

# **An Enemy of the People**

**A play in five acts**

**by**

**Henrik Ibsen**

*Translated from the Norwegian by Barbara J. Haveland*

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## CHARACTERS

DR TOMAS STOCKMANN, medical officer to the spa baths

MRS STOCKMANN, his wife

PETRA, their daughter, a teacher

EJLIF &

MORTEN, their sons, aged 13 and 10

PETER STOCKMANN, the doctor's older brother, town magistrate and chief of police, chairman of the spa baths' board of directors

MORTEN KIIL, master tanner, Mrs Stockmann's foster father

HOVSTAD, editor of *The People's Herald*

BILLING, reporter with the newspaper

CAPTAIN HORSTER, ship's captain

MR ASLAKSEN, printer

PEOPLE ATTENDING A PUBLIC MEETING, men of all classes, a few women and a bunch of schoolboys.

The action takes place in a coastal town in southern Norway.

## ACT I

*Evening in the doctor's living-room which is simply, but pleasantly appointed and furnished. In the right-hand wall are two doors, the one farther away leading to the hall, and the nearer one to the doctor's study. On the opposite wall, directly facing the door to the hall, is a door leading to the other rooms of the house. In the middle of this same wall a tiled stove, and further to the foreground a sofa with a mirror above it. In front of the sofa an oval table covered with a rug. On the table a lighted lamp with a shade. In the background an open door leading to the dining-room, where lamps are lit and the table is set for supper.*

*Billing is sitting at the dining-table with a napkin tucked under his chin. Mrs Stockmann is standing by the table, handing him a platter containing a large joint of roast beef. The other seats at the table have been vacated; tableware scattered about as after a meal.*

MRS STOCKMANN: Well, Mr Billing, when you get here an hour late you just have to make do with cold food.

BILLING *(eating)*: It's delicious, - quite excellent.

MRS STOCKMANN: You know how particular Dr Stockmann is about having his dinner served prompt -

BILLING: I don't mind at all. Actually I think it tastes even better when I can sit and eat like this, quite alone and undisturbed.

MRS STOCKMANN: Yes, well, as long as you're enjoying it, - *(cocking an ear towards the hall)*. Ah, that must be Mr Hovstad now.

BILLING: Could be.

*Judge Stockmann the town magistrate comes in, wearing his overcoat and cap of office, with staff in hand.*

JUDGE STOCKMANN: A very good evening to you, sister-in-law.

MRS STOCKMANN (*stepping into the living-room*): Ah, it's yourself, is it? Good evening; how nice of you to come up and see us.

JUDGE STOCKMANN: I was just passing and – (*with a glance towards the dining-room*) Oh, but you have company, it appears.

MRS STOCKMANN (*slightly flustered*): No, not at all; it just so happened - (*quickly*) Won't you come in and have a bite to eat as well?

JUDGE STOCKMANN: Me! No, thank you. Good gracious me; hot food in the evening; not with *my* digestion.

MRS STOCKMANN: Oh, but just this once -.

JUDGE STOCKMANN: No, no, God bless you; I'll stick to my weak tea and my bread and butter. It's healthier in the long run, after all, - and somewhat more economical, too.

MRS STOCKMANN (*smiling*): Ah, but you mustn't go thinking that Tomas and I are utter spendthrifts either.

JUDGE STOCKMANN: Not you, sister-in-law; far be it from me to say that. (*points to the doctor's study*). Is he not at home?

MRS STOCKMANN: No, he went out for a little walk after supper, - he and the boys.

JUDGE STOCKMANN: Can that be healthy, I wonder? (*listens*) Here he comes now, I think.

MRS STOCKMANN: No, I don't think that's him. (*there's a knock at the door*) Come in!

*Hovstad the newspaper editor comes in from the hall.*

MRS STOCKMANN: Oh, it's you Mr Hovstad, -?

HOVSTAD: Yes, you'll have to excuse me; but I got held up at the printer's. Good-evening, Judge.

JUDGE STOCKMANN (*nods rather stiffly*): Mr Hovstad. Here on business, I presume?

HOVSTAD: Partly. There's a piece to go in the paper.

JUDGE STOCKMANN: I'm sure there is. My brother is, it seems, an exceedingly prolific contributor to *The People's Herald*, or so I hear.

HOVSTAD: Yes, he ventures to write in the *Herald* whenever he has a few home truths to impart on one matter or another.

MRS STOCKMANN: But won't you -? (*points to the dining-room*)

JUDGE STOCKMANN: Oh, good gracious, no; I certainly don't blame him for writing for the readership from which he can expect to receive most approbation. In any case, I personally have no reason to nurture any ill-will towards your newspaper, Mr Hovstad.

HOVSTAD: No, I shouldn't have thought so.

JUDGE STOCKMANN: All in all, a fine spirit of tolerance reigns in our town; - a really grand civic spirit. And this springs from the fact that we have a great common cause to rally around, - a cause which is of equal concern to every right-minded citizen -

HOVSTAD: The spa baths, yes.

JUDGE STOCKMANN: Exactly. We have our magnificent, big, new spa baths. Mark my words! Those baths will be the town's finest prerequisite, Mr Hovstad. Indubitably!

MRS STOCKMANN: That's what Tomas says too.

JUDGE STOCKMANN: What a quite extraordinary upturn this place has taken just in the past year or so! There's money about; life and activity. Buildings and land are increasing in value with every day that passes.

HOVSTAD: And unemployment is falling.

JUDGE STOCKMANN: That too, yes. And the poor-rates imposed on the propertied classes have been reduced to a gratifying degree, and will come down even further if only we have a really good summer this year; - a great many visitors from outside, - lots of invalids to give the spa a good reputation.

HOVSTAD: And there is some prospect of this, I hear.

JUDGE STOCKMANN: It's looking very promising. More inquiries regarding accommodation and so on are pouring in every day.

HOVSTAD: Well, in that case, the doctor's article couldn't come at a better time.

JUDGE STOCKMANN: Don't tell me he's written something else?

HOVSTAD: This is something he wrote in the winter; a testimonial for the Baths, a description of the salubrious conditions here in our town. But at the time I kept the article back.

JUDGE STOCKMANN: A-ha, there was some problem with it, I suppose?

HOVSTAD: No, not that; but I felt it was better to wait until the spring, since this is when people start to plan and think about where to spend the summer -

JUDGE STOCKMANN: Quite right; absolutely right, Mr Hovstad.

MRS STOCKMANN: Yes, Tomas really is tireless where the Baths are concerned.

JUDGE STOCKMANN: Well, he is in the employ of the Baths, after all.

HOVSTAD: Yes, and he *is* the one who built it up from scratch, after all.

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JUDGE STOCKMANN: *Is he? Really?* Yes, well, it has occasionally come to my ears that certain people are of that opinion. Although I was under the impression that *I* also had some small part in that undertaking.

MRS STOCKMANN: Yes, that's what Tomas always says.

HOVSTAD: Yes, and who would deny it, Your Honour. You set the whole thing in motion and made it a practical reality; we all know that. I only meant that the idea was first suggested by the doctor.

JUDGE STOCKMANN: Oh yes, my brother has certainly had plenty of ideas in his time – unfortunately. But when it comes to putting something into practice, other sorts of men are called for, Mr Hovstad. And I really did think that in this house at least -

MRS STOCKMANN: But my dear brother-in-law -

HOVSTAD: Oh, now Judge, how can you -

MRS STOCKMANN: Do go in and have something to eat, Mr Hovstad; my husband is sure to be back shortly.

HOVSTAD: Thank you; a little bite perhaps.

*He steps into the dining-room.*

JUDGE STOCKMANN (*under his breath*): It's a strange thing with these people who are directly descended from peasants; they can never quite rid themselves of their tactlessness.

MRS STOCKMANN: But is that really worth bothering about? Can't you and Tomas share the credit, as brothers?

JUDGE STOCKMANN: Yes, well, one would think so; but not everyone's content to share, it seems.



MRS STOCKMANN: Nonsense! You and Tomas get on very well together really. *(listens)* I think that's him now.

*She goes over to the hall door and opens it.*

DR STOCKMANN *(laughing and making a lot of noise out in the hall)*: Look, Katrine, here's another guest for you. Isn't that grand; eh? There you go, Captain Horster; hang your coat on that peg. Ah, so you don't wear an overcoat, sir? Would you believe it, Katrine I picked him up on the street; he wasn't much for coming up with me.

*Captain Horster comes in and greets Mrs Stockmann.*

DR STOCKMANN *(in the doorway)*: In with you, lads. They're famished again, Katrine! Come, Captain Horster; wait till you taste this roast beef -

*He shepherds Horster into the dining-room. Ejlif and Morten follow them in.*

MRS STOCKMANN: But Tomas, don't you see -?

DR STOCKMANN *(turning in the doorway)*: Oh, it's yourself, Peter! *(walks up to him and offers his hand)*. Well, isn't this just grand.

JUDGE STOCKMANN: I'm afraid I'll have to be going in a moment -

DR STOCKMANN: Rubbish; we're just about to have toddy. You're not forgetting the toddy, are you, Katrine?

MRS STOCKMANN: No, of course not; the water's on the boil.

*She goes into the dining-room*

JUDGE STOCKMANN: Toddy as well -!

DR STOCKMANN: Yes, sit yourself down and let's enjoy ourselves.

JUDGE STOCKMANN: Thank-you, no; I never partake in toddy parties.

DR STOCKMANN: Oh, but this isn't a party.

JUDGE STOCKMANN: But I thought – (*glances towards the dining-room*). It's remarkable how they can put away all that food.

DR STOCKMANN: Yes, isn't it a blessing to see young people eat? Always hungry, you know! Which is as it should be. Food's what they need! Energy! These are the people who will stir up the fermenting brew of the future, Peter.

JUDGE STOCKMANN: Dare I ask what there could possibly be to 'stir up' as you put it?

DR STOCKMANN: Ah, you'll have to ask the younger generation that – when the time comes. *We* won't see it of course. Obviously. Two old fogeys like you and me -

JUDGE STOCKMANN: Well, really! That's a most peculiar appellation -

DR STOCKMANN: Ah, you'll have to make allowances for me, Peter. I'm just so very glad and contented, you see. I feel so indescribably happy to be surrounded by all this budding, burgeoning life. What glorious times we're living in! A whole new world seems to be springing up around us.

JUDGE STOCKMANN: Do you really think so?

DR STOCKMANN: Well, it's not as obvious to you as it is to me, of course. You've been a part of this all your life; so the impact is dulled. But I, who was stuck up there in the north in my backwater for all those years, hardly ever seeing a new face, anyone with a stimulating word to say to me, - to me it seems as though I had moved right into the centre of a teeming metropolis -

JUDGE STOCKMANN: Hm; metropolis -

DR STOCKMANN: Yes. Oh, I know it's not big, not compared to a lot of other places. But there's life here, - promise, an untold number of things to work for and strive for; and *that's* the main thing. (*calls out*) Katrine, has the postman not been here?

MRS STOCKMANN (*from the dining-room*): No, no one's been here.

DR STOCKMANN: And to have a good livelihood, Peter! That's something you learn to appreciate when you've lived, as we have, from hand to mouth -

JUDGE STOCKMANN: Good gracious -

DR STOCKMANN: Oh, yes, I'm sure I don't have to tell you that times were often hard for us up there. And now, to be able to live like a gentleman! Today, for example, we had roast beef for dinner; yes, and for supper too. Won't you have a taste? Or can't I at least show you it to you? Here -

JUDGE STOCKMANN: No, no, absolutely not -

DR STOCKMANN: All right, well come here then. We have a table rug, do you see?

JUDGE STOCKMANN: Yes, I did notice that.

DR STOCKMANN: And we have a lampshade. Do you see? All scraped together by Katrine. And they make the room so cosy. Don't you think? Just stand here; - no, no, no; not like that. Like that, yes! Do you see; when the light falls in a pool like that -. I really think it looks so elegant. What do you say?

JUDGE STOCKMANN: Yes, well, if one can permit oneself that sort of luxury -

DR STOCKMANN: Oh yes, I think I can permit myself that now. Katrine says I earn almost as much as we spend.

JUDGE STOCKMANN: Almost, yes -!

DR STOCKMANN: But a man of science ought to live a slightly more refined life. I'm sure the average county councillor spends much more in a year than I do.

JUDGE STOCKMANN: Well, I should think so! A county councillor, a senior administrative officer –

DR STOCKMANN: All right, well an ordinary merchant then! Such a person spends many times more -

JUDGE STOCKMANN: Yes, well that's in the nature of things.

DR STOCKMANN: Besides, I truly don't fritter away money to no good end, Peter. But I see no reason to deny myself the sincere pleasure of having people in my home. I need it, you see. I, who have been shut out for so long, - for me it's a vital necessity to be with young, gay, spirited people, open-minded people, dynamic -; and *that* they are, all those who sit round that table and eat so well in there. I wish you could get to know Hovstad a little -

JUDGE STOCKMANN: Ah yes, Hovstad, that's right, he told me he was going to be printing another article by you.

DR STOCKMANN: An article by me?

JUDGE STOCKMANN: Yes, about the Baths. An article you wrote in the winter.

DR STOCKMANN: Oh that one, yes! – Ah, but I don't want that to be published just yet.

JUDGE STOCKMANN: You don't? But it strikes me that this would be the perfect time.

DR STOCKMANN: Yes, you could be right about that; under normal circumstances – (*walks across the room*)

JUDGE STOCKMANN (*his eyes following him*): And what could possibly be abnormal about the current circumstances?

DR STOCKMANN (*stops*): Ah, Peter, I'm blessed if I can tell you at the moment; not this evening at any rate. There could be a great deal about the circumstances that is abnormal; or possibly nothing at all. It might well be that it's just my imagination.

JUDGE STOCKMANN: I must confess, this sounds most mysterious. Is something afoot? Something I am not to be privy to? Although I would have thought that as chairman of the Baths' board, I -

DR STOCKMANN: And I would have thought that I -; oh, let's not go flying at each other's throats, Peter.

JUDGE STOCKMANN: Heaven forbid; I'm not in the habit of flying at anyone's throat, as you put it. But I must insist, most strongly, that all measures be adopted and implemented in a businesslike manner and through the thereto legally appointed authorities. I cannot permit the taking of roundabout routes or back ways.

DR STOCKMANN: Have *I* ever gone by roundabout routes or back ways!

JUDGE STOCKMANN: You have an ingrained tendency to go your own way at any rate. And in a well-ordered society that is surely almost as unacceptable. The individual simply has to put up with having to toe the common line, or rather, that set by the authorities responsible for safeguarding the common weal.

DR STOCKMANN: That may be. But what the blazes does that have to do with me?

JUDGE STOCKMANN: Ah, because you see, my dear Tomas, that is what you never seem to learn. But beware; you may well find yourself paying for it one day – sooner or later. Don't say I didn't warn you. Goodbye.

DR STOCKMANN: Are you out of your mind? You're on quite the wrong track -

JUDGE STOCKMANN: Well, I'm not usually. In any case I will have to decline – (*nods toward the dining-room*) Goodbye, sister-in-law. Goodbye, gentlemen.

*He leaves.*

MRS STOCKMANN (*coming into the living-room*): Has he gone?

DR STOCKMANN: Oh, yes, and in high dudgeon too.

MRS STOCKMANN: Oh, Tomas dear, what have you done to offend him now?

DR STOCKMANN: Not a single thing. He surely can't expect me to account to him ahead of time.

MRS STOCKMANN: What should you have to account to him for?

DR STOCKMANN: Hm, leave that to me, Katrine. – It's odd that the postman hasn't been.

*Hovstad, Billing and Horster have left the dining-table and come into the living-room. Ejlif and Morten come in shortly afterwards.*

BILLING: Ah, by God, after a meal like that one feels like a new man.

HOVSTAD: The judge wasn't in the best of moods this evening, it seems.

DR STOCKMANN: It's his stomach; he suffers from bad digestion.

HOVSTAD: It was probably us from *The People's Herald* he found hardest to digest.

MRS STOCKMANN: You got on tolerably well with him, though, I think.

HOVSTAD: Oh yes, but that's nothing but a truce of sorts.

BILLING: *There* you have it! That's the situation in a nutshell.

DR STOCKMANN: We have to remember that Peter is a single man, poor soul. He has no home with all its comforts for him to enjoy; nothing but business, business. And all that blasted weak tea he swills. Right then, pull your chairs up to the table, lads! Katrine, where's that toddy?

MRS STOCKMANN (*walking towards the dining-room*): I'm bringing it now.

DR STOCKMANN: And you have a seat here on the sofa, next to me, Captain Horster. A rare guest such as yourself -. Please; sit down, my friends.

*The gentleman take their seats around the table. Mrs Stockmann brings in a tray bearing a kettle, glasses, carafes and other paraphernalia.*

MRS STOCKMANN: Here you are: this is arrack, and this here is rum; and this is brandy. Now you can all help yourselves.

DR STOCKMANN (*taking a glass*): Oh, we certainly will. (*while the toddies are being mixed*). Now let's get the cigars out. Ejlif, you know where the box is kept, don't you. And you, Morten, can fetch my pipe. (*the boys disappear into the room on the right*). I have a suspicion that Ejlif pinches a cigar now and again; but I pretend not to notice. (*calls out*) And my smoking cap, Morten! Katrine, can't you tell him where I've put it. Ah, he's got it! (*the boys bring him the desired items*). Please, help yourselves, my friends. I stick to my pipe, as you know; this one here has been for many a storm-blown walk with me up there in the North. (*chinks glasses*) Cheers! Aah, but it really is a bit better to be sitting here all snug and warm.

MRS STOCKMANN: Will you be going to sea soon, Captain Horster?

HORSTER: I'm expecting to be ready next week.

MRS STOCKMANN: And then you'll be off to America, will you?

HORSTER: Yes, that's the plan.

BILLING: But that means you won't be able to take part in the election for the new council board.

HORSTER: Is there to be another election here?

BILLING: Didn't you know that?

HORSTER: No, I don't get involved in such matters.

BILLING: But you do care about public affairs, surely?

HORSTER: No, I don't understand such things.

BILLING: All the same; you do at least have to vote.

HORSTER: Even those who don't know anything about it?

BILLING: Know? Now, what do you mean by that? Society is like a ship; it's all hands to the wheel

HORSTER: That might be fine on land; but it wouldn't work so well on board ship.

HOVSTAD: It's strange how most sailors care so little for matters of national interest.

BILLING: Very odd.

DR STOCKMANN: Sailors are like birds of passage; they feel at home both in the south and the north. But that means that the rest of us need to work all the harder. Is there going to be anything of a generally edifying nature in the *Herald* tomorrow?

HOVSTAD: Nothing of local interest. But the day after tomorrow I was thinking of running your article -

DR STOCKMANN: Oh, damn and blast it, that article. No, listen, you'll have to wait with that.

HOVSTAD: Oh? It's just that we have plenty of space at the moment and I felt this would be the perfect time -

DR STOCKMANN: Yes, yes, you could be right about that; nonetheless you'll have to wait. I'll explain later -

*Petra comes in from the hall in her hat and coat with a bundle of exercise books under her arm.*

PETRA: Good evening.

DR STOCKMANN: Ah, it's you Petra; good evening.

*Greetings all round; Petra deposits her coat, hat and books on a chair by the door.*



PETRA: And here you all are indulging yourselves while I've been out slaving away.

DR STOCKMANN: Well, come you and indulge yourself too.

BILLING: Shall I prepare a little glass for you?

PETRA: Thank you, but I'd rather do it myself; you always make it too strong. Oh, by the way, Father, I have a letter for you. *(goes over to the chair where she has left her hat and coat)*.

DR STOCKMANN: A letter! From whom?

PETRA *(rummaging in her coat pocket)*: The postman gave it to me just as I was going out -

DR STOCKMANN *(gets up and goes over to her)*: And you're only bringing it to me now!

PETRA: I really didn't have time to run back up the stairs with it. Here you are.

DR STOCKMANN: Let me see; let me see, child. *(glances at the inscription)*. Yes, just as I thought - !

MRS STOCKMANN: Is *that* what you've been waiting for, Tomas?

DR STOCKMANN: Yes indeed; now I'd better go straight in -. Where can I find a light, Katrine? Don't tell me there's no lamp in my study again!

MRS STOCKMANN: No, the lamp is right there on your desk, and it's lit.

DR STOCKMANN: Good, good. Excuse me a moment.

*He goes into the room on the right.*

PETRA: What can it be, Mother?

MRS STOCKMANN: I don't know; he has asked after the postman so often over the past few days.

BILLING: Probably some out-of-town patient -

PETRA: Poor Father; he's soon going to have far too much to do. (*mixes her toddy*). Ah, this should be good!

HOVSTAD: Have you been to night school today as well?

PETRA: Two hours.

BILLING: And four hours at the Institute this morning -

PETRA: Five hours.

MRS STOCKMANN: And you've essays to correct this evening, I see.

PETRA: A whole pile of them, yes.

