A Doll’s House Part 2
by Lucas Hnath

March 12 – April 7, 2019
on the OneAmerica Mainstage

STUDY GUIDE
edited by Richard J Roberts, Resident Dramaturg
with contributions by Janet Allen
James Still • Ann Sheffield • Alex Jaeger
Randy Pease • Eden Rea-Hedrick

Indiana Repertory Theatre
140 West Washington Street
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204
Janet Allen, Executive Artistic Director
Suzanne Sweeney, Managing Director
www.irtlive.com
A DOLL’S HOUSE, PART 2

BY LUCAS HNATH

Fifteen years ago, Nora realized her marriage was a sham, and slammed the door on the life she once knew. Now, the question that’s always been in the back of theatre-goers’ minds will be answered: What has the former Mrs. Helmer been doing all this time? Last year’s Broadway hit, A Doll’s House, Part 2 dares to be the sequel to Henrik Ibsen’s revolutionary play. A perfect play for theatre classes, drama clubs, or units on classical drama, A Doll’s House, Part 2 will have you laughing while seriously contemplating modern relationships and marriage.

STUDENT MATINEES 10:00 AM on March 20 & 27, 2019

ESTIMATED LENGTH Approximately 90 minutes

AGE RANGE Recommended for grades 9-12

CONTENT ADVISORY
A Doll’s House, Part 2 is an intense comedic drama that contains some adult language and situations. A script preview is available upon request.

STUDY GUIDE CONTENTS

Synopsis 3
Executive Artistic Director’s Note 4
Director’s Note 6
Designer Notes 8
Henrik Ibsen & A Doll’s House 8
Alignment Guide 9
Before Seeing the Show 10
Discussion Questions 10
Writing Prompts 12
Activities 12
Resources 13
Glossary 14
The Role of the Audience 17

COVER ART BY
KYLIE RAGSDALE

STUDENT MATINEES, ARTIST IN THE CLASSROOM, & YOUTH AUDITIONS
Sarah Geis • 317-916-4841
sgeis@irtlive.com

CLASSES, YPIP, & SUMMER CONSERVATORY
Randy D. Pease • 317-916-4842
rpease@irtlive.com
TWO STORIES ABOUT NORA

A Doll’s House, Part 2 by Lucas Hnath is a sequel to Henrik Ibsen’s groundbreaking 1879 play A Doll’s House. As in much of his work, Ibsen’s play challenged the status quo by highlighting the hypocrisy of 19th century society.

In Ibsen’s original play, Nora and Torvald have three young children. Their marriage of eight years seems picture perfect: Torvald has a prestigious job at a bank, and Nora is the life of every party. But Nora has a secret: in a time where women were not allowed to make business decisions without their husbands, she forged her father’s signature to secure a loan. Her intentions were noble; she used the money to save her husband when he was deathly ill. Since then, Nora has scrimped and saved to pay back the money out of her household allowance. As the play begins, the loan is almost repaid, and Torvald remains unaware of his wife’s actions. Although Torvald often patronizes his wife, calling her his “little squirrel” and chastising her behavior, Nora is very much in love.

Problems surface when a bank employee threatens to reveal Nora’s forgery to the world. When Torvald learns of the situation, he condemns Nora for her immoral behavior, saying that she is unfit to raise her children, and that from now on their marriage will be only for show. But a friend of Nora’s inspires a change of heart in the potential blackmailer, and he gives Torvald the evidence he has against Nora. Relieved that his reputation is saved, Torvald forgives Nora for her misdeeds.

Nora, however, is shocked that Torvald believes she acted out of stupidity rather than courage or selfless love, and that the law would make her a criminal for protecting her husband’s life. She notes that she has always been controlled by a man, first her father, and then her husband, both of whom have treated her “like a little doll.” She realizes that she has no understanding of how the real world works outside the confines of her doll’s house. Declaring herself unfit to be a wife or mother until she has learned to understand the world and herself, she makes the difficult decision to leave her husband and children and strike out on her own. Torvald begs Nora to stay, but Nora leaves the house, slamming the door behind her.

