PLUME

IBSEN

THE COMPLETE MAJOR PROSE PLAYS

Translated and Introduced by
ROLF FJELDE

Henrik Ibsen

was born of well-to-do parents at Skien, a small Norwegian coastal town, on March 20, 1828. In 1836, his father's bankruptcy reduced the family to near poverty, and at fifteen Ibsen was apprenticed to an apothecary. Hoping to become a doctor, Ibsen began studies in Christiania—present-day Oslo—in 1850, but failed his entrance examinations. His first two plays, however, won him appointment as "theater-poet" of the new Bergen National Theater, where he wrote five conventional verse and historical dramas. In 1857, he became director of the Christiania Norwegian Theater. Its financial failure in 1862 helped spur Ibsen's decision in 1864 to leave Norway for what became a twenty-seven-year voluntary exile. In Italy, he wrote the volcanic *Brand* (1866), which made his reputation and won him a stipend from the Norwegian government. The colorful verse play *Peer Gynt* followed in 1867, then the epic ten-act drama *Emperor and Galilean* in 1873. Meanwhile, Ibsen had been searching for a new style. With *Pillars of Society* in 1877 he found it; this became the first of twelve plays, appearing at two-year intervals, that established Ibsen as the foremost dramatist of his age. In 1900, Ibsen suffered the first of several incapacitating strokes. He died in Oslo on May 23, 1906.

ABOUT THE TRANSLATOR: ROLF FJELDE

Born in New York City of Norwegian ancestry, Rolf Fjelde was educated at Yale University, including the Yale Drama School, and at Columbia University. His poetry has been published by many leading periodicals and in two collections, and his original plays and Ibsen translations have been staged in England, Norway, Canada, and throughout the United States. He has edited *Ibsen: A Collection of Critical Essays*, and his translations of *Ibsen: Four Major Plays*, Volumes I and II, are available in Signet Classic editions. Rolf Fjelde currently teaches drama and film at Pratt Institute and drama history at the Juilliard School.

HENRIK IBSEN

THE COMPLETE MAJOR PROSE PLAYS

TRANSLATED AND INTRODUCED BY

Rolf Fjelde

A PLUME BOOK

To Michele, Eric, Christopher,
and the theater of their time
in the spirit of truth and freedom

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The appended stage history of American productions of the major Ibsen prose plays was compiled with assistance from a variety of sources, including the artistic directors and public-relations personnel of a number of the regional repertory theaters cited; but I would particularly like to express my appreciation to Louis A. Rachow, custodian of the Walter Hampden–Edwin Booth Collection and Library of the Players Club, and the respective staffs of the Library of the International Theater Institute of the United States, the Theater Collection of the Performing Arts Research Center at Lincoln Center, and the Information and Research Program of the Theater Communications Group.

For my growing awareness of both the audacity and the intricacy of Ibsen's thought and art I am indebted to many studies and biographies, especially those published over approximately the last quarter-century. The introductions following have been framed in a context of insights from the most perennially valuable of those works; and their presence in the bibliography included herewith, designed for those whose readings in and about Ibsen are confined to English, will I hope serve as a further advertisement of their merits.

My awareness of another Ibsen, the master of practical stagecraft, has grown through warmly remembered associations with those directors and actors throughout the country whom I have joined, at one stage or another, in the engrossing process of bringing these translations into performance. By their insistence on questioning a word here, a phrase there, they have often forced me back to refine what exhaustion had declared could no longer be improved upon. Paul Valéry has said that no translation is ever finished, it is abandoned. If so, I can only be thankful to my friends in the theater, without whom I might have ended this unendable endeavor too soon.

Phases of this project have been substantially forwarded by a travel grant to the University of Oslo from the American-Scandinavian Foundation, and a Ford Foundation Fellowship from the National Translation Center. It has been aided as well by the sympathetic interest of three chairmen of the Pratt Institute Department of English and Humanities: the late Edwin C. Knowles, and Professors Sherwood Weber and Carl Craycraft. The early encouragement of Eric Bentley, Einar Haugen, John Houseman, and Maurice Valency meant more than they could have known at the time. Finally, to my wife Christel, who has shared these plays in many towns, theaters, discussions, drafts, revisions, and now in print complete, I owe a gratitude that I am still learning daily how to translate.

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INTRODUCTION

On March 20, 1828, Henrik Johan Ibsen was born in the tiny coastal town of Skien, in the province of Telemark, near the mouth of what now is the Oslofjord, the eldest surviving child of Knut and Marichen Altenburg Ibsen. Three years later the growing family, prospering from a boom in the shipping trade, moved from the writer's birthplace, the Stockmann house on the town square, to the more attractive, spacious Altenburg villa, better suited for entertaining; and in 1833, Ibsen's gregarious father acquired country property, a farm at Venstøp several miles outside town. When Ibsen was seven, this lavishly outgoing life ceased. Overextended in his speculations, the merchant and importer Knut Ibsen was ruined financially; and the family of seven—Ibsen had three brothers and a sister, Hedvig—was forced to move out to the isolated farm. Here the sensitive boy turned inward, read intensively, painted and drew, staged puppet shows, and, increasingly over the next eight years, felt himself an onlooker, an outsider, unable to compete in the narrowly provincial and snobbish local society that earlier had feasted at his father's table.

In 1843, following his confirmation at age fifteen, after the custom of the time, Ibsen left home to seek his fortune or, more prosaically, to become an apothecary's apprentice in the still smaller village of Grimstad, farther down the coast. In his scant free hours, aided by an iron physique that required little rest, Ibsen began to write and, in time, publish poetry and to prepare himself to study medicine at the university. In another bitter formative experience, at eighteen he fathered an illegitimate child by one of his employer's servants, Else Sophie Jensdatter, a woman of good family that like his had succumbed to adversity. Though apparently sympathetic to Ibsen's literary ambitions, she was ten years his senior; there was no question of

marriage, and for the next fourteen years of his most difficult struggles, Ibsen had to contribute support for the boy. The Grimstad period was deeply stamped also by repercussions of the year of revolutions, 1848, which fired the young poet to write his first play, a blank-verse tragedy about the Roman conspirator and rebel Catiline. In April 1850, he left for the capital, Christiania (present-day Oslo), where his failing entrance-exam grades in Greek and mathematics deprived the world of a doctor and gave it one of its handful of supremely great playwrights.

From this point on, Ibsen's life is inextricably bound, and increasingly subordinated, to his art. If the first two decades call for more detailed summary, it is because they contain the seeds of so many of the themes and motifs that found their way into that series of masterpieces composed between Ibsen's forty-seventh and seventy-first years. The devastating, lasting effects of financial ruin, the hypocrisy of the so-called best people in society, the bittersweet compensations of a withdrawn life, the humiliations of being déclassé, the virtual mystique (shared with Emerson, Carlyle and other authors of the century) of self-reliance, the rankling in one's past of a guilty secret, compounding remorse with strangled affections: all this disorder and early sorrow can be traced in such indelible characterizations as Hjalmar and Hedvig Ekdal, John Gabriel Borkman, Hedda Gabler, Karsten Bernick, Thomas Stockmann, Rebecca West, Helene Alving. Innumerable others, of course, have undergone the same, or comparable experiences; and any cross-check of Beethoven's notebooks against his scores will verify that, not the theme, but its development, is the test and revelation of genius. The events of the raw life can only be peripheral to the autonomous world that comes filtered and modified through the imagination.

For more than another decade, Ibsen's imagination and his livelihood were in close, if restless, conjunction. On the strength of *Catiline* and a second play, *The Warrior's Barrow*, he was appointed "theater-poet"—that is, playwright in residence—at the newly formed Bergen Theater, a post he held, along with that of stage manager, for six years, followed by a second, more responsible term of five years as artistic director of the impoverished Norwegian

Theater in Christiania. During this, the harsh course of his true apprenticeship, he campaigned tenaciously, through repeated discouragements, to create a national theater with its own repertory, contributing seven dramas of his own, mainly in verse or poetic prose and on Norwegian historical subjects, toward this goal. The weight of the odds against him can be gauged by noting that drama internationally had rarely been at a lower ebb of quality than in the 1850s, and that the fledgling playwright-director was compelled to serve this thin diet of, most typically, Scribean melodrama and knockabout French farce to audiences of provincially unformed tastes through the medium of badly trained actors, in a cultural situation where inordinately admired Danish theater personnel held the dominant positions of artistic influence and decision. "What destroys a writer is indifference and rejection," Ibsen later wrote. "That is what I encountered." Indeed, his sheer survival is a wonder, and his steady artistic maturation little short of miraculous, a tribute in good part to an indomitable will.

