

# INSIDE OUT

A STUDY GUIDE FOR EDUCATORS



## *A DOLL'S HOUSE, PART 2*

# SYNOPSIS

Fifteen years after walking out on her marriage and family, Henrik Ibsen's controversial character, Nora Helmer, walks back into Torvald's life with a strange request. *A Doll's House, Part 2* presents the famous character as an older, wiser, sassier, more independent Nora who returns to her old home, confronting her decisions head on and demanding help from the family she ran out on years earlier. Not only does Torvald finally get to stand up for himself and be heard by Nora, but their daughter, Emmy, enacts her own form of rebellion. This hilarious sequel to Ibsen's classic discusses gender roles and the way men and women interact and opens up a dialogue about social shifts taking place in 2019.



**DENVER CENTER** FOR THE  
**PERFORMING ARTS**  
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## INSIDE OUT

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**A DOLL'S HOUSE, PART 2**  
BY **LUCAS HNATH**  
DIRECTED BY **ROSE RIORDAN**

Producing Partners  
**Martin and Jo Semple & Susan Fox Pinkowitz  
and Ted Pinkowitz**

**SEP 14 - NOV 24**  
**RICKETSON THEATRE**

# PLAYWRIGHT: LUCAS HNATH

American playwright born and raised in Orlando, Florida, Lucas Hnath received a BFA in 2001 from the Tisch School of the Arts at New York University followed by an MFA in 2002. He currently teaches at NYU and is a resident playwright at New Dramatists. Hnath has received several

awards, including an Obie Award for Playwriting for *The Christians* and *Red Speedo* in 2016. He is also a member of the Ensemble Studio Theatre and is a New York Theatre Workshop Usual Suspect.

## SELECTED DRAMAS BY HNATH

2012 - *Death Tax*

2013 - *A Public Reading of an Unproduced Screenplay About the Death of Walt Disney*

2014 - *Isaac's Eye*

2015 - *The Christians*

2016 - *Red Speedo*

2017 - *A Doll's House, Part 2*

2019 - *Hillary and Clinton*

Sources:

<https://newdramatists.org/lucas-hnath>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lucas\\_Hnath#cite\\_note-28](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lucas_Hnath#cite_note-28)

## HNATH'S INSPIRATION FOR *A DOLL'S HOUSE, PART 2*

Lucas Hnath has admired Henrik Ibsen and his plays for the majority of his career. *A Doll's House* is one of his favorite plays, and he has seen the production numerous times. Hnath wanted to revisit the story in hopes of answering several questions: What did it mean when Nora left the Helmer house? What would make her come back and what would that mean for the family? Once she returned is there anything that would make her stay?

It all started with the title—*A Doll's House, Part 2*; a preposterous project, but one that Hnath was determined to tackle. During his process, Hnath realized that the problems Ibsen was trying to address nearly 150 years ago are still prevalent today. He said "It felt like I was having a conversation with [Ibsen]. He is a playwriting mentor of mine, and let me do a sort of homage to him and do something of my own at the same time."

The driving inspiration for the sequel was to create space for Torvald and Nora to hash out their beliefs. When Nora left 15 years earlier, Torvald was so caught off guard by her grand exit that he never got

the chance to form his own argument. Hnath gives both Torvald and their daughter, Emmy, a chance to take their own punches at Nora.

While the context of the play, its costumes and setting suggest the play is set in the 1890s, the writing is very contemporary which allows the audience to see the play through a contemporary lens and look backward. This was one of Hnath's goals, to ask the question: what about our world is like Victorian Norway? What is different? He wants the audience to be surprised and conflicted, creating a dialogue for people to make a case for what they believe.