HORSTER: You've more than enough to do yourself, so it seems.

PETRA: Yes, but that's good. One is so nice and tired afterwards.

BILLING: And you like that?

PETRA: Yes, because then one sleeps so well.

MORTEN: You must be really sinful, Petra.

PETRA: Sinful?

MORTEN: Yes, working as much as you do. Mr Rørlund says work is a punishment for our sins.

EJLIF (*snorts*): Huh, shows how stupid you are, believing something like that.

MRS STOCKMANN: Now, now Ejlif!

BILLING (*laughing*): Oh, that's excellent.

HOVSTAD: You wouldn't want to work as much as that, Morten?

MORTEN: No, I wouldn't.

HOVSTAD: All right, but what would you like to be in life?

MORTEN: What I'd most like to be is a Viking.

EJLIF: Ah, but then you'd have to be a heathen, wouldn't you?

MORTEN: Yes, well, then I'd be a heathen, wouldn't I?

BILLING: I'm with you there, Morten! That's just what I say.

MRS STOCKMANN (*signing to him*): No, I'm sure you don't, no, Mr Billing.

BILLING: By God, yes -! I *am* a heathen, and proud of it. Mark my words, we'll all be heathens soon.

MORTEN: And *then* will we be allowed to do anything we want?

BILLING: Well, you see, Morten –

MRS STOCKMANN: Run along now, boys; you must have homework to do for tomorrow.

EJLIF: I might be allowed to stay a little longer -

MRS STOCKMANN: Not you either; off you go, the pair of you.

*The boys say goodnight and go into the room on the left.*

HOVSTAD: Do you really think it can hurt the boys to hear something like that?

MRS STOCKMANN: Oh, I don't know; but I don't like it.

PETRA: Oh, but Mother, I think that's quite wrong of you.

MRS STOCKMANN: Oh, that's as may be; but I don't like it; not here at home.

PETRA: There's so much untruthfulness both at home and at school. At home things have to be hushed up and at school we have to stand there and lie to the children.

HORSTER: You have to lie?

PETRA: Yes, don't you think we have to teach a great deal that we don't believe in ourselves?

BILLING: Yes, that's probably all too true.

PETRA: If only I had the money I'd set up a school of my own, and things would be done differently there.

BILLING: Oh well, money -

HORSTER: Well, if *that's* what you have in mind, Miss Stockmann, you're welcome to use one of my rooms. My dear, departed father's big old house is standing there all but empty, you know; there's an enormous dining-room downstairs -

PETRA (*laughing*): Yes, yes, thank you; but I don't suppose it will ever come to anything.

HOVSTAD: Oh, no. Miss Petra is more likely to join the ranks of the journalists, I think. Oh, by the way, have you had time to take a look at that English story you promised to translate for us?

PETRA: No, not yet; but don't worry, you'll have it on time.

*Dr Stockmann emerges from his study holding the open letter.*

DR STOCKMANN (*waving the letter*): Well, now, here's some news to set the town talking!

BILLING: News?

MRS STOCKMANN: What sort of news?

DR STOCKMANN: A great discovery, Katrine!

HOVSTAD: Oh?

MRS STOCKMANN: Made by you?

DR STOCKMANN: Yes, by yours truly. (*striding back and forth*). Now let them come, as they usually do, and say that it's all mere fancy and the delusions of a madman. Well they'd better watch what they say! Ha-ha, they'll have to watch what they say, I think!

PETRA: But Father, tell us what it is.

DR STOCKMANN: Yes, yes, just give me time and you shall hear all about it. Oh, if only I had Peter here! Yes, it just shows you how we humans can go around making judgements like the blindest of moles -

HOVSTAD: What do you mean by that, Doctor?

DR STOCKMANN (*stopping by the table*): Is it not the general opinion that our town is a salubrious place?

HOVSTAD: Yes, of course it is.

DR STOCKMANN: A quite extraordinarily salubrious place, even, - a place which deserves to be recommended most warmly for our fellow human beings, both sick and well -

MRS STOCKMANN: Yes, but Tomas dear -

DR STOCKMANN: And recommended it and praised it, that is what we've done. I've written article after article, both for *The People's Herald* and for pamphlets -

HOVSTAD: Well, yes, but what of it?

DR STOCKMANN: These spa baths, which are described as the town's main artery, the town's vital nerve and - and the devil knows what all else -

BILLING: "The pulsating heart of the town" is what I once, in a frivolous moment, took the liberty of -

DR STOCKMANN: Oh yes, that too. But do you know what they actually are, these great, splendid, acclaimed spa baths that have cost so much money, - do you know what they are?

HOVSTAD: No, what are they?

MRS STOCKMANN: Yes, what?

DR STOCKMANN: Those baths are a pestilential sump.

PETRA: The Baths, Father!

MRS STOCKMANN: Our Baths!

HOVSTAD: But Doctor -

BILLING: Absolutely incredible!

DR STOCKMANN: That whole spa is a poisonous whited sepulchre, I tell you. Unsanitary in the extreme. All that filth and muck up in Mølleedal, - all that foul-smelling ordure, - it contaminates the

water in the feeder pipes to the well-house; and this same damnable poisonous sludge also seeps out onto the beach -.

HORSTER: Where the sea-baths are?

DR STOCKMANN: Just there.

HOVSTAD: How can you be so sure of all this, Doctor?

DR STOCKMANN: I have examined the conditions as conscientiously as possible. Oh, I had long suspected something of the sort. There were quite a few notable instances of illness among visitors to the Baths, - cases of typhoid and of gastric complaints -

MRS STOCKMANN: Yes, that's true, there were.

DR STOCKMANN: At the time we thought these outsiders had brought the infection with them; but later, - in the winter, - I began to have second thoughts about this; so I set about examining the water, as well as that could be done.

MRS STOCKMANN: So *that's* what you've been so busy with!

DR STOCKMANN: Oh, I've been busy all right, Katrine. But I didn't have the necessary scientific facilities here, you see; so I sent samples of both the drinking water and the seawater to the university to have an exact analysis carried out by a chemist.

HOVSTAD: And this you have now received?

DR STOCKMANN (*holding up the letter*): I have it here! It has been established that putrefied organic material is present in the water, - infusoria galore. This is most definitely damaging to the health whether taken internally or externally.

MRS STOCKMANN: What a blessing that you discovered it in time.

DR STOCKMANN: Oh, you can say that again.

HOVSTAD: And what do you intend to do now, Doctor?

DR STOCKMANN: I'm going to put the matter right, of course.

HOVSTAD: But is that possible

DR STOCKMANN: It must be possible. Otherwise the whole spa will be useless – ruined. No need to worry, though. I know exactly what has to be done.

MRS STOCKMANN: But Tomas dear, how could you have kept all this so secret.

DR STOCKMANN: Well, would you rather I had run all over town talking about it, before I was completely certain? No, thank you; I'm not that mad.

PETRA: Yes, but to us, here at home -

DR STOCKMANN: Not to a living soul. But tomorrow you can pop round to the "Badger" -

MRS STOCKMANN: Oh, now Tomas, really -!

DR STOCKMANN: All right, all right, to your grandfather then. Ah, this'll give him something to wonder about, the old rogue; he thinks I'm off my head, you know; oh yes, and he's not the only one who thinks that, I can tell. Well, now they'll see, those worthy folk -; now they'll jolly well see -! (*paces up and down, rubbing his hands*). There's going to be such an uproar in this town, Katrine! You've no idea. All the water conduits will have to be relaid.

HOVSTAD: All the water conduits -?

DR STOCKMANN: Yes, of course. The inlet is too low down; it'll have to be moved to a spot much higher up.

PETRA: So you were proved right after all.

DR STOCKMANN: Yes, do you remember, Petra? I wrote an article criticizing them. When they were about to start building. But no one would listen to me back then. Well, I'm going to give them what for now, I can tell you; oh yes, because I have, of course, written a report to the Baths' board of directors; it's been lying here ready for a whole week; I've just been waiting for this. (*holds up the letter*). But it's going to be sent off now, this very minute. (*steps into his study and reappears clutching a sheaf of papers*). See here! Four full, closely-written sheets! And this letter shall be

enclosed with them. A newspaper, Katrine! Find me something to wrap it in. Right; now then; give it to – to –; (*stamps his foot*) what the hell's her name again? Well, anyway, give it to that girl; tell her she's to take it straight down to the Judge.

*Mrs Stockmann exits through the dining-room carrying the parcel.*

PETRA: What do you think Uncle Peter will say, Father?

DR STOCKMANN: Well, what *can* he say? He can't be anything but glad that such an important truth has been brought to light, I'm sure.

HOVSTAD: Might I be permitted to put a little note about your discovery in *The People's Herald*?

DR STOCKMANN: Yes, I'd be very grateful if you would.

HOVSTAD: It's probably as well that the general public be informed, and the sooner the better.

DR STOCKMANN: Indeed it is.

MRS STOCKMANN (*returning*): She's off to deliver it now.

BILLING: By God, Doctor, you're going to be the top man in this town!

DR STOCKMANN (*wandering around, looking pleased*): Oh, well: I really haven't done anything except my duty. I've been a lucky treasure hunter; that's all; but still -

BILLING: Hovstad, don't you think the town ought to hold a parade for Dr Stockmann, with banners and bunting.

HOVSTAD: I, for one, would be all for that.

BILLING: And I'll speak to Aslaksen about it.



DR STOCKMANN: No, dear friends, let such antics pass; I won't hear of any sort of celebration. And if the board of the Baths should take it into their heads to award me a bonus, I will not accept it. Katrine, I'm telling you, - I won't accept it.

MRS STOCKMANN: You're quite right, Tomas.

PETRA: Cheers, Father!

HOVSTAD and BILLING: Cheers, cheers, Doctor.

HORSTER (*chinking glasses with the doctor*): May you have nothing but joy of this.

DR STOCKMANN: Thank you, thank you, my dear friends! I am so very, very glad -; oh, what a blessing it is to know in your heart that you have earned the gratitude of your native town and of your fellow citizens. Hooray, Katrine!

*He flings his arms about her and whirls her round. Mrs Stockmann squeals and resists. Laughter, clapping and cheers for the doctor. The boys pop their heads round the door.*

## ACT II

*The doctor's living-room. The dining-room door is closed. Mid-morning.*

MRS STOCKMANN (*comes out of the dining-room with a sealed letter in her hand, walks over to the nearest door on the right and looks in*): Are you home, Tomas?

DR STOCKMANN (*from inside*): Yes, I just got here. (*comes out*) What is it?

MRS STOCKMANN: A letter from your brother. (*hands it to him*)

DR STOCKMANN: A-ha, let's see. (*opens the wrapping and reads*) "The dispatched manuscript is hereby returned – " (*reads on under his breath*) Hm -

MRS STOCKMANN: What does he say?

DR STOCKMANN: Oh, he simply says that he'll come up here himself around midday.

MRS STOCKMANN: Well, do remember to stay at home then.

DR STOCKMANN: Yes, I can do that all right; I've finished my morning rounds.

MRS STOCKMANN: I'm very curious to know how he'll take it.

DR STOCKMANN: He won't much like the fact that it was me and not him who made this discovery, you wait and see.

MRS STOCKMANN: I know, doesn't that worry you too?

DR STOCKMANN: Ah, but deep down he'll be glad, you know. All the same, though -; Peter is so damned afraid that anyone other than him might do something for the good of the town.

MRS STOCKMANN: Well, in that case, Tomas, - you should be gracious and give him some of the credit. Couldn't it be said that he was the one who put you on to it -?

DR STOCKMANN: Yes, all right, that's fine by me. Just so long as I can set the matter right -

OLD MORTEN KIIL (*pops his head round the hall door, looks around him inquiringly, chuckles to himself and ask slyly*): Is it – is it true?

MRS STOCKMANN: Father, - is that you!

DR STOCKMANN: Well, well, father-in-law; good morning, good morning!

MRS STOCKMANN: Oh, but come on in, do.

MORTEN KIIL: All right, if it's true; otherwise I'll be off again.

DR STOCKMANN: If what's true?

MORTEN KIIL: This daft business with the waterworks. Is it true?

DR STOCKMANN: Yes, of course it's true. But how did *you* find out about *that*?

MORTEN KIIL (*coming in*): Petra popped in on her way to school -

DR STOCKMANN: Oh, she did, did she?

MORTEN KIIL: Oh, aye, and she tells me -. I thought she was just fooling with me; but that's not like Petra.

DR STOCKMANN: No, how could you think such a thing!

MORTEN KIIL: Oh, you should never trust anybody; you can be made a fool of before you know it. It's true after all, then?

DR STOCKMANN: Yes, it most certainly is. Do sit down, father-in-law. (*pressing him down onto the sofa*) Now isn't that a real stroke of luck for the town -?

MORTEN KIIL (*trying not to laugh*): A stroke of luck for the town?

DR STOCKMANN: Yes, that I made this discovery in time –

MORTEN KIIL: Oh yes, oh yes! – But I never thought I'd see you getting up to monkey business with your own brother, your own flesh and blood.

DR STOCKMANN: Monkey business!

MRS STOCKMANN: Oh, now father dear, really -

MORTEN KIIL (*rests his hands and his chin on the top of his cane and winks slyly at the doctor*):

What was the story now? Some animals had got into the water pipes, wasn't that it?

DR STOCKMANN: Yes indeed. Animalcula – microscopic animals.

MORTEN KIIL: And a whole lot of these animals had got in there apparently, or so Petra said. A whole when o' them.

DR STOCKMANN: That's true; they're could be hundreds of thousands of them in there.

MORTEN KIIL: But nobody can see them, - was that not how it was?

DR STOCKMANN: That's right; you can't see them.

MORTEN KIIL (*chuckling softly*): Well, I'll be blowed if that isn't the best I've heard from you yet.

DR STOCKMANN: What do you mean?

MORTEN KIIL: But you'll never get the judge to believe something like that.

DR STOCKMANN: Oh, we'll see about that.

MORTEN KIIL: D'you think he'd ever be that daft?

DR STOCKMANN: I hope the whole town will be that daft.

MORTEN KIIL: The whole town! Aye, well it might just be, at that. But it serves them right; it'll do them good. They think they're so much cleverer than us old folk. They hounded me off the council board. Aye, hounded, I say, because they voted me out like a hound, so they did. But now they're going to be paid back. Get up to all the monkey business you like with them, Stockmann.

DR STOCKMANN: Oh, but father-in-law -

MORTEN KIIL: All the monkey business you like, I say. (*stands up*). If you can manage to send the judge and his cronies off with their tails between their legs, I'll give a hundred kroner to the poor on the spot.

DR STOCKMANN: Well, that's very good of you.

MORTEN KIIL: Aye, well, I don't have that much to spare; but if you can manage that, I'll donate fifty kroner to the poor on Christmas Eve.

*Hovstad, the newspaper editor, enters from the hall.*

HOVSTAD: Good morning! (*stops short*) Oh, excuse me –

DR STOCKMANN: No, come in; come in.

MORTEN KIIL (*chuckles again*): Him! Is he in on it too?

HOVSTAD: What do you mean?

DR STOCKMANN: Yes, of course he's in on it.

MORTEN KIIL: I might have guessed! It'll be in the papers. Oh aye, you're the very man for this, all right, Stockmann. But scheme away, I say; I'll be off now.

DR STOCKMANN: Oh no, stay a while, father-in-law.

MORTEN KIIL: No, I'll be off now. And you get up to all the monkey business you can; I'm damned if you'll have done all this for nothing.

*He leaves; Mrs Stockmann follows him out.*

DR STOCKMANN: Would you credit it, - the old man doesn't believe a word of all this about the water system.

HOVSTAD: Ah, so it was *that* business -?

DR STOCKMANN: Yes, that's what we were talking about. And that may be why you're here too?

HOVSTAD: Yes, it is. Do you have a moment, Doctor?

DR STOCKMANN: As long as you want, my dear fellow.

HOVSTAD: Have you heard anything from the judge?

DR STOCKMANN: Not yet. He's coming over later.

HOVSTAD: I've given the matter a lot of thought since yesterday evening.

DR STOCKMANN: Oh yes?

HOVSTAD: For you, as a doctor and a man of science, this thing with the water system is an isolated case. I mean, it doesn't occur to you that this is linked to a whole bunch of other things.

DR STOCKMANN: Oh, in what way -? Why don't we sit down, my dear fellow. – No, there on the sofa.

*Hovstad sits down on the sofa, the doctor in an armchair on the other side of the table.*

DR STOCKMANN: Now then? So you believe -?

HOVSTAD: You said yesterday that the putrid water was the result of impurities in the soil.

DR STOCKMANN: Yes, it comes, without a shadow of a doubt, from that poisonous sump up in Mølledalén.

HOVSTAD: Excuse me, Doctor, but I think it comes from a quite different sump.

DR STOCKMANN: What sump might that be?

HOVSTAD: The sump in which the whole life of our community is rotting away.

DR STOCKMANN: Oh, good grief. Mr Hovstad, what sort of talk is that?

HOVSTAD: Little by little, all the affairs of this town have passed into the hands of a select group of public officials -

DR STOCKMANN: Ah, well they're not all public officials, you know.

HOVSTAD: No, but those that aren't public officials are certainly friends or associates of public officials; it's all the rich men, all those in town with old and distinguished names; it's them who govern and control us.

DR STOCKMANN: Yes, but these people do actually have both skill and acumen.

HOVSTAD: Did they display skill and acumen when they laid those water pipes where they are now?

DR STOCKMANN: No, *that* was obviously a very stupid mistake on their part. But that's going to be put right now.

HOVSTAD: Do you think it will be so smoothly done?

DR STOCKMANN: Smoothly or not, it shall be done.

HOVSTAD: Yes, if the press takes a hand.

DR STOCKMANN: That won't be necessary, my dear fellow. I'm sure my brother -

HOVSTAD: Excuse me, Doctor, but I have to tell you that I mean to take up this matter.

DR STOCKMANN: In the paper?

HOVSTAD: Yes. When I took over *The People's Herald* it was my intention to break up this circle of pig-headed old stick-in-the-muds who held all the power.

DR STOCKMANN: But you told me yourself what came of that; you almost ruined the paper in the process.

HOVSTAD: Yes, back then we had to hold our tongues, that's very true. Because there was a risk that the Baths wouldn't be built if those men fell. But now they are there, and now those grand gents are dispensable.

DR STOCKMANN: Dispensable, yes; but still, we do owe them a great debt of gratitude.

HOVSTAD: And that will also be acknowledged with all good grace. But a newspaperman of my popular bent cannot let an opportunity such as this go by him. This myth about the infallibility of

the ruling class must be overturned. Such things must be stamped out, just like all other forms of superstition.

DR STOCKMANN: On that I agree with you with all my heart, Mr Hovstad; wherever there is superstition, away with it!

HOVSTAD: The judge, though, I'd be loath to meddle with him, seeing that he's your brother. But you seem to feel, as I do, that the truth should come before all other considerations.

DR STOCKMANN: Well, that goes without saying. – (*exclaiming*). Ah, but -! Ah, but -!

HOVSTAD: Don't get me wrong. I'm no more self-seeking or power-hungry than anyone else.

DR STOCKMANN: But my dear chap, - who would ever think that?

HOVSTAD: I come from humble stock, as you know; and I've had plenty of opportunity to see what the lower classes need most. And that is, to have a hand in the governing of public affairs, Doctor. *That* is what fosters skills and knowledge and self-esteem -

DR STOCKMANN: That I can very well understand –

HOVSTAD: Right, - and so it seems to me that a journalist has a great deal to answer for if he fails to seize a golden opportunity for the liberation of the masses, of the little people, of the downtrodden. Oh, I know, - in the big men's camp they would call this subversion and suchlike; but let them think what they like. As long as my conscience is clear, -

DR STOCKMANN: Yes, exactly! That's it exactly, my dear Mr Hovstad. But still – damn it all -  
! (*there is a knock at the door*) Come in!

*Aslaksen the printer appears in the hall doorway. He is plainly, but decently dressed in black, with a rather creased white stock, gloves and a silk hat in his hand.*

ASLAKSEN (*bowing*): I beg your pardon, Doctor, for being so bold -



DR STOCKMANN: Well, well, - look who's here, Aslaksen the printer!

ASLAKSEN: Yes, indeed, Doctor.

HOVSTAD (*rising*): Was it me you wanted, Aslaksen?

ASLAKSEN: No, it wasn't; I didn't know I'd find you here. No, it was really the doctor himself -

DR STOCKMANN: Well, how can I be of service?

ASLAKSEN: Is it true what I hear from Mr Billing, that the doctor is thinking of procuring us a better water system

DR STOCKMANN: Yes, for the spa baths.

ASLAKSEN: Ah yes; I understand. Well, I'm here to tell you that I'll do everything in my power to support this cause.

HOVSTAD (*to the doctor*): You see!

DR STOCKMANN: Well, I'm sincerely grateful for your offer; but -

ASLAKSEN: Because you might well need to have us ordinary townsmen behind you. We form a kind of a compact majority in this town, you see – when we really *want* to. And it's always good to have the majority on your side, Doctor.