A Doll’s House drew criticism from the public because of its often shocking and controversial portrayal of marriage. But since its premiere, the play has become a classic, one of the pillars of modern theatre. Contemporary playwright Lucas Hnath sets his sequel 15 years after Ibsen’s play, with Nora’s return to the family home. She first encounters Anne Marie, the children’s nanny, who stayed on to raise them and now takes care of the house. Nora explains that she has only recently discovered that Torvald never filed for divorce, which is now causing her legal difficulties. In a series of conversations with Anne Marie, Torvald, and her daughter Emmy, now grown, Nora tries to explain the choices she has made, while for the first time hearing the strong feelings of those she left behind.

In his new play, premiered on Broadway in 2017, Lucas Hnath continues the original play’s legacy of inquiry into the nature of marriage, truth, and what women owe themselves. Although set in the 1890s, A Doll’s House, Part 2 offers sharp perspectives on how we in the 21st century continue to grapple with marriage, motherhood, and gender roles.

Rough preliminary sketch by scenic designer Ann Sheffield. Compare to the scale model of the final design on page 6. How has the design developed over time?
Artists have been responding to classic works and creating sequels for eons, and yet it’s rare to encounter one where the sequel is every bit as thrilling and groundbreaking as the original. Thus is the case with *A Doll’s House, Part 2*, and one need look no farther than the listings of the regional theatres’ bills this season to see that many theatre professionals share that belief. The wonderful irony of *A Doll’s House, Part 2* is that Lucas Hnath has fashioned a sequel that does not need its original to exist completely and wholly. He accomplishes that feat with ease and style, weaving the backstory of the characters into the forward movement of his new plot with apparent effortlessness. The accolade “expertly crafted” appears in many reviews, and is completely apparent in this play.

The play Hnath has responded to is an 1879 drama by Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen. At the time, *A Doll’s House* was groundbreaking enough to be banned in several countries; but it has since come to be taught and admired as the cornerstone of modern drama. In 2001, it was inscribed as a UNESCO manuscript of historic value. In 2006, which marked the 100th anniversary of Ibsen’s death, it was the most produced play around the world.

*A Doll’s House* is revered among theatre professionals, feminists, and champions of social justice. Its ending is its claim to fame: Nora Helmer shockingly leaves her husband and young children to pursue a life of self-fulfillment, escaping the stifling confines of her gender role in late 19th century culture. Of course, this choice was considered horrifically controversial in its time. “The door slam heard around the world,” which signifies Nora’s departure from home and hearth and from gender stereotypes, has engendered many adaptations and revisions, but no successful sequels until this 2017 play by American Lucas Hnath.

Hnath’s play is loyal to the characters of the original and keeps the period setting, but uses a contemporary language idiom; this fusion creates a freshness that both surprises and leads us further into his purpose. In something like a four-handed fugue, he invites each of the characters to express their viewpoint on the problematic situation that brings them together; these varying perspectives are at once character cogent and also astonishing. Part legal thriller, part family drama, part exploration of gender roles both past and present, this play delivers much to discuss, as well as a superb experience in the theatre.

I am not a big fan of sequels, so much so that I declined several opportunities to see this on Broadway last season and didn’t read the reviews. But when the script was in my hand, I couldn’t put it down, and I was wholeheartedly committed to sharing it with our audiences from the minute I finished reading it.

One of the greatest delights of my job is being surprised—by audiences, by writers, by actors—but I wasn’t surprised by the amazing actors that clamored to be in this production. We are delighted to have brought them together on this wildly entertaining and thought-provoking work. Enjoy the ride.
ENGAGING

BY JAMES STILL, DIRECTOR

Which makes the most noise? The sound of a door slamming shut, or a knock on that same door 15 years later? For the people living in that house in Norway, both sounds signal enormous changes. This is where Lucas Hnath’s *A Doll’s House, Part 2* begins—with Nora returning to the house she had once called home.

Within the course of the play we discover not only what happened to Nora after her scandalous domestic exit in 1879 when she left her husband and three small children, but we also discover what's brought her back. Mr. Hnath doesn’t shy away from the thorny connection between choices and consequences; but he's also too smart a writer to make his play simply about the burdens of responsibility and the need to face our monsters. These are serious issues, but somehow Mr. Hnath manages to tinge his play with an infectious glee. His characters are in pursuit of many things they can’t quite grasp—and they aren’t beyond making fools of themselves in the process—but they *engage*. That’s the fuel of this play: engagement against all odds. These are characters sharing spontaneous ideas, testing the ideas on the spot, and using whatever works to figure out what’s next. They do it without self-reverence, with humor and modern-day vernaculars. It is as though Nora’s hard-won liberation has liberated the very form of storytelling, as though she’s written her own play about her life—only to discover that she doesn’t know all the story. In fact, it’s not even all her story.