Fortunately, Ibsen had chosen well in his wife, Suzannah Thoresen, spirited and independent, whom he married in 1858. The couple's only son, Sigurd, was born a year later; and his upbringing and schooling was made as serious and strategic an ongoing project by his largely self-educated father as the conduct of his own vocation as a dramatist. That education had to be entirely pursued abroad, for in 1864, in exasperation and despair, Ibsen abandoned the Norwegian theatrical scene and, partly on the prospects of a contract from the Copenhagen publishing house of Gyldendal, commenced what became twenty-seven years of voluntary exile, the crucial period that transformed him from an obscure Scandinavian author to a master builder of world drama, a creator and a diagnostician of the mind of modern Western man.

The bulk of the dozen plays that compose this volume were written in the latter half of that odyssey of wanderings, when the place names of Ibsen's residences—Rome, Ariccia, Frascati, Ischia, Sorrento, Amalfi; Berchtesgarden, Kitzbühel, Dresden, Gossensass, Munich—were like a cross-stitch weaving together the old, antiquity-steeped Mediterranean culture of the south with the new, future-

oriented Germanic culture of the north. Interrelated by theme, locale, format and, in one instance, even a character shared between two plays, the twelve segments of Ibsen's final span of productivity, for which all the rest of his life and writings were preparation, are preceded by three oversized dramas crucial to their comprehension. These are *Brand*, the stark tragedy of a promethean country pastor whose faith is steeled by uncompromising will; *Peer Gynt*, the picaresque comedy of an amiable rogue whose amours, abortive careers and shifty escapades are prompted by ungovernable wish; and *Emperor and Galilean*, an epic and prophetic account of Julian the Apostate that ranges freely over the fourth-century Roman Empire, depicting the ideological combat between paganism and Christianity for determination of the future of Western civilization. Prototypal characters and conflicts from these massive dramas, the products of the first half of Ibsen's exile, recur in the major prose plays that grew out of them. Ibsen would want them assimilated in their sequence of composition, after the procedure he urged for his work in its totality:

> Only by grasping and comprehending my entire production as a continuous and coherent whole will the reader be able to receive the precise impression I sought to convey in the individual parts of it.
>
> I therefore appeal to the reader that he not put any play aside, and not skip anything, but that he absorb the plays—by reading himself into them and by experiencing them intimately—in the order in which I wrote them.

It is in obedience to this injunction to see at least the major prose plays as a subtly and significantly interconnected dramatic cycle that the present collection has been designed. The plays, which have often, perhaps necessarily under certain circumstances, been issued piecemeal and in a broken sequence, have been gathered here in a single volume, arranged in the chronological order of their completion, their first publication and their premieres in the theaters of Scandinavia and Germany—in short, the order of their original impact on readers and playgoers. Each of the plays has been provided with a brief introduction, aimed at defining its particular tone and atmosphere, for as

similar as the twelve dramas may initially appear in style, none can be adequately understood unless sensed out in its uniqueness, as a distinctive microcosm of its own.

Not merely sensed out, but thought out as well. "It may be questioned," James Joyce once wrote of Ibsen, "whether any man has held so firm an empire over the thinking world in modern times." Thinking, not at the expense of feeling, but collateral with it, has such a hold on both Ibsen and the companions in his quests because jointly they recognize that they share a new and unprecedented age where every position—intellectual, moral, political and religious—must be thought out afresh. For the fact is that through a dual revolution in politics and technology a gulf had been opened up in and around the mid-nineteenth century, dividing the period Joyce calls "modern times" from all that had gone before. The historian W. H. McNeil has termed that radical break with the past "a mutation in the economic and social life of mankind comparable in magnitude with the Neolithic transition from predation to animal husbandry"—in other words, the most tumultuous upheaval in patterns of living in some eleven thousand years. In this climate of unpredictable and accelerating change, no personal solution, whether of antiquity or the future, can be adopted without the most searching examination. Thus even the introductions that follow would be a betrayal of Ibsen's purpose if they failed to rise above documentation and received opinion and participate in that vital thinking process through interpretation, however brief, of the idea content of the plays. Though no analysis can be presumed definitive, strong lines of inquiry may at least obviate certain past approaches that have deadened or demeaned the incisive complexity of Ibsen's art. If these introductions act to stimulate such strongly conceived rethinking and discussion of the plays, they will have fulfilled their intent.

The other phase of interpretation, at the opposite end of the playwright's creative shuttle between ideas and imaginary characters, is the fully realized theatrical performance. It was Ibsen's tireless effort to find vivid theatrical equivalents for his sense of having crossed over into new territory—an unmapped wilderness of potentialities for human existence—that gained him the title of the father of

modern drama. His driving fervor to explore the frontiers of consciousness struck a responsive chord almost from the start in the American theater, which like the nation itself is the maturing product of a frontier situation and mentality. As a native-born American whose Norwegian ancestry is three generations removed, I have sought to translate my pursuit, over some years, of the immediate experience of Ibsen in our theater—something that can never be captured between the covers of a book—into something that can: a distillate of the record. The appendix covering principal professional productions in the United States of the cycle from *Pillars of Society* to *When We Dead Awaken* is the result. I hope it will prove useful as an American counterpart to the listing of principal British Ibsen productions, organized along somewhat different lines, appended to Volumes V–VIII of *The Oxford Ibsen*.

The record is restricted to English-language performances and therefore begins the year after the world premiere of *Ghosts*, presented in Norwegian in 1882 at the Aurora Turner Hall in Chicago. Limitation of space also prevents the inclusion of selected amateur productions, which have sometimes had historic importance, high artistic merit, or simply curiosity value. There is thus, perhaps luckily, no occasion to list the first Ibsen play in English ever staged here, by a Milwaukee amateur group in 1882. The victim was *A Doll House*, renamed *A Child Wife*, reset in England, recast with a jovial Irish widow for comic relief and rehabilitated with a happy ending. As Einar Haugen has documented it, in Act Two, one of Nora's children sang a song to such charming effect that the applause of the audience compelled her to repeat it. Lack of the amateur record, nevertheless, is a loss. In my own experience, one of the most sensitive Eilert Løvborgs I have yet seen was the avant-garde playwright Robert Wilson in a student production at Pratt Institute.

The approximate century of professionally performed Ibsen drama in the United States raises an important question: if one can speak, with no prejudice of typecasting, of a born Shakespearian or Shavian actor, is there a histrionic sensibility particularly right for Ibsen? Probably so. What traits, then, would the born Ibsenian actor or actress possess? First, a relish for detail. Role interpretation of Ib-

sen's people demands to be built after the model of the characterizations themselves, stroke by stroke, with a savoring of the quirks and mannerisms which individualize behavior (contra the more generalized Brechtian actor). Second, the emotional stamina for a sustained, if rarely overt, passion. Perhaps the most unwisely violated of all Ibsen's prescriptions for playing his work is his statement to the French director Lugné-Poë: "People have not fully appreciated that a passionate writer needs to be acted with passion, and not otherwise." Thirdly, a related appreciation of the texts, not as prose, but poetry. Here Stark Young can hardly be improved upon, in writing that "dramatic poetry is not the dramatic situation poetically expressed; it is the dramatic expression of the poetic that lies in a situation." Ibsen's major prose plays, with their compression of experience, their metaphoric resonances, their unsettling juxtapositions of the commonplace and the extraordinary, their formal patterning, are of the very essence of poetry.

Overriding all these properties, though, must be an instinctive gravitation to what Henry James called Ibsen's "peculiar blessedness to actors." After paying tribute to the playwright's "independence, his perversity, his intensity, his vividness, the hard compulsion of his strangely inscrutable art," James observes on behalf of actors that "no dramatist of our time has had more the secret, and kept it better, of making their work interesting to them. The subtlety with which he puts them into relation to it eludes analysis, but operates none the less strongly as an incitement. Does it reside mainly in the way he takes hold of their imagination, or in some special affinity with their technical sense; in what he gives them or in what he leaves it to them to give; in the touches by which the moral nature of the character opens out a vista for them; or in the simple fact of connection with such a vivified whole. . . ? What is incontestable is the excitement, the amusement, the inspiration of dealing with material so solid and so fresh. The very difficulty of it makes a common cause, as the growing ripeness of preparation makes a common enthusiasm."

So solid and so fresh—those two adjectives, which the conventional mind might set in opposition, are for James the consummate summary of Ibsen's appeal. The solidity derives from the diversity of perspectives infolded into

each play in the long compositional process of meditating, embodying and refining its basic idea. As a result, whenever the dramatic material appears to be most symbolic, most archetypal, most fully explicable by transpersonal agencies and forces, one finds its realism of social and psychological causation reasserting an inescapable claim for attention. Conversely, any attempt to psychologize the plays down to a purely naturalistic dissection of character and motive soon demonstrates its inadequacy, for their larger cohering structures grow out of the perspectives of history, of religion, of folktale, ritual and myth. The truth is that there is psychology behind Ibsen's metaphysics, and metaphysics behind his psychology; they interpenetrate as close and distant views of the same reality.