DR STOCKMANN: That is undeniably true; but I simply can't imagine that any special measures should be called for here. I would have thought that such a simple, straightforward matter -

ASLAKSEN: Oh, yes, but it might not be a bad thing all the same; because I know the local authorities only too well; the powers that be are not greatly given to accepting suggestions from other people. Which is why I feel it might not go amiss if we were to protest a bit.

HOVSTAD: Yes, exactly.

DR STOCKMANN: Protest, you say? I see, and how exactly would you protest?

ASLAKSEN: With great temperance, of course, Doctor; I strive always for temperance; because temperance, that is a citizen's prime virtue, - in *my* opinion, that is.

DR STOCKMANN: And one for which you are, of course, well-known, Mr Aslaksen.

ASLAKSEN: Yes, I believe I dare say that I am. And this matter of the water system, it really is of great importance to us townsmen. Because the Baths look like becoming a little goldmine for the town. We're all going to be making our living from the Baths, not least us householders. So we're obviously keen to support the spa in every way we can. And since I'm the chairman of the Householders Association -

DR STOCKMANN: Yes -?

ASLAKSEN: - and since I'm also an agent for the Temperance Society, - yes, well the doctor knows, I'm sure that I'm active in the temperance cause?

DR STOCKMANN: Yes, of course.

ASLAKSEN: Well – then you'll understand that I come into contact with a lot of people. And since I am known for being a prudent law-abiding citizen, as the doctor himself said, I do have a certain influence in the town, - a modest position of power, - though I say so myself.

DR STOCKMANN: I'm well aware of this, Mr Aslaksen.

ASLAKSEN: So you see – it would be no trouble for me to draw up a testimonial, in case there should be any problem.

DR STOCKMANN: A testimonial, you say?

ASLAKSEN: Yes, a sort of vote of thanks to you from the people of the town for bringing to light a matter of such social importance. It goes without saying that it ought to be worded with due temperance so as not to offend the authorities or anyone else in power. And as long as we're very careful to do *that*, then no one can possibly take exception to us, I'm sure?

HOVSTAD: Yes, well, even if they weren't all that happy about it, –

ASLAKSEN: No, no, no; no antagonising the powers that be, Mr Hovstad. No opposing people who are so close to us. I've had enough of that in my time; and nothing good ever comes of it

anyway. But the frank and prudent remarks of a citizen, no man can be forbidden from making these.

DR STOCKMANN. I can't tell you, my dear Mr Aslaksen, how very happy it makes me to encounter so much support among my fellow townspeople. I'm so glad, - so glad! Now then; how about a little glass of sherry? Eh?!

ASLAKSEN: No, thank-you; I never indulge in spirits of that nature.

DR STOCKMANN: Oh, well a glass of beer then; what do you say to that?

ASLAKSEN: No thank-you, not that either, Doctor; I don't indulge in anything so early in the day. But now I will go off into town to speak to some of the householders and prepare the ground.

DR STOCKMANN: Oh, that really is extremely kind of you, Mr Aslaksen; although I simply can't imagine that all these measures should be necessary; the matter should, I think, run its course quite naturally.

ASLAKSEN: The authorities do tend to move rather slowly, Doctor. Oh, heavens, I'm not blaming them, it's not that -

HOVSTAD: We'll get them going in the paper tomorrow, Aslaksen.

ASLAKSEN: Not too forcefully, though, Mr Hovstad. Proceed with moderation, or you'll never get them to budge; take my advice; because I gained my experience in the school of life. - Well, I'll say goodbye, Doctor. Now you know that at least we ordinary townsmen are behind you, like a wall. You have the compact majority on your side, Doctor.

DR STOCKMANN: Thank-you, my dear Mr Aslaksen. (*shakes his hand*). Goodbye, goodbye!

ASLAKSEN: Are you coming along to the printing house, Mr Hovstad?

HOVSTAD: I'll be over later; I still have a few things to sort out.

ASLAKSEN: Good, good.

*He bows and leaves; Dr Stockmann accompanies him into the hall.*

HOVSTAD (*when the doctor comes back in*): Well, Doctor, what do you say? Don't you think it's time to air this place out and give all this slackness and half-heartedness and cowardliness a good shaking up?

DR STOCKMANN: Are you referring to Mr Aslaksen?

HOVSTAD: Yes, I am. He's one of those who's stuck in the sump – no matter how good a man he may be in other ways. The same goes for most people in this town of ours; they waver and dither and swither one way then the other; so ridden with considerations and scruples that they never dare to go the whole hog.

DR STOCKMANN: Oh, but Aslaksen was so very well-disposed, I thought.

HOVSTAD: There's one thing that I rate more highly; and that is to stand as a solid, self-assured man.

DR STOCKMANN: I couldn't agree with you more.

HOVSTAD: Which is why I'm now going to take this opportunity to try and see if I can't persuade those who are well-disposed to act like men for once. This idolisation of authority *must* be stamped out here in town. This huge and inexcusable mistake that has been made with the water system must be made plain to all members of the electorate.

DR STOCKMANN: Very well; if you believe that it's in the public's best interests, then so be it; but not until I've spoken to my brother.

HOVSTAD: I'll write an editorial in the meantime, anyway. And if the Judge won't pursue the matter -

DR STOCKMANN: Oh, but how can you think such a thing?

HOVSTAD: It's not entirely unthinkable. And in *that case* -?

DR STOCKMANN: Well, in that case I promise you -; listen to me, - in that case you can print my study, - publish it in full.

HOVSTAD: May I? I have your word?

DR STOCKMANN: Here it is; take it with you; it can't do any harm for you to read through it; and you can let me have it back later.

HOVSTAD: Good, good; I'll do that. Well, goodbye then, Doctor.

DR STOCKMANN: Goodbye, goodbye! And it will all go so smoothly, Hovstad, you'll see – so smoothly!

HOVSTAD: Hm, - we'll see.

*He nods and walks off across the hall.*

DR STOCKMANN: Katrine -! Oh, you're home are you, Petra?

PETRA (*coming in*): Yes, I just got home from school.

MRS STOCKMANN (*coming in*): Hasn't he been here yet?

DR STOCKMANN: Peter? No. But I've had a long talk with Hovstad. He's very impressed with the discovery I've made. Oh yes, because it has far wider-ranging consequences than I first thought, you see. So he has placed his newspaper at my disposal, if that should prove necessary.

MRS STOCKMANN: But do you think it will be necessary?

DR STOCKMANN: No, not at all. But in any case it makes one proud to know one has the open-minded free press on one's side. Oh, and would you believe it – I had a visit from the chairman of the Householders' Association.

MRS STOCKMANN: Really? And what did he want?

DR STOCKMANN: To support me too. They'll all support me, if there should be any problem, Katrine, - do you know what I have behind me?

MRS STOCKMANN: Behind you? No; what do you have behind you?

DR STOCKMANN: The compact majority.

MRS STOCKMANN: I see. And is that a good thing for you, Tomas?

DR STOCKMANN: Oh, I'll say it's good! (*rubs his hands and paces up and down*). Good heavens, yes, what a pleasure it is to be joined like this in brotherhood with one's fellow citizens!

PETRA: And to do so much that's good and useful, Father!

DR STOCKMANN: Yes, and for the town of one's birth at that, Petra!

MRS STOCKMANN: There's the doorbell.

DR STOCKMANN: That must be him. - (*there's a knock on the door*) Come in!

JUDGE STOCKMANN: Good morning.

DR STOCKMANN: Welcome, Peter!

MRS STOCKMANN: Good morning, brother-in-law. How are you?

JUDGE: Oh, so-so; (*to the doctor*) I received from you yesterday after office hours a study concerning the water conditions at the Baths.

DR STOCKMANN: Yes, have you read it?

JUDGE: Yes, I have.

DR STOCKMANN: And what do you have to say about the matter?

JUDGE (*with a sidelong glance*): Hm -

MRS STOCKMANN: Come, Petra.

*She and Petra step into the room on the left.*

JUDGE (*after a pause*): Was it necessary to carry out all these investigations behind my back?

DR STOCKMANN: Yes, so long as I was not absolutely certain, -

JUDGE: And that you now believe yourself to be?

DR STOCKMANN: Yes, but you must surely be convinced of that yourself.

JUDGE: Is it your intention to present this paper to the board of the Baths as an official document of sorts?

DR STOCKMANN: Indeed I do. Well, something has to be done about it; and quickly.

JUDGE: As usual, in your study you use strong language. You say, among other things, that what we are offering visitors to our baths is permanent poisoning.

DR STOCKMANN: Yes, but, Peter, is there any other word for it? Think about it – poisoned water taken both internally and externally! And this by poor, ailing people who turn to us in good faith and pay us exorbitant sums of money in order to regain their health!

JUDGE: And you reach the conclusion, in your exposition, that we will have to build a sewer to take the postulated muck and filth from Mølledalen and that the water pipes will need to be relaid.

DR STOCKMANN: Yes, well do you know of any other solution? I know of none.

JUDGE: I found an excuse to call on the municipal engineer this morning. And I brought up with him the subject of these measures – half in jest – as something that we ought perhaps to consider at some point in the future.

DR STOCKMANN: Some point in the future!

JUDGE: He smiled at my supposed extravagance – naturally. Have you taken the trouble to consider what these suggested alterations would cost? According to the information I have received the costs would amount to hundreds of thousands of kroner.

DR STOCKMANN: As much as that?

JUDGE: Yes. And that's not the worst of it. The work would stretch over a period of at least two years.

DR STOCKMANN: Two years, you say? Two whole years?

JUDGE: At least. And what are we supposed to do with the Baths in the meantime? Do we close them? Well, we would have to. Or do you think anyone is likely to visit our town once word gets out that the water is supposedly bad for the health

DR STOCKMANN: Yes, but Peter, it *is*.

JUDGE: And that this should come up now, - now, of all times, when the spa is flourishing. The towns round about us also have a certain potential to become popular spa resorts. Don't you think that they would immediately set to work to draw the whole influx of visitors to them? Oh yes, most indubitably. And there we would be: we would, in all likelihood, have to shut down that whole costly establishment; and you would have ruined the town of your birth.

DR STOCKMANN: I – ruined -!

JUDGE: It is solely due to the Baths that this town has any future to speak of. You must see that as well as I do.

DR STOCKMANN: All right, so what do you think should be done?

JUDGE: I have not been able to convince myself, on the basis of your study, that the water conditions at the Baths are as alarming as you make them out to be.

DR STOCKMANN: They're worse, more like, Peter! Or they certainly will be come the summer when the weather hots up.

JUDGE: As I say, I think you are exaggerating greatly. A competent medical officer must know what precautions to take, - he has to know how to prevent harmful effects and how to remedy them should they arise.

DR STOCKMANN: Yes, and -? Then what -?



JUDGE: Well, the established water supply to the Baths is a fact and obviously has to be treated as such. In due course, however, the board of directors would, in all likelihood, not be disinclined to consider to what extent it might be possible, for a reasonable pecuniary outlay, to implement certain improvements.

DR STOCKMANN: And you think I'd ever go along with such underhandedness!

JUDGE: Underhandedness?

DR STOCKMANN: Yes, underhandedness is what it would be, - a swindle, a lie, a downright crime against the public, against our whole society!

JUDGE: I have, as I've already said, been unable to gain the conviction that there is any actual, imminent danger here.

DR STOCKMANN: Oh, yes you have! How could you not? My report is as true and correct as it can be, I know it is! And you know that very well, Peter; you simply won't admit it. It was you who pushed through the motion to site the Baths and run the water pipes where they now lie; and *that* - that damnable blunder, is what you won't own up to. Bah, - don't you think I can see right through you?

JUDGE: Well, even if that were so? If I am perhaps somewhat anxious to guard my reputation, then I do so for the good of the town. Without any moral authority I cannot control and manage matters in the way that I consider to be in the best interests of all. Therefore, - and for various other reasons, - I deem it imperative that your presentation should not be submitted to the Baths' board of directors. It must be withheld for the sake of the common good. I will bring the matter up for discussion at a later date and we will do our best, quietly; but nothing, - not a single word of this disastrous affair can become public knowledge.

DR STOCKMANN: Ah, but that cannot be prevented, my dear Peter.

JUDGE: It must and it shall be prevented.

DR STOCKMANN: Out of the question, I tell you; too many people know about it.

JUDGE: Know about it! Who? Don't tell me it's those gentlemen from *The People's Herald*, who've -?

DR STOCKMANN: Oh, yes; them too. The open-minded free press will see to it that you lot do your duty.

JUDGE: You are an exceedingly imprudent man, Tomas. Have you given no thought to the consequences this could bring in its wake for you personally?

DR STOCKMANN: Consequences? Consequences for me?

JUDGE: For you and yours, yes.

DR STOCKMANN: What the hell is *that* supposed to mean?

JUDGE: I believe that all my days I have shown myself to be an obliging and helpful brother to you.

DR STOCKMANN: Yes, you have; and I thank you for it.

JUDGE: No thanks required. To some extent I have had to be anyway – for my own sake. It was always my hope that by helping to improve your financial situation I would be able to keep you more or less in check.

DR STOCKMANN: What? So it was actually only for your own sake -!

JUDGE: To an extent, I said. It is embarrassing for a public official to have one of his closest relatives compromising himself again and again.

DR STOCKMANN: And you think that I do that?

JUDGE: Yes, unfortunately, you do, although you don't know it. You have an unruly, belligerent, rebellious temperament. And then there is your unfortunate penchant for writing publicly on all conceivable and inconceivable matters. No sooner does a whim strike you, - than you have to write a newspaper article or a whole pamphlet about it.

DR STOCKMANN: Well, isn't it a citizen's duty to inform the public when he has come up with a new idea!

JUDGE: Oh, the public doesn't need any new ideas. The public is best served by the good old approved ideas it already has.

DR STOCKMANN: And you say that straight out!

JUDGE: Yes, for once I have to be straight with you. Until now I've tried to avoid it, since I know how touchy you are; but now I have to tell you the truth, Tomas. You have no idea how much harm you do yourself with your impetuous behaviour. You complain about the authorities, and about the government itself, - decry it, even, - claim that you've been slighted, persecuted. But what can you expect, - a man as difficult as you are?

DR STOCKMANN: What, - so now I'm difficult too?

JUDGE: Yes, Tomas, you are a very difficult man to work with. As I have learned. You set yourself above all considerations. You seem to have forgotten completely that it's me you have to thank for your position here as medical officer to the Baths -

DR STOCKMANN: I was the obvious choice! I and no other! I was the first to realise that this town could become a flourishing spa resort; I was the only one who saw it back then. I stood alone, and fought for the idea for years; I wrote and wrote -

JUDGE: Undeniably. But back then the right time had not yet come; although of course you, up there in your backwater, could hardly be the judge of that. But when the opportune moment did arrive, then I - and the others - took the matter in hand -

DR STOCKMANN: Yes, and made a complete botch of my splendid plan. Oh yes, it's well seen now what shrewd fellows you were!

JUDGE: In my opinion this only goes to show that yet again you need an outlet for your aggression. You want to do away with your superiors; - well, that was always your way. You cannot

stand anyone to have authority over you: you look askance at anyone who occupies high public office; you regard him as a personal enemy, - and then one weapon is as good as another, as far as you are concerned. But now I've made you aware of the interests that are at stake here for the whole town, - and hence for me too. And so I say to you, Tomas, that I shall be inexorable in the demand I now intend to place on you.

DR STOCKMANN: What demand might that be?

JUDGE: Since you have been indiscreet enough to mention this delicate matter to outsiders, notwithstanding that it should have stayed a board secret, the matter can obviously not be hushed up. All manner of rumours will be widespread and the malicious among us will feed these rumours with all sorts of additional details. It will, therefore, be necessary for you to publicly refute such rumours.

DR STOCKMANN: Me! How! I'm not with you.

JUDGE: It might be expected that on fresh investigation you will come to the conclusion that the situation is not nearly as dangerous or alarming as you first imagined.

DR STOCKMANN: A-ha, - so that's what you expect, is it!

JUDGE: Furthermore, you will be expected to have, and to publicly declare that you have, confidence in the board of directors to exhaustively and conscientiously take the necessary steps to rectify any possible drawbacks.

DR STOCKMANN: Well, you'll never be able to do that as long as you lot resort to jiggery-pokery and patch-up jobs. I'm telling you, Peter; and this is my deepest and most earnest conviction -!

JUDGE: As a public servant you are not permitted to hold any separate conviction.

DR STOCKMANN: Not permitted -?

JUDGE: As a public servant, I said. As a private individual, - good gracious, that's another matter. But as a subordinate officer at the Baths you are not permitted to voice any conviction that is at variance with that of your superiors.

DR STOCKMANN: This is too much! That I, as a doctor, as a scientist, should not be permitted -  
!

JUDGE: The issue in question here is not a purely scientific one; it is a twofold issue; it is both a technical and a financial issue.

DR STOCKMANN: Oh, it can be whatever the hell it wants for all I care! I demand the freedom to express my opinion on any issue in the world!

JUDGE: Go right ahead. Only not on that regarding the Baths – That we forbid you to do.

DR STOCKMANN (*shouting*): You forbid! You! What a bunch of -!

JUDGE: *I* forbid you, - *I*, your ultimate superior; and when I forbid you to do something, it is up to you to obey.

DR STOCKMANN: Peter, - if you weren't my brother, so help me -

PETRA: Father, you don't have to stand for this!

MRS STOCKMANN: Petra, Petra!

JUDGE: Ah, eavesdropping, were we?

MRS STOCKMANN: The walls are so thin; we couldn't help but -

PETRA: Yes, I was listening.

JUDGE: Well, that's fine by me, really -

DR STOCKMANN: You were talking to me about forbidding and obeying -?

JUDGE: You have forced me to take that tone.

DR STOCKMANN: So I'm supposed to make a public statement in which I eat my words?

JUDGE: We deem it absolutely essential that you publish a statement as so directed by me.

DR STOCKMANN: And what if I do not – obey?

JUDGE: Then we will issue a statement ourselves to reassure the public.

DR STOCKMANN: Very well; but then I'll write a piece denouncing the lot of you. I'll stick to my guns; I'll prove that *I'm* right and that all of you are wrong. And then what'll you do?

JUDGE: Then I will be unable to prevent your being dismissed.

DR STOCKMANN: What -!

PETRA: Father, - dismissed!

MRS STOCKMANN: Dismissed!

JUDGE: Dismissed from the post of medical officer to the Baths. I will find myself obliged to request that you be given notice immediately, to debar you from having any hand in the Baths' affairs.

DR STOCKMANN: You wouldn't dare!

JUDGE: You're the one who's daring to take risks here.

PETRA: Uncle, this is an outrageous way to treat a man like Father!

MRS STOCKMANN: Petra, will you just keep quiet!

JUDGE (*turns to Petra*): A-ha, someone's started voicing opinions already. Well, it's hardly surprising. (*to Mrs Stockmann*) Sister-in-law, you are probably the most prudent person in this house. Use whatever influence you may have over your husband; make him see what consequences this will have both for his family -

DR STOCKMANN: My family is no one's business but my own!

JUDGE: - both for his family, I say, and for the town in which he lives.

DR STOCKMANN: I'm the one who has the true good of the town at heart! I'll disclose those faults that, sooner or later, must be brought to light. Oh, and then it will be seen that I love the town of my birth.

JUDGE: You, who in blind defiance are going to cut off the town's main source of sustenance.

DR STOCKMANN: That source is poisoned, man! Are you mad! We are making our living here out of peddling filth and corruption! The whole life of our flourishing little society draws its sustenance from a lie!

JUDGE: Figments of the imagination – or what is even worse. Any man who casts such flagrant aspersions on his own home town must be the enemy of society.

DR STOCKMANN (*lunging at him*): How dare you -!

MRS STOCKMANN (*throwing herself between them*): Tomas!

PETRA (*grabbing her father's arm*): Steady now, Father!

JUDGE: I refuse to subject myself to violence. You have been warned. Consider what you owe to you and yours. Goodbye.

*He walks out.*

DR STOCKMANN (*pacing up and down*): And I'm supposed to put up with such treatment! In my own house, Katrine! What do you say to that!

MRS STOCKMANN: Yes, I know, it's a disgrace and an insult, Tomas -

PETRA: Oh, I could *kill* Uncle Peter -

DR STOCKMANN: It's my own fault; I should have stood up to them long ago, - shown my teeth, - bitten back! – And to call me an enemy of society! Me! Upon my soul I won't have that said of me!

MRS STOCKMANN: But Thomas, dear, your brother does have the might -

DR STOCKMANN: Yes, but I have the right of it, Katrine!

MRS STOCKMANN: Oh, the right, the right; what's the good of having the right of it, if you don't have the might?

PETRA: Oh, really Mother, - how can you say such a thing?