I remember vividly the first time I read *A Doll’s House, Part 2* and felt a breathless restlessness. I laughed out loud. I was puzzled. I was under its spell. There is something beautifully poetic and practical about the story in Mr. Hnath’s play. Poetic because the language is rich and contemporary, and practical because these are characters with a very big problem to solve. The five scenes (which Mr. Hnath describes as “boxing rounds”) fight their way through the play’s core subjects: marriage and free agency; the tension between sacrifice and emancipation; and the price paid for pursuing our authentic selves. For me, part of the brilliance of the play is how, although it is a “Part 2,” it easily lives on its own, for its own reasons.

But what of Nora’s decision to return? There is something heartbreakingly human in the ways that we are unprepared for the unknown. Leaving can be an agonizing decision—even for the decider. And the return of someone who left can reignite grief and chaos for those who were left behind. Nora’s return makes it impossible for all four characters not to rage about the consequences of actions. Her return is as shocking as her dramatic exit 15 years ago—but now we are here to feel the flood of feelings that inevitably erupt, and to see how little it takes to undo the broken heart that has been stitched back together over time.

For me, directing is very much about preparation—but a peculiar kind of preparation that also intuits that the point of preparation is to be surprised. Rehearsals are a time of immense invention, repetition that’s something akin to breaking a secret code. My job is to be “first witness” to the ways the play becomes our production. The process I have with designers and actors is sacred to me—collaboration as action.

In recent weeks, the great poet Mary Oliver died, and I keep coming back to the last line of her poem “The Summer Day”: “Tell me, what is it you plan to do / With your one wild and precious life?” All of the characters in *A Doll’s House, Part 2* ponder that question differently, and the many answers they confront can be as funny as they are painful.
15 YEARS LATER ...

ANN SHEFFIELD
SCENIC DESIGNER
I’m drawn to the work of late 19th and early 20th century Scandinavian artists whose landscapes and domestic interiors feel both bleak and hopeful. I admire the way beauty is revealed in the ordinary details of a hallway and window; and how rugged terrain is imbued with spiritual depth. The poetry of these masterworks supports contradictory notions: they are both real and imagined, noisy and quiet. For me, A Doll’s House, Part 2 seems to find that same complex and layered beauty. The play is simple in structure; its narrative is spare; it demands quiet spaces within the action.

My path as set designer found footing in these contradictions and structural observations. The structure of the design is formal and edited: a door, a window, a staircase. Although these elements might otherwise exist in a cohesive and detailed period interior, they have been released from such constrictions. With the walls gone, the impact of the overwhelmingly beautiful and imposing Norwegian landscape is ever-present—lending, I hope, visual poetry to an otherwise austere world. This vista is also a reminder that, for Nora, there is a stunning world right outside that door.

Scale model by scenic designer Ann Sheffield.
ALEX JAEGER
COSTUME DESIGNER
As a costume designer, I see my job as helping to tell the story in a clear way. Generally, I’m not devoted to strict adherence to period accuracy if it doesn’t support the characters. In the case of *A Doll’s House, Part 2*, while the costumes are from the period, I have worked with director James Still to choose clean silhouettes that I feel support the modern feel of the language and work with the beautiful, clean, open space of the set. The colors and fabrics were chosen to reflect the station in life of the characters, as well as their emotional states. Each of them has a way that they want to present themselves to the outside world and to each other. It is my hope that I have struck that delicate balance, and that my designs will enhance your enjoyment of this beautiful play.

*Preliminary costume sketches by designer Alex Jaeger for (clockwise from upper left) Nora, Torvald, Emmy, & Anne Marie.*
HENRIK IBSEN &

A DOLL’S HOUSE

In 1879, Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen shocked Europe when the heroine of his play A Doll’s House left her husband and her three children. At the same time, the play thrilled the young and avant-garde audiences of the “new” theatre with its realistic stage depiction of middle-class life.

Most theatre of Ibsen’s time was either melodrama, sappy romance, or farcical comedy. What made Ibsen’s work revolutionary was its realism and its focus on social issues of the day. Ibsen galvanized the theatre community, ultimately creating the “new” theatre, the modern theatre, the theatre that would dominate the 20th century. Since the plays of the ancient Greeks, tragic heroes had been kings and princes who spoke poetry. Ibsen created middle-class heroes, businessmen and housewives who spoke common prose yet faced serious issues with tragic consequences. He placed his everyday heroes in everyday living rooms, with doors and windows and chairs to sit on. He read the new theories of Charles Darwin and Sigmund Freud and created characters who were affected by environment and heredity, and who possessed inner lives.