Not merely as the focus of mutually commutable perspectives, but also as a comprehensive image expressed in dramatic poetry, the reality that the cycle presents in its cumulative progression is ultimately a cosmos. Like any of the supreme dramatic poets, Ibsen is the creator of his own inimitable universe. One knows in Ibsen the rooms and the landscapes, the light and the weather, as one knows their less specified counterparts in Shakespeare, with the haunting immediacy of the country of one's childhood. The plays of the cycle and their possibilities in performance have, finally, the same inexhaustibility as that larger cosmos they reflect, preserving the paradox of their enduring freshness. To interpret these plays is to rediscover life.

ROLF FJELDE

AN ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE

The day after completing *An Enemy of the People* (1882), Ibsen wrote his publisher in Copenhagen, stating that "I am still uncertain as to whether I should call it a comedy or a straight drama. It has many of the traits of comedy, but it also is based on a serious idea." The playwright's doubts directly reflect the play's structure, which derives in more or less equal measure from both its comic form and its underlying idea.

Comedy from the Greeks to the present has played endless, ingenious variations on one basic, inexhaustible plot. As Northrop Frye notes, that plot pits an insistent force of vitality, usually a pair of young lovers, against an outworn, rigidified, established society. The characters that embody that vitality, by their actions, expose the rulers of society as impostors, since they have forgotten, in the process of defending their vested interests in the status quo, that the law of life is change, succession, regeneration.

In *An Enemy of the People* the status quo is represented by the spa, the mineral baths that are the mainstay of the town's prosperity. Its water system, conveying all the heady triumphs of nineteenth-century technology and entrepreneurial capitalism, was designed, when properly functioning, to be a source of health and well-being. But also since, by the Bible that Ibsen's childhood was steeped in, water and the spirit are commensurable, the water system is analogous to the moral and spiritual ideas that, by rights, should freely circulate in the community and the civilization it exemplifies.

When pollution is discovered in the system, the arrogant refusal of the establishment to listen to dissenting expertise in the rush for profits stands exposed. The lines are soon drawn between that minority advocating further change to rectify past errors and that majority willing to cover up the pollution, and ready to discredit, and if necessary destroy, its discoverers. The spa is run by an invisible board of directors, for which Mayor Stockmann, with his comical rigidities and his more ominous flair for intimidation and expedient maneuver, is the managerial front. His name,

Peter, identifies him as the unyielding rock upon which orthodoxy rests.

The mayor's headstrong, impulsive, exuberant adversary is his younger brother Thomas, the doubter, the skeptic who cannot accept the opinions of others, but must ascertain the truth for himself. Around him a small nucleus of progressive-minded young people has cohered; but by Act Five, it has almost completely melted away, Hovstad and Billing having proved themselves impostors, traitors to their rhetoric, through defection to the establishment. The exception, Horster, Ibsen emphasized, must be conceived and cast as a young man, counter to stock images of Norwegian sea captains; and he and Petra must be depicted as strongly drawn to each other, evoking in the midst of Stockmann's final, beleaguered but unbowed isolation a promise of the classic comedic resolution of the life-forwarding union of young lovers.

The doctor has been isolated, it turns out, not by an unpopular fact, the contamination of the baths, but by a serious idea, expressed of course too sweepingly with his typically intemperate gusto. In defiance of the democratic dogma, the minority, he claims, is always right, for those who think and create on history's evolving frontiers, those pioneers of today's unsettling change that becomes tomorrow's truth, must always be the few. (Ibsen's own version of the idea: "That man is right who is most in league with the future.") However put, whether explicitly proclaimed as in the stirring theatrical tour de force of Act Four, or translated into the overall action that systematically strips the protagonist of all class or factional alliances, all naive illusions of belonging, down to the tiny minority of his likeminded own, this idea, fully as much as the comedic conflict, fuels and propels the drama.

But what remains with readers and audience is less likely to be plot structure or thematic idea than a character and an attitude, the infectiously buoyant fighting spirit of Thomas Stockmann. The actor-director Stanislavsky found in that character the most congenial of all his roles, and it helped lead him to the intuitive essence of the actor's art, the method of building credible character from within. "From the intuition of feelings I passed naturally to the inner image with all its peculiarities and details: the short-sighted eyes that spoke so eloquently of his inner blindness

to human faults, the childlike and youthful manner of movement, the friendly relations with his children and family, the happiness, the joking and play, the gregariousness and attractiveness which forced all who came in touch with him to become purer and better, and to show the best sides of their nature in his presence. From the intuition of feelings I went to the outer image, and the soul and body of Stockmann-Stanislavsky became one organically."

More than anything, for Stanislavsky the appeal and the secret of playing Stockmann lay in his love of, and feeling for, truth. It buoyed the familial openness so warmly celebrated above, and when faced by the consensual betrayal of truth, it roused him to the wrath of an Old Testament prophet. In short, it made his life integral, high-purposed, all of one positive piece. Kierkegaard's words, "purity of heart is to will one thing," could be his motto. No later protagonist in the cycle would similarly enjoy his guiltless and undivided mind.

THE CHARACTERS

DR. THOMAS STOCKMANN, staff physician at the municipal baths
MRS. STOCKMANN, his wife
PETRA, their daughter, a teacher
EILIF, MORTEN } their sons, aged 12 and 10
PETER STOCKMANN, the doctor's older brother, mayor, police chief, chairman of the board of the municipal baths, etc.
MORTEN KIIL, master tanner; Mrs. Stockmann's foster-father
HOVSTAD, editor of the *People's Courier*
BILLING, his assistant on the paper
CAPTAIN HORSTER
ASLAKSEN, a printer
PARTICIPANTS IN A PUBLIC MEETING: men of all social ranks, several women, and a gang of schoolboys

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

ACT ONE

Evening. DR. STOCKMANN*'s living room, simply but attractively furnished and decorated. In the side wall to the right are two doors, the farther one leading out to the hall, and the nearer into the* DOCTOR*'s study. In the facing wall, directly opposite the hall door, is a door to the family's living quarters. At the middle of this wall stands the stove; closer in the foreground, a sofa with a mirror above it, and in front of these, an oval table covered by a cloth. On the table a lamp, shaded and lit. In the back wall, an open door to the dining room. The table is set for dinner within, with a lit lamp on it.*

BILLING, *napkin under his chin, sits at the table inside.* MRS. STOCKMANN *is standing by the table, passing him a plate with a large slice of roast beef. The other places at the table are empty; the settings are in disorder, as after a meal.*

MRS. STOCKMANN. Well, if you come an hour late, Mr. Billing, then you have to accept cold food.

BILLING (*eating*). It tastes simply marvelous—just perfect.

MRS. STOCKMANN. Because you know how precise my husband is about keeping his regular mealtime—

BILLING. Doesn't bother me in the least. In fact, I really think food tastes best to me when I can eat like this, alone and undisturbed.

MRS. STOCKMANN. Yes, well—just so you enjoy it

—(*Turns, listening, toward the hall door.*) Now that must be Hovstad coming.

BILLING. Probably.

(PETER STOCKMANN *enters, wearing an overcoat and the official hat of his mayor's office. He carries a walking stick.*)

MAYOR STOCKMANN. A most pleasant good evening, my dear Katherine.

MRS. STOCKMANN (*comes into the living room*). Why, good evening! So it's you? How nice that you stopped up to see us.

MAYOR STOCKMANN. I was just passing by, so— (*With a glance toward the dining room.*) Ah, but it seems you have company already.

MRS. STOCKMANN (*somewhat embarrassed*). No, no—he was quite unexpected. (*Hurriedly.*) Won't you step in and join him for a bite?

MAYOR STOCKMANN. I? No, thank you. Good heavens, hot food at night! Not with *my* digestion.

MRS. STOCKMANN. Oh, but just this once—

MAYOR STOCKMANN. No, really, that's kind of you; but I'll stick to my bread and butter and tea. It's healthier in the long run—and a bit more economical, too.

MRS. STOCKMANN (*smiling*). Now you mustn't think that Thomas and I live so lavishly, either.

MAYOR STOCKMANN. Not *you,* Katherine. *That* never crossed my mind. (*Points toward the* DOCTOR'*s study.*) I suppose he isn't home?

MRS. STOCKMANN. No, he went for a little walk after dinner—he and the boys.