Sources:

<https://www.aspentimes.com/entertainment/aspentimes-qa-playwright-lucas-hnath-on-a-dolls-house-part-2/>

Charlie Rose interview <https://charlierose.com/videos/30558>

CBS News <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/a-dolls-house-part-2-the-return-of-nora/>

# HNATH'S WRITING PROCESS

Hnath's process began by re-reading the original play. He wanted to write the story in his own words and through that process realized the debate that began 150 years ago, at the end of Ibsen's play, is still being debated today. Hnath was also able to get into the plot and character dynamics and streamline the process by re-writing the original. He then interviewed people to see what they thought happened to Nora after she left. Most of the responses ended with Nora's death or prostitution. Hnath said that he needed to do the opposite of what everyone thought. "She needed to be walking in that door and be doing great."

After finishing his script, Hnath sent *Part 2* to a number of feminist and historical scholars to read and respond. He wanted to make sure there was balance throughout the play and that every argument was not only "right" but received an adequate amount of stage time.

Sources:

<https://www.aspentimes.com/entertainment/aspentimes-qa-playwright-lucas-hnath-on-a-dolls-house-part-2/>

## TIME PERIOD: NORWAY 1894 (15 YEARS AFTER THE ORIGINAL *A DOLL'S HOUSE*)

The second wave of feminism, beginning right after the publication of Ibsen's original play, was primarily concerned with the debate on double standards. The expansion of prostitution and the difference in treatment between adulterous men and women was the basis of the debate. The resulting women's movement of the 1890's was an attempt to raise women's consciousness of their value as human beings and to encourage them to take responsibility for their own lives.

The decades between 1884 and 1914 may be divided into three periods, each with a distinct character: the 1880s, the 1890s, and the time from the turn of the century until 1913.

In the 1880s the women's movement was established and the first battles over strategies and goals were fought. In the 1890s efforts turned to educating housewives and female servants. Cooperation and conflicts between the increasing number of organizations, not least between socialists and nonsocialists, complicated the situation. The 1890s saw the fight for the vote taking off, resulting in the first victory in 1901 and the achievement of general female suffrage in 1913. As the new century started, new areas of conflict reopened

earlier battlegrounds. Between 1902 and 1909, laws to give special protection to working women were discussed, dividing bourgeois and working-class women. Discussions on reforms concerning unmarried mothers, lasting from 1901 until 1915, brought out opposing views of sexual morals, marriage, and social policies.

Marriage was also a central debate. While the majority of people regarded marriage as a base unit of society, some women deemed it a necessary evil in need of reformation. More radical female thinkers, represented by Nora in Hnath's sequel, believed marriage should be replaced with free love and desired to focus the debate on social and political equality.

An analysis of generational differences in the understanding of gender relations around the turn of the century has revealed that women born around the middle of the nineteenth century still defended hierarchical gender relations, within as well as outside marriage. In the opinion of the elder generation, women derived their power from the influence they had over husbands and children, not from egalitarian arrangements. They severely criticized the younger generation's call for husbands who would accept them as equal partners in

marriage and refrained from demanding obedience. They were appalled at the idea that husbands might accept wives who were not prepared to use all their energy in the home, who would not “sacrifice everything for love,” and who questioned the notion that motherhood was the most important thing in life. But for many young women, too, the meaning of “the women’s cause” was uncertain. Liberal young women around the turn of the century also gave priority to marriage and motherhood. However, they did not accept marriage as a hierarchical arrangement, but expected it to build on love between two equal individuals. Marriage should allow the wife to continue to develop herself spiritually, not

confine her to “the simple exigencies of the nursery.”

Several significant laws were passed in 1890, the first establishing majority status to married women, and the second ending the authority of the husband over the wife, allowing women to freely dispose of her husband’s wealth. The most important condition for women’s liberation was full economic independence.

