald begs for an apology. When they explain both of their situations to one another, Nora tells her husband that she had hoped that he would take all the blame for her - because he is her husband and loves her. He explains that he loves her as he always had, but that no man would give up his honor for anyone else. Nora states that women do so all the time.

Topic Tracking: Independence 9

Nora continues to pack and changes her clothes. She claims that she no longer loves her husband and has just now awakened into her own life. She has played in a doll's house her entire life - from that of her father and then to her husband - and she, herself, has also been treated as a doll by both of these influential men. She never thought for

herself. She only took on the opinions of her husband and father. For the first time, she has her own opinion and realizes that she must live and learn on her own. She tells Torvald that she is leaving him and he is not to write her or communicate with her. All his husbandly duties to her are absolved when she leaves. Torvald begs her to stay, apologizing for his harsh words and tells her how much he loves her and that her children need her. Nora realizes and explains that she is unfit to raise her own children and that the servants can run the house and raise the children better than she, herself, could do.

*"But you don't talk or think like the man I could bind myself to. When your first panic was over - not about what threatened me, but about what might happen to you - and when there was no more danger, then, as far as you were concerned, it was just as if nothing had happened at all. I was simply your little songbird, your doll, and from now on you would handle it more gently than ever because it was so delicate and fragile. [Rising] At that moment, Torvald, I realized that for eight years I'd been living her with a strange man and that I'd borne him three children. Oh, I can't bear to think of it - I could tear myself to little pieces!" Act 3, pg. 230*

Topic Tracking: Honesty 10

She walks out, ending her life in the doll's house, her life of ignorance, bliss, and dependence, to educate herself and find her own life. That night she will stay with Mrs. Linde until she returns home and finds a job of her own. When Torvald asks if they can ever be a family again, Nora responds that it would take a miracle. They both know that although both Nora and Torvald would have to change, sometimes miracles do come true.

Topic Tracking: Independence 10

Topic Tracking: Money 9