Today, critics see A Doll’s House as one of history’s most significant plays, a major turning point. At the time of its publication in 1879, however, the reaction was mixed. While some hailed the play for its frank depiction of the realities of life, others condemned it as immoral and obscene. Ibsen biographer Halfcan Koht writes, “A Doll’s House exploded like a bomb…. Ending not in reconciliation, but in inexorable calamity, it pronounced a death sentence on accepted social ethics…. Those who were against social and moral upheaval, against female emancipation, came to see in Ibsen their greatest, most dangerous enemy.” In her book Ibsen’s Women, Joan Templeton writes, “Ibsen was accused not merely of advocating the destruction of the family, and with it, morality itself, but of a kind of godless androgyny: women, in refusing to be compliant, were refusing to be women.”

Over the years, many have believed that the play advocates a form of feminism. Ibsen, however, felt otherwise. At a testimonial banquet by the Norwegian Society for Women’s Rights in 1898, he said, “I must decline the honor of consciously having worked for women’s rights. I am not even quite sure what women’s rights really are. To me it has been a question of human rights.”

Over the course of action in A Doll’s House, Nora comes to believe that both tradition and law make her little more than the property of her husband, and that she has been raised in ignorance of the world outside her household. She leaves her husband, for which Ibsen was roundly denounced, especially by the clergy. So in his 1881 play Ghosts, Ibsen reversed the situation, showing what happens to a woman who heeds the advice of clergy and stays in an unhappy marriage: by the end of the play, the family’s legacy includes venereal disease, incest, and insanity. The themes of both plays—and, indeed, all of Ibsen’s plays from this time forward—are the same: the danger in accepting conventional morality as absolute truth, the importance of overcoming the past, the need for each individual to find his own path through life.
ALIGNMENT GUIDE

Seeing a performance at Indiana Repertory Theatre is a great way to help make connections for students and facilitate their understanding of a text. Some key literature standards to consider on your trip would be:

**READING - LITERATURE**

- **RL.1** – Read and comprehend a variety of literature independently and proficiently
- **RL.2** – Build comprehension and appreciation of literature by analyzing, inferring, and drawing conclusions about literary elements, themes, and central ideas
  - Sample: 9-10.RL.2.2: *Analyze in detail the development of two or more themes or central ideas over the course of a work of literature, including how they emerge and are shaped and refined by specific details.*
- **RL.3** – Build comprehension and appreciation of literature, using knowledge of literary structure and point of view
  - Sample: 11-12.RL.3.2: *Analyze a work of literature in which the reader must distinguish between what is directly stated and what is intended (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement) in order to understand the point of view.*
- **RL.4** – Build comprehension and appreciation of literature by connecting various literary works and analyzing how medium and interpretation impact meaning

**READING - NONFICTION**

- **RN.2** – Extract and construct meaning from nonfiction texts using a range of comprehension skills
  - Sample: 8.RN.2.3: *Analyze how a text makes connections and distinctions among individuals, events, and ideas.*

**READING - VOCABULARY**

- **RV.3** – Build comprehension and appreciation of literature and nonfiction texts by determining or clarifying figurative, connotative, and technical meanings
  - Sample: 9-10.RV.3.3: *Interpret figures of speech (e.g., euphemism, oxymoron) in context and analyze their role in the text.*
PRE-SHOW DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

*A Doll’s House, Part 2* deals with marital relationships and gender roles in the late 1800s. What do you know about society of this era? What would you suppose would be the expectations for a married woman in this time period? For a married man?

Contemporary playwright Lucas Hnath chose to revisit Henrik Ibsen’s *A Doll’s House* more than 130 years after its first performance. What makes a work of art timeless? Why do you think we return to certain stories again and again? Think of sequels and remakes you have read and/or seen—novels, plays, movies, even television shows. How successful have these “reboots” been as their own works of art? How have they helped you to better understand the originals upon which they are based?