Sources:

*Women’s Emancipation Movements in the Nineteenth Century: A European Perspective*. Edited by Sylvia Paletschek and Bianka Pietrow-Ennker. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feminism\\_in\\_Norway](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feminism_in_Norway)

## TIME PERIOD: THE WORLD

The Panic of 1893 sparked a severe economic depression as well as several strikes in the industrial workforce in the United States. However, the decade saw several technological developments as well. The first skyscraper was built in Chicago in 1885 and the Statue of Liberty was unveiled in New York in 1886. 1891 marked the beginning of wireless telegraphy, and in 1896 Henry Ford built his first car. The World’s Fair was held in Chicago in 1893 to celebrate the 400th anniversary of Christopher Columbus’s discovery of the New World. This Exposition was an influential social and cultural event that had a profound effect on architecture, sanitation, the arts, Chicago’s self-image, and the American industrial optimism.

Internationally, the Eiffel Tower was completed in 1889 in Paris and France later became divided after a political scandal, the Dreyfus affair, where a young

French artillery officer of Jewish descent was convicted of treason. In the latter half of the decade, men from all walks of life, all over the world rushed to Yukon Canada after members of a Tagish First Nations family group found a wealth of gold deposits there. The Klondike Gold Rush, as it would later be called, significantly contributed to the economic development of Western Canada, Alaska, and the Pacific Northwest. Though the rush north ended in 1898, the exploitation of big mining companies lasted well into the 20th century.

Sources:

[https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/haventohome/timeline/haven-timeline\\_2.html](https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/haventohome/timeline/haven-timeline_2.html)  
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1890s>  
*Larson, Erik. The Devil In The White City: Murder, Magic, And Madness At The Fair That Changed America*. New York: Crown Publishers, 2003. Print.



# THEMES

## Women's Role in Society

Fifteen years after Ibsen's play, society for women hadn't changed much. Despite the establishment of some political and employment rights, such as the Norwegian Association for Women's Rights created in 1884, the first women workers union established in 1890, and the Norwegian Women's Health Organization in 1896, relatively few women worked outside the home. Those who did find employment often took traditional female occupations requiring little to no training and establishing them as low-income earners. The first country that granted women the right to vote was New Zealand in 1893, almost a decade before any other country and 20 years before Norway. The same year, women in Colorado were given the right to vote.

The Norwegian Law of 1888, a huge step toward inter-spousal equality, allowed married women to have the same control over her property as an unmarried woman and become legal citizens, freeing her from her husband's guardianship. However, joint ownership remained in the husband's custody.

Nora, her daughter Emmy, and the Helmer's servant Anne Marie take passionate yet opposing views on women and their roles and responsibilities in society. Having experienced true financial, occupational, and relational freedom in her life after leaving her children and Torvald, Nora represents personal independence. As a woman and individual, she stands by her claim that all people, both men and women, shouldn't be forced to do anything they don't want to or don't enjoy. She encourages women through her writing to leave their husbands if they are unhappy and proves to her family that women can be successful through their own wit and devices.

Anne Marie is the first character to push back against Nora. Her character represents traditional values and societal norms arguing that things have always been done a certain way. If the majority

of people are happy, then no one, specifically Nora, should meddle with a good thing. Stirring up political and social controversy makes people uncomfortable and Anne Marie stands up for those women who don't have a desire to see social norms change.

In her own way, Emmy rebels against Nora's lifestyle by sticking with her choice to marry. She admits she knows nothing about marriage but has experienced the absence of one and knows she doesn't want that life either. Emmy is more accepting of Nora's desires and differences than Nora is of hers, stating at one point, "don't make my wants about your wants." While Emmy upholds and follows the role of a woman society has given her, she is not another doll. She is just as resourceful and clever as Nora and uses these strengths to not only protect the family name but get what she wants in the process. Emmy also believes that because of Nora's abandonment, she was able to take on more responsibility and deal with realities of life at an earlier age.

### Sources:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feminism\\_in\\_Norway](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feminism_in_Norway)  
Heffermehl, Karin Bruzelius. "The Status of Women in Norway." *The American Journal of Comparative Law*, vol. 20, no. 4, 1972, pp. 630-646. JSTOR, [www.jstor.org/stable/839034](http://www.jstor.org/stable/839034).