DR STOCKMANN: So it does no good to have right on your side in a free society? What a funny one you are, Katrine. And besides, - don't I have the open-minded free press going before me, - and the compact majority behind me? That's might enough, surely, or I would have thought so!

MRS STOCKMANN: Oh, heavens above, Tomas, surely you're not thinking of -?

DR STOCKMANN: What am I not thinking of?

MRS STOCKMANN: - of pitting yourself against your brother, I mean.

DR STOCKMANN: What the hell else do you expect me to do, if not to stand up for what is right and true?

PETRA: Yes, that's just what I'd like to know too.

MRS STOCKMANN: But it'll do no earthly good; if they won't, then they won't.

DR STOCKMANN: Ho-ho, Katrine, just give it time and you'll see, I'll win through.

MRS STOCKMANN: Yes, you may well win through to your own dismissal, - that's what you'll do.

DR STOCKMANN: Well, at least I'll have done my duty by the general public, - by society. I, who am being called an enemy of society!

MRS STOCKMANN: But what about your family, Tomas? What about us here at home? Do you think *that* is doing your duty by those you have to support?

PETRA: Oh, don't always go putting us first, Mother.

MRS STOCKMANN: Yes, well it's easy for *you* to talk; you can stand on your own two feet if need be. - But don't forget the boys, Tomas; and spare a thought for yourself too, and for me -



DR STOCKMANN: Oh, but Katrine, I think you're quite wrong! If I were such a woeful coward as to knuckle under to this Peter and his damn cronies - how could I ever have another happy moment in my life?

MRS STOCKMANN: Well, I don't know about that; but the good Lord preserve us from the happiness we'll have, all of us, if you remain defiant. There you'll be again with no livelihood, no steady income. I think we had enough of that in the old days; remember that, Tomas; think what it would mean.

DR STOCKMANN (*in turmoil, clenching his fists*): And these office-vassals can do such a thing to a free and honest man! Is that not terrible, Katrine?

MRS STOCKMANN: Oh yes, you've been shamefully treated, that's for sure. But, heavens above, there's so much injustice in this world that we have to bow to. – Here are the boys, Tomas! Look at them! What's to become of them? Oh no, no, you could never bring yourself to -

*Ejlif and Morten have come in during this, carrying their schoolbooks.*

DR STOCKMANN: The boys -! (*suddenly determined and composed*) No, even if the whole world were to come tumbling down I will not bow my head to the yoke.

*He walks towards his study.*

MRS STOCKMANN (*going after him*): Tomas, - what are you going to do!

DR STOCKMANN: I demand the right to look my boys in the eye when they are free, grown men.

*He goes into his study.*

MRS STOCKMANN (*bursting into tears*): Oh, God help and comfort us all!

PETRA: What a great man Father is! He won't give in.

*The boys ask wonderingly what is going on;*

*Petra motions to them to be quiet.*

### ACT III

*The offices of The People's Herald. On the left in the background is the front door; on the right in this same wall is another, glass-panelled, door through which the print room is visible. On the right-hand wall is a door. In the centre of the room is a large table strewn with papers, newspapers and books. In the foreground on the left, a window and next to this a writing desk and a high stool. A couple of armchairs beside the table, some other chairs up against the walls. The room is dingy and cheerless, the fixtures and fittings old, the armchairs grubby and tattered. In the print room a couple of typesetters can be seen at work; beyond them a hand press is in operation.*

*Hovstad, the newspaper editor, is sitting at the desk, writing.*

*After a few moments Billing enters from the right with the doctor's manuscript in his hand.*

BILLING: Well, I must say -!

HOVSTAD (*writing*): Have you read the whole thing?

BILLING: Yes, I most certainly have.

HOVSTAD: The doctor's pretty scathing, don't you think?

BILLING: Scathing. By God he's crushing, so he is. Every word falls – well – like a blow from a sledgehammer, I'd say.

HOVSTAD: Yes, but those characters won't be felled by the first blow, you know.

BILLING: That's true; but we'll keep on bashing away, - blow after blow, until that whole ruling élite comes tumbling down. Sitting in there reading this it was almost as though, far off, I could see the revolution coming.

HOVSTAD (*turning round*): Ssh; don't let Aslaksen hear you say that.

BILLING (*lowering his voice*): Aslaksen's a chicken-hearted milksop, a coward; he hasn't an ounce of courage in him. But this time you'll insist on having your way, won't you? Eh? The doctor's article will be published, won't it?

HOVSTAD: Yes, as long as the judge doesn't prove more amenable -

BILLING: That would be such a damned bore.

HOVSTAD: Well, fortunately we can take advantage of the situation whatever happens. If the judge doesn't go along with the doctor's proposal he'll have all ordinary townsmen on his back, - the Householders' Association and the rest. And if he does go along with it, he'll fall foul of a whole host of major shareholders in the Baths, who have, until now, been his staunchest supporters

—

BILLING: Yes, that's right; because they'll probably have to fork out a great deal of money -

HOVSTAD: Yes, you're damn right they will. And then the circle will be broken, you see, and then each and every day in the newspaper we'll make it clear to the public that the judge is incompetent in one respect and another and that all positions of trust in the town, all the running of the town, should be put into the hands of open-minded individuals.

BILLING: By God, that's so true! I see it, - I see it; we're standing on the brink of a revolution!

*There is a knock at the door.*

HOVSTAD: Ssh! (*calls out*) Come in!

*Dr Stockmann enters through the door on the left in the background.*

HOVSTAD: Ah, here's the doctor. Well?

DR STOCKMANN: Print away, Mr Hovstad!

HOVSTAD: So it's come to this, has it?

BILLING: Hooray!

DR STOCKMANN: Print it, I say. I knew it would come to this. Well, they asked for it, and now they're going to get it. It's war in this town now, Mr Billing.

BILLING: A war to the knife, I hope? A cutthroat war, Doctor!

DR STOCKMANN: My study is only the beginning. My head is already full of outlines for four or five other articles. What have you done with Aslaksen?

BILLING: Aslaksen, come here a moment!

HOVSTAD: Four or five other articles, you say? On the same topic?

DR STOCKMANN: Oh, no, - far from it, my friend. No, on quite different matters. But all of them arising from the water system and the sewers. One thing leads to another, you see. It's like when you start to tear down an old building, - exactly the same.

BILLING: By God, that's true; you feel like you can't stop until the whole pile of junk has been torn down.

ASLAKSEN (*from the print room*): Torn down! The doctor surely isn't thinking of tearing down the Baths!

HOVSTAD: Not at all; fear not.

DR STOCKMANN: No, I'm talking of quite different matters. Well, what do you say to my study, Mr Hovstad?

HOVSTAD: I think it's an absolute masterpiece -

DR STOCKMANN: Yes, isn't it -? Ah, I'm pleased to hear it; pleased to hear it.

HOVSTAD: It's so clear and straightforward; you don't have to be an expert to get the picture. You'll have every enlightened man on your side, I dare say.

ASLAKSEN: And all the prudent ones too, surely?

BILLING: Both the prudent and the imprudent, - in fact, just about the whole town, I'd say.

ASLAKSEN: All right, so we dare to print it then?

DR STOCKMANN: Yes, I should think so!

HOVSTAD: It'll be in tomorrow morning.

DR STOCKMANN: Right-oh, hell knows there's not a day to be wasted. Now, Mr Aslaksen, *that's* what I wanted to ask you: you must set my manuscript personally.

ASLAKSEN: I will.

DR STOCKMANN: Handle it as if it were solid gold. No typographical errors; every word is crucial. And I'll look in again later; perhaps I could have a look at the proofs. – Oh, I can't tell you how much I long to see this piece in print, - hurled out -

BILLING: Hurled, - yes, like a bolt from the blue!

DR STOCKMANN: - subjected to the judgement of all well-informed fellow townspeople. Oh, you've no idea what I have had to put up with today. They've threatened me with this, that and the other; they've tried to rob me of my most self-evident rights as a human being -

BILLING: What! Your rights as a human being!

DR STOCKMANN: - they've tried to degrade me, to make a scoundrel of me, demanded that I put personal gain before my deepest, most sacred conviction -

BILLING: By god, that's a bit thick.

HOVSTAD: Ah, well, nothing would surprise me from that quarter.

DR STOCKMANN: But in me they've met their match; that they'll have proof of in black and white. Every single day from now on I'm going to ride at anchor, as it were, in *The People's Herald* and rake them with one broadside after another -

ASLAKSEN: Ah, but listen now -

BILLING: Hooray; it's war, it's war!

DR STOCKMANN: I'll lay them low, I'll crush them, I'll flatten their fortresses for all right-minded members of the public to see! That I will!

ASLAKSEN: But do it with moderation please, Doctor; be temperate in your firing -

BILLING: No, no, not at all! Don't spare the dynamite!

DR STOCKMANN (*carrying on, quite unperturbed*): Because now it's not just about this business of the water system and the sewers, you see. No, it's society as a whole that needs to be cleansed, disinfected -

BILLING: There now, that's the *very* word!

DR STOCKMANN: All those patch-up merchants must be driven out, you understand. And I mean in every conceivable sphere! Such endless vistas have revealed themselves to me today. It's not quite clear to me yet; but I'll make sense of it, you'll see. Young, fresh standard bearers, that's what we need to go out and look for, my friends; we need new commanding officers in all advance positions.

BILLING: Hear, hear!

DR STOCKMANN: And if we just stick together it will go so smoothly, so smoothly! The whole revolt will glide down the slipway like a ship. Well, don't you agree?

HOVSTAD: For my own part I think that we now have every prospect of placing the running of the town where it ought rightly to be.

ASLAKSEN: And as long as we proceed with temperance I don't think this could be dangerous.

DR STOCKMANN: Who the hell cares whether it's dangerous or not! Whatever I do, I do in the name of truth and for my conscience's sake.

HOVSTAD: You are a man who deserves to be supported, Doctor.

ASLAKSEN: Yes, that's for sure, the doctor is the town's true friend; a real friend of society, so he is.

BILLING: Dr Stockmann, is, by God, a friend of the people, Aslaksen!

ASLAKSEN: I think the Householders' Association might soon be making use of that expression.

DR STOCKMANN: Thank you, thank you, my dear and loyal friends; - it's so heartening to hear this; - my esteemed brother called me something quite different. Well, upon my soul, he'll be paid back for that, with interest! Now, though, there's a poor devil I have to call on -. But, as I said, I'll be back. Take great care of my manuscript, please, Mr Aslaksen; - and, whatever you do, don't delete any of the exclamation marks! If anything, add a few more! Well, well; goodbye for now; goodbye, goodbye!

*Goodbyes all round as he is escorted to the door and leaves.*

HOVSTAD: He could be of invaluable use to us, that man.

ASLAKSEN: Yes, as long as he confines himself to this business with the spa. But if he goes beyond that it would not be advisable to join forces with him.

HOVSTAD: Hm, well, that all depends -

BILLING: Oh really, Aslaksen you're so damn fearful.

ASLAKSEN: Fearful? Yes, where the local powers-that-be are concerned, I am fearful, Mr Billing; that's something I've learned in the school of experience, I'll have you know. But just you put me up there in high politics, up against the government itself, and then see if I'm scared.



BILLING: No, of course you're not, no; but that is exactly the contradiction in you.

ASLAKSEN: I'm a man of conscience, that's the point. At least if you lash out at the government you're not doing society any harm; because those men don't care about that, you see; - they will stand fast, no matter what. But the *local* authorities, *they* can be ousted and if that happens we could find ourselves with incompetents at the wheel, to the irreparable detriment of householders and others.

HOVSTAD: But what about elevation of the people through self-government, - have you not thought of *that*?

ASLAKSEN: A man can't think of everything, Mr Hovstad, when he has had something entrusted into his hands,

HOVSTAD: Then I hope I'll never have anything entrusted into my hands!

BILLING: Hear, hear!

ASLAKSEN (*smiling*): Hm. (*points to the desk*). See that editor's stool - District Commissioner Stensgård sat there before *you*.

BILLING (*spitting*): Bah! What a turncoat!

HOVSTAD: I'm no weathercock – and I never will be.

ASLAKSEN: A politician should never forswear the possibility of anything in this world, Mr Hovstad. And you, Mr Billing, should also trim your sails a little at the moment, I think; seeing that you're applying for the post of secretary to the magistracy.

BILLING: I -!

HOVSTAD: *Are* you, Billing!

BILLING: Well, yes, - but only to annoy those ever-so-clever gents dammit, surely you can see that.

ASLAKSEN: Yes, well it's nothing to do with me. But if I'm to be accused of cowardice and contradicting myself then there's *one thing* I want to make quite clear: Aslaksen the printer's political antecedents are an open book. There has been no change in me, other than that I've become more temperate, you understand. My heart still belongs to the people; I don't deny, though, that my head inclines more toward the powers that be, - to the local powers, that is.

*He steps into the print room.*

BILLING: Shouldn't we see about getting rid of him, Hovstad?

HOVSTAD: Do you know anyone else who'd advance us credit on both the paper and printing costs?

BILLING: It's a damn nuisance that we don't have the necessary working capital.

HOVSTAD (*sitting down at the desk*): Yes, if we just had *that*, then -

BILLING: What if you were to approach Dr Stockmann?

HOVSTAD (*leafing through papers*): Oh, what good would that do? He owns nothing.

BILLING: No; but he has a good man up his sleeve in old Morten Kiil, - "the Badger" as they call him.

HOVSTAD (*writing*): And are you so sure that *he* owns anything?

BILLING: Oh, by God, yes, he's bound to! And some of that is bound to go to Stockmann's family. He's bound to be thinking of providing - for the children at least.

HOVSTAD (*half turning to him*): You're counting on *that*?

BILLING: Counting on it? Naturally I'm not counting on anything.

HOVSTAD: You're right not to. And you definitely shouldn't count on that position with the magistracy, either; because I can assure you, - you won't get it.

BILLING: Oh, and don't you think I'm well aware of that? In fact, I'll be glad if I don't get it. Such a rejection fires one's fighting spirit; it's like being given a fresh injection of bile, and that can be pretty necessary in a backwater like this where hardly anything really stimulating ever happens.

HOVSTAD (*writing*): Quite so; quite so.

BILLING: Well, - they'll be hearing from me soon! – Now I'm going in to write that announcement to the Householders' Association.

*He disappears into the room on the right.*

HOVSTAD (*sits at the desk, chews on his pen and says slowly*: Hm, - ah yes, right. – (*a knock at the door*) Come in!

*Petra enters through the door to the left in the background.*

HOVSTAD (*rising*): Oh, it's you, Miss Stockmann? What brings you here?

PETRA: Oh, excuse me -

HOVSTAD: Won't you sit down?

PETRA: No, thank-you; I'm not staying.

HOVSTAD: Was it something from your father perhaps -?

PETRA: No, from me. (*takes a book from her coat pocket*) Here's that English story.

HOVSTAD: Why are you returning it?

PETRA: Well, because I won't be translating it.

HOVSTAD. But you promised me quite definitely -

PETRA: Yes, but that was before I read it. And you haven't read it either, have you?

HOVSTAD: No; you know I don't understand English; but -

PETRA: No, exactly; which is why I wanted to tell you that you'll have to find something else.  
(places the book on the table). This simply cannot be published in *The People's Herald*.

HOVSTAD: Why not?

PETRA: Because it is totally at odds with your own beliefs.

HOVSTAD: Oh, well as to that -

PETRA: I don't think you understand me. It's all about a supernatural power that watches over the so-called good people in this world and ensures that everything works out for the best for them in the end, - and that all of the so-called bad people are duly punished.

HOVSTAD: Well, what's wrong with that? That's just the sort of thing people want.

PETRA: And do you want to be the one to give the people that sort of thing? You don't believe a word of it yourself. You know very well that that is not how it works in real life.

HOVSTAD: You're absolutely right; but an editor can't always act as he would like. One often has to bend to public opinion in minor matters. Politics is, after all – for a newspaper at any rate – the most important thing in life; and if I want to bring people round to liberation and progress then I musn't scare them away. If they come across a moral tale of this sort below the fold they'll be more willing to accept what we print above it; - they'll feel more secure, as it were.

PETRA: Ugh, you wouldn't be so sneaky as to lay traps like that for your readers; you're not a spider.

HOVSTAD: Thank you for having such a good opinion of me. No, in actual fact that's just Billing's way of thinking, not mine.

PETRA: Billing's!

HOVSTAD: Yes, or at least that's how he was talking the other day. Billing's the one who's so keen to have this story in the paper, I don't know the book at all.

PETRA: But how can Billing, with his liberated views-!

HOVSTAD: Oh, Billing is a versatile man. He's applying for the position of secretary to the magistracy now, too, I hear.

PETRA: That I don't believe, Mr Hovstad. How could he bring himself to do such a thing?

HOVSTAD: Ah, you'll have to ask him that.

PETRA: I would never have thought that of Billing.

HOVSTAD (*eyeing her more intently*): No? Does it come as such a surprise to you?

PETRA: Yes. Or perhaps not, at that. Oh, I really don't know -

HOVSTAD: We newspapermen aren't worth much, Miss.

PETRA: You really mean that?

HOVSTAD: I do sometimes think it.

PETRA: Oh, amid all the usual humdrum bickering; that I can well understand. But now, when you've taken up a great cause -

HOVSTAD: This business with your father, you mean?

PETRA: Yes, exactly. I'd have thought that now you must feel like a man who's worth more than most.

HOVSTAD: Yes, today I do feel a little like that.

PETRA: There, you see; you do, don't you? Oh, what a splendid calling in life you've chosen. Paving the way like this for unappreciated truths and bold new viewpoints -; why, just the fact of coming fearlessly forward and speaking up for a wronged man -

HOVSTAD: Especially when that wronged man is, - hm, - I'm not quite sure how to -

PETRA: When he is so upright and so thoroughly honest, you mean?

HOVSTAD (*more softly*): Especially when he is your father, is what I meant.

PETRA (*suddenly taken aback*): What?

HOVSTAD: Yes, Petra, - Miss Petra.

PETRA: Is *that* what is uppermost your mind? Not the cause itself? Not the truth; not my father's big, warm heart?

HOVSTAD: Yes, - yes, that too, of course.

PETRA: No; now you've said too much, Mr Hovstad; and now I'll never believe anything you say.

HOVSTAD: Are you really so upset with me, just because it's mainly for your sake that -?

PETRA: What makes me so angry with you is that you haven't been honest with my father. You've given him the impression, by what you've said to him, that the truth and the good of society were what you had most at heart; you've fooled both my father and myself; you're not the man you made yourself out to be. And I'll never forgive you for that – never!

HOVSTAD: You shouldn't speak so harshly, Miss Petra; least of all now.

PETRA: Why not now as well as any other time?

HOVSTAD: Because your father can't do without my help.

PETRA (*eyeing him up and down*): So you're that sort of person too? Shame on you!

HOVSTAD: No, no, I'm not; I was just caught so unawares; you mustn't think that.

PETRA: I know what to think. Goodbye.

ASLAKSEN (*from the print room, hasty and furtive*): Hell and damnation, Mr Hovstad – (*sees Petra*) Oh, dear -

PETRA: Anyway, there's the book; you'll have to give it to someone else. (*moves towards the front door*)

HOVSTAD (*going after her*): But, Miss -

PETRA: Goodbye

*She leaves*

ASLAKSEN: Mr Hovstad, listen!

HOVSTAD: All right, all right, what is it?

ASLAKSEN: The judge is out in the print room.

HOVSTAD: The judge, you say?

ASLAKSEN: Yes, he wants a word with you; he came in the back way, - didn't want to be seen, you understand.

HOVSTAD: What can he want? No, wait, I'll go –

*He goes over to the print room door, opens it, waves and invites the judge in.*

HOVSTAD: Keep a look-out, Aslaksen, so no one -

ASLAKSEN: Right you are – *(withdraws to the print room)*

JUDGE: Mr Hovstad, you weren't expecting to see me here, I don't suppose.

HOVSTAD: No, as a matter of fact I wasn't.

JUDGE *(looking round about)*: Well, you've fitted yourself up very nicely here; most pleasant.

HOVSTAD: Oh -

JUDGE: And here I am, showing up all unannounced and taking up your time.

HOVSTAD: Please, Your Honour; I'm at your service. But let me relieve you of - *(places the judge's cap and staff on a chair)*. Won't Your Honour have a seat?

JUDGE *(sits down at the table)*: Thank you.

*Hovstad also sits down at the table.*

JUDGE: I've had a – such a great deal of vexation today, Mr Hovstad.

HOVSTAD: Really? Oh, well, with all the things Your Honour has to see to, -

JUDGE: The source of my vexation today is the medical officer to the Baths.

HOVSTAD: I see; the doctor?

JUDGE: He has written some sort of presentation to the Baths' board of directors concerning a number of supposed faults at the Baths.

HOVSTAD: Oh, has he?

JUDGE: Yes, hasn't he told you -? I thought he said -

HOVSTAD: Oh, yes, he did say a word or two -

ASLAKSEN (*from the print room*): I'd better have that manuscript -

HOVSTAD (*irritably*): Hm; well it's right there on the desk.