If your class has read Ibsen’s original *A Doll’s House*, discuss what students imagine to have happened to Nora and her family after she leaves them at the end of the play. What might have happened to Nora, her husband Torvald, their daughter Emmy, and the family’s nanny Anne Marie, over the 15 years between the events of Ibsen’s play and Hnath’s sequel? Why might Nora be returning? How would you expect the other characters to react?

POST-SHOW DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

*A Doll’s House, Part 2* is populated by complex characters, none of whom are clearly “bad” or “good.” Which characters did you feel sympathy for? Why or why not? How and why did you find your sympathies shifting over the course of the play? Whose line of reasoning did you find most persuasive or compelling? Why?

Discuss the relative importance of freedom versus responsibility. What do we owe ourselves? What do we owe others? When these ideas conflict with each other, how do we make good choices?

In the time of the play, divorce was a very rare occurrence, and some people felt that societal pressure to stay together caused pain and suffering for many couples and families. Today, divorce is very common, and some people feel that it is too easy to end long-term commitments and break up families. What is your point of view? How can the best needs of each family be served?

If your students have read Ibsen’s *A Doll’s House*, discuss how playwright Lucas Hnath draws on that original play for his sequel. Which of his choices for the characters were what you expected? What about the play surprised you? Why? How does Hnath’s play affirm the messages in Ibsen’s play? How does it challenge them?

How has Nora’s absence for the last 15 years affected her family? How might their lives have been different—in both good ways and bad ways—if she had stayed?
Although Hnath’s play sticks with the period setting and costumes one would expect for a play set in the 1890s, it uses more contemporary language. Why do you suppose the playwright made this choice? Did you find it effective? Why or why not?

Hnath’s play looks not only at gender inequality, but also at the imbalance of power between employers and employees. For many childcare workers, caring for other people’s children comes at the cost of caring for their own. Did Anne Marie make the right decision when she agreed to raise Torvald and Nora’s children? Why or why not? What other options were available to her? Do you think Torvald and Nora understand the sacrifice she has made for their family? How could modern society do a better job supporting parents who must care for or teach other people’s children in order to support their own?

How is Emmy like her mother? How is she different? Where do you see Emmy fitting on the feminism continuum?

At the end of the play, Torvald decides to give Nora what she wants and file for divorce, even though it will ruin his reputation. But ultimately, Nora changes her mind and decides to handle the situation her own way. Why do you believe the two characters made these choices? Did you find the ending satisfying? Why or why not?

Are men and women equal under the law today in the United States? Why or why not? In American culture, does equality among the sexes exist?

How do you stay true to yourself while maintaining a romantic relationship? In close personal relationships—not only romantic, but also parent-child, siblings, friends—when might individuals need to compromise or even set aside their own needs or personal preferences for the sake of the relationship?

When Torvald reads Nora’s book, he is frustrated by what she has written about him; her account of their relationship bears no resemblance to what he felt or believed to be the truth. Is it possible that both Nora and Torvald are telling the truth? How? What is the relationship between truth and perspective?

What about A Doll’s House, Part 2 is funny? What is serious? How do these two elements work together and/or against each other in the play?

Discuss the scenic and costume choices in the IRT’s production. How do they evoke the 19th century world of Ibsen’s original play A Doll’s House? How do they transform that world into something new and different?

Is it appropriate for modern playwrights to expand upon classic works, or should the original works stand alone? How does the relationship with the original play impact the meaning and power of the modern play?
WRITING PROMPTS

A Doll’s House, Part 2 takes place 15 years after Henrik Ibsen’s A Doll’s House. Choose one of your favorite characters from a book you’ve previously read or a play or movie you’ve previously seen. Write a scene or monolog that takes place 15 years after that character’s story originally ends. Consider how the character might have changed. Is the character still dealing with conflicts that were present in the original story, or are there new challenges to face? What might the character’s goals and objectives be now?

At the end of A Doll’s House, Part 2, we have many clues about what the characters of the play are planning to do. Imagine A Dolls House, Part 3. Write a short story about what has happened to one or more of the characters another 15 years later. How have their expectations been fulfilled or altered? How have the revelations and events of the play caused them to change the direction of their lives—or have they?

In A Doll’s House, Part 2, Nora talks about changing the “bad rules,” saying, “this is my chance to change the rules because 20, 30 years from now the world isn’t going to be the kind of place I say it’s going to be unless I’m the one to make it that way.” What are ten societal or legal rules that you would change to make the world the kind of place you want it to be in twenty years? How would you go about making those changes happen? What can you start to do right now?