[Women's Emancipation Movements in the Nineteenth Century: A European Perspective](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1890s). Edited by Sylvia Paletschek and Bianka Pietrow-Ennker. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1890s>  
<https://www.infoplease.com/history/womens-history/womens-suffrage>

## Divorce

As established in 1582 in Denmark by an act issued by Fredrik II, women were only allowed to file for divorce under the proof of desertion, adultery, or impotence. After the country's separation from Denmark, Norway reversed the liberalization of divorce laws established in 1790 and restricted divorce throughout the 19th century reverting to the standard established in 1582. Between 1790 and 1830, only the King could dissolve marriages without a specific reason as long as applicants had an unblemished

record. After receiving an alarmingly large amount of petitions, the King later gave regional authorities the right to administer applications for separation and also make decisions regarding the matters.

In 1909, a New Marriage Act was passed that determined numerous legal grounds as valid reasons for divorce and established both the legal system and administrative appropriation as a means to obtain a divorce. Following the Norwegian divorce law of 1909 many women remained married as a result of economic constraints, a women's dependency on a husband's salary, distrust of the legal system, and of course, social stigma.

Marital breakdown was regarded as a shameful failure, with blame usually falling on the wife, regardless of her culpability. Marriages did break down, though. Divorce was exceedingly hard to obtain — and more so for a woman, given her financial and legal situation. Most legal codes prevented women from obtaining a divorce before the second half of the century, though separations might be possible. Also the grounds for divorce favored men over women, and in a world where custom might turn a blind eye if a husband killed a 'disobedient' wife, and women were often not recognized as having a legal identity of their own, divorce provided them little relief. According to Norwegian law at the time, a woman could only ask for divorce on the grounds of adultery, impotency, or desertion. By law, no woman could divorce her husband without proof of mistreatment. People in the cities divorced more than those in the countryside, and they were predominantly from the artisanal, merchant, and professional classes. Separations could be agreed between the partners, and if not, desertion and abandonment were options, more often practiced among working men and women, but leaving neither free to remarry.

Society began to recognize a need for an escape valve to deal with marital breakdown, and changes to marriage and divorce law began to take place, though very gradually, from 1857; but most women had to wait until the

twentieth century for real change and equality in marriage. The right to divorce was considered the first step toward female citizenship. In the Netherlands, Scandinavia, Poland, and Italy (after unification) women fought to eliminate male authority in marriage and to reform marital law. The main challenge to marital law addressed the unequal legal status of men and women on which marriages were constructed, focusing on three areas: women's earnings, property and inheritance, their access to and custody of children, and their ability to end marriage through divorce and to do so without financial disadvantage. Law was weighted in favor of husbands and fathers. In essence, all European legal systems described the wife as subordinate to the husband, and granted him authority both in marriage and the household. Women's rights were so restricted that husbands could incarcerate them, using insane asylums to great effect. So the laws of Europe situated wives in a dependent and subordinate position with respect to their husbands. Wives were likewise restrained with regard to property, earnings and inheritance, normally unable to act independently or without a husband's permission. Usually, women's property became their husbands'. A wife's copyrights, earnings and income became either community property or virtually belonged to her husband.

Sources:

*Women in European Culture and Society : Gender, Skill and Identity from 1700* by Deborah Simonton.  
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/03468755.2017.1298013?journalCode=shis20>  
<https://www.uib.no/en/skok/106419/history-divorce-norway>  
<http://sciencenordic.com/until-infidelity-or-impotence-do-us-part-%E2%80%93-history-divorce-norway>

## Love and Marriage

At the end of Ibsen's play, it is obvious that making a marriage work is not a priority in Nora's life. She doesn't seem to realize the damage she has caused not only to Torvald, her ex-husband, but also her daughter Emmy, and Anne Marie, the woman who not only raised Nora but raised her daughter as well.