ASLAKSEN (*finds it*): Good.

JUDGE: Well, look *here*, that's just what -

ASLAKSEN: Yes, Judge, that is the doctor's article.

HOVSTAD: Ah, so *that's* what you're talking about?

JUDGE: The very same. What do you make of it?

HOVSTAD: Well, I'm no expert, of course, and I've only glanced at it.

JUDGE: You're going to print it, though?

HOVSTAD: If a gentleman puts his name to something, I can't deny him -

ASLAKSEN: I've no say in what goes into the newspaper, Your Honour -

JUDGE: Of course not.

ASLAKSEN: I merely print whatever I'm given.

JUDGE: Just as it should be.

ASLAKSEN: So I'd better – (*makes towards the print room*)

JUDGE: No, wait a moment, Mr Aslaksen. With your permission, Mr Hovstad -



HOVSTAD: By all means, Your Honour -

JUDGE: You're a prudent, thoughtful man, Mr Aslaksen.

ASLAKSEN: I'm glad Your Honour thinks so.

JUDGE: And a man of widespread influence.

ASLAKSEN: Ah, well that's mostly among small folk.

JUDGE: The small taxpayers are the most numerous – here as elsewhere.

ASLAKSEN: They certainly are.

JUDGE. And I've no doubt that you know the general mood among them. Do you not?

ASLAKSEN: Yes, I think I dare say that I do, Your Honour.

JUDGE: Yes, - well, since such an admirable spirit of self-sacrifice prevails among the town's less prosperous citizens, then -

ASLAKSEN: How do you mean?

HOVSTAD: Self-sacrifice?

JUDGE: It is a fine sign of public spiritedness; an exceedingly fine sign. I might almost have said I had not expected it. But you know the mood better than I do, of course.

ASLAKSEN: Oh, but Your Honour -

JUDGE: And it's no mean sacrifice the town will be making, that's for sure.

HOVSTAD: The town?

ASLAKSEN: But I don't understand -. It's the Baths -!

JUDGE: According to a provisional estimate, the alterations which the medical officer considers desirable, could run to as much as two hundred thousand kroner.

ASLAKSEN: That's an awful lot of money; but -

JUDGE: Naturally it will be necessary for us to take up a municipal loan.

HOVSTAD (*getting to his feet*): You surely don't mean that the town -?

ASLAKSEN: Is it to come out of the town coffers! Out of the straitened pockets of the ordinary townsmen!

JUDGE: Well, my dear Mr Aslaksen, where else should the money come from?

ASLAKSEN: It's up to those gentlemen who own the Baths to take care of that.

JUDGE: The owners of the Baths do not consider themselves able to do any more than they have done.

ASLAKSEN: Is that quite definite, Your Honour?

JUDGE: I am satisfied that it is. So, if there is a desire for these extensive alterations, then the town itself will have to pay for them.

ASLAKSEN: But damn and blast it all – pardon my language! – but this is a very different kettle of fish, Mr Hovstad!

HOVSTAD: Yes, it certainly is.

JUDGE: The most disastrous part of it is that we would have to close the Baths for a couple of years.

HOVSTAD: Close them? Close them completely!

ASLAKSEN: For two years!

JUDGE: Yes, that's how long the work would take – at least.

ASLAKSEN: Oh, but, hell and damnation, Your Honour, that we'd never survive! What are we householders supposed to live on in the meantime?

JUDGE: It is, unfortunately, extremely hard to answer that, Mr Aslaksen. But what would you have us do? Do you think we'll be able to attract a single visitor to the spa if they're led to believe that the water is putrid, that we are living on a pestilential sump, that the whole town -

ASLAKSEN: So that's all mere fancy?

JUDGE: With the best will in the world I have been unable to convince myself otherwise.

ASLAKSEN: But in that case it's quite inexcusable of Dr Stockmann -; I beg your pardon, Your Honour, but -

JUDGE: It is a regrettable truth you're voicing there, Mr Aslaksen. My brother has, unfortunately, always been an impetuous man.

ASLAKSEN: And yet you would support him in such a matter, Mr Hovstad!

HOVSTAD: But who could ever have imagined that –

JUDGE: I have composed a brief summary of the case as it ought to be viewed from an objective standpoint; and I have suggested therein how any possible drawbacks might in all likelihood be rectified in a way that would be within the Baths' means.

HOVSTAD: Do you have this article with you, Judge?

JUDGE: Yes, I brought it with me just in case you -

ASLAKSEN: Hell and damnation, there he is!

JUDGE: Who? My brother?

HOVSTAD: Where, - where?

ASLAKSEN: He's coming through the print room.

JUDGE: Disastrous. I'd rather not run into him here, and I still have various matters to discuss with you.

HOVSTAD (*points to the door on the right*): Step in there for the moment.

JUDGE: But -?

HOVSTAD: There's no one there but Billing.

ASLAKSEN: Hurry, hurry, Your Honour; he's coming.

JUDGE: Yes, yes all right; but get rid of him as quickly as possible.

*He exits through the door on the right,*

*which Aslaksen opens for him and closes behind him.*

HOVSTAD: Find something to do, Aslaksen.

*He sits down and starts to write. Aslaksen rummages through  
a pile of newspapers on a chair on the right.*

DR STOCKMANN (*coming in from the print room*): Here I am again. (*puts down his hat and cane*).

HOVSTAD (*writing*): So soon, Doctor? Get a move on with that thing we were talking about, Aslaksen. We're very short on time today.

DR STOCKMANN (*to Aslaksen*): No proofs ready yet, I hear.

ASLAKSEN (*without turning round*): No, what made you think there would be, Doctor?

DR STOCKMANN: No, I know; but I can't wait, you can understand that surely. I won't rest until I see it in print.

HOVSTAD: Hm; it'll be a good while yet, though, I think? Wouldn't you say so, Aslaksen?

ASLAKSEN: Yes, I'm rather afraid so.

DR STOCKMANN: Fine, fine, my dear friends; I'll call back later then; I'll gladly call back twice, if necessary. Such a great cause, - the welfare of the whole town -; upon my soul this is no time to be idle. (*is about to leave, then stops and comes back*). No, wait, - there's something else I need speak to you about.

HOVSTAD: I'm sorry; but could we do that some other time -?

DR STOCKMANN: Just a word or two. You see, it's just that, - when people read my article in the paper tomorrow and thus learn that I've spent the whole winter quietly working for the good of the town -

HOVSTAD: Oh, but Doctor -

DR STOCKMANN: I know what you're going to say. You believe that it was no more than my damn duty, - my civic duty, plain and simple. Well, naturally; I know that as well as you do. But my fellow townspeople, you see -; goodness me, those dear, good people, they're so fond of me, you know -

ASLAKSEN: Yes; the townspeople have been very fond of you up to now, Doctor.

DR STOCKMANN: Yes, and that's exactly why I'm afraid that -; *that's* what I wanted to say: when this reaches them - the poorer classes especially - coming as an exhortation to take the affairs of the town into their own hands in future -

HOVSTAD (*rising*): Er, Doctor, I don't want to hide from you -

DR STOCKMANN: A-ha, - I thought there was something going on! But I don't want to know about it. If plans are afoot for anything of that sort -

HOVSTAD: Of what sort?

DR STOCKMANN: Oh, something or other, - a parade or a banquet or a collection for a testimonial - or whatever it might be, I want you to promise me by all that you hold sacred and dear that you'll put a stop to it. You too, Mr Aslaksen; do you hear!

HOVSTAD: Pardon me, Doctor; we might as well tell you the honest truth right now.

*Mrs Stockmann enters through the door on the left in the background, wearing a hat and coat.*

MRS STOCKMANN (*seeing the doctor*): Ah, I thought as much!

HOVSTAD (*going to meet her*): Well, well, here's your lady wife too?

DR STOCKMANN: What the devil are *you* doing here, Katrine?

MRS STOCKMANN: I think you know very well what I'm doing here.

HOVSTAD: Won't you have a seat, ma'am. Or perhaps -

MRS STOCKMANN: Thank you; don't trouble yourself. And please don't mind me coming to fetch Dr Stockmann; I'm the mother of three children, I'll have you know.

DR STOCKMANN: Oh, tittle-tattle; we're all well aware of that.

MRS STOCKMANN: Oh, well you certainly don't seem to be giving much thought to your wife and children today; because if you were you wouldn't go plunging us all into ruin.

DR STOCKMANN: Oh, Katrine, have you gone quite mad! Is a man with a wife and children not allowed to proclaim the truth, - not allowed to be a useful and active citizen, - not allowed to serve the town in which he lives!

MRS STOCKMANN: All things in moderation, Tomas!

ASLAKSEN: That's just what I say. Moderation in all things.

MRS STOCKMANN: Which is why, Mr Hovstad, you do us wrong when you lure my husband away from house and home and fool him into doing all this.

HOVSTAD: I'm sure I'm not fooling anyone into -

DR STOCKMANN: Fool! You think *I* can be fooled!

MRS STOCKMANN: Yes, you can. I know you're the cleverest man in this town; but you're so easily fooled, Tomas. (*to Hovstad*) And bear in mind that he'll lose his position with the Baths if you print what he has written -

ASLAKSEN: What!

HOVSTAD: Yes, well actually, Doctor -

DR STOCKMANN (*laughing*): Ha-ha, just let them try -; Oh, no, Katrina, they wouldn't dare. Because I have the compact majority behind me, you see!

MRS STOCKMANN: Yes, that's the whole trouble, that you have something as awful as that behind you.

DR STOCKMANN: Tittle-tattle, Katrine, - go home and take care of your house and let me take care of society. How can you be so fearful when I'm so confident and happy? (*rubs his hands and strides back and forth*). Truth and the people shall win the battle, you can be sure of that. Oh, I can see it now, the entire open-minded citizenry marshalled into a victorious army -! (*stops by a chair*). What – what the devil is *that*?

ASLAKSEN (*looking in that direction*): Uh-oh!

HOVSTAD (*doing the same*): Ah -

DR STOCKMANN: Well, well, here lies the pinnacle of authority.

*He picks up the judge's cap gingerly, by his fingertips, and holds it aloft.*

MRS STOCKMANN: The judge's cap!

DR STOCKMANN: And here's his baton too. How the dickens -?

HOVSTAD: Well, you see -

DR STOCKMANN: Ah, I see! He's been here to talk you out of it. Ha-ha, he came to the right one there! And then, when he spotted me in the print room -. (*bursts out laughing*) Did he run away, Mr Aslaksen?

ASLAKSEN (*quickly*): Too right, he ran away, Doctor.

DR STOCKMANN: Ran away, leaving his baton and -. Stuff and nonsense; Peter doesn't run away from anything. But what the hell have you done with him? Ah, - in there, of course. Watch this, Katrine!

MRS STOCKMANN: Tomas, - please -!

ASLAKSEN: Take care, Doctor!

*Dr Stockmann has placed the judge's cap on his head and picked up his staff; he crosses to the door, flings it open and tips the peak of the cap in salute.*

*The judge comes in, scarlet with rage.*

*Billing comes in behind him.*

JUDGE: What is the meaning of all this commotion?

DR STOCKMANN: Respect, my dear Peter. Now I'm the authority in this town.

*He saunters up and down.*

MRS STOCKMANN (*close to tears*): Oh now, Tomas, really!

JUDGE (*going after him*): Give me my cap and my staff!

DR STOCKMANN (*as before*): If you're the chief of police I'm the chief of the people, - I'm the chief of the whole town, so I am, - so there!

JUDGE: Take off that cap, I say. Remember, that is a regulation cap of office!

DR STOCKMANN: Bah; do you think the awakening lion of the people is scared of caps of office? Oh yes, because we're going to stage a revolution in this town tomorrow, I'll have you



know. You threatened to dismiss me; well now I'm dismissing you, - dismissing you from all your positions of trust -. You think I can't do it? Oh, but I can; I have the victorious forces of society on my side. Hovstad and Billing will thunder in *The People's Herald* and Aslaksen the printer will march at the head of the entire Householders' Association -

ASLAKSEN: No, I won't, Doctor.

DR STOCKMANN: Oh, but of course you will -

JUDGE: A-ha; and Mr Hovstad does perhaps choose to join the revolt after all?

HOVSTAD: No, Your Honour.

ASLAKSEN: No, Mr Hovstad is not mad enough to go destroying himself and the paper for a flight of fancy.

DR STOCKMANN (*looking around him*): What's the meaning of this?

HOVSTAD: You have presented your cause in a false light, Doctor; and I cannot, therefore, support it.

BILLING: No, after hearing what His Honour the judge was so good as to tell me in there -

DR STOCKMANN: False! Let me worry about that. Just print my article; I'm man enough to defend it, you'll see.

HOVSTAD: I'm not going to print it. I cannot and will not and dare not print it.

DR STOCKMANN: You dare not? What sort of talk is that? You're the editor; and it's the editors who control the press, I should have thought!

ASLAKSEN: No, doctor, it's the subscribers.

JUDGE: Fortunately, yes.

ASLAKSEN: It's public opinion, the enlightened general public, the householders and all the rest; *they* are the ones who control the newspapers.

DR STOCKMANN (*composed*): And I have all these forces against me?

ASLAKSEN: Yes, you have. It would spell ruin for the citizens of this town if your article was printed.

DR STOCKMANN: I see. -

JUDGE: My cap and my staff!

*Dr Stockmann removes the cap and plays it on the table  
along with the staff.*

JUDGE (*picking up both*): Your reign as chief of the people came to an abrupt end.

DR STOCKMANN: This is not the end, not yet. (*to Hovstad*) So there's absolutely no question of having my article published in the *Herald*?

HOVSTAD: Absolutely none; partly, also, out of consideration for your family.

MRS STOCKMANN: Oh, don't you worry about our family, Mr Hovstad.

JUDGE (*produces a piece of paper from his pocket*): As to advising the public, putting this in the paper should suffice; it is an authentic statement of the facts. Here you are.

HOVSTAD (*taking the piece of paper*): Good, I'll see that it goes in.

DR STOCKMANN: But not mine. You people think you can stifle me and the truth! But that will not go as smoothly as you think. Mr Aslaksen, will you take my manuscript this instant and print it as a pamphlet – at my own expense, - under my own imprint. Let me have four hundred copies; no, make that five – six hundred.

ASLAKSEN: No, not even if you offered me gold for it, would I dare lend my printing-house for such a venture, Doctor: I don't dare to, for fear of public opinion. You won't get it printed anywhere in this town.

DR STOCKMANN: Then give it back to me.

HOVSTAD (*handing him the manuscript*): Here you are.

DR STOCKMANN (*collecting his hat and cane*): Well, out it shall come, nevertheless. I'll read it out at a grand public meeting; all my fellow townspeople shall hear the voice of truth!

JUDGE: There's not an association in the whole town would lend you premises for such a purpose.

ASLAKSEN: Not a single one; I know that for a fact.

BILLING: No, by God they won't!

MRS STOCKMANN: That would be a crying shame! But why are they so opposed to you, all of them?

DR STOCKMANN (*fuming*): Oh, I'll tell you why. It's because in this town they're all old biddies - like you; all thinking only of the family and not of society.

MRS STOCKMANN (*grasping his arm*): Well, I'll show them one - one old bidy who can be a man - for once. Because I'm on your side now, Tomas!

DR STOCKMANN: Well said, Katrine. And out it shall come, upon my life! If I can't rent some hall, I'll hire a drummer to march through the town with me, and I'll read it out on every street corner.

JUDGE: You're not as mad as all that, surely!

DR STOCKMANN: Oh, yes I am!

ASLAKSEN: You won't get a single man in the whole town to march with you.

BILLING: No, by God, you won't!

MRS STOCKMANN: Don't you give in, Tomas. I'll ask the boys to march with you.

DR STOCKMANN: That's an excellent idea!

MRS STOCKMANN: Morten will be more than happy to; and Ejlif, he'll tag along too, I'm sure.

DR STOCKMANN: Yes, and so will Petra! And you, Katrine!

MRS STOCKMANN: No, no, not me; but I'll stand at the window and watch you, that I will do.

DR STOCKMANN (*throws his arms around her and kisses her*): Thank you! Right then, my fine gentlemen, into the lists we go! Now we'll see whether dirty tricks have the power to gag a patriot who wishes to purge society!

*He and his wife leave through the door on the left in the background.*

JUDGE (*anxiously shaking his head*): Now he's made *her* mad too.

## ACT IV

*A large, old-fashioned reception room in Captain Horster's house.*

*Double doors standing open in the background lead to an ante-room.*

*In the left-hand wall are three windows; halfway down the opposite wall a dais has been set up and on this is a small table on which sit two candles, a water jug, a glass and a bell. The room is also lit by wall lamps hung between the windows. On the left in the foreground are a table and chair, with a candle on the table. At the very front on the right is a door and next to this a couple of chairs.*

*Large gathering of townspeople of all classes.*

*A few women and some schoolboys are visible in the crowd.*

*More and more people keep streaming in at the back and the room gradually fills up.*

ONE TOWNSMAN *on running into another*: You're here tonight too, are you Lamstad?

SECOND TOWNSMAN: I come to every public meeting, me.

A MAN NEXT TO THEM: And you'll have brought your whistle with you, I'm sure.

SECOND TOWNSMAN: Too right I have. Haven't you?

THE THIRD: Oh, aye. And Skipper Evensen was going to bring a great big lure horn, so he said.

SECOND TOWNSMAN: Good old Evensen.

*Laughter in the throng.*

A FOURTH TOWNSMAN *joining them*: So tell me, what's going on here this evening?

SECOND TOWNSMAN: Oh, it's Dr Stockmann, he's going to be making a speech attacking the Judge.

THE NEWCOMER: But the Judge is his brother.

FIRST TOWNSMAN: That's neither here nor there; Dr Stockmann's not worried - not him.

THIRD TOWNSMAN: But he's wrong; it said so in *The People's Herald*.

SECOND TOWNSMAN: Aye, it looks like he must be wrong this time; because neither the Householders' Association nor the Townsmen's Club would lend him a hall.

FIRST TOWNSMAN: He wasn't even allowed the use of the hall at the Baths.

SECOND TOWNSMAN: No, well you know why.

A MAN *in another group*: Who should one side with in this matter, do you think?

ANOTHER MAN *in the same group*: Just keep an eye on Aslaksen the printer and do what *he* does.

BILLING (*with an attaché case under his arm, elbows his way through the crowd*): Excuse me, gentlemen! If I might just get through? I'm covering this for *The People's Herald*. Thank you!

*He takes a seat at the table on the left.*

A WORKING MAN: Who was that?

ANOTHER WORKING MAN: Don't tell me you don't know *him*? It's that Billing that works for Aslaksen's paper.

*Captain Horster ushers Mrs Stockmann and Petra through the door on the right in the foreground.*

*Ejlif and Morten are with them.*

HORSTER: I thought the family could sit here; it's so easy to slip out this way if anything should happen.

MRS STOCKMANN: Do you think there will be trouble?

HORSTER: You never know; with so many people -. But sit you down, ma'am, and don't worry.

MRS STOCKMANN (*sitting down*): How kind it was of you to offer Dr Stockmann this room.

HORSTER: Well, since no one else would -

PETRA (*who has also sat down*): And courageous of you too, Captain.

HORSTER: Oh, it didn't take that much courage, I don't think.

*Hovstad the newspaper editor and Aslaksen the printer push their way through the crowd at the same time, but separately.*

ASLAKSEN (*walking up to Horster*): Is the doctor not here yet?

HORSTER: He's waiting in there.

*Stirrings up by the door in the background.*

HOVSTAD (*to Billing*): There's the judge. Look!

BILLING: By God, yes; I'll be blowed if he hasn't shown up after all!

*Judge Stockmann edges his way through the gathering, bows politely and positions himself over by the wall on the left. Shortly afterwards Dr Stockmann comes in through the door on the right in the foreground. He is dressed in black, in a frock coat with a white stock.*

*Some scattered, hesitant applause is met by soft shushing. There is silence.*

DR STOCKMANN (*under his breath*): How are you, Katrine?

MRS STOCKMANN: Oh, I'm fine. (*more quietly*). Please don't lose your temper, Tomas.

DR STOCKMANN: Oh, I think I know how to control myself, my dear. (*glances at his watch, steps up onto the dais and bows*). It is now a quarter past, - so I shall begin – (*takes out his manuscript*).

ASLAKSEN: But first I suppose we should elect a chairman.

DR STOCKMANN: No; there's absolutely no need for that.

SOME GENTLEMEN (*shouting*): Yes, yes!

JUDGE: I too would have thought that a moderator ought to be elected.

DR STOCKMANN: But I called this meeting in order to give a lecture, Peter!

JUDGE: The medical officer's lecture may well give rise to the expression of diverging opinions.

MORE VOICES (*from the crowd*): A chairman! A moderator!

HOVSTAD: The will of the people seems to demand a chairman.

