DISCUSSION QUESTIONS WHILE READING A DOLL'S HOUSE BY HENRIK IBSEN

ACT I

1. From the beginning of Act I, Torvald calls Nora several pet names. What do these names suggest about Torvald's perception of his wife and his marriage?

2. Compare Nora's and Kristine's lives since marriage. Who is better off? Explain.

3. What might be the link between Nora's "contraband" macaroons and her "huge desire to say – to hell and be damned?"

4. What crime has Nora committed?

5. Do Nora's motives for committing the crime excuse her in some way?

6. What does Nora's tree decorating and chattering at the end of Act I reveal about her character?

ACT II

1. When Nora sees the box of masquerade clothes, she wants to "rip them in a million pieces!" What does Ibsen

symbolize with this characterization?

2. Discuss the foreshadowing in Nora's conversation with Anne-Marie.

3. Why does Torvald make such a decisive show of mailing the letter firing Krogstad against Nora's pleas?

4. After Dr. Rank professes his love, Nora demands the lamp be brought in. Why? Is this light real or artificial?

What might Ibsen be suggesting about truth and light in the Helmer's household?

5. Some histories of the tarantella dance explain that it is used to fight off the venomous effects of a spider bite.

Other interpretations suggest it represents a woman's frustration in oppression. Which of these explanations

best fits Nora's violent practice at the end of Act II? Might both apply? Explain.

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ACT III

1. Why is Kristine willing to "risk everything" for Krogstad?

2. Why does Kristine encourage Krogstad to let Torvald read the letter revealing Nora's deception?

3. Dr. Rank suggests Nora should go to the next masquerade dressed as "Charmed Life," and that she should

dress "just as she looks every day." What is the implication about Nora's daily life? Is it charmed? Or is the

charm a masquerade? Explain.

4. Discuss the irony in Torvald's accusation that Nora has played with him "like a puppet."

5. Helmer's pronouncement that "before all else, (Nora is) a wife and mother" is contradicted by Nora's "before

all else, I'm a human being." Is this issue significant today, or is it only a sign of Ibsen's time? Explain.

6. Discuss Nora's decision to leave her family. Is it truly the only way she can reclaim her identity and humanity?

7. The last sound the audience hears is the door slamming shut after Nora's departure. Examine the theatrical,

literary, and historical significance of this stage device.