MAYOR STOCKMANN. How healthy is that, I wonder? (*Listening.*) That ought to be him.

MRS. STOCKMANN. No, I don't think it is. (*A knock at the door.*) Come in!

(HOVSTAD *enters from the hall.*)

MRS. STOCKMANN. Ah, so it's Mr. Hovstad—

HOVSTAD. Yes, you'll have to excuse me, but I got held up at the printer's. Good evening, Mr. Mayor.

MAYOR STOCKMANN (*bowing rather stiffly*). Mr. Hovstad. Here on business, I suppose?

HOVSTAD. Partly. It's about something going in the paper.

MAYOR STOCKMANN. I'm not surprised. I hear my brother's become a very active contributor to the *People's Courier.*

HOVSTAD. Yes, he deigns to write for the *Courier* whenever he has a little plain speaking to do about this and that.

MRS. STOCKMANN (*to* HOVSTAD). But won't you—? (*Points toward the dining room.*)

MAYOR STOCKMANN. Oh, well now, I can hardly blame him for writing for the sort of readers who'd give him the best reception. And of course, personally, you know, I haven't the least cause for any ill will toward your paper, Mr. Hovstad.

HOVSTAD. No, I wouldn't think so.

MAYOR. On the whole, there's a fine spirit of tolerance in this town of ours—a remarkable public spirit. And that stems, of course, from our having a great common concern that binds us all together—a concern that involves to the same high degree every right-minded citizen—

HOVSTAD. The spa, yes.

MAYOR STOCKMANN. Exactly. We have our great, new, magnificent installation, the spa. Mark my words, Mr. Hovstad—these baths will become the very life-principle of our town. Unquestionably!

MRS. STOCKMANN. That's what Thomas says, too.

MAYOR STOCKMANN. Why, it's simply extraordinary the way this place has revived in the past two years! People here have some money again. There's life, excitement! Land and property values are rising every day.

HOVSTAD. And unemployment's down.

MAYOR STOCKMANN. Yes, that too. The taxes for public welfare have been cut by a comfortable margin for the

propertied classes, and will be still more if we can only have a really good summer this year—hordes of visitors—masses of invalids who can give the baths a reputation.

HOVSTAD. And that's the prospect, I hear.

MAYOR STOCKMANN. The outlook is very auspicious. Every day, inquiries coming in about accommodations and the like.

HOVSTAD. Well, then the doctor's article ought to be quite timely.

MAYOR STOCKMANN. Has he been writing something again?

HOVSTAD. This is something he wrote last winter: a recommendation of the baths, and a report on the health-promoting character of the life here. But I held the article back at the time.

MAYOR STOCKMANN. There was a flaw in it somewhere, I suppose?

HOVSTAD. No, that's not it. I thought it was better to wait till now, in the spring, when people start planning their summer vacations—

MAYOR STOCKMANN. Quite right. Absolutely right, Mr. Hovstad.

MRS. STOCKMANN. Yes, Thomas spares nothing when the baths are involved.

MAYOR STOCKMANN. Well, he *is* on the staff, after all.

HOVSTAD. Yes, and then he's the one, too, who really originated the idea.

MAYOR STOCKMANN. He *did?* Really? Yes, I do occasionally hear that certain people hold that opinion. But I still had an impression that *I* also played some modest part in this enterprise.

MRS. STOCKMANN. Yes, Thomas says that always.

HOVSTAD. No one denies that, Mr. Mayor. You got the thing moving and put it into practical reality—we all know that. I only meant that the idea came from the doctor first.

MAYOR STOCKMANN. Yes, my brother's had more than enough ideas in his time, I'm afraid. But when there's

something to be done, it's another sort of man that's called for, Mr. Hovstad. And I really had thought that, at least here, in this house—

MRS. STOCKMANN. But, my dear Peter—

HOVSTAD. Sir, how can you possibly think—?

MRS. STOCKMANN. Mr. Hovstad, do go in and take some refreshment. My husband's sure to be back any moment.

HOVSTAD. Thank you; just a bite, maybe. (*He goes into the dining room.*)

MAYOR STOCKMANN (*dropping his voice*). It's curious with these people of peasant stock: they never can learn any tact.

MRS. STOCKMANN. But why let that bother you? It's not worth it. Can't you and Thomas share the honor, like brothers?

MAYOR STOCKMANN. Yes, it would seem so; but it isn't everyone who can be satisfied with his share, apparently.

MRS. STOCKMANN. Oh, nonsense! You and Thomas get along splendidly together. (*Listening.*) There, now I think we have him. (*Goes over and opens the hall door.*)

DR. STOCKMANN (*laughing and raising commotion outside*). Look, Katherine—you've got another guest here. Isn't this a treat, eh? There we are, Captain Horster; hang your coat up on the peg. Oh, that's right—you don't wear a coat. Imagine, Katherine, I met him on the street, and he almost didn't want to come up.

(CAPTAIN HORSTER *enters and greets* MRS. STOCKMANN. DR. STOCKMANN *appears in the doorway.*)

In you go, boys. They're ravenous all over again! Come on, Captain Horster; now you're going to have some roast beef—

(*He propels* HORSTER *into the dining room;* EILIF *and* MORTEN *follow after.*)

MRS. STOCKMANN. But, Thomas, don't you see—?

DR. STOCKMANN (*turning by the door*). Oh, it's you, Peter! (*Goes over to shake hands.*) Well, this *is* a pleasure.

MAYOR STOCKMANN. I'm afraid I have to be going in just a moment—

DR. STOCKMANN. Rubbish! There's hot toddy on the table now, any minute. You haven't forgotten the toddy, Katherine?

MRS. STOCKMANN. Of course not. The water's boiling. (*She goes into the dining room.*)

MAYOR STOCKMANN. Toddy, too—!

DR. STOCKMANN. Yes, have a seat, so we can get comfortable.

MAYOR STOCKMANN. Thank you, I never take part in toddy parties.

DR. STOCKMANN. But this isn't a party.

MAYOR STOCKMANN. Well, it looks to me— (*Glancing toward the dining room.*) It's astonishing how they put all that food away.

DR. STOCKMANN (*rubbing his hands*). Yes, isn't it wonderful to watch young people eat? Endless appetites—just as it ought to be! They've got to have food—for strength! They're the ones who'll put a kick in the future, Peter.

MAYOR STOCKMANN. May I ask what, here, needs a "kick put in it," in your manner of speaking?

DR. STOCKMANN. Well, you better ask the young ones that—when the time comes. We don't see it, of course. Naturally. A pair of old fogies like you and me—

MAYOR STOCKMANN. Now really! That's a very peculiar term—

DR. STOCKMANN. Oh, you mustn't take things so literally with me, Peter. Because you know, I've been feeling so buoyant and happy. I can't tell you how lucky I feel to be part of this life that's budding and bursting out everywhere. What an amazing age we live in! It's as if a whole new world were rising around us.

MAYOR STOCKMANN. You really believe that?

DR. STOCKMANN. Of course you can't see it as well as I can. You've lived in the midst of it all your life, and that dulls the impression. But I, who've been stuck all these many years in my little limbo up north, hardly ever seeing

a stranger with a fresh idea to share—to me, it's as if I'd been plunked down in the middle of a swarming metropolis.

MAYOR STOCKMANN. Hm—metropolis—

DR. STOCKMANN. Oh, I'm well aware this is small scale compared with a lot of other places. But there's life here—a promise, an immensity of things to work and fight for; and *that's* what's important. (*Calls.*) Katherine, didn't the mailman come?

MRS. STOCKMANN (*from the dining room*). No, not today.

DR. STOCKMANN. And then to make a good living, Peter! That's something you learn to appreciate when you've been getting along, as we have, on starvation wages—

MAYOR STOCKMANN. Oh, come—

DR. STOCKMANN. You can just imagine how tight things were for us up there, yes, many times. And now we can live like kings! Today, for instance, we had roast beef for dinner, and we had some more for supper. Don't you want a piece? Or, anyway, let me show it to you. Come here—

MAYOR STOCKMANN. No, definitely not—

DR. STOCKMANN. Well, then come over here. Look, we bought a new tablecloth.

MAYOR STOCKMANN. Yes, so I noticed.

DR. STOCKMANN. And we got a lampshade. See? It's all out of Katherine's savings. And it makes the room so cozy, don't you think? Just stand right here—no, no, no, not there. Just—so! Look, how the light concentrates there where it falls. Really, I find that quite elegant. Don't you?

MAYOR STOCKMANN. Yes, if you can allow yourself luxuries like that—

DR. STOCKMANN. Oh yes. I can allow myself that. Katherine says I'm now earning almost as much as we spend.

MAYOR STOCKMANN. Almost—!