DR STOCKMANN: Oh, all right then; let the will of the people have its way.

ASLAKSEN: Might His Honour the judge be willing to undertake this task?

THREE GENTLEMEN: Bravo! Bravo!

JUDGE: For several readily understandable reasons I must decline. Fortunately, however, we have in our midst a man whom I believe all would find acceptable. I am referring to the chairman of the Householders' Association, Mr Aslaksen.

MANY VOICES: Yes, yes! Three cheers for Aslaksen! Hooray for Aslaksen!

*Dr Stockmann picks up his manuscript and steps down from the dais.*

ASLAKSEN: Since I am called by the trust of my fellow townspeople, I shall not be unwilling –



*Clapping and cheering. Aslaksen steps up onto the dais.*

BILLING (*writing*): Right, so – ”Mr Aslaksen, master printer, elected to great acclaim –“

ASLAKSEN: And now that I’m here, might I be permitted to say a brief word or two. I am a quiet and peaceable man who believes in prudent moderation and – and moderate prudence; anyone who knows me will tell you that.

MANY VOICES: Yes! That’s right, Aslaksen!

ASLAKSEN: In the school of life and experience I have learned that moderation is the virtue which stands a citizen in best stead -

JUDGE: Hear, hear!

ASLAKSEN: - and that prudence and temperance are what society is best served with too. I would therefore suggest to the esteemed fellow townsman who called this meeting that he endeavour to remain within the bounds of temperance.

A MAN: Here’s to the Temperance Society!

A VOICE: Oh, to hell with that!

MANY: Ssh, ssh!

ASLAKSEN: No interruptions, gentlemen! Does anyone wish to have the floor?

JUDGE: Mr Moderator!

ASLAKSEN: His Honour Judge Stockmann has the floor.

JUDGE: In light of the close kinship that exists, as I presume you all know, between myself and the acting medical officer to the Baths, I would have preferred not to speak this evening. However, my own position with regard to the Baths and my concern for the prime interests of the town compel me to put forward a proposal. I can safely take it, can I not, that not a single one of the

townspeople here gathered considers it desirable for unreliable and exaggerated reports of the Baths' and the town's sanitary conditions to be spread abroad?

MANY VOICES: No, no, no! Not that! We protest!

JUDGE: I wish to propose, therefore, that this assembly should not permit the medical officer to read or to lecture on his report of this matter.

DR STOCKMANN (*seething with rage*): Not permit -! What is all this!

MRS STOCKMANN (*coughing*): Ahem – ahem!

DR STOCKMANN (*composing himself*): So; not permit, eh?

JUDGE: In my statement in *The People's Herald* I have acquainted the general public with the essential facts, thus making it easy for all right-minded citizens of the town to judge for themselves. From this it can be seen that essentially the medical officer's proposal, - besides constituting a vote of no confidence in the leading men of the town, - would entail the imposition on its taxpayers of an unnecessary expenditure of at least one hundred thousand kroner.

*Booing and some whistling.*

ASLAKSEN (*ringing the bell*): Silentium, gentlemen! I beg leave to second the Judge's proposal. I *too* am of the opinion that there is an ulterior motive behind the doctor's campaign. He talks about the Baths; but what he is after is a revolution; he aims to place the running of the town in other hands. No one doubts the honesty of the doctor's intentions; God forbid, there's no argument on that score. *I*, too, am an advocate of government by the people, as long as it does not prove too expensive for the taxpayers. But that *would* be the case here; and so -; no, great God Almighty - pardon my language – I cannot, therefore, side with Dr Stockmann on this occasion. One can pay too high a price, even for gold; that's *my* opinion anyway.

*Animated agreement from all sides.*

HOVSTAD: I, too feel moved to make my position clear. Dr Stockmann's revolt seemed to win a good deal of favour initially and I supported it as impartially as I could. But then we discovered that we had been misled by a false representation -

DR STOCKMANN: False -!

HOVSTAD: Well, a less than reliable representation, then. The judge's statement has proved that. I hope that no one here present doubts my liberal disposition; the *Herald's* stance on the major political issues is well known to everyone. But from experienced and prudent men I have learned that in purely local matters a newspaper should proceed with a certain caution.

ASLAKSEN: Totally agree with the speaker.

HOVSTAD: And in the matter before us there is now no doubt whatsoever that Dr Stockmann has the will of the people against him. But what is an editor's foremost and most noble duty, gentlemen? Is it not to act in accordance with his readers? Has he not been given a tacit mandate, as it were, to dauntlessly and steadfastly promote the welfare of his like-minded fellows. Or might I be wrong about this?

CHORUS OF VOICES: No, no, no! Mr Hovstad's right!

HOVSTAD: It has been a hard struggle for me to break with a man in whose house I have lately been a regular guest - a man who has, until today, enjoyed the undivided goodwill of his fellow townspeople, - a man whose only - or, at any rate, chief failing is that he lets himself be guided more by his heart than his head.

A FEW SCATTERED VOICES: That's true! Hooray for Dr Stockmann!

HOVSTAD: But my duty to society dictates that I must break with him. There is, however, another consideration that drives me to fight him and, if possible, stop him from following the fateful path he has taken; and that is consideration for his family -

DR STOCKMANN: Stick to the water conduits and the sewers, sir!

HOVSTAD: - consideration for his spouse and his poor, neglected children.

MORTEN: Is that us, Mama?

MRS STOCKMANN: Ssh!

ASLAKSEN: So, I will now put His Honour the judge's proposal to the vote.

DR STOCKMANN: There's no need! I have no intention of speaking this evening about that whole foul mess down at the Baths. No; you're going to hear something quite different.

JUDGE (*in an undertone*): What's he on about now?

A DRUNK MAN (*up by the main door*): I'm a taxpayer! I'm as entitled to my opinion as any man! And it's my full - firm – incomprehensible - opinion that -

MORE VOICES: Quiet back there!

OTHERS: He's drunk! Throw him out!

*The drunk man is ejected.*

DR STOCKMANN: Do I have the floor?

ASLAKSEN (*ringing the bell*): The honourable Dr Stockmann has the floor!

DR STOCKMANN: Only a couple of days ago, I should have liked to see anyone dare attempt, as here this evening, to muzzle me! I would have fought like a lion to defend my sacred rights as a human being! But that makes no odds to me now; because now I have more important things to speak about.

*The crowd presses closer around him.*

*Morten Kiil comes into view among the throng.*

DR STOCKMANN (*continuing*): I've been doing a lot of thinking over the past few days – thinking and considering so many things, until it almost made my head spin -

JUDGE (*clearing his throat*): Ahem -!

DR STOCKMANN: - but eventually I got things straight in my mind; and then I saw the whole picture only too clearly. And that is why I am standing here this evening. My fellow citizens, I am going to make great revelations! I am going to inform you of a discovery of a quite different magnitude than such trifling matters as our water conduits being poisoned or our therapeutic baths lying on pest-ridden ground.

MANY VOICES (*yelling*): Don't talk about the Baths! We don't want to hear it! Not a word about them.

DR STOCKMANN: I've said that I'm going to speak about the great discovery that I have made over these past few days, - the discovery that all of our spiritual life-springs are poisoned and that our whole community rests on the pest-ridden ground of a lie.

ASTONISHED VOICES (*in a loud whisper*): What's that he says?

JUDGE: Such an insinuation -!

ASLAKSEN (*with his hand on the bell*): The speaker will kindly moderate his language.

DR STOCKMANN: I have loved the town of my birth as dearly as any man can love the home of his youth. I wasn't very old when I left this place, and distance, longing and memory seemed to lend an added lustre to the town and the people in it.

*Some clapping and cheering.*

DR STOCKMANN: Then, I was confined for many years to a dreadful backwater in the far north. And often, on meeting some of the people who lived here and there among the rocks, I felt that it would have been better for those poor, spent creatures if they had had a vet up there instead of a man like me.

*Mutterings in the room.*

BILLING (*putting down his pen*): Well, by God, I've never heard -!

HOVSTAD: This is an insult to decent common folk!

DR STOCKMANN: Wait a moment! – I don't think anyone could accuse me of forgetting the town of my birth while I was up there. I brooded like an eider duck; and what I hatched, - was the plan for the spa baths here in town.

*Clapping and cries of protest.*

DR STOCKMANN: And when at long, long last Fate so beautifully and blessedly arranged things so that I could come home again, - well, my fellow townspeople, I felt that I had nothing left in this world to wish for. Or, at least, I did have one wish, a fervent, indefatigable, burning desire to work for the good of my home and the general public.

JUDGE (*staring into space*): You've a funny way of – hm.

DR STOCKMANN: And here I've been, wallowing in blissful blindness. But yesterday morning – no, the evening before, in fact – my spiritual eyes were opened wide and the first thing I spied was the colossal stupidity of the authorities –

*Uproar, shouts and laughter. Mrs Stockmann coughs frantically.*

JUDGE: Mr Moderator!

ASLAKSEN (*rings the bell*): By the authority invested in me -!

DR STOCKMANN: It's petty to fasten on one word, Mr Aslaksen! I simply mean that I discovered the colossal mess down at the Baths, for which the leading men there are to blame. For the life of me I cannot stand leading men – I've had enough of that sort in my time. They're like billy-goats in a plantation of saplings; they cause havoc wherever they go; they stand in the way of a free man whichever way he turns, - and if I had my way we would have them exterminated like all other vermin –

*Stirrings of unrest in the room.*

JUDGE: Mr Moderator, can such statements be allowed to pass.

ASLAKSEN (*with his hand on the bell*): Doctor -!

DR STOCKMANN: Why it should have taken me till now to gain a proper, clear-sighted view of these gentlemen is beyond me; considering that I've had such a prime example of the breed right before my eyes almost every day here in town, - my brother Peter, - slow off the mark and stiff in prejudice –

*Laughter, shouts and whistling. Mrs Stockmann coughs and coughs.*

*Aslaksen rings the bell vigorously.*

THE DRUNK MAN *who has just come back in*: Are you referring to me? Aye, well my name's Pettersen, right enough; but no bloody way am I –

ANGRY VOICES: Get that drunk out of here! Kick him out!

*The man is thrown out again.*

JUDGE: Who was that person?

A BYSTANDER: No idea, Your Honour.

ANOTHER: He's not from around here.

A THIRD: Isn't he a lumber merchant from over in – *(the rest is inaudible)*

ASLAKSEN: The man was obviously the worse for beer. – Carry on, Doctor; but do please endeavour to exercise moderation.

DR STOCKMANN: Very well then, my fellow townspeople; I'll say no more about our leading men. If anyone should have the impression, from what I have just said, that I am here this evening to lambast those gentlemen then he is mistaken, - very much mistaken. Because I cherish the heartening conviction that these laggards, all these relics of a dying ideology, they are doing an excellent job of killing themselves off; they need no doctor to help to hasten their demise. And in any case *these* are not the sort of people who pose the most overwhelming threat to society; *they* are not the ones who are doing most to contaminate our spiritual life-springs and poison the ground beneath our feet; *they* are not the most dangerous enemies of truth and freedom in our society.

CRIES FROM ALL SIDES: Who then? Who are they? Name them!



DR STOCKMANN: Oh, I'll name them all right, don't you worry! Because *that* is the great discovery that I made yesterday. *(raises his voice)* The most dangerous enemy of truth and freedom here among us, is the compact majority. Yes indeed, that damned, compact, liberal majority, - *that* is the enemy. So now you know.

*Huge uproar in the room. Almost everyone is shouting, stamping and whistling.*

*Some elderly gentlemen exchange stolen glances and appear to be relishing all the fuss.*

*Mrs Stockmann gets anxiously to her feet; Ejlif and Morten make menacing moves towards the schoolboys, who are raising a rumpus. Aslaksen rings the bell and calls for order. Hovstad and*

*Billing are both speaking, but neither can be heard. At last there is silence.*

ASLAKSEN: The chairman expects the speaker to retract his imprudent remarks.

DR STOCKMANN: Never, Mr Aslaksen. It is the large majority in our society that robs me of my freedom and that would forbid me to speak the truth.

HOVSTAD: The majority always has the right on its side.

BILLING: And so has truth, by God it does!

DR STOCKMANN: The majority never has the right on its side. Never, I say! That is one of those lies of society that a free, thinking man must rebel against. Who is it that forms the majority in a country? Is it the wise men, or is it the fools? I think we can agree that the fools are in the quite shocking and overwhelming majority all over the world. But, damn it all, surely it can never, ever be right that the fools should rule over the wise!

*Loud outcry, shouting and yelling.*

DR STOCKMANN: Yes, yes; You may be able to outshout me; but you cannot gainsay me. The majority has the *might* – unfortunately -; but the *right*, that it does not have. I have the right of it, I and those few others, the individuals: the minority always has the right of it.

*Loud outcry again.*

HOVSTAD: Ha-ha; so Dr Stockmann has become an aristocrat since the day before yesterday!

DR STOCKMANN: I've said that I can't be bothered wasting a word on that small, tight-chested, breathless herd that's lagging behind. Vibrant pulsating life no longer takes anything to do with them. I'm thinking, rather, of the few, the individuals among us who have embraced all the young, budding truths. These men are out there in the vanguard, as it were, so far out in front that the compact majority hasn't got there yet, and out *there* they are fighting for truths that are still too newborn to the world of the intellect to have built up a majority behind them.

HOVSTAD: Ah, so the doctor has become a revolutionary now!

DR STOCKMANN: Yes, too damn right, I have, Mr Hovstad! I intend to rebel against the lie which says the majority is in possession of the truth. What kind of truths do the majority usually rally around? Truths so advanced in years that they are almost in their dotage. But when a truth is that old, gentlemen, it is also well on its way to becoming a lie.

*Laughter and cries of derision.*

DR STOCKMANN: Yes, well, whether you believe me or not is up to you, but truths are by no means such diehard Methuselahs as people imagine. A truth of normal build will usually live for – let me see – about 17 to 18 years, 20 at the most; rarely longer. Such age-worn truths are, however,

always appallingly scrawny. And yet it's only *then* that the majority takes them up and recommends them to society as wholesome spiritual fodder. But there's no great nutritional value in that sort of fare, I assure you; and as a doctor I should know. All these majority-truths are akin to last year's salted meat; they're like rancid, doubtful, green-cured hams. And from this comes all the moral scurvy that is so rife in our societies.

ASLAKSEN: It seems to me that the honourable speaker is straying rather too far from the text.

JUDGE: I must, in all essentials, concur with the moderator's opinion.

DR STOCKMANN: Oh really, I do believe you're quite mad, Peter! I'm sticking as closely to the text as I can. Because what I want to speak about is the very fact that the mass, the greater number, this damned compact majority, - that this, I tell you, is what is poisoning our spiritual life-springs and contaminating the ground beneath our feet.

HOVSTAD: And the large, open-minded majority of the people does this because it is prudent enough to acclaim only those truths that are certain and approved?

DT STOCKMANN: Ah, my dear Mr Hovstad, don't talk to me about certain truths! Those truths that are approved by the mass and the multitude, those are the truths that the advance guard of our grandfathers' day regarded as certain. We, the advance guard of today, we no longer approve these; I simply do not believe there is any certain truth other than that which says no society can lead a healthy life on such old, puny truths.

HOVSTAD: Well, instead of you standing here rambling on like this, it might be interesting to hear what they are, these old, puny truths that we're living on.

*Murmurs of agreement from around the room.*

DR STOCKMANN: Oh, I could reel off a whole heap of such abominations; but for now I'll confine myself to *one* acknowledged truth which is, in fact, a vile lie, but which Mr Hovstad and *The People's Herald* and all the *Herald's* adherents live on.

HOVSTAD: And that is -?

DR STOCKMANN: That is the doctrine handed down to all of you by our forefathers, which you preach thoughtlessly, far and wide, - that doctrine which states that the common folk, the mob, the mass, are the backbone of the nation, - that they are the nation, - that the man in the street, that these unskilled, unfinished members of society, have the same right to condemn and approve, to govern and advise as those few spiritually superior personalities.

BILLING: Well I never, by God -

HOVSTAD (*at the same time, shouting*): Citizens, take note of this!

INDIGNANT VOICES: Oy! Aren't we the nation! Or is it only these superior so-and sos that are allowed to govern!

A WORKING MAN: Who said that? Out with him!

OTHERS: Chuck him out!

A TOWNSMAN (*roaring*): Blow your horn, Evensen!

*The loud blare of a lure horn is heard; whistling and angry shouts fill the room.*

DR STOCKMANN (*once the noise has died down a little*): Oh, come now, be reasonable! Can you not bear, just *once*, to hear the voice of truth? It's not as though I'm asking that you should all instantly agree with me. Although I had certainly expected that Mr Hovstad would give me the right of it once he had had the chance to gather his thoughts. Mr Hovstad does, after all, claim to be a freethinker -

A LOW RIPPLE OF ASTONISHED QUESTIONS: Freethinker, did he say? What? Is Hovstad a freethinker?

HOVSTAD (*shouting*): Prove it, Dr Stockmann! When have I ever said that in print!

DR STOCKMANN (*considers this*): No, you're damned right about that; you've never been that freespoken. Well, far be it from me to make things awkward for you, Mr Hovstad. So just you leave it to me to be the freethinker. Because now I'm going to make it patently clear to you all, scientifically, how *The People's Herald* is quite shamefully leading you up the garden path when it tells you that you, that the common folk, the mass and the multitude, form the real backbone of the nation. That is merely a lie propagated by the press, you see! The common folk are nothing but the raw material from which the nation can forge its people.

*Grumbling, laughter and stirrings in the room.*

DR STOCKMANN: Well, isn't *that* the way of it everywhere else in the living world? Just think what a difference there is between a cultivated and an uncultivated breed of animal? Take a common farmyard hen. How much meat is there on such a stunted chicken carcass? Not a lot, no! And what sort of eggs does it lay? A relatively decent crow or raven could lay eggs almost as good. Then take a cultivated Spanish or Japanese hen, or take a noble pheasant or turkey; - ah, then you'll see the difference! Or what about dogs, to which we humans are so very closely related. Think first of a plain, common dog, - which is to say a horrible, shaggy, vulgar mongrel that does nothing but roam the streets and foul the walls of buildings. Then set that alongside a poodle with a long pedigree, bred in a noble house where it has been fed on fine food and had the opportunity to listen to harmonious voices and music. Don't you think the cranium of that poodle will have developed quite differently from that of the mongrel? Oh, you bet your boots it will! It is poodle pups like this

that travelling showmen train to do the most amazing tricks. A lowly farm mongrel could try till it was blue in the face, but it could never learn such things.

*Loud shouting and hilarity in the room.*

A TOWNSMAN (*shouting*): Would you make us out to be dogs now, too?

ANOTHER MAN: We're not animals, doctor!

DR STOCKMANN: Oh, bless my soul, but we are animals, father! We are, all of us, just about the best animals any man could ask for. But noble animals, they're really aren't too many of those among us. Oh, it's a quite appallingly far cry from poodle-humans to mongrel-humans. And the odd thing about it is that on this point Mr Hovstad is very much in agreement with me, as long as we're talking about four-legged creatures –

HOVSTAD: Yes, well they are what they are.

DR STOCKMANN: Quite: but as soon as I extend the law to include two-legged creatures Mr Hovstad calls a halt; then he no longer dares to believe his own beliefs, or think his own thoughts through to their conclusion; then he turns the whole doctrine on its head and preaches in the *Herald* that the farmyard hen and the street mongrel – that *they* are the real prime specimens in the menagerie. But that's always the way as long as one is still common inside and as long as one has not worked one's way out to spiritual nobility.

HOVSTAD: I make no claims to any sort of nobility. I come from simple peasant stock; and I'm proud to have my roots deep among the common folk who are being mocked here.

A LOT OF WORKING MEN: Hooray for Hovstad! Hooray, hooray!

DR STOCKMANN: The sort of commonness I'm talking about is not only found deep down; it crawls and swarms all around us, - all the way up to the heights of society. Just look at your own

grand and worthy town magistrate! My brother Peter is surely as good a common man as any on two legs –

*Laughter and hissing*

JUDGE: I object to such personal remarks.

DR STOCKMANN (*nothing daunted*): - and this he is, not because he, like me, is descended from a wicked old pirate from down in Pomerania or thereabouts – oh yes, because we are –

JUDGE: Ridiculous traditions. Denied!

DR STOCKMANN: - no, this he is, because he thinks the thoughts of his superiors and because he believes his superiors' beliefs. Those who do *that*, they are spiritually common; so you see, that is why my august brother Peter is, in fact, so appallingly lacking in nobility, - and hence also so lacking in open-mindedness.

JUDGE: Mr Moderator -!

HOVSTAD: So it's the noble folk who are the open-minded ones in this country? That's news to me.

*Laughter from the crowd.*

DR STOCKMANN: Yes, well, that is also part of my new discovery. That and the *fact* that open-mindedness is almost exactly the same thing as morality. And so I say to you that it is quite indefensible of the *Herald* to preach, day in, day out, the false doctrine which says that it is the mass and the multitude, the compact majority, that has the monopoly on open-mindedness and morality, -

and that vice and corruption and all manner of spiritual foulness are things that seep out of the culture, just as all the muck and filth seeps down to the Baths from the tanneries up in Mølledalen!