Write a review of the play. A well-rounded review includes your opinion of the theatrical aspects—scenery, lights, costumes, sound, direction, acting—as well as your impressions of the script and the impact of the story and/or themes and the overall production. What moments made an impression? How do the elements of scenery, costumes, lighting, and sound work with the actors' performance of the text to tell the story? What ideas or themes did the play make you think about? How did it make you feel? Did you notice the reactions of the audience as a whole? Would you recommend this play to others? Why or why not? To share your reviews with others, send to: education.irt@gmail.com

ACTIVITIES

After Torvald’s unfortunate altercation with the courthouse clerk in A Doll’s House, Part 2, imagine that, instead of simply filing divorce papers, the clerk requires Nora and Torvald to appear before a judge, with Emmy and Anne Marie as witnesses. Find volunteers to play the four characters from the play, as well as the clerk, the judge, and two lawyers for Nora and Torvald. The rest of the class will act as the jury. The two lawyers should prepare opening statements to be read. The members of the jury should each prepare two or three questions to ask, which can be shared with the judge and/or the lawyers. Each of the four characters will be examined and cross-examined. When the trial is concluded, the members of the jury should meet separately to deliberate and reach a verdict about a potential divorce.

In the play, Nora says, “In the future, 20, 30 years from now, marriage will be a thing of the past….” Divide the class into two teams and debate the value of marriage—one side for, one side against. Discuss all the legal, social, family, and religious issues involved. How does gay marriage enter into the debate?
RESOURCES

BOOKS

Mrs. Osmond by John Banville (a sequel to Henry James’s Portrait of a Lady)
The Hours by Michael Cunningham (an exploration of Virginia Woolf’s novel Mrs. Dalloway—also a 1998 film)
Divorce Helpbook for Teens by Cynthia MacGregor
The Divorce Workbook for Teens by Lisa Schab
Earthly Possessions by Anne Tyler
plays by Henrik Ibsen:
   A Doll’s House
   Ghosts
   Hedda Gabler
   An Enemy of the People

MOVIES

Adam’s Rib (1949)
A Doll’s House (1973)
Kramer vs. Kramer (1979)
My Brilliant Career (1979)
Out of Africa (1985)
A League of Their Own (1992)
Mulan (1998)
Erin Brokovich (2000)
Bend It Like Beckham (2002)
Brave (2012)

WEBSITES

https://www.globalfundforwomen.org/womens-human-rights/#.XGsgJi3Mw4U
http://time.com/longform/gender-equality-america/
   “Can American Men and Women Ever Really Be Equal?”—September 27, 2018
http://divorceandteens.weebly.com
http://iamachildofdivorce.com/teen-between-support-for-teenagers-of-separated-parents/
2 15 years since Nora left Torvald.
Although the exact year of its setting is never specified, Ibsen’s *A Doll’s House* was written in 1879. If *A Doll’s House, Part 2* is set 15 years later, that would mean it probably takes place around 1894.

4 Anne Marie
Anne Marie appears in *A Doll’s House* as the nursemaid of Nora’s three children. It is also mentioned that she was Nora’s nursemaid when Nora was a child.

4 Nora
In *A Doll’s House*, Nora is the wife of Torvald Helmer and mother of three small children. Over the course of the play, she comes to recognize the stifling nature of her marriage, and at the play’s end she leaves her husband.

6 Torvald
In *A Doll’s House*, Torvald Helmer is Nora’s husband. He treats Nora in what many might consider a condescending manner, calling her “my little singing bird,” “my little squirrel,” “my pretty little pet,” and other childish names. He is shocked when she leaves him at the end of the play.

6 and the kids
In *A Doll’s House*, Nora and Torvald have three children, Ivar, Bob, and Emmy, all of whom are quite young at the time of the events of *A Doll’s House*; Emmy is specifically referred to as a baby.

13 the way women are often treated these days
Women’s rights in Norway increased slowly during the 19th century. In 1869, unmarried women 21 and over were granted full legal status as autonomous adults. In 1882, women were admitted to upper-level secondary education institutions. Married women remained under their husbands’ guardianship until the passing of an 1888 law that granted them the same legal adult status that single women had been granted almost 20 years previously. Norway was one of the first nations in the world to grant women universal suffrage, but not until 1913.