DR. STOCKMANN. But a man of science ought to live with a little style. I'm sure the average district judge spends more in a year than I do.

MAYOR STOCKMANN. Yes, I expect so! A district judge, a superior magistrate—

DR. STOCKMANN. Well, an ordinary businessman then. That kind of man spends a lot more—

MAYOR STOCKMANN. It's a matter of circumstances.

DR. STOCKMANN. In any case, I honestly don't waste anything on luxuries, Peter. But I don't feel I can deny myself the gratification of having people in. You see, I need that. Having been shut out for so long—for me it's a necessity of life to spend time with high-spirited, bold young people, with adventurous minds and a wealth of energy—and that's what they are, all of them sitting and savoring their food in there. I wish you knew Hovstad a bit better—

MAYOR STOCKMANN. Yes, come to think of it, Hovstad told me he'll be printing another of your articles.

DR. STOCKMANN. Of *my* articles?

MAYOR STOCKMANN. Yes, about the baths. Something you wrote last winter.

DR. STOCKMANN. Oh yes, that! No, I don't want that in right now.

MAYOR STOCKMANN. No? It strikes me this is just the opportune time.

DR. STOCKMANN. Yes, you might be right—under ordinary circumstances— (*He paces about the room.*)

MAYOR STOCKMANN (*following him with his eyes*). What's extraordinary about the circumstances now?

DR. STOCKMANN (*stops*). Peter, I swear, at this moment I can't tell you—anyway, not this evening. There could be something quite extraordinary about the circumstances—or it might be nothing at all. It could well be that it's just imagination.

MAYOR STOCKMANN. I have to confess, it sounds very mysterious. Is anything wrong? Something I'm excluded from? I would assume that I, as chairman of the board of the municipal baths—

DR. STOCKMANN. And I would assume that—oh, come on, Peter, let's not fly at each other like this.

MAYOR STOCKMANN. Heaven forbid! I'm not in the habit of flying at people, as you put it. But I most definitely must insist that all necessary steps be taken and carried out in a businesslike manner by the legally constituted authorities. I can't condone any sly or underhanded activities.

DR. STOCKMANN. When have I ever been sly or underhanded?

MAYOR STOCKMANN. You have an inveterate tendency to go your own way, in any case. And in a well-ordered society, that's nearly as inexcusable. The individual has to learn to subordinate himself to the whole—or, I should say, to those authorities charged with the common good.

DR. STOCKMANN. Possibly. But what in thunder does that have to do with me?

MAYOR STOCKMANN. Because, my dear Thomas, it's this you seem never to want to learn. But watch out; someday you're going to pay for it—sooner or later. Now I've told you. Good-bye.

DR. STOCKMANN. Are you stark, raving mad? You're completely on the wrong track—

MAYOR STOCKMANN. That's not my custom. And now, if I may excuse myself— (*With a bow toward the dining room.*) Good night, Katherine. Good night, gentlemen. (*Goes out.*)

MRS. STOCKMANN (*coming into the living room*). He's gone?

DR. STOCKMANN. Yes, and in a foul humor.

MRS. STOCKMANN. Oh, Thomas dear, what did you do to him this time?

DR. STOCKMANN. Nothing at all. He can't demand that I settle accounts with him before the time comes.

MRS. STOCKMANN. What accounts do you have to settle with him?

DR. STOCKMANN. Hm, don't ask me, Katherine. It's odd that the mailman hasn't come.

(HOVSTAD, BILLING, *and* HORSTER *have risen from the*

table and come into the living room. EILIF *and* MORTEN *follow after a moment.*)

BILLING (*stretching his arms*). Ah, a meal like that and, ye gods, you feel like a new man!

HOVSTAD. The mayor wasn't in his best spirits tonight.

DR. STOCKMANN. It's his stomach; he has bad digestion.

HOVSTAD. I'm sure it was mainly us from the *Courier* he couldn't digest.

MRS. STOCKMANN. You were getting on rather well with him, I thought.

HOVSTAD. Oh yes, but it's nothing more than an armistice.

BILLING. That's it! That's the word for it.

DR. STOCKMANN. We have to remember, Peter's a lonely man. Poor fellow, he has no home to give him comfort—just business, business. And all that damn weak tea he's always sloshing down. Well, now, pull up your chairs to the table, boys! Katherine, don't we get any toddy?

MRS. STOCKMANN (*going toward the dining room*). I'm just bringing it.

DR. STOCKMANN. And you sit here on the sofa by me, Captain Horster. A rare guest like you—please, sit down, everyone.

(*The men seat themselves at the table.* MRS. STOCKMANN *comes back with a tray, holding a hotplate, glasses, decanters, and the like.*)

MRS. STOCKMANN. There now. This is arrack, and here's rum, and cognac. So just help yourselves.

DR. STOCKMANN (*taking a glass*). Oh, I think we'll manage! (*While the toddy is mixed.*) And let's have the cigars. Eilif, I'm sure you know where the box is. And, Morten, you can fetch my pipe. (*The boys go into the room on the right.*) I have a suspicion that Eilif sneaks a cigar now and then—but I play innocent. (*Calls.*) And my smoking cap too, Morten! Katherine, can't you tell him where I left it? Ah, he's got it! (*The boys bring in the various items.*) Help yourselves, everybody. I'll stick to my pipe. This one's taken me through a lot of dirty

weather on my rounds up north. (*Clinking glasses.*) Skoal! Ah, it's a lot better sitting here, snug and warm.

MRS. STOCKMANN (*sits and starts knitting*). Are you sailing soon, Captain Horster?

HORSTER. I think we'll be ready by next week.

MRS. STOCKMANN. And you'll be going to America then?

HORSTER. That's the intention, yes.

BILLING. But then you can't vote in the new town election.

HORSTER. There's an election coming up?

BILLING. Didn't you know?

HORSTER. No, I don't bother with such things.

BILLING. But you *are* concerned about public affairs, aren't you?

HORSTER. No. I don't understand them.

BILLING. Even so, a person at least ought to vote.

HORSTER. People who don't understand, too?

BILLING. Understand? What do you mean by that? Society's like a ship: all hands have to stand to the wheel.

HORSTER. Maybe on land; but at sea it wouldn't work too well.

HOVSTAD. It's remarkable how most sailors are so little concerned with what happens on land.

BILLING. Very strange.

DR. STOCKMANN. Sailors are like birds of passage: north, south, wherever they are is home. But it's why the rest of us have to be all the more effective, Mr. Hovstad. Anything of general interest in tomorrow's *Courier?*

HOVSTAD. No local items. But I was thinking of running your article the day after tomorrow—

DR. STOCKMANN. Hell's bells, that article! No, listen, you'll have to wait on that.

HOVSTAD. Oh? We have so much space right now, and it seems like the opportune moment—

DR. STOCKMANN. Yes, yes, you're probably right; but you'll have to wait all the same—

(PETRA, *wearing a hat and coat, comes in from the hall, with a stack of exercise books under her arm.*)

PETRA. Good evening.

DR. STOCKMANN. That's you, Petra? Good evening.

(*Greetings all around.* PETRA *takes off her hat and coat and leaves them, with the books, on a chair by the door.*)

PETRA. And here you all sit partying while I'm out slaving away.

DR. STOCKMANN. Well, now it's your party, too.

BILLING. Can I fix you a little drink?

PETRA (*coming to the table*). Thanks, I'll do it myself. You always make it too strong. Oh, Father, by the way, I have a letter for you. (*Goes over to the chair where her things are.*)

DR. STOCKMANN. A letter! Who from?

PETRA (*searching in her coat pocket*). I got it from the mailman as I was just going out—

DR. STOCKMANN (*gets up and goes toward her*). And you don't bring it till now!

PETRA. I really hadn't the time to run up again. Here it is.

DR. STOCKMANN (*seizing the letter*). Let me see, let me see, child. (*Looks at the envelope.*) Yes, that's it—!

MRS. STOCKMANN. Is *this* the one you've been so impatient for?

DR. STOCKMANN. Exactly. I must take it straight in and —where can I find a light, Katherine? Is there no lamp in my room again?

MRS. STOCKMANN. The lamp is lit and standing on your desk.

DR. STOCKMANN. Good, good. Excuse me a minute— (*Goes into his study to the right.*)

PETRA. Mother, what do you suppose that is?

MRS. STOCKMANN. I don't know. These last days he's been asking constantly about the mailman.

BILLING. Most likely some patient out of town—

PETRA. Poor Father, he's taking on too much work. (*Mixing a drink.*) Ooh, this'll be good!

HOVSTAD. Were you teaching night school again today?

PETRA (*sipping her glass*). Two hours.