Torvald's focus grew so narrow after Nora's departure that he isolated himself with his work and his home. This lack of social life and concern for what society had to say about him and his family turned his world upside down. In his distress and privacy around Nora, he allowed everyone around him to make assumptions about what had happened to Nora. When people began to come to the conclusion that she was dead, he didn't correct them. Because his social circles thought Nora was dead, Torvald couldn't file for divorce because he would have to explain the truth to everyone. This would not only embarrass himself and tarnish his reputation in society, but he could be tried for fraud and lose everything because he took government support in claiming to be a widower. When Nora comes back demanding a divorce and threatening his social standing and their daughter's upcoming marriage, he refuses.

For the first time, Anne Marie and Emmy are given a voice. Hnath shows us that Nora's departure affected what both of these women believe about marriage. Anne Marie was married and had a child of her own, but due to her husband's inability to provide for their family on his own, Anne Marie was forced to put aside her duties as a wife to earn money as a servant. After Nora left, Anne Marie filled the role that was left behind by taking on more responsibility in caring for Torvald.

When Nora sees Emmy for the first time she is engaged to be married to a banker at Torvald's bank. Nora pleads with Emmy not to get married because when a woman marries, Nora claims she must sacrifice herself to be tied down for the rest of her life, and becomes her husband's property. Nora believes in love but argues love is different than marriage and sees the institution as completely unnecessary and a form of torture. She recognizes that all people desire to be intimate with another person, to know and love another, but argues marriage, a lifelong commitment, is not only unnatural but backward. Her main argument is that people change for the worse when married, and one cannot possibly know who and what they will want in the future.

Committing oneself for life to another individual is something Nora sees as evil now that she has experienced true freedom.

### **Children and Parenting**

"A modern woman is a woman who, in contrast to women of the past, understands that the fate of her children is mainly decided by society, and that her work is pointless and may be in vain if she does not take part in forming the society in which she lives." This was the opinion of a well-known Norwegian author, Bjornstjerne Bjornson, who wrote in the journal of the Norwegian women's movement at the end of the nineteenth century. The quotation places the women's movement in the general process of modernization and democratization. Women's traditional loyalty to children and the family was, in this perspective, seen as vain as long as it was not combined with active participation in the democratic development of society.

The main reason Nora never came back to visit or wrote her children was due to her fear of confusing them even more. Though it would have made her feel good to reach out, she felt it was better to have no contact than some halfway relationship. Nora believed the wounds of her abandonment needed to heal and her meddling would make them fester.

Contemporaries of Nora's believed mothers had a particular responsibility for daughters' upbringing because female character and morality was seen as crucial for the maintenance of social order. Thus, mothers had a special role in transmitting values, behavior and morality to daughters, by precept and example.

In Hnath's sequel, we learn that along with setting aside her role as a wife, Anne Marie also sacrificed her maternal duties when taking on the role of the Helmer's servant. She raised Nora as a young girl and then served under Nora for her children. When Nora left Torvald, he had to raise their three children with Anne Marie, and when Nora returns Anne Marie tells her exactly what price she paid to



raise Nora's children—sacrificing being a mother to her own child.

Sources:

*Women's Emancipation Movements in the Nineteenth Century: A European Perspective*. Edited by Sylvia Paletschek and Bianka Pietrow-Ennker. *Women in European Culture and Society : Gender, Skill and Identity from 1700* by Deborah Simonton.

### Gender Roles

In the 15 years that Nora has been away, she reinvented herself. Everything that was bottled up in the original play has exploded, and now she is a passionate, driven, focused woman who is determined to not let anyone get in the way of her freedom.

When she comes back and interacts with those she left, Nora confronts the reality of society's reaction to her action. "There's something in our time and place and culture," says Nora, "that teaches us to expect and even want for women who leave their families to be punished." In her argument with Anne Marie, she points out the hypocrisy regarding men and women and their familial roles. When a man walks out on his family, society doesn't make a big deal about it, "but if a woman does it she's a monster, and the children are ruined."

