

## Unit 1.11: Playscripts

### Worksheet

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The class will split into two equally sized groups. Within each group, form a pair with a classmate.

Your teacher will give one group/pair an extract from *A Doll's House*.

Your teacher will give the other group/pair an extract from *A Streetcar Named Desire*.

- Work with your partner. Rewrite the dramatic extract as prose fiction.
- Once each extract is rewritten, you should swap texts, so that those who rewrote *A Doll's House* should swap with those students who rewrote *A Streetcar Named Desire*.
- Continue to work with your original partner. Consider the concept of **representation**. Comparing the original play text with the (rewritten) prose text of your classmates, what is gained and what is lost? Once you have shared your ideas with a partner, share your ideas with the whole class.
- At the end of the activity, attach the work of each pair to the wall so that everyone has the opportunity to read how others have rewritten a play text as prose fiction.

## A Streetcar Named Desire

Tennessee Williams 1947

### Scene 3

Mitch: What do you teach? What subject?

Blanche: Guess!

Mitch: I bet you teach art or music? (*Blanche laughs delicately.*) Of course I could be wrong. You might teach arithmetic.

Blanche: Never arithmetic, sir; never arithmetic! (*With a laugh.*) I don't even know my multiplication tables! No, I have the misfortune of being an English instructor. I attempt to instil a bunch of bobby-soxers and drug-store Romeos with reverence for Hawthorne and Whitman and Poe!

Mitch: I guess that some of them are more interested in other things.

Blanche: How very right you are! Their literary heritage is not what most of them treasure above all else! But they're sweet things! And in the spring, it's touching to notice them making their first discovery of love! As if nobody had ever known it before!

*The bathroom door opens and Stella comes out. Blanche continues talking to Mitch.*

Blanche: Oh! Have you finished? Wait – I'll turn on the radio.

*She turns the knobs on the radio and it begins to play 'Wien, Wien, nur du allein.' Blanche waltzes to the music with romantic gestures.*

*Mitch is delighted and moves in awkward imitation like a dancing bear. Stanley stalks fiercely through the portieres into the bedroom. He crosses to the small white radio and snatches it off the table. With a shouted oath, he tosses the instrument out of the window.*

Stella: Drunk – drunk – animal thing, you! (*She rushes through to the poker table.*) All of you – please go home! If any of you have one spark of decency in you –

Blanche: Stella, watch out, he's –

*Stanley charges after Stella.*

Men: (*feebly*) Take it easy, Stanley. Easy fellow. – Let's all . . .

Stella: You lay your hands on me and I'll . . .

*She backs out of sight. He advances and disappears. There is the sound of a blow. Stella cries out. Blanche screams and runs into the kitchen. The men rush forward and there is grappling and cursing. Something is overturned with a crash.*

Blanche: My sister is going to have a baby!

Mitch: This is terrible.

Blanche: Lunacy, absolute lunacy!

Mitch: Get him in here, men.

*Stanley is forced, pinioned by the two men, into the bedroom. He nearly throws them off. Then all at once he subsides and is limp in*

*their grasp. They speak quietly and lovingly to him and he leans his face on one of their shoulders.*

Stella (*in a high, unnatural voice, out of sight*): I want to go away, I want to go away!

Mitch: Poker shouldn't be played in a house with women.

## A Doll's House

Henrik Ibsen 1879

### ACT I

*[SCENE.—A room furnished comfortably and tastefully, but not extravagantly. At the back, a door to the right leads to the entrance-hall, another to the left leads to Helmer's study. Between the doors stands a piano. In the middle of the left-hand wall is a door, and beyond it a window. Near the window are a round table, armchairs and a small sofa. In the right-hand wall, at the farther end, another door; and on the same side, nearer the footlights, a stove, two easy chairs and a rocking-chair; between the stove and the door, a small table. Engravings on the walls; a cabinet with china and other small objects; a small book-case with well-bound books. The floors are carpeted, and a fire burns in the stove.]*

*It is winter. A bell rings in the hall; shortly afterwards the door is heard to open. Enter NORA, humming a tune and in high spirits. She is in outdoor dress and carries a number of parcels; these she lays on the table to the right. She leaves the outer door open after her, and through it is seen a PORTER who is carrying a Christmas Tree and a basket, which he gives to the MAID who has opened the door.]*

Nora: Hide the Christmas Tree carefully, Helen. Be sure the children do not see it until this evening, when it is dressed. *[To the PORTER, taking out her purse.]* How much?

Porter: Sixpence.

Nora: There is a shilling. No, keep the change. *[The PORTER thanks her, and goes out. NORA shuts the door. She is laughing to herself, as she takes off her hat and coat. She takes a packet of macaroons from her pocket and eats one or two; then goes cautiously to her husband's door and listens.]* Yes, he is in. *[Still humming, she goes to the table on the right.]*

Helmer *[calls out from his room]*: Is that my little lark twittering out there?

Nora *[busy opening some of the parcels]*: Yes, it is!

Helmer: Is it my little squirrel bustling about?

Nora: Yes!

Helmer: When did my squirrel come home?

Nora: Just now. *[Puts the bag of macaroons into her pocket and wipes her mouth.]* Come in here, Torvald, and see what I have bought.

Helmer: Don't disturb me. *[A little later, he opens the door and looks into the room, pen in hand.]* Bought, did you say? All these things? Has my little spendthrift been wasting money again?

Nora: Yes but, Torvald, this year we really can let ourselves go a little. This is the first Christmas that we have not needed to economise.

Helmer: Still, you know, we can't spend money recklessly.

Nora: Yes, Torvald, we may be a wee bit more reckless now, mayn't we? Just a tiny wee bit! You are going to have a big salary and earn lots and

lots of money.

Helmer: Yes, after the New Year; but then it will be a whole quarter before the salary is due.

Nora: Pooh! we can borrow until then.

Helmer: Nora! [*Goes up to her and takes her playfully by the ear.*] The same little featherhead! Suppose, now, that I borrowed fifty pounds today, and you spent it all in the Christmas week, and then on New Year's Eve a slate fell on my head and killed me, and –

Nora [*putting her hands over his mouth*]: Oh! don't say such horrid things.

Helmer: Still, suppose that happened, – what then?

Nora: If that were to happen, I don't suppose I should care whether I owed money or not.

Helmer: Yes, but what about the people who had lent it?

Nora: They? Who would bother about them? I should not know who they were.

Helmer: That is like a woman! But seriously, Nora, you know what I think about that. No debt, no borrowing. There can be no freedom or beauty about a home life that depends on borrowing and debt. We two have kept bravely on the straight road so far, and we will go on the same way for the short time longer that there need be any struggle.

Nora [*moving towards the stove*]: As you please, Torvald.

Helmer [*following her*]: Come, come, my little skylark must not droop her wings. What is this! Is my little squirrel out of temper? [*Taking out his purse.*] Nora, what do you think I have got here?

Nora [*turning round quickly*]: Money!

Helmer: There you are. [*Gives her some money.*] \_Do you think I don't know what a lot is wanted for housekeeping at Christmas-time?