BILLING. And four hours mornings at the Institute—

PETRA (*sitting by the door*). Five hours.

MRS. STOCKMANN. And papers to correct in the evening, I see.

PETRA. A whole batch, yes.

HORSTER. It looks like you take on your own full share.

PETRA. Yes, but that's fine. You feel so delectably tired afterward.

BILLING. You like that?

PETRA. Yes. Then you sleep so well.

MORTEN. You must be horribly wicked, Petra.

PETRA. Wicked?

MORTEN. Yes, when you work so hard. Mr. Rørland says that work is a punishment for our sins.

EILIF (*snorts*). Pah, how stupid you are, to believe that stuff.

MRS. STOCKMANN. Now, now, Eilif!

BILLING (*laughing*). Oh, marvelous!

HOVSTAD. You'd rather not work so hard, Morten?

MORTEN. No, I wouldn't.

HOVSTAD. Yes, but what do you want to be in life?

MORTEN. Best of all, I want to be a Viking.

EILIF. But then you'd have to be a pagan.

MORTEN. Well, so then I'll be a pagan!

BILLING. I'm with you, Morten! Exactly what I say!

MRS. STOCKMANN (*making signals*). No, you don't really, Mr. Billing.

BILLING. Ye gods, yes—! I *am* a pagan, and proud of it. Just wait, we'll all be pagans soon.

MORTEN. And can we then do anything we want?

BILLING. Well, you see, Morten—

MRS. STOCKMANN. Now, in you go, boys, both of you. I'm sure you've got homework for tomorrow.

EILIF. *I* could stay a little longer—

MRS. STOCKMANN. Oh no, you can't. The two of you, out!

(*The boys say good night and go into the room to the left.*)

HOVSTAD. Do you really think it could hurt the boys to hear these things?

MRS. STOCKMANN. Well, I don't know. But I don't like it.

PETRA. Oh, Mother, I think you're just being silly.

MRS. STOCKMANN. Yes, that's possible; but I don't like it—not here at home.

PETRA. Oh, there's so much hypocrisy, both at home and in school. At home we have to keep quiet, and in school we have to stand there and lie to the children.

HORSTER. You have to lie?

PETRA. Yes, don't you know, we have to teach them all kinds of things we don't believe in ourselves?

BILLING. Yes, that's for certain.

PETRA. If I only had the means, then I'd start a school myself, and things would be different there.

BILLING. Pah, the means—!

HORSTER. Well, if that's your idea, Miss Stockmann, I'll gladly provide you the facilities. My father's old place has been standing nearly empty; there's a huge dining room on the ground floor—

PETRA (*laughing*). Oh, thank you! But nothing'll come of it, I'm sure.

HOVSTAD. No, I think Miss Petra's more apt to go in for journalism. Incidentally, have you had time to look over that English story you promised to translate for us?

PETRA. No, not yet. But I'll get it to you in time.

(DR. STOCKMANN *comes in from his study, the open letter in his hand.*)

DR. STOCKMANN (*waving the letter*). Well, let me tell you, here's news for the town!

BILLING. News?

MRS. STOCKMANN. What sort of news?

DR. STOCKMANN. A great discovery, Katherine!

HOVSTAD. Really?

MRS. STOCKMANN. That you've made?

DR. STOCKMANN. My own, yes. (*Pacing back and forth.*) Now let them come around the way they do, saying it's just whims and wild fantasies. But they better watch out! (*With a laugh.*) They're going to watch out, I think!

PETRA. But, Father, tell what it is!

DR. STOCKMANN. Yes, all right, just give me time, and you'll learn everything. If I only had Peter here now! There you see how we human beings can go around, passing judgments as blind as moles—

HOVSTAD. What do you mean by that, Doctor?

DR. STOCKMANN (*stops by the table*). It's the general opinion, isn't it, that our town is a healthy place?

HOVSTAD. Why, of course.

DR. STOCKMANN. A most outstandingly healthy place, as a matter of fact—a place to be glowingly recommended to sick and well alike—

MRS. STOCKMANN. But, Thomas, dear—

DR. STOCKMANN. And recommend it we have, and praised it to the skies. I've written endlessly in the *Courier* and in pamphlets—

HOVSTAD. All right, so?

DR. STOCKMANN. This establishment, the baths, that's

been called the "main artery" of the town, and its "nerve center," and—who the hell knows what else—

BILLING. "The pulsating heart of our town" I once, in a moment of exuberance, went so far as to—

DR. STOCKMANN. Oh yes, that too. But do you know what they are in reality, these great, splendid, celebrated baths that have cost such a lot of money—you know what they are?

HOVSTAD. No, what are they?

MRS. STOCKMANN. What?

DR. STOCKMANN. The whole setup's a pesthole.

PETRA. The baths, Father!

MRS. STOCKMANN (*simultaneously*). Our baths!

HOVSTAD (*likewise*). But, Doctor—

BILLING. Simply incredible!

DR. STOCKMANN. It's a whited sepulcher, the whole establishment—poisoned, you hear me! A health hazard in the worst way. All that pollution up at Mølledal—all that reeking waste from the mill—it's seeped into the pipes feeding the pump-room; and the same damn poisonous slop's been draining out on the beach as well.

HORSTER. You mean in the bathing area?

DR. STOCKMANN. Exactly.

HOVSTAD. How can you be so certain of all this, Doctor?

DR. STOCKMANN. I've investigated the facts as scrupulously as possible. Oh, I've had suspicions for quite a while. Last year there were a number of unusual cases among the visitors here—typhoid and gastritis—

MRS. STOCKMANN. That's right, there were.

DR. STOCKMANN. At the time we assumed the visitors had brought their maladies with them. But later, over the past winter, I began having second thoughts; so I set out to analyze the water with the best means available.

MRS. STOCKMANN. So *that's* what you've been so involved in!

DR. STOCKMANN. Yes, involved—you can well say that, Katherine. But here, of course, I lacked the necessary scientific equipment, so I sent samples of both the drinking water and the seawater to the university for a strict laboratory analysis.

HOVSTAD. And this you've just gotten?

DR. STOCKMANN (*showing the letter*). This is it! There's irrefutable proof of the presence of decayed organic matter in the water—millions of bacteria. It's positively injurious to health, for either internal or external use.

MRS. STOCKMANN. What a godsend that you found out in time!

DR. STOCKMANN. You can say that again.

HOVSTAD. And what do you plan to do now, Doctor?

DR. STOCKMANN. To see things set to rights, of course.

HOVSTAD. Can that be done?

DR. STOCKMANN. It's got to be. Otherwise, the baths are totally useless—ruined. But there's no need for that. I'm quite clear about what actions have to be taken.

MRS. STOCKMANN. But, Thomas dear, why have you made such a secret of all this?

DR. STOCKMANN. Maybe I should have run out in the streets, blabbering about it before I had sure proof. No thanks, I'm not that crazy.

PETRA. But to us at home—

DR. STOCKMANN. Not to one living soul! But tomorrow you can run over to the Badger—

MRS. STOCKMANN. Really, Thomas—!

DR. STOCKMANN. All right then, your grandfather. Yes, this'll stand the old boy on his ear. He's always thought I'm a bit unhinged—oh yes, and a lot more think the same, I'm aware. But now these good people are going to find out—! (*Walks about, rubbing his hands.*) What a stir this'll make in town, Katherine! You can't imagine. The whole water system has to be relaid.

HOVSTAD (*rising*). The whole water system—?

DR. STOCKMANN. Well, obviously. The intake's too low; it's got to be placed much higher up.

PETRA. So you were right, after all.

DR. STOCKMANN. Ah, you remember that, Petra? I wrote a protest when they were just starting construction. But nobody would listen to me then. Well, now you can bet I'll pour on the heat—yes, because naturally I've written a report for the board of directors. It's been lying in my drawer a whole week; I've just been waiting for this. (*Waving the letter.*) But now it'll be sent right off. (*Goes into his study and returns with a sheaf of papers.*) See here! Four closely written pages! And a covering letter. A newspaper, Katherine—something to wrap this in! Good, that's it. Give it to—to— (*Stamps his foot.*) —what the hell's her name? The maid! Well, give it to her and tell her to take it straight to the mayor.

(MRS. STOCKMANN *takes the packet and goes out through the dining room.*)

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

DR. STOCKMANN. What should he say? Undoubtedly he has to be glad that a fact of such importance is brought to light.

HOVSTAD. May I have permission to run a little item on your discovery in the *Courier?*

DR. STOCKMANN. I'd be most gratified if you would.

HOVSTAD. The public should hear about this, and the sooner the better.

DR. STOCKMANN. Absolutely.

MRS. STOCKMANN (*returning*). She's gone with it.