*Shouting and heckling.*

DR STOCKMANN (*undaunted, laughing in his enthusiasm*): And yet this same *People's Herald* can preach that the mass and the multitude are to be elevated to a higher condition of life! But, damn and blast it all, - if the *Herald's* doctrine were correct then to do *that*, to elevate the mass would be exactly the same as tipping them straight into corruption! Fortunately, though, this is merely an old wives' tale, this idea that culture demoralises. No, the dulling of wits -, poverty, grim living conditions, it is these that commit this fiendish act! In a house that's not aired every day and the floors swept -; my wife Katrine maintains that the floor ought to be washed too; but that's a moot point - anyway, - in such a house, I say, there, within two to three years, people lose the ability to think and act morally. The lack of oxygen weakens the scruples. And it looks as though oxygen must be in terribly short supply in many, many houses in this town, when the entire compact majority can be so unscrupulous as to base the town's prosperity on a quagmire of lies and deception.

ASLAKSEN: Such a gross accusation cannot be hurled at a whole community.

A GENTLEMAN: I move that the moderator make the speaker relinquish the floor.

VEHEMENT VOICES: Yes, yes! He's right! Make him relinquish the floor!

DR STOCKMANN (*incensed*): Then I'll shout the truth from every street corner! I'll write in newspapers elsewhere! The whole country will be told about the way things are here!

HOVSTAD: One might almost think the doctor meant to destroy this town.



DR STOCKMANN: Yes, I care so much for the town of my birth that I'd rather destroy it than see it flourish on a lie.

ASLAKSEN: Those are strong words.

*Shouts and whistling. Mrs Stockmann coughs in vain; the doctor no longer hears her.*

HOVSTAD (*shouting through the din*): Any man who is willing to destroy an entire society must be an enemy of the citizenry!

DR STOCKMANN (*becoming more and more worked up*): What does it matter if a lying society is destroyed! It ought to be razed to the ground, I say! Exterminated like vermin, that's what they ought to be, all those who live a lie! You'll end up contaminating the whole land; you'll bring it to the point where the whole country will deserve to be laid waste. And if things go *that* far, then I say, from the very bottom of my heart: let the whole land be laid waste; let this entire nation be exterminated!

A MAN (*in the crowd*): Those are the words of a downright enemy of the people!

BILLING: There it is, by God, the voice of the people!

THE WHOLE CROWD (*yelling*): Yes, yes, yes! He's an enemy of the people! He hates his land! He hates the entire nation!

ASLAKSEN: As a citizen and a human being I am deeply shocked by what I have had to listen to here. Dr Stockmann has shown himself up in a way that I would never have dreamed possible. Unfortunately, I must concur with the opinion just voiced by a number of worthy townsmen; and I hold that we ought to express this opinion in a resolution. I propose as follows: "This assembly declares that it considers the medical officer to the Baths, Dr Tomas Stockmann, to be an enemy of the people".

*Tumultuous applause and cheering. Lots of people close in around the doctor, whistling at him.*

*Mrs Stockmann and Petra are on their feet. Morten and Ejlif are fighting with the other schoolboys, who have also been whistling. Some grown-ups separate them.*

DR STOCKMANN (*to the whistlers*): Oh, fools that you are, - I'm telling you, -

ASLAKSEN (*ringing the bell*): The doctor no longer has the floor. We should have a formal vote; but to spare anyone's feelings it ought to be a secret ballot. Do you have some blank sheets of paper, Mr Billing?

BILLING: Here's some blue and some white -

ASLAKSEN (*stepping down*): Good; it'll be quicker that way. Cut it up -; there now, that's it, yes. (*to the gathering*) Blue for no; white for yes. I will go round and collect the ballot slips myself.

*The judge leaves the room. Aslaksen and a couple of other townsmen work their way through the crowd with hats containing the slips of paper.*

A GENTLEMAN (*to Hovstad*): What's got into the doctor, sir. What's one supposed to think about such a thing.

HOVSTAD: Oh, well you know how impetuous he is.

ANOTHER GENTLEMAN (*to Billing*): Look: you're a regular visitor to the house. Have you noticed whether the man drinks?

BILLING: Well, by God, I don't know what to tell you. The toddy's always on the table when anyone calls.

A THIRD GENTLEMAN: No, I think he's actually a bit deranged at times.

FIRST GENTLEMAN: Ah, there isn't any history of insanity in the family, is there?

BILLING: There might bloody well be.

A FOURTH GENTLEMAN: No, it's just pure badness, so it is; it's revenge for something or other.

BILLING: He did say something the other day about a bonus; he didn't get it, though.

ALL THE GENTLEMEN (*in chorus*): A-ha; well, that explains it then!

THE DRUNK MAN (*in the crowd*): A blue one, for me! And a white one as well!

SHOUTS: It's that drunk man again! Chuck him out!

MORTEN KIIL (*sidling up to the doctor*): Well, Stockmann, now do you see what comes of such monkey business?

DR STOCKMANN: I've done my duty.

MORTEN KIIL: What was that you said about the tanneries in Mølledalen?

DR STOCKMANN: You heard me; I said that that was where all the foul muck was coming from.

MORTEN KIIL: From my tannery too?

DR STOCKMANN: Unfortunately your tannery is probably the worst of the lot.

MORTEN KIIL: Are you going to put *that* in the papers?

DR STOCKMANN: I won't be keeping anything back.

MORTEN KIIL: That could cost you dearly, Stockmann.

*He walks away.*

A FAT GENTLEMAN (*comes over to Captain Horster, does not greet the ladies*): Well, Captain, so you lend your house to enemies of the people, do you?

HORSTER: I believe I can do what I like with my own property, sir.

FAT GENTLEMAN: Well, then you won't have any objection to me doing the same with mine.

HORSTER: What are you saying, sir?

FAT GENTLEMAN: You'll be hearing from me tomorrow.

*He turns and walks off.*

PETRA: Wasn't that your shipowner, Captain?

HORSTER: Yes, that was Vik, the merchant.

ASLAKSEN (*clutching the ballot slips, steps up onto the dais and rings the bell*): Gentleman, if I might inform you of the result. With all votes bar one -

A YOUNG GENTLEMAN: That one's the drunk man's!

ASLAKSEN: With all votes bar that of an inebriated man, this public gathering declares the medical officer to the Baths, Dr Tomas Stockmann, to be an enemy of the people. (*shouts and cheering*). Long live our ancient and honourable community! (*more cheering*). Long live our clever, hard-working town magistrate who has so faithfully suppressed the call of kinship! (*hooray*). The meeting is adjourned.

*He steps down.*

BILLING: Long live the moderator!

WHOLE CROWD: Hooray for Mr Aslaksen!

DR STOCKMANN: My hat and my coat, Petra! Captain, do you have room for passengers to the new world?

HORSTER: For you and yours room will be found, Doctor.

DR STOCKMANN (*as Petra helps him on with his coat*): Good. Come, Katrine! Come, boys!

*He takes his wife's arm.*

MRS STOCKMANN (*softly*): Tomas, dear, let's go out the back way.

DR STOCKMANN: No back ways, Katrine. (*raising his voice*): You'll be hearing from this enemy of the people before he shakes the dust off his feet! I'm not as good-hearted as a certain other person; I'm not going to say: I forgive you, for you know not what you do.

ASLAKSEN (*shouts*): That is a blasphemous comparison, Dr Stockmann!

BILLING: By god, it is -. it's hard for a serious man to have to listen to such talk.

A ROUGH VOICE: And he's making threats as well!

FIERCE SHOUTS: Let's smash in his windows! Duck him in the fjord!

A MAN: Blow your horn, Evensen! Toot, toot!

*Horn-blaring, whistling and fierce shouting.*

*The doctor heads for the exit with  
his family. Horster clears the way for them.*

WHOLE CROWD (*roaring after the departing group*): Enemy of the people! Enemy of the people! Enemy of the people!

BILLING (*gathering up his notes*): Well, by God, I'll be damned if I'll drink toddy at the Stockmanns' this evening!

*The crowd streams towards the door; the shouting spreads to the outside; from the street comes the*

*cry:*

*“Enemy of the people! Enemy of the people!”*

## ACT V

*Dr Stockmann's study. Bookcases and cabinets containing a variety of specimens line the walls. In the background, the door to the hall; on the left in the foreground, the door to the living-room. On the wall on the right are two windows in which all the panes have been smashed. In the centre of the room is the doctor's desk, strewn with books and papers. The room is in total disorder.*

*It is late morning.*

*Dr Stockmann, in dressing-gown and slippers and with a smoking cap on his head, is bending down, poking under one of the cabinets with an umbrella; eventually he pulls out a stone.*

DR STOCKMANN (*calling through the open living-room door*): Katrine, I've found another one here.

MRS STOCKMANN (*from the living-room*): Oh, I think you'll probably find a whole lot more yet.

DR STOCKMANN (*adds the stone to a pile of others on the table*): I'm going to keep these stones as sacred relics. Ejlif and Morten will be presented with them every day, and when they're grown-up they'll inherit them from me. (*pokes under a bookcase*) Hasn't – what the hell's her name – her, that girl – hasn't she been to fetch the glazier yet?

MRS STOCKMANN (*coming in*): Yes, but he said he didn't know whether he'd be able to come today.

DR STOCKMANN: He doesn't dare, you'll see.

MRS STOCKMANN: No, that's what Randine thought, that he doesn't dare, for fear of what the neighbours might say. (*calling back into the living-room*) What is it, Randine? Oh, right. (*steps into the living-room and comes straight back*). There's a letter here for you, Tomas.

DR STOCKMANN: Let me see. (*opens it and reads*). Well, well.

MRS STOCKMANN: Who is it from?

DR STOCKMANN: From the landlord. He's giving us notice.

MRS STOCKMANN: Really, is that true? But he's such a decent man -

DR STOCKMANN: He doesn't dare do otherwise, he says. He hates to do it; but he doesn't dare do otherwise – for the sake of his fellow townspeople – on account of public opinion – he's dependent on – doesn't dare offend certain influential men -

MRS STOCKMANN: There, you see, Tomas.

DR STOCKMANN: Yes, yes, I see all right; they're cowards, the lot of them, in this town; not one person dares to do anything on account of all the other people. (*tosses the letter on to the desk*). Well, it's all the same to us, Katrine. We're off to the new world now, so –

MRS STOCKMANN: Yes, but, Tomas, have you really thought about this, this idea of leaving?

DR STOCKMANN: Do you expect me to stay here, where they've pilloried me as an enemy of the people, branded me, smashed my windows! And would you look at this, Katrine; they've even torn a hole in my black trousers.

MRS STOCKMANN: Oh, no; and that's your best pair!

DR STOCKMANN: A man should never wear his best trousers when he's out fighting for freedom and truth. Oh, I'm not all that bothered about my trousers, you know; because you can always stitch them for me. But the fact that the mob and the mass have the temerity to lash out at me, as if they were my equals, - *that* is what, for the life of me, I cannot stomach!



MRS STOCKMANN: Yes, they've treated you very harshly here in town, Tomas; but is *that* any reason for us to leave the country altogether?

DR STOCKMANN: Don't you think the plebs are every bit as impertinent in other towns as they are here? Oh, believe you me, it would be pretty much the same story everywhere. Oh well, never mind; let the mongrels snap and snarl; *that's* not the worst of it; the worst of it is that everyone in the whole county is a party vassal. Don't get me *wrong*, - there may not be any greater equality in the free West either, the compact majority is rife *there* too, and liberal public opinion and all those other abominations. But the surroundings there are on such a grand scale, you see; they can kill, but they don't torment; they don't clamp a free spirit in a vice the way they do here at home. And if the worst comes to the worst you can always opt out. ( *pacing the floor* ) If only I knew of an ancient forest going cheap, or a small South Sea island -

MRS STOCKMANN: But what about the boys, Tomas?

DR STOCKMANN ( *stops in his tracks* ): What a funny one you are, Katrine! Would you rather have the boys grow up in a society such as ours? You said yourself only yesterday evening that half the population is stark, raving mad and if the other half hasn't lost its wits then it's because they're all blockheads who have no wits to lose.

MRS STOCKMANN: Yes, but Tomas, dear, you do tend to let your tongue run away with you.

DR STOCKMANN: Oh! But isn't it true what I'm saying? Aren't they standing all concepts on their head? Aren't they denouncing as lies everything I know to be true? But the craziest thing of all is that here we have hordes of liberal adult individuals going around telling themselves and others how open-minded they are! Have you ever heard the like of it, Katrine!

MRS STOCKMANN: Yes, I know, it's all wrong, of course, but -

*Petra comes in from the living-room.*

MRS STOCKMANN: Are you home from school already?

PETRA: Yes; I've been given my notice.

MRS STOCKMANN: Your notice!

DR STOCKMANN: You too!

PETRA: Mrs Busk gave me my notice; so I felt it was best to leave straight away.

DR STOCKMANN: And upon my life you were right to do so!

MRS STOCKMANN: Who would have thought that Mrs Busk was such a bad person!

PETRA: Oh, Mother, Mrs Busk isn't really bad; I saw quite clearly how much it pained her. But she didn't dare do otherwise, she said; so I was given my notice.

DR STOCKMANN (*laughs and rubs his hands*): So she didn't dare do otherwise either. Oh, isn't that just grand.

MRS STOCKMANN: Oh, well, after those dreadful scenes yesterday evening, -

PETRA: It wasn't *just* that. Father, wait till you hear this!

DR STOCKMANN: What?

PETRA: Mrs Busk showed me no fewer than three letters she had received this morning -

DR STOCKMANN: Unsigned, I suppose?

PETRA: Yes.

DR STOCKMANN: Yes, because they don't dare to sign their names, Katrine!

PETRA: And in two of them it said that a gentleman who frequents this house had said in the club last night that I had some extremely free opinions on various matters -

DR STOCKMANN: You didn't deny that, did you?

PETRA: No, you know I wouldn't. Mrs Busk has quite free opinions herself, when we're alone together; but now that there's all this gossip about me she didn't dare to keep me on.

MRS STOCKMANN: And to think, - a regular visitor to this house! There, you see Tomas, that's what you get for all your hospitality.

DR STOCKMANN: We're not going to live in such a mire any longer. Pack up as fast as you can, Katrine; the sooner we get away from here the better.

MRS STOCKMANN: Hush; I thought I heard someone out in the hall. Go and see, Petra.

PETRA (*opening the door*): Oh, it's you, Captain Horster? Please come in.

CAPTAIN HORSTER (*from the hall*): Good morning. I felt I had to look in and hear how you were.

DR STOCKMANN (*shaking his hand*): Thank-you; that was very kind of you.

MRS STOCKMANN: And thank-you for helping us out of there, Captain Horster.

PETRA: But how did you get back home?

HORSTER: Oh, I managed; I'm pretty strong, you know; and those characters are all talk really.

DR STOCKMANN: Yes, it's odd, don't you think, Captain, all this filthy cowardice? Come here, let me show you something! Look, here are all the stones they hurled through our windows. Just look at them! Bless my soul, there aren't two good, big rocks in the whole pile; the rest are nothing but gravel, - mere dross. And yet they stood out there bawling and swearing that they would beat me to a pulp; but action - action - no, you don't see much of that in this town!

HORSTER: Well, that was just as well for you this time, Doctor.

DR STOCKMANN: It certainly was. But it's infuriating all the same; because if it ever comes to a serious fight, one of national importance, public opinion will be all for making a run for it, you'll see, and the compact majority will take to the woods like a flock of sheep, Captain Horster. *That* is what is so sad to think; it pains me so deeply -. No, but what the hell, - it's really just a lot of nonsense, all this. They call me an enemy of the people, all right, then an enemy of the people is what I'll be.

MRS STOCKMANN: You'll certainly never be that, Tomas.

DR STOCKMANN: Don't be too sure of that, Katrine. Foul words can have the same effect as the scratches of a pin on the lung. And those blasted words -; I cannot rid myself of them; they've lodged in the pit of my stomach and there they sit, burrowing in and sucking sour juices, so to speak. And no amount of magnesia can relieve that.

PETRA: Pooh; you should just laugh at them, Father.

HORSTER: People are bound to think better of it eventually, Doctor.

MRS STOCKMANN: Yes, Tomas, they will, as sure as you're standing here.

DR STOCKMANN: Yes, when it's too late perhaps. Well, let them, and much *good* may it do them! Let them wallow in their mire and rue the day they drove a patriot into exile. When do you sail, Captain Horster?

HORSTER: Hm, - well, that's actually what I came to speak to you about -

DR STOCKMANN: Oh, is there a problem with the ship?

HORSTER: No; but it looks as though I won't be sailing with it.

PETRA: Don't tell me you've been given notice?

HORSTER (*smiling*): Oh, indeed I have.

PETRA: You too.

MRS STOCKMANN: There, you see, Tomas.

DR STOCKMANN: And all in the name of truth! Oh, if I had thought it would come to this -

HORSTER: Don't take it too much too heart; I'm sure I'll find a position with a shipping company elsewhere.

DR STOCKMANN: And it's that merchant, Vik, - a wealthy man, independent of all and sundry. Faugh, goddamn it!

HORSTER: He's normally very fair-minded; and he said himself that he would have liked to keep me on, if only he dared -

DR STOCKMANN: But he didn't dare? No, of course not!

HORSTER: It's not that simple, he said, when you're a member of a party -

DR STOCKMANN: He never said a truer word, that gentleman! A party is like a meat-mincer, so it is; it grinds all heads together into a mush; which is why they're all meatheads with mush for brains, every last one of them!

MRS STOCKMANN: Oh, Tomas, really!

PETRA (*to Horster*): If only you hadn't escorted us home, it might not have come to this.

HORSTER: I have no regrets about that.

PETRA (*giving him her hand*): Thank-you!

HORSTER (*to the doctor*): But what I *actually* wanted to say was that if you really do mean to leave, then I have another idea -

DR STOCKMANN: Good; just so long as we can get away soon -

MRS STOCKMANN: Sshh, wasn't that a knock at the door?

PETRA: It's probably Uncle.

DR STOCKMANN: A-ha! (*shouts*) Come in!

MRS STOCKMANN: Now, Tomas, dear, promise me -

*Judge Stockmann comes in from the hall*

JUDGE (*in the doorway*): Ah, you're busy. Yes, well I'd better -

DR STOCKMANN: No, no; come on in.

JUDGE: But I wished to speak to you in private.

MRS STOCKMANN: We'll go into the living-room meantime.

HORSTER: And I'll come back later.

DR STOCKMANN: No, you go on in too, Captain Horster; I need to hear more -

HORSTER: Oh, all right then, I'll wait.

*He follows Mrs Stockmann and Petra into the living-room.*

*The judge says nothing, but glances at the windows.*

DR STOCKMANN: You find it a bit draughty in here today, perhaps? Put on your cap.

JUDGE: Thank-you, if I may. *(does so)*. I think I caught a chill yesterday; I was so cold -

DR STOCKMANN: Really? It seemed pretty bloody heated to me.

JUDGE: I regret that it was not in my power to prevent these nocturnal excesses.

DR STOCKMANN: Have you anything else in particular to say to me?

JUDGE: I have this document for you from the board of the Baths.

DR STOCKMANN: Am I being given notice?

JUDGE: Yes, as of today. *(places the letter on the desk)*. We are sorry; but – quite frankly – we did not dare do otherwise on account of public opinion.

DR STOCKMANN: Did not dare? It's not the first time I've heard *those* words today.

JUDGE: I want you to be quite clear on your position. You should not expect to have any sort of practice in this town in the future.

DR STOCKMANN: To hell with my practice! But how can you be so sure of that?

JUDGE: The Householders' Association has drawn up a petition which is being taken from house to house. All well-disposed citizens are being urged not to avail themselves of your services; and I

dare guarantee that no head of any household would venture not to withhold his signature; they simply do not *dare*.

DR STOCKMANN: No, no; I don't doubt that. But what of it?

JUDGE: If I might give you some advice, it would be that you should leave town for a while -

DR STOCKMANN: You know, I have actually been giving some thought to leaving town.

JUDGE: Well, there you are then. And once you'd had six months or so to mull things over and, after mature consideration, could bring yourself, with a few words of apology, to acknowledge the error of your ways -

DR STOCKMANN: Then I might perhaps be given my job back, you mean?

JUDGE: Possibly; it's not entirely out of the question.

DR STOCKMANN: Ah, but what about public opinion? You wouldn't dare, would you, on account of public opinion.

JUDGE: Said opinion is an extremely fickle thing. And, to be honest, it is of the utmost importance to us that we receive such an admission from your hand.

DR STOCKMANN: Oh, you're all licking your chops in anticipation, I'll bet! But dammit man, I've told you before about such wiles, don't you remember!