15 actress … dancer
Most people in the 19th century felt that a woman who made a career as a stage performer was little better than a prostitute. It was not something a “respectable” woman would do; any performer who married outside the profession would be expected to give up her career immediately.

15 something having to do with clothes
After domestic work, the textile and clothing industries offered the second greatest number of employment opportunities to 19th century women: factory workers, seamstresses, etc. But well before that time, fashion had been one of the few places where a women could be her own boss, as a dressmaker or milliner.

15 lawyer
The first woman to earn a law degree in Norway was Mary Cathrine Dahl in 1890, but she did not go into practice. The first practicing woman lawyer in Norway was Elise Sem in 1904.

15 banker
Women first began working in the back rooms of banks in the 1870s and 1880s, but these were low-level clerk positions. While women soon gained access to jobs as tellers, their rise to positions of authority in banking was very slow. The first female bank manager in Britain was Hilda Harding in 1958; the first in the United States and Canada were in the 1960s.
16 women's writing
Women writers first began to achieve prominence in Norway near the end of the 19th century, as the cause of women's liberation began to come to public attention. Arguably the most important was Camilla Collett (1813-1895). Often described as the first Norwegian feminist, Collett was a major contributor to realism in Norwegian fiction; Henrik Ibsen was significantly influenced by her work.

17 pseudonym
Throughout history, many women writers have found it helpful to use pseudonyms to protect their identity. Jane Austen’s books were first published by “A Lady.” Many women have used male pseudonyms in order to get their works read by publishers in the first place, let alone published. All three Brontë sisters published under men’s names: Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell. Mary Ann Evans published as George Elliot. Amantine-Lucile-Aurore Dudevant published as George Sand. Although Louisa May Alcott published Little Women under her own name, she published other works under the name A. M. Barnard. The practice continues: Joanne Rowling published the Harry Potter books under the name J. K. Rowling at her publisher’s behest, in hopes of attracting more boy readers.

22 It's been like this for all of human history
Despite the common misconception that a monogamous union between one man and one woman has always been the essential definition of marriage, early civilizations operated according to no such conviction. The earliest equivalent to what might be considered marriage is thought to have originated roughly one million years ago, when early humans tended to break off into pairs of one male and one female who would stay together for three to four years while their joint offspring were very young. No formal contract characterized these relationships, and one individual would likely form several such unions over the course of his or her life. The first evidence of marriage contracts and ceremonies dates back only about 4,000 years to ancient Mesopotamia. The primary functions of marriage during this era were to produce heirs, maintain the family name, and retain control of family property; thus it was extremely common for individuals to marry their cousins or even siblings. Many historians estimate that well over half of all marriages throughout human history have been between blood relatives. Monogamy was still not part of the definition of marriage in many cultures: the Hebrew king Solomon, for instance, purportedly had 700 wives. In the Western world, the practice of polygamy was largely squelched by the Catholic Church near the end of the Roman Empire. Still, marriages were primarily economically motivated. Not until the Enlightenment was any emphasis placed on the feelings of the couple toward one another, and even then, this concern remained largely subsidiary to practical considerations such as wealth and status until the early twentieth century.

22 the book wouldn't have been published if she didn't die of consumption at the end of it
Henrik Ibsen encountered a similar circumstance during the first German production of A Doll’s House. The German producer and lead actress insisted on a more “conciliatory” ending for the play, and rather than allow another author to rewrite his play, Ibsen reluctantly wrote an alternate ending himself: Nora declares her intention to leave, but then breaks down at the sight of her children and declares that although it is “a sin against myself,” she cannot leave them.

24 all sorts of things a married woman isn't allowed to do, that are illegal
Until the passage of an 1888 law that granted married Norwegian women status as legal adults, a married woman was considered under the guardianship of her husband and, like a child, could not sign contracts or conduct business. Even this law, however, did not fully effect women’s marital equality in the eyes of the law; it was not until 1927 that married women were granted equal property rights alongside their husbands.

25 syphilis
Syphilis is a sexually-transmitted disease caused by the bacterium Treponema pallidum. Until treatment with antibiotics was developed in the 20th century, syphilis was generally fatal. Today it still causes thousands of deaths each year.

34 I told you you’re free. You have no obligation to me.
At the end of A Doll's House, Nora tells Torvald: “from what I’ve heard, when a wife leaves her husband’s house as I am doing now, he is absolved by law of all responsibility for her.”