BILLING. So help me, Doctor, you're the foremost citizen of this town!

DR. STOCKMANN (*walks about, looking pleased*). Oh, come on—really, I haven't done anything more than my duty. I've been a lucky treasure-hunter, and that's it. All the same—

BILLING. Hovstad, don't you think this town owes Doctor Stockmann a parade?

HOVSTAD. I'll come out for it, in any case.

BILLING. And I'll put it up to Aslaksen.

DR. STOCKMANN. No, my dear friends, please—forget all this nonsense. I don't want any ceremonies. And if the board tries to vote me a raise in salary, I won't take it. Katherine, I'm telling you this—I won't take it.

MRS. STOCKMANN. That's only right, Thomas.

PETRA (*raising her glass*). Skoal, Father!

HOVSTAD *and* BILLING. Skoal, skoal, Doctor!

HORSTER (*clinking glasses with him*). May this bring you nothing but joy.

DR. STOCKMANN. Thank you. Dear friends, thank you! My heart is so full of happiness—! Ah, what a blessing it is to feel that you've done some service for your own home town and your fellow citizens. Hurrah, Katherine!

(*He wraps both hands around her neck and whirls about the room with her; she screams and struggles against him. Laughter, applause, and cheers for the* DOCTOR. *The* BOYS *poke their heads in at the door.*)

ACT TWO

The DOCTOR*'s living room. The dining-room door is closed. It is morning.* MRS. STOCKMANN, *with a sealed letter in her hand, enters from the dining room, goes across to the door of the* DOCTOR*'s study, and peers inside.*

MRS. STOCKMANN. Are you in, Thomas?

DR. STOCKMANN (*from within*). Yes, I just got back. (*Entering.*) Is there something?

MRS. STOCKMANN. Letter from your brother. (*Hands it to him.*)

DR. STOCKMANN. Ah, let's see. (*Opens the envelope and reads.*) "The enclosed manuscript is returned herewith—" (*Reads on in an undertone.*) Hm—

MRS. STOCKMANN. What does he say?

DR. STOCKMANN (*slips the papers in his pocket*). Only that he'll be stopping up around noon sometime.

MRS. STOCKMANN. You *must* remember not to go out, then.

DR. STOCKMANN. Oh, that's no problem. I've finished my calls for the morning.

MRS. STOCKMANN. I'm terribly curious to know how he takes it.

DR. STOCKMANN. You'll see, he's not going to like it that I made the discovery, and he didn't.

MRS. STOCKMANN. Yes, doesn't that worry you?

DR. STOCKMANN. Oh, basically he'll be pleased, you can imagine. All the same—Peter's so damned nervous that somebody besides himself might do this town a little good.

MRS. STOCKMANN. But, you know what, Thomas—that's why you ought to be nice and share the honors with him. Couldn't it get around that he was the one who put you on the track—?

DR. STOCKMANN. Fine, as far as I'm concerned. If I can just get this thing cleared up—

(*Old* MORTEN KIIL *sticks in his head at the hall door, looks about inquisitively, and shakes with silent laughter.*)

MORTEN KIIL (*slyly*). Is is—is it true?

MRS. STOCKMANN (*moving toward him*). Father—it's you!

DR. STOCKMANN. Why, Father-in-law, good morning, good morning!

MRS. STOCKMANN. Oh, but aren't you coming in?

MORTEN KIIL. Yes, if it's true—if not, I'm leaving—

DR. STOCKMANN. If what's true?

MORTEN KIIL. This wild story about the waterworks. Is that true?

DR. STOCKMANN. Of course it's true. But how did *you* hear about it?

MORTEN KIIL (*entering*). Petra flew in on her way to school—

DR. STOCKMANN. Oh, did she?

MORTEN KIIL. Oh yes, and she told me. I thought she was just making a fool of me; but that isn't like Petra, either.

DR. STOCKMANN. You don't mean that!

MORTEN KIIL. Oh, you can't trust anybody. You can be made a fool of before you know it. It really is true, though?

DR. STOCKMANN. Yes, irrefutably. Now, please, have a seat, Father. (*Pressing him down onto the sofa.*) Isn't this a real piece of luck for the town?

MORTEN KIIL (*stifling his laughter*). Luck for the town?

DR. STOCKMANN. Yes, that I made this discovery in the nick of time—

MORTEN KIIL (*as before*). Yes, yes, yes! But I'd never have dreamed that you'd play your monkeyshines on your own brother.

DR. STOCKMANN. Monkeyshines!

MRS. STOCKMANN. But, Father—

MORTEN KIIL (*rests his hands and chin on the handle of his cane and winks slyly at the* DOCTOR). How was it now? You're saying that some animals got loose in the water-pipes?

DR. STOCKMANN. Yes, bacteria.

MORTEN KIIL. And there are lots of those animals in there, Petra said. A huge crowd of them.

DR. STOCKMANN. Up in the millions, most likely.

MORTEN KIIL. But no one can see them—wasn't that it?

DR. STOCKMANN. You can't *see* them, of course not.

MORTEN KIIL (*chuckling to himself*). Damned if this isn't the best one you've pulled off yet.

DR. STOCKMANN. What do you mean?

MORTEN KIIL. But you'll never get the mayor believing anything like that.

DR. STOCKMANN. Well, we'll see.

MORTEN KIIL. You think he's that crazy?

DR. STOCKMANN. I hope the whole town will be that crazy.

MORTEN KIIL. The whole town! Yes, that's not impossible. It'd serve them right—and show them up. They think they're so much smarter than us old boys. They hounded me out of the town council. That's right, I'm telling you, like a dog they hounded me out, they did. But now they're going to get it. You just go on and lay your monkeyshines on them, Stockmann.

DR. STOCKMANN. Yes, but—

MORTEN KIIL. Make monkeys out of them, I say. (*Getting up.*) If you can work it so the mayor and his cronies

get their ears pinned back, right then and there I'll donate a hundred crowns to the poor.

DR. STOCKMANN. You're very generous.

MORTEN KIIL. Yes, of course I've got little enough to spare, you understand. But if you can do that, I'll remember the poor next Christmas with a good fifty crowns.

(HOVSTAD *comes in from the hall.*)

HOVSTAD. Good morning! (*Stopping.*) Oh, excuse me—

DR. STOCKMANN. No, come in, come in.

MORTEN KIIL (*chuckling again*). Him! Is he in on this too?

HOVSTAD. What do you mean?

DR. STOCKMANN. Why, of course he is.

MORTEN KIIL. I might have guessed it. It's going into the paper. You're really the limit, Stockmann. Well, now you two get together; I'm leaving.

DR. STOCKMANN. No, stay a while, Father.

MORTEN KIIL. No, I'm leaving. And scheme up all the monkeyshines you can. You damn well aren't going to lose by it!

(*He goes, accompanied by* MRS. STOCKMANN.)

DR. STOCKMANN (*laughing*). What do you think—the old man doesn't believe a word of this about the water system.

HOVSTAD. Oh, was it *that*—?

DR. STOCKMANN. Yes, that's what we were talking about. And I suppose you're here for the same.

HOVSTAD. That's right. Do you have just a moment, Doctor?

DR. STOCKMANN. As long as you like.

HOVSTAD. Have you heard anything from the mayor?

DR. STOCKMANN. Not yet. He's stopping by later.

HOVSTAD. I've been thinking a good deal about this business since last evening.

DR. STOCKMANN. Oh?

HOVSTAD. For you, as a doctor and a scientist, this

condition in the water system is something all to itself. I mean, it hasn't occurred to you that it's interrelated with a lot of other things.

DR. STOCKMANN. How so? Here, let's sit down. No, on the sofa there.

(HOVSTAD *sits on the sofa, and* STOCKMANN *in an armchair on the other side of the table.*)

DR. STOCKMANN. Well? You were thinking—?

HOVSTAD. You said yesterday that the polluted water came from impurities in the soil.

DR. STOCKMANN. Yes, beyond any doubt it comes from that poisoned swamp up at Mølledal.

HOVSTAD. If you'll pardon me, Doctor, I think it comes from another swamp altogether.

DR. STOCKMANN. What sort?

HOVSTAD. The swamp where our whole community lies rotting.

DR. STOCKMANN. What the deuce is that supposed to mean, Mr. Hovstad?

HOVSTAD. Little by little every activity in this town has passed into the hands of a little clique of politicians—

DR. STOCKMANN. Come on now, they're not all of them politicians.

HOVSTAD. No, but those who aren't politicians are their friends and camp followers. All the rich in town, and the old established names—they're the powers that rule our lives.

DR. STOCKMANN. Yes, but then those people have a great deal of competence and vision.

HOVSTAD. Did they show competence and vision when they laid the water mains where they are now?

