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CHAPTER TWO: DRAMA

Definitions

Drama is a form of literature that tells a story through the dialogue and actions of characters. It can be presented on stage, on screen, or in written form. The specific type of drama intended to be performed on stage is called a **play**. The latter is divided into acts and scenes. The **Act** a major division within a play, typically representing a significant segment of the overall story. Acts are often further divided into **scenes**. They represent a smaller division within an act of a play, usually representing a specific moment or setting. Scenes often involve a change in time, location, or characters.

Elements of Drama

In addition to the setting, characters, themes, and tone, drama is characterized by the following:

Audience: The people for whom the drama is performed, whose reactions and interpretations can influence the experience of the performance.
Fourth wall: An imaginary wall of the box theatre setting, supposedly removed to allow the audience to see the action.
Stage direction: A playwright's descriptive or interpretive comments that provide readers (and actors) with information about the dialogue, setting, and action of a play.
Staging/ Stagecraft: The spectacle a play presents in performance, including the position of actors on stage, the scenic background, the props and costumes, and the lighting and sound effects.
Props: articles or objects that appear on stage during a play.
Elements of Drama
Tragic hero: a privileged, exalted character of high repute, who, by a tragic flaw and fate, suffers a fall from glory into suffering. Sophocles' Oedipus is an example.
Chorus: a group of characters in Greek tragedy (and in later forms of drama), who comment on the action of a play without participating in it.
Gesture: the physical movement of a character during a play. Gesture is used to reveal characters, and may include facial expressions as well as movements of other parts of an actor's body

Types of Speech in Drama

Dialogue: the conversation of characters in a literary work. In fiction, dialogue is typically enclosed within quotation marks. In plays, characters' speech is preceded by their names.

Dramatic monologue: a type of speech in which a speaker addresses a silent listener. That is, the speaker addresses a present yet muted character.

Monologue: A long speech delivered by one character, often revealing their inner thoughts or feelings.

Soliloquy: A speech delivered by a character alone on stage, expressing their thoughts aloud.

Aside: A brief comment or remark made by a character directly to the audience, not heard by other characters on stage.

Literary Analysis of Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House*

Plot Summary

The play follows Nora Helmer, a seemingly happy and submissive wife, who secretly borrowed money years ago to save her husband, Torvald, from illness. As the play unfolds, her deception is exposed, leading to a dramatic confrontation with Torvald. Instead of receiving his support, she realizes his selfishness and lack of genuine love. In the end, she chooses to leave her husband and children to seek her own identity, marking a radical break from traditional gender expectations.

Setting

Place	***Helmer's household emphasizes the domestic sphere as both a comfort and a prison. The home is well-furnished but ultimately serves as a "doll's house" where Nora is confined.***
Time	***The festive Christmas season***

Themes

- **Gender Roles and Feminism:** *A Doll's House* is widely regarded as an early feminist work, challenging traditional gender roles. Nora initially embodies the ideal 19th- century wife, obedient, charming, and dependent. However, she evolves into an independent individual who rejects societal norms.
- **Marriage and the Illusion of Domestic Bliss:** The play exposes the façade of an ideal marriage. Torvald's treatment of Nora as a child rather than an equal partner reveals how marriage was often based on control and appearance rather than mutual respect and love.
- **Money and Power:** Financial dependence is a central concern in the play. Nora's inability to conduct financial transactions without her husband's consent reflects the economic limitations imposed on women.
- **Identity and Self-Discovery:** Nora's transformation from a "doll-wife" to an independent woman symbolizes the journey of self-discovery. Her realization that

she has been living in an illusion propels her to seek an identity beyond being a wife and mother.

Performance and Stage Directions

Aspect	Characteristics
Stage Directions	**Meticulous, emphasizing realism.**
Dialogue and Movements	**Naturalistic, with characters frequently engaging in small domestic activities to create a sense of everyday life.**
Emotions	**The play demands emotional depth from its actors, particularly in the final confrontation between Nora and Torvald.**
Closing Scene	**Nora leaves and the door slams, is one of the most famous moments in theatre history, symbolizing her break from societal constraints.**

Monologues and Soliloquies

While *A Doll's House* does not follow the Shakespearean tradition of lengthy soliloquies, Nora's final speech serves as a powerful monologue where she asserts her independence. Her transformation is crystallized in her direct, impassioned dialogue with Torvald, where she explains why she must leave. Dr. Rank's reflections on his impending death also function as a soliloquy, revealing his despair and resignation.