

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Within Henrik Ibsen's play, the Doll House, Nora has a life of privilege and has been very carefree. Her world focuses on the domestic needs of her husband and children. She is very independent and seen how harsh the world can be. These appearances define the women early on in act one.

Nora's husband, Torvald, often talks to her in a condescending way. It much like a parent would speak to a young child. His terms of endearment for her are blatantly patronizing towards her. He often calls her as his, "songbird," or "little lark." Mrs. Linde is given more respect as compared to Nora. The men in the play do not speak to her condescendingly, but in a respectful way, as if they were talking to their equal.

This duality or double standard of treatment towards women becomes evident to Nora at the end of play as Torvald reads Krogstad's letter. He calls Nora horrible things and it is revealed that he does not respect her, nor truly love her; he simply lusts for her. She realizes she must take on the world as Mrs. Linde. She leaves her family to become educated and self-reliant. She knows in order for others to give her the respect she desires; she must leave her family.

Krogstad is the antagonist in A Doll's House, but he is not necessarily a villain. Though his willingness to allow Nora's torment to continue is cruel, Krogstad is not without sympathy for her. As he says, "Even money-lenders, hacks, well, a man like me, can have a little of what you call feeling, you know." He visits Nora to check on her, and he discourages her from committing suicide. Moreover, Krogstad has reasonable motives for behaving as he does: he wants to keep his job at

the bank in order to spare his children from the hardships that come with a spoiled reputation. Unlike Torvald, who seems to desire respect for selfish reasons, Krogstad desires it for his family's sake.

When Krogstad first arrives, Nora appears confident, full of life and believes herself to be innocent. Krogstad reveals that he knows that she forged her husband's signature and becomes afraid. Later talking to Torvald, she follows his beliefs, believing herself to be harming her children whenever she is around them. It is interesting that she believes her husband in this, as Nora is often shown to make her own decisions based on her own judgement (such as whether she should eat macaroons or not). As she becomes afraid of what Krogstad could do to her, she starts to realise that she needs to take matters into her own hands if she does not want her husband to think ill of her.

Nora also realizes that Krogstad is not so different to her, he too broke a law in order to help his loved ones, and his social predicament shows Nora what could happen to her if she is unable to appease Krogstad. Previously she had thought of him aLike Nora, Krogstad is a person who has been wronged by society, and both Nora and Krogstad have committed the same crime: forgery of signatures. Though he did break the law, Krogstad's crime was relatively minor, but society has saddled him with the stigma of being a criminal and prohibited him from moving beyond his past. Additionally, Krogstad's claim that his immoral behavior began when Mrs. Linde abandoned him for a man with money so she could provide for her family makes it possible for us to understand Krogstad as a victim of circumstances. One could argue that society forced Mrs. Linde away from Krogstad and thus prompted his crime. Though society's unfair treatment of Krogstad does not justify his actions,

it does align him more closely with Nora and therefore tempers our perception of him as a despicable character. s an evil man, but now she realises that she is 'no better or worse' than him.