Study Guide

Work with your reading group to answer each of the following questions. Hand in one completed set of answers with each group member’s name to receive credit. Groups can be no larger than five—the play can easily be read by three students, so large groups should split into smaller groups. Answers should be thorough and explicit.

Act One

1. What roles do Nora and Torvald play in their marriage?
2. What are the differences in Nora and Kristine’s situations, and what is revealed about Nora in the way she speaks with her old friend?
3. What is Nora’s big secret? Why is it important to her?
4. What illegal act has Nora committed? How does it complicate her relationship with Torvald?

Act Two

1. What reason does Torvald ultimately say necessitates firing Krogstad? What does this reveal about his character?
2. Characterize the relationship between Nora and Dr. Rank.
3. How is Krogstad planning to use the information about Nora? What does he expect to gain?
4. Compare and contrast the roles of Kristine and Dr. Rank in this act.

Act Three

1. What occurred between Kristine and Krogstad in the past? Why does she ask him to do what she does?
2. How does Torvald describe his feelings for Nora following the party? How does this reinforce the roles each seemed to play in the first act?
3. Shortly before reading Krogstad’s first letter, Torvald states: “Nora—time and again I’ve wished you were in some terrible danger, just so I could stake my life and soul and everything, for your sake.” How does his response to the letter compare to this statement? What seems to be his main concern? How does he change after reading the second letter?
4. Why does Nora make the decision that she does at the end of the play?

Review

1. How does the play’s title relate to the subject of the play?
2. In Act Two, Nora had commented “that with Torvald it’s just the same as with Papa.” By the end of the play the meaning of this statement is clearer. How have her relationships with these two men influenced her character?
3. In his forward to the plays in our text, Rolf Fjelde states, “If there is one cliché I could wish away […] one stereotype worth shattering to help liberate the living play from the revered Dramatic Classic, it would be the tired notion that this is a feminist play, and that we have done our duty as playgoers when we have followed gallant Nora through her struggle for her rights.” He instead suggests the play “is not primarily about an individual, but a relationship—the modern middle-class conception of marriage.” Agree or disagree with his statements.
4. There are numerous relationships in this relatively compact play. How does Nora’s relationship with Dr. Rank and the relationship between Kristine and Krogstad work to reveal the untenable aspects of the relationship between Nora and Torvald?