Two different visions of gender relations circulated at this time: One was built on natural rights, seeing women and men as humans with the same potentials and stressing gender equality. The other vision was built on gender difference, highlighting women's "otherness." It stressed that women and men had their gender-specific qualities and that both were needed in society. These different understandings of gender should not be seen as opposed and competing phenomena, however. Rather they should be taken as closely interwoven analytical categories, often coexisting within one and the same individual.

Sources:

*Women's Emancipation Movements in the Nineteenth Century: A European Perspective*. Edited by Sylvia Paletschek and Bianka Pietrow-Ennker.

### Money and Work

The women's movement was one answer to new demands on both sexes made by industrialization and urbanization. Demographic changes resulting from the migration of young men out of the country to towns and cities added to the women's problem of finding a livelihood through marriage. At the same time growth of industry and of the service sector offered paid work to an increasing number of young women. Women gradually moved from the family and household into the public sphere of schools, factories, offices, hospitals, and shops, in arenas that until then were perceived as exclusively masculine.

Much like in Ibsen's original play, money is a driving theme in *Part 2*, for both similar and new reasons. In *A Doll's House*, money is a source of contention between the characters, whereas in the sequel it is also a representation of freedom and individuality. After 15 years Nora bursts back through the door she previously slammed, with a new sense of identity, part of which is due to her financial stability.

In their initial conversation, Nora asks Anne Marie what she thought happened to Nora after she left. Anne Marie admits she didn't think Nora would end up as well off as she has, and calls her "lucky" to have become so fortunate. Hnath uses this conversation to point out that women were not highly regarded and may still today struggle to be admired for their wit and resourcefulness when they are successful. Anne Marie initially guesses that Nora became an actress or a dancer, stereotyped female occupations, and is shocked that Nora is, in fact, a successful women's writer. When Nora leaves Torvald she begins her career by writing the story of her life. She then goes on to write other books for women challenging their traditional roles in society.

One of the main reasons she has returned is the threat Torvald poses to her financial well being. For the last 15 years, Nora had been conducting herself as a single woman in her business ventures

and her personal life. When she finds out Torvald never filed for divorce, she realizes she has in fact been committing several criminal acts including signing legal documents, doing business as an unmarried woman, and committing adultery. In order to begin living her life again without the fear and knowledge that her husband actually owns all that she has worked for, she has to convince Torvald to legally set her free.

Another reason money is a driving factor not found in the original play is

the government aid Torvald receives by falsely claiming to be a widower. By granting Nora the divorce she wants, he would be admitting that Nora was in fact not dead, exposing himself to charges of fraud. Not only would he be ruined, but their daughter wouldn't be able to marry a successful banker because of her involvement in such a scandal.

Sources:

*Women's Emancipation Movements in the Nineteenth Century: A European Perspective*. Edited by Sylvia Paletschek and Bianka Pietrow-Ennker.

## A GLOSSARY OF TERMS FROM THE PLAY

**Appease:** to pacify, to yield or concede to demands sometimes at the expense of one's principles.

**Destitute:** deprived of, devoid of, or lacking means of substance; food, clothing, and shelter.

**Retract:** to withdraw a statement or opinion as inaccurate or unjustified.

**Fraud:** deceit, trickery, or breach of confidence, for profit or to gain some unfair advantage.

**Precarious:** dependent on circumstances beyond one's control; uncertain; unstable; insecure.

**Chastise:** to discipline; to criticize severely.

**Condescend:** to behave as if someone is inferior in rank, dignity, or intellect.

**Corroborate:** to make more certain; to confirm.

**Aggrandize:** to make something appear greater; to make great power, wealth, rank, or honor.

**Animosity:** a feeling of strong dislike or ill will that tends to display itself in action.

**Reconciliation:** an act of settling a dispute or argument; to bring into agreement or harmony.

**Pseudonym:** a fictitious name used by an author to conceal one's identity.

**Fjord:** a long narrow stretch of the sea bordered by steep cliffs.

**Pontificate:** to speak in a pompous or dogmatic manner.

**Dote:** to express excessive love or fondness on an individual.

Sources:

<https://www.dictionary.com>

## *A Doll's House, Part 2*

# ENHANCE YOUR EXPERIENCE

Make your time at the theatre unforgettable when you join us for one of these added experiences:

## Post-Show Community Discussions

***A Doll's House: Oct 26 at 2pm***

***A Doll's House, Part 2: Nov 16 at 2pm***

Join an actor from the cast for a topical panel discussion with local community and academic leaders that explores the themes and issues of *A Doll's House* & *A Doll's House, Part 2*. All audience members are invited and encouraged to attend. Post-Performance

## Cast Perspective

***A Doll's House: Thu, Oct 17 at 6:30pm***

***A Doll's House, Part 2: Thu, Nov 7 at 6:30pm***

Join a fun and engaging discussion with the actors after the 6:30pm performance.

## Accessible Performances

***A Doll's House: Sun, Oct 20 at 2pm***

***A Doll's House, Part 2: Sun, Oct 20 at 7pm***

***A Doll's House, Part 2: Sun, Nov 2 at 2pm***

We offer American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation and Audio Description services free with paid admission on select performance dates. Before selecting seats, use the appropriate code noted below for the services you require in the Promotional Code box when purchasing online. For optimal service, call the box office at **303.893.4100**.

Sign Language Interpretation: **ASL**

Audio Description: **AUDIO**

# STUDY QUESTIONS

## Pre-Performance Questions

1. Have you ever wanted to know the next installment of a character's story after a play has ended? If you have, who was the character and what do you think happened to them 15 years later?
2. What are our society's expectations and assumptions about the institution of marriage?

## Post-Performance Questions

1. How do the scenic elements of set design, costuming, lighting, and sound help tell the story? Which are the most effective and why?
2. The DCPA Theatre Company is performing *A Doll's House* and *A Doll's House Part 2* in repertory. Have you seen the other play? If you have, how was the experience? If you have not, what do you think the other installment is about?
3. How would you describe the relationship between Anne Marie and Nora? What do we learn about their past history?
4. Why does Nora return to the house she left 15 years earlier? What does she hope to find there? What are the consequences of her decision to leave 15 years earlier?
5. How does Nora describe the institution of marriage? What are Torvald's views about marriage? What are the other character's views about marriage?
6. How does Torvald's action or lack of action effect Nora? Why do you think he chooses to address his marriage in such a fashion?
7. How does Anne Marie feel about male and female roles in society?
8. What happens to Nora's character in the book she wrote? Why does she find this to be the only ending for her character?
9. How does Emmy feel about meeting Nora? How would you describe her and her feelings toward her mother?
10. What do you think happens to Nora in another 15 years? Does she return to the house or is there another "final" moment?

# ACTIVITIES

## Perspective Writing | Character Narrative

1. Have students select an important moment from *A Doll's House, Part 2*. This should be a moment that has more than one person in attendance. For example, the meeting between Emmy and Nora or the discussion between Anne Marie and Nora.
2. From this moment, the students are to pick a character from the story and, in their own words (paraphrase), provide the character's perspective and attitude of what transpired. Specifically, emotions, behavior, and how the moment affects the character should be explored.
3. From the exploration of a moment from the play, each student will write a short monologue describing the moment from the character's perspective of what they experienced.
4. Compare the monologues about the event from other characters that were involved. Discuss the similarities and differences that arose during the writing process. Was there general agreement of what happened or marked differences? Why were the moments similar or different? Were they subtle or obvious variations? Did students agree on what was important to include and why? If not, how would the elimination of some elements change the way the moment would be understood or remembered by the character?