JUDGE: You were in a much stronger position at that time; at that time you dared to assume that you had the whole town at your back -

DR STOCKMANN: Yes, and now I find that I have the whole town *on my back* – (*flaring up*) But no, not even if I had the devil and his great-grandmother on my back -! Never, - never, I tell you!

JUDGE: No man with a family to support would dare to do as you are doing. You wouldn't dare, Tomas.

DR STOCKMANN: Wouldn't dare! There's only one thing in this world that a free man does not dare; and do you know what that is?

JUDGE: No.

DR STOCKMANN: Of course not; well I'll *tell* you what it is. A free man doesn't dare to sully himself like any old ragtag; he doesn't dare to behave in a way that would make him want to spit in his own eye!

JUDGE: This all sounds exceedingly plausible; and if no other explanation for your obduracy was forthcoming -; but of course there is –

DR STOCKMANN: What do you mean by *that*?

JUDGE: I think you know very well what I mean. But as your brother and a prudent man I would advise you not to rely too much on hopes and prospects that might so very easily come to nothing.

DR STOCKMANN: What on earth are you talking about *now*?

JUDGE: Are you really trying to tell me that you know nothing of the provisions made in his will by Mr Kiil?

DR STOCKMANN: I know that what little he owns will go to a foundation for needy old tradesmen. But what has that to do with me?

JUDGE: For one thing, we're not talking about small change here. Mr Kiil is quite a wealthy man.

DR STOCKMANN: I had no idea - !

JUDGE: Hm, - really? Well, then, nor will you have any idea that a not insignificant portion of his fortune is to go to your children, such that you and your wife can enjoy the interest for life. He hasn't told you that?

DR STOCKMANN: No, upon my soul he has not! On the contrary; he's been forever ranting on about the unreasonably high taxes he had to pay. But are you quite sure about this, Peter?

JUDGE: I have it from an extremely reliable source.



DR STOCKMANN: Oh, heavens, this means that Katrine is secure, - and the children too! Oh, but I have to tell her – (*shouts*) Katrine, Katrine!

JUDGE (*restraining him*): Ssh, don't say anything yet!

MRS STOCKMANN (*opening the door*): What's the matter?

DR STOCKMANN: Nothing, my dear; just go back inside.

*Mrs Stockmann closes the door.*

DR STOCKMANN (*wandering around the room*): Secure! Well, fancy that, - they're all secure! And for life, at that! What a glorious feeling to know that one is secure!

JUDGE: Ah, but that's just what you're *not*. Mr Kiil can cancel that will any time he pleases.

DR STOCKMANN: But he won't, my dear Peter. The old Badger is far too delighted to see me taking on you and your ever- so-clever friends.

JUDGE (*taken aback, eyes him curiously*): A-ha, this sheds light on all sorts of things.

DR STOCKMANN: What sorts of things?

JUDGE: So this whole thing has been a joint manoeuvre. These fierce, ruthless attacks that you – in the name of the truth – have made on the leading men of this town -

DR STOCKMANN: What about them; what about them?

JUDGE: They were, in fact, nothing but prearranged payment for the will of that vengeful old Morten Kiil.

DR STOCKMANN (*almost speechless*): Peter, - in all my born days, you're the most despicable pleb I've ever known.

JUDGE: We're finished, you and I. Your dismissal is irrevocable; - because now we have ammunition against you.

*He leaves.*

DR STOCKMANN: Faugh, faugh, faugh! (*bellows*) Katrine! This floor needs washing after him! Tell that girl to get in here with a basin, her – her – what the hell's her name -, that girl that's always got soot on her nose -

MRS STOCKMANN (*in the living-room doorway*): Hush, hush now, Tomas!

PETRA (*also in the doorway*): Father, Grandfather's here; he wants to know if he can have a word with you in private.

DR STOCKMANN: Yes, of course he can. (*from the door*). Come in, Father-in-law.

*Morten Kiil comes in. The doctor closes the door behind him.*

DR STOCKMANN: Now then, what can I do for you? Take a seat, sir.

MORTEN KIIL: I won't sit down. (*looks around him*). This house of yours is a pretty sight today, Stockmann.

DR STOCKMANN: Yes, isn't it just?

MORTEN KIIL: A right pretty sight; and with fresh air too; you'll be getting plenty of that oxy-whatchmacallit today that you were talking about yesterday. You must have a very clear conscience today, I should think.

DR STOCKMANN: Yes, I have.

MORTEN KIIL: I should think so. (*pounds his chest*) But do you know what *I* have here?

DR STOCKMANN: A clear conscience there too, I hope.

MORTEN KIIL: Bah! No, something better than that.

*He pulls out a fat wallet, opens it and holds up a sheaf of papers.*

DR STOCKMANN (*gazes at him in astonishment*): Shares in the Baths?

MORTEN KIIL: They weren't hard to come by today.

DR STOCKMANN: And you've been out and bought -?

MORTEN KIIL: As many as I could afford.

DR STOCKMANN: But my dear father-in-law, - with the situation at the Baths as desperate as it is right now -!

MORTEN KIIL: If you behave like a sensible person. I'm sure you'll soon have the Baths back on their feet.

DR STOCKMANN: Well, you can see for yourself, I'm doing everything I can; but -. People in this town are quite mad!

MORTEN KIIL: You said yesterday that the worst of that foul muck was coming from my tannery. But if *that* were true then my grandfather, and my father before me, and I myself must have been befouling this town for years and years, like three murdering angels. Do you think I'm going to let such a shameful thing be said of me?

DR STOCKMANN: I'm afraid you'll jolly well *have* to.

MORTEN KIIL: No, thanks. I've my good name and my reputation to maintain. Folk call me "the Badger", so I've heard. And a badger now, that's a kind of a pig; but they'll never be proved right on that score. I'll live and die a clean person.

DR STOCKMANN: And how do you intend to do *that*?

MORTEN KIIL: *You're* going to make me clean, Stockmann.

DR STOCKMANN: I!

MORTEN KIIL: Do you know what money I used to buy these shares? No, how could you know; well, let me tell you. It was the money I was going to leave to Katrine and Petra and the wee lads. Oh, aye, because I had a bit put by after all, y'see.

DR STOCKMANN (*furious*): And you go and spend Katrine's money on something like this!

MORTEN KIIL: Aye, that money's all invested in the Baths now. And now I'll see whether you really are stark, staring – stark, raving – mad, after all, Stockmann. If you go on making out that my tannery is churning out animals or other such nasty beasties, then you might as well be slicing off broad strips of Katrine's skin, and Petra's too, and that of the wee lads; but no decent family man would ever do *that*, - not unless he was a mad man, that is.

DR STOCKMANN (*pacing up and down*): Ah, but I *am* a mad man; I *am* a mad man!

MORTEN KIIL: You're not absolutely barking mad surely, not where your wife and children are concerned.

DR STOCKMANN (*stopping in front of him*): Why couldn't you have spoken to me before you went and bought all that junk!

MORTEN KIIL: What's been done can't be undone.

DR STOCKMANN (*roaming around restlessly*): If I weren't still so sure of my case -! But I'm so utterly convinced that I'm right.

MORTEN KIIL (*weighing his wallet in his hand*): If you persist in this madness then these here, they won't be worth much.

*He stuffs the wallet into his pocket.*

DR STOCKMANN: But dammit all, science must surely be able to come up with preventative measures, I'd have thought; some sort of preservative -

MORTEN KIIL: You mean something that would kill those beasties?

DR STOCKMANN: Yes, something that would render them harmless.

MORTEN KIIL: You couldn't give rat poison a go?

DR STOCKMANN: Oh, don't talk rubbish! – But everybody says it's mere fancy. Alright then, mere fancy it is. And much good may it do them! Haven't those ignorant, mean-hearted mongrels called me an enemy of the people; - and they were all set to tear the clothes off my back too!

MORTEN KIIL: And then they went and smashed all your windows!

DR STOCKMANN: Yes, and then there's this question of family obligations! I'll have to talk to Katrine about that; she's so well up on these matters.

MORTEN KIIL: Good; take the advice of a sensible wife.

DR STOCKMANN (*lunging at him*): But how could you act in such a cack-handed way! Putting Katrine's money at risk; putting me in such a horrendously painful predicament. When I look at you, it's like looking at the Devil himself -!

MORTEN KIIL: Well, I'd best be off then. But I need to hear from you by two o'clock. *Yes or no*. If the answer's *no* the shares go to the foundation, - this very day.

DR STOCKMANN: And what will Katrine get?

MORTEN KIIL: Not a bean.

*The hall door is opened. Hovstad and Aslaksen can be seen out in the hall.*

MORTEN KIIL: Well, well, would you look at that pair!

DR STOCKMANN (*staring at them*): What! Do you still have the *cheek* to set foot in my house!

HOVSTAD: Yes, we certainly do.

ASLAKSEN: We have something to discuss with you, you see.

MORTEN KIIL (*whispers*): Yes or no – by two o’clock.

ASLAKSEN (*glancing at Hovstad*): A-ha!

*Morten Kiil leaves.*

DR STOCKMANN: Well, what do you want with me? Make it brief.

HOVSTAD: I can well understand if you’re agin us after the stance we took at the meeting yesterday -

DR STOCKMANN: You call that a stance. Oh, a fine stance that was. No sort of a stance at all, is what I call it, womanish shilly-shallying -. Ugh!

HOVSTAD: Call it what you like; but we *couldn’t* do otherwise.

DR STOCKMANN: You didn’t *dare* do otherwise, did you? Isn’t that so?

HOVSTAD: Well, if you want to put it like that.

ASLAKSEN: But why didn’t you drop us a little hint beforehand? Just a little tip to Mr Hovstad or myself.

DR STOCKMANN: A tip? About what?

ASLAKSEN: About what lay behind it all.

DR STOCKMANN: I haven’t the faintest idea what you’re talking about.

ASLAKSEN (*nodding confidentially*): Oh, come on, Dr Stockmann, you know you do.

HOVSTAD: There’s no need for concealment now.

DR STOCKMANN (*looking from one to the other*): Oh, what in the blue blazes -!

ASLAKSEN: Might I ask, - isn’t your father-in-law going around town, buying up all the shares in the Baths?

DR STOCKMANN: Yes, he was out buying shares in the Baths today; but -?

ASLAKSEN: It would have been wiser to get someone else to do it, - someone not quite so close to you.

HOVSTAD: And you shouldn't have acted under your own name. Nobody needed to know that the attack on the Baths came from you. You should have consulted me, Dr Stockmann.

DR STOCKMANN (*stares into space; a light seems to dawn on him and he says, as if thunderstruck*): Is such a thing possible? Can such a thing be done.

ASLAKSEN (*smiling*): Well, clearly it can be done. But it really ought to be more subtly done, you see.

HOVSTAD: And there really ought to be more people in on it; because it's always the case that each individual has less responsibility when he's working with others.

DR STOCKMANN (*calm and collected*): In short, gentlemen, - what is it you want?

ASLAKSEN: It would be best if Mr Hovstad -

HOVSTAD: No, you say it, Aslaksen.

ASLAKSEN: Yes well, the *thing* is, now that we know the situation, we think we dare place *The People's Herald* at your disposal.

DR STOCKMANN: *Now* you dare to do it? But what about public opinion? You're not afraid there'll be a storm of protest against us?

HOVSTAD: We'll just have to ride out the storm.

ASLAKSEN: But you'll have to be quick off the mark, Doctor. As soon as your broadside has served its purpose -

DR STOCKMANN: As soon as my father-in-law and I have acquired the shares at a knock-down price, you mean -?

HOVSTAD: Well, it's more in the interests of science that you're moved to take control of the Baths, right?

DR STOCKMANN: Of course; it was in the interests of science that I persuaded the old Badger to go along with this. And then we'll patch up the water pipes a bit, and root around the beach a bit, without it making the slightest dent in the town coffers. That would do it, don't you think? Eh?

HOVSTAD: I think it would, - if you have *The People's Herald* on your side.

ASLAKSEN: In a free society the press is a force to be reckoned with, Doctor.

DR STOCKMANN: Indeed; and so, too, is public opinion; and you, Mr Aslaksen, you can speak, I presume, for the Householders' Association?

ASLAKSEN: Both the Householders' Association and my Temperance friends. You can be sure of that.

DR STOCKMANN: But, gentlemen -; ah, I'm ashamed to ask this, but, - what do you want in return -?

HOVSTAD: Well, you know, of course that if it were up to us we'd help you for absolutely nothing. But the *Herald* is on rather shaky footing; it wouldn't really do; and to shut down the paper now, when there's so much to work for in high politics, I'd be so loath to do that.

DR STOCKMANN: Well, of course; that would obviously come really hard to a friend of the people such as yourself. (*roars*). But I'm an enemy of the people, I am! (*flying around the room*) Where's my stick? Where the hell's my stick?

HOVSTAD: What's this?

ASLAKSEN: You're surely never going to -?

DR STOCKMANN (*stopping short*): And what if I didn't give you a single bean from all my shares? We don't part with our money easily, us rich folk, you must remember.

HOVSTAD: And *you* must remember that there are two ways of presenting this matter of the shares.



DR STOCKMANN: Yes, and you're just the man to do it, I'll bet; if I don't come to the aid of *The People's Herald* you'll take a dim view of the matter, I'll be bound; you'll hunt me down, I shouldn't wonder, - hound me, - try to throttle me, the way a dog throttles a hare!

HOVSTAD: It's the law of Nature; every creature needs to survive.

ASLAKSEN: You have to take your food wherever you can find it, you know.

DR STOCKMANN: Well, see if you two can find something out there in the gutter; (*flying around the room*) because, by Jove, now we'll see who's the strongest of us three creatures. (*picks up his umbrella and brandishes it*). Hah, see here -!

HOVSTAD: You're not going to strike us, surely!

ASLAKSEN: Mind what you're doing with that umbrella!

DR STOCKMANN: Out the window with you, Mr Hovstad!

HOVSTAD (*by the hall door*): Have you lost your mind completely!

DR STOCKMANN: Out the window, Mr Aslaksen! Jump, I say! You'll have to do it sooner or later.

ASLAKSEN (*running round the desk*): Temperance, Doctor; I'm not a strong man; I can't take too much - (*cries*) Help, help!

*Mrs Stockmann, Petra and Horster come in from the living-room.*

MRS STOCKMANN: Good heavens, Tomas, what's going on here!

DR STOCKMANN (*brandishing the umbrella*): Jump out, I said! Down into the gutter!

HOVSTAD: Attacking an innocent man! I call you as witness, Captain Horster.

*He hurries off across the hall.*

ASLAKSEN (*bewildered*): If one just knew one's way around – (*slips out through the living-room.*)

MRS STOCKMANN (*holding the doctor back*): Oh, control yourself now, Tomas!

DR STOCKMANN (*tossing away the umbrella*): Well, I'm blessed if they didn't get away anyway.

MRS STOCKMANN: But what did they want with you?

DR STOCKMANN: I'll tell you later; right now I have other things to think about. (*crosses to the desk and scribbles something on a calling card*) See here, Katrine; what does it say here?

MRS STOCKMANN: Three big *Nos*; what's that about?

DR STOCKMANN: That, too, I'll tell you later. (*holds out the card*) There, Petra; get that sooty-nosed girl to run down to the Badger with this, as quick as she can. Hurry now!

*Petra goes out into the hall, card in hand.*

DR STOCKMANN: Well – if I haven't been visited by all the messengers of hell today, then I don't know. But now I'm going to sharpen my pen against them; hone it to a needle point, I'll dip it in venom and gall, I'll hurl my inkhorn at their heads!

MRS STOCKMANN: Oh, but Tomas, we're leaving.

*Petra returns*

DR STOCKMANN: Well?

PETRA: Done.

DR STOCKMANN: Good. Leaving, did you say? No, by Jove we're not; we're staying where we are, Katrine!

PETRA: We're staying!

MRS STOCKMANN: Here in town?

DR STOCKMANN: Yes, right here; here is the field of conflict; here the battle will be fought; here I shall win the day! Just let me get my trousers stitched and then I'll be off into town to look for a house; we're going to need a roof over our heads come the winter.

HORSTER: That you'll have with me.

DR STOCKMANN: I will?

HORSTER: Yes, of course you will; I've plenty of room and I'm hardly ever home.

MRS STOCKMANN: Oh, how kind of you, Captain.

PETRA: Thank-you!

DR STOCKMANN (*shaking his hand*): Thank-you! Thank-you! Well, that's that worry out of the way. And I'll set to work in earnest this very day. Oh, Katrine, there's no end of digging to be done here. So it's just as well that my time is now all my own; oh yes, because, look - I've been given notice by the Baths, you know -

MRS STOCKMANN (*sighs*): Oh dear, well I expected as much.

DR STOCKMANN: - and they mean to take my practice away from me too. Well, let them! I'll still have the poor folk at any rate - the ones that don't pay anything; and God knows they're the ones that need me most. But they're going to have to listen to me, by Jove they will; I'm going to preach to them, in season and out of season, as it's written somewhere.

MRS STOCKMANN: But Tomas, dear, I thought you'd seen what good preaching does.

DR STOCKMANN: You really are a funny one, Katrine. Do you think I can be driven from the field by public opinion and the compact majority and suchlike abominations? No, thank-you! When

what I want is so simple and clear and straightforward. All I want is to drum it into the heads of these mongrels that the liberals are the free man's most insidious enemies, - that their party manifestos will strangle all young, viable truths, that regard for expediency will turn morality and justice on their heads, until eventually life here will be quite abominable. Now, Captain Horster, don't you think I should be able to make people understand *that*?

HORSTER: Quite possibly; I'm no expert on such matters.

DR STOCKMANN: Ah, well now – let me tell you! It's the party chiefs who have to be exterminated. Because a party chief is like a wolf, you see, - he's like a ravening grey-back; he needs to gobble up a certain number of little creatures in a year if he's to survive. Just look at Hovstad and Aslaksen! How many little creatures don't they kill off; or maul them and mangle them, so they can never be anything but householders and subscribers to *The People's Herald!* (*he perches on the edge of the table*). Oh, Katrine, come here – look how beautifully the sun is streaming through the window today. And this blessedly fresh spring air that's wafting around me.

MRS STOCKMANN: Yes, if only we could live on sunshine and spring air, Tomas.

DR STOCKMANN: Well, you'll just have to scrimp and save where you can, - and we'll get by all right. That's the least of my worries. No, the worst of it is -, well, that is that I know of no man free and noble enough to dare to carry on my work after I'm gone.

PETRA: Oh, don't think about that, Father, you've plenty of time. - Oh look, the boys are home already.

*Ejlif and Morten come in from the living-room.*

MRS STOCKMANN: Have you been given the day off?

MORTEN: No; but we were fighting with the others at break.

EJLIF: That's not true; it was the others who were fighting us.

MORTEN: Yes, and then Mr Rørlund said it would be best if we stayed at home for a few days.

DR STOCKMANN (*snapping his fingers and hopping down from the table*): I've got it! Bless my soul, I've got it! You're never going to set foot inside that school again!

BOYS: Not go to school!

MRS STOCKMANN: Oh, now, Tomas, really-

DR STOCKMANN: Never, I say! I'll teach you myself; - or rather, you're not going to learn a blessed thing-

MORTEN: Hooray!

DR STOCKMANN: - but I'll make free, noble men of you. Petra, you'll have to help me, d'you hear?

PETRA: Yes, father. You can rely on me.

DR STOCKMANN: And your lessons will be held in the very room in which they called me an enemy of the people. But there'll need to be more of us; I'll need at least twelve boys to start with.

MRS STOCKMANN: Well you certainly won't find them here in town.

DR STOCKMANN: We'll see about that. (*to the boys*) Don't you two know any street urchins - some real guttersnipes?

MORTEN: Oh yes, Father, I know lots!

DR STOCKMANN: Excellent; round up a few for me. For once, I mean to experiment with these mongrels; there could be some remarkable heads among them.

MORTEN: But what shall we do, once we've become free, noble men?

DR STOCKMANN: Then, lads, you shall chase all the grey-backs into the far west!

*Ejlif looks a little doubtful; Morten jumps up and down and cheers.*

MRS STOCKMANN: Oh dear, Tomas. As long those grey-backs don't end up chasing you.

DR STOCKMANN: Are you quite mad, Katrine? *Chase me! Now*, when I'm the strongest man in this town!

MRS STOCKMANN: The strongest – now?

DR STOCKMANN: Yes, I would dare go so far as to say that I am *now* one of the strongest men in the whole world.

MORTEN: Oh, gosh!

DR STOCKMANN: (*lowering his voice*): Not a word to a soul, not yet; but I've made a great discovery.

MRS STOCKMANN: What, again?

DR STOCKMANN: Yes indeed, yes indeed! (*gathering them around him and whispering confidentially*) The fact is, you see, that the strongest man in the world is he who stands alone.

MRS STOCKMANN (*smiling and shaking her head*): Oh, Tomas -!

PETRA (*trustfully, clasping his hands*): Father!