39 you’d ask me to do a favor for a friend of yours
A major plotline of A Doll’s House concerns Nora asking Torvald to secure a job at the bank for Nora’s old school friend Kristine Linde.
53 Thank you for abandoning your life, your own child and raising mine
A brief exchange between Nora and Anne Marie in *A Doll’s House* reveals that Anne Marie has a daughter whom she left to be raised by others so that she could take the job of being young Nora’s nursemaid in order to support herself.

55 I didn’t have a father with money like you had a father with money
In *A Doll’s House*, it is clear that Nora grew up in relative financial comfort. A major plot point of the play hinges on several characters’ false belief that Nora’s father provided the large sum of money which paid for a trip Nora and Torvald took to Italy shortly after Nora’s father’s death, several years before the events of *A Doll’s House*.

58 Emmy
In *A Doll’s House*, Emmy is the youngest of the Helmer children. Her age is not specified, but she is small enough to be carried about and passed from person to person. She seems to be old enough to be at least learning to talk; while she has no individual lines in the play, the stage directions of the one scene in which the children appear specify that all three are chattering while Nora plays with them.

63 Iver
In most translations of *A Doll’s House*, Iver is spelled “Ivar.” He is the oldest of the Helmer children, but his exact age is not specified.

63 Bob
In *A Doll’s House*, Bob is the middle child of the Helmer family; his exact age is not specified.

71 sanitarium
A sanitarium is a medical treatment facility for patients who suffer from chronic diseases or who are in the process of convalescence. Throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries, sanitariums were primarily filled with tuberculosis (consumption) patients. With the discovery of a cure for tuberculosis in the 1940s, many sanitariums were closed, and very few are in operation today.

72 he had his job at the bank
At the beginning of *A Doll’s House*, Torvald has recently been promoted to the position of bank manager, a job that he has apparently retained during the fifteen years between that play and this.

72 government support for the families
Under current Norwegian law, the surviving partner of a deceased spouse is eligible for a survivor’s pension if the survivor and the deceased were married for at least five years and have children together.

81 nomads
“Nomad” historically refers to communities that have no permanent home but move from place to place seeking fresh grasslands for their livestock. Today, the term more commonly indicates simply a person who never stays long in one place.

87 fjord
A fjord is a long, narrow, deep inlet of the sea located between high cliffs. Fjords are found on the coasts of areas including Alaska, British Columbia, Chile, Greenland, Iceland, Norway, and Scotland. Norway’s largest and deepest fjord, the Sognefjord, is more than 127 miles long and a popular tourist destination. The Geirangerfjord, also in Norway, is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. In Norwegian colloquial speech, however, the word “fjord” may refer to any long, narrow body of water, so Torvald may be referring to a site an American would perceive as a lake or river rather than to an ocean inlet surrounded by cliffs.

100 up north
Northern Norway comprises the three northernmost counties of Norland, Troms, and Finnmark. It is a very cold and sparsely populated area located mostly north of the Arctic Circle. In much of the region, the sun does not set from mid-May to the end of July, and it does not rise from mid-November to mid-January.
THE ROLE OF THE AUDIENCE

You, the audience are one of the most important parts of any performance. Experiencing the theatre is a group activity shared not only with the actors, but also with the people sitting around you. Your attention and participation help the actors perform better, and allow the rest of the audience to enjoy the show. Here are a few simple tips to help make each theatre experience enjoyable for everyone:

Leave mp3 players, cameras, mobile phones, and other distracting and noise-making electronic devices at home.

You may think texting is private, but the light and the motion are very annoying to those around you and on stage. Do not text during the performance.

Food and drink must stay in the lobby.

The house lights dimming and going out signal the audience to get quiet and settle in your seats: the play is about to begin.

Don’t talk with your neighbors during the play. It distracts people around you and the actors on stage. Even if you think they can’t hear you, they can.

Never throw anything onto the stage. People could be injured.

Remain in your seat during the play. Use the restroom before or after the show.

Focus all your attention on the play to best enjoy the experience. Listen closely to the dialogue and sound effects, and look at the scenery, lights, and costumes. These elements all help to tell the story.

Get involved in the story. Laugh, cry, sigh, gasp—whatever the story draws from you. The more emotionally involved you are, the more you will enjoy the play.

Remain at your seat and applaud during the curtain call because this is part of the performance too. It gives you a chance to recognize a job well done and the actors a moment to thank you for your attention.