**Writing PG:** Articulate the position of self and others using experiential and material logic.

**Writing PG:** Write with clear focus, coherent organization, sufficient elaboration, and detail.

## Persuasive Arguments

1. The goal of this activity is to have students create a persuasive argument to support their decision. They can work individually or in small groups.
2. Establish the situation: One partner in a marriage would like to separate from the other partner. Students must decide if they are on the side of staying together or separating. Students then decide how they feel about their decision.
3. Students now create a persuasive argument either to stay or to go—steps 4 through 6 will help in the building of the persuasive argument.
4. Create an opening statement. This statement should include the position for signing the document or not signing the document.
5. List three reasons that support the position. From these three reasons, find three facts to support each reason. Try to avoid opinionated personal conclusions.
6. Write a concluding statement. Include the original position statement and incorporate the strongest reason from the three to support the concluding statement.
7. Have students share their work with each other: to the whole group, in pairs or in other small groups.
8. EXTENSION OPTION: If students have seen or read the play, have them select a character (Nora who would like the separation, Torvald who would like to stay together, or Emmy and her reasons for her choice) and make the argument from that character's perspective.
9. Raise the Bar: Find one reason that supports the opposition. Find three facts and compose a concluding statement for the other side of the argument.

**Civics PG:** Research, formulate positions, and engage in appropriate civic participation to address local, state, or national issues or policies.

**Research and Reasoning PG:** Independent research designs articulate and defend information, conclusions, and solutions that address specific contexts and purposes.



# WANT TO KNOW MORE?

The Denver Public Library recommends:

## Read!

***The Divorce Hacker's Guide to Untying the Knot: What Every Woman Needs to Know About Finances, Child Custody, Lawyers, and Planning Ahead* by Ann E. Grant, JD (2018).**

Ladies, if you are even remotely thinking of leaving your husband, start with the *Divorce Hacker's Guide*, by shrewd divorce lawyer Ann Grant, and start making wise and healthy decisions about your future. Grant's book, born from her own acrimonious divorce is thoughtful and thorough, well-organized with action steps, lifehacks, insider tips and empowering quotes. Having this book as a reference is equivalent to having a trusted counsel who is also a heavyweight in your corner. Don't leave your lover without paging through this one.

## Watch!

***Ricki and the Flash* (2015)**

This movie could be seen as *A Doll's House, Part 2*, rock 'n' roll edition. Not only has Ricki left her family to follow her dream of being a rock star, but she also returns home to her three children who are as enthused as Emmy is. As Ricki, Meryl Streep sings and agonizes over the consequences of her decisions. Is the world any different today than in Nora's time? Do people have more freedoms? We may not have definitive answers but we can enjoy the musical journey.

## Listen!

***Feminasty* by Erin Gibson read by the author (2018).**

Gibson, known for her Podcast "Throwing Shade" reads her own collection of 18 sharp-as-a-knife essays that will have you laughing because they are funny but crying because they are true. From the sinister origins of Lysol as a household product to the stagnation of women's rights since the voting rights act, she covers a lot of ground. I think Nora would approve, as Gibson says in her dedication "To women. You are not my competition."

## Download!

***Many Love: A Memoir of Polyamory and Finding Love(s)* by Sophie Lucido Johnson (2018).**

Patriarchy got you down? Does marriage sometimes feel like a cage, and you a captive songbird? Could the Noras and Torvalds of the world, bound by tradition and hemmed in by expectation, find happiness in discovering a new, polyamorous way of loving? If your answer is anywhere near "why not?" then *Many Love*, the beautifully illustrated memoir by Sophie Johnson is a good place to introduce yourself to the passion and heartbreak that can be found outside of monogamy. Johnson takes her readers along as she reflects on her own ups and downs of trying to find happiness outside of normal.



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