DR. STOCKMANN. No, of course that was an enormous piece of stupidity. But that'll be straightened out now.

HOVSTAD. You think it'll go so smoothly?

DR. STOCKMANN. Smoothly or not—it's going to go through.

HOVSTAD. Yes, if the press steps in.

DR. STOCKMANN. That won't be necessary, really. I'm positive that my brother—

HOVSTAD. Excuse me, Doctor; but I'm telling you that I plan to take this matter up.

DR. STOCKMANN. In the paper?

HOVSTAD. Yes. When I took over the *Courier*, it was my intention to break up that ring of pig-headed reactionaries who hold all the power.

DR. STOCKMANN. But you've told me yourself what the outcome was: you nearly wrecked the paper over them.

HOVSTAD. Yes, that time we had to back down, it's true. There was some risk that the baths might never have been constructed if those men had fallen. But now we have the baths, and the high and mighty are expendable now.

DR. STOCKMANN. Expendable, yes; but we still owe them a great debt.

HOVSTAD. And we'll acknowledge that, in all fairness. But a journalist of my radical leanings can't let an opportunity like this go by. The myth of the infallibility of the ruling class has to be shattered. It has to be rooted out, like any other superstition.

DR. STOCKMANN. I fully agree with you there, Mr. Hovstad. If it's a superstition, then out with it!

HOVSTAD. Of course I'm rather loath to involve the mayor, since he *is* your brother. But certainly you believe as I do, that the truth comes before anything else.

DR. STOCKMANN. No question of that. (*In an outburst.*) Yes, but—but—!

HOVSTAD. You mustn't think badly of me. I'm no more self-seeking or power-hungry than most people.

DR. STOCKMANN. But—whoever said you were?

HOVSTAD. I come from a poor family, as you know; and I've had ample opportunity to observe what the most pressing need is among the lower classes. Doctor, it's to play some part in directing our public life. That's the thing that develops skills and knowledge and self-respect—

DR. STOCKMANN. I understand absolutely—

HOVSTAD. Yes—and so I think a journalist is terribly remiss if he neglects the least opportunity for the liberation of the powerless, oppressed masses. Oh, I know—those on top are going to label this agitation, among other things; but they can say what they please. So long as my conscience is clear, then—

DR. STOCKMANN. That's it, yes! That's it, Mr. Hovstad. But all the same—damn it—! (*A knock at the door.*) Come in!

(ASLAKSEN, *the printer, appears at the hall door. He is plainly but respectably dressed in black, with a white, somewhat wrinkled cravat; he holds gloves and a high silk hat in his hand.*)

ASLAKSEN (*bowing*). Pardon me, Doctor, for intruding like this—

DR. STOCKMANN (*rises*). Well, now—it's Mr. Aslaksen!

ASLAKSEN. That's right, Doctor.

HOVSTAD (*getting up*). Were you looking for me, Aslaksen?

ASLAKSEN. No, I didn't think to meet you here. No, it was the doctor himself—

DR. STOCKMANN. Well, what can I do for you?

ASLAKSEN. Is it true, what I heard from Mr. Billing, that you're of a mind to get us a better water system?

DR. STOCKMANN. Yes, for the baths.

ASLAKSEN. Of course; I understand. Well, then I'm here to say, I'm throwing my full support behind you in this.

HOVSTAD (*to the* DOCTOR). You see!

ASLAKSEN. Because it might just come in handy to have us small businessmen in back of you. We make up pretty much of a solid majority in this town—that is, when we *choose* to. And it's always good to have the majority with you, Doctor.

DR. STOCKMANN. That's undoubtedly true. But I can hardly believe that any special measures are going to be

needed here. With something as clear-cut as this, it would seem to me—

ASLAKSEN. Oh, it could be a good thing all the same. Because I know these local authorities. The ones that run things don't take too kindly to propositions coming from the outside. And so I was thinking it wouldn't be out of the way if we staged a little demonstration.

HOVSTAD. That's the idea.

DR. STOCKMANN. You say, a demonstration? Just how would you plan to demonstrate?

ASLAKSEN. Naturally with great moderation, Doctor. I always make every effort for moderation. Because moderation is a citizen's chief virtue—in *my* opinion, anyway.

DR. STOCKMANN. You're certainly well known for it, Mr. Aslaksen.

ASLAKSEN. Yes, I think that's not too much to say. And this question of the water system, it's immensely important to us little businessmen. The baths show every sign of becoming like a miniature gold mine for this town. It's the baths that'll give us all a living, and especially us home owners. That's why we want to support this operation in every possible way. And since I'm now chairman of the Home Owners Council—

DR. STOCKMANN. Yes—?

ASLAKSEN. And since, moreover, I'm a representative of the Temperance Union—you knew, Doctor, did you not, that I am a temperance worker?

DR. STOCKMANN. Yes, that follows.

ASLAKSEN. Well—so it's quite obvious that I come in contact with a wide variety of people. And since I'm known for being a sober, law-abiding citizen, as you yourself said, Doctor, I've acquired a certain influence in this town—just a little position of power—if I may say so myself.

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

ASLAKSEN. So you see—it would be a small matter for me to work up a tribute, in a pinch.

DR. STOCKMANN. A tribute?

ASLAKSEN. Yes, a kind of tribute of thanks from the townspeople to you, for having advanced such a vital interest for the community. It goes without saying that it's got to be phrased with all due moderation, so it doesn't offend the authorities, or anyone else in power. And if we just watch ourselves *there*, then I don't think anyone will object, do you?

HOVSTAD. So, even if they didn't like it too well—

ASLAKSEN. No, no, no! No affronts to the authorities, Mr. Hovstad. No collisions with people so much involved in our lives. I've had enough of that in my time; and no good ever comes of it, either. But a citizen's sober and honest opinions are not to be scorned by any man.

DR. STOCKMANN (*shaking his hand*). My dear Mr. Aslaksen, I can't tell you how deeply it pleases me to find so much sympathy among my fellow citizens. It makes me so happy—so happy! Listen, why not a little glass of sherry, what?

ASLAKSEN. Many thanks, but no. I never indulge in spirits.

DR. STOCKMANN. Well, then a glass of beer—what do you say to that?

ASLAKSEN. Thanks again, Doctor, but I never partake so early in the day. Just now I want to get around town and talk to some of the home owners and prepare their reactions.

DR. STOCKMANN. That's exceptionally kind of you, Mr. Aslaksen. But I simply can't get it through my head that all these measures are going to be necessary. I think the matter could very well take care of itself.

ASLAKSEN. Authorities tend to need goading, Doctor Stockmann—though, on my soul, I don't mean to be critical of them—!

HOVSTAD. We'll go after them in the paper tomorrow, Aslaksen.

ASLAKSEN. But without violence, Mr. Hovstad. Proceed in moderation, or you'll never get anywhere. You can trust my word on that, because I've gleaned my experience in the school of life. Well, then—I'll say good-bye to you, Doctor. Now you know that, in any event, we small

businessmen stand behind you, like a wall. You've got the solid majority on your side, Doctor.

DR. STOCKMANN. Thank you for that, Mr. Aslaksen. (*Shaking his hand.*) Good-bye, good-bye!

ASLAKSEN. Will you be coming along to the pressroom, Mr. Hovstad?

HOVSTAD. I'll be in later. I still have a bit more to do.

ASLAKSEN. Very good.

(*He bows and leaves.* DR. STOCKMANN *accompanies him into the hall.*)

HOVSTAD (*as the* DOCTOR *re-enters*). Well, what do you say now, Doctor? Don't you think it's about time to stir up and air out all the stale, spineless inertia in this town?

DR. STOCKMANN. You're referring to Aslaksen?

HOVSTAD. Yes, I am. He's one of them who's sunk in the swamp—good a man as he is in some other ways. He's what most of them are around here: they go along tacking and trimming from this side to that. With all their scruples and second thoughts, they never dare strike out for anything.

DR. STOCKMANN. But to me Aslaksen seemed so thoroughly well-intentioned.

HOVSTAD. There's something I value more—and that's standing your ground as a strong, self-reliant man.

DR. STOCKMANN. I agree with you there entirely.

HOVSTAD. That's why I want to take this opportunity now and see if I can't force some of these models of intention to make men of themselves for once. The worship of authority in this town has to be uprooted. This inexcusable lapse of judgment about the water system has to be driven home to every eligible voter.

DR. STOCKMANN. All right. If you think it's best for the community, then go ahead. But not before I've talked with my brother.

HOVSTAD. Meanwhile, I'm writing an editorial to have on hand. And if the mayor doesn't get after this thing—

DR. STOCKMANN. Oh, but how can you think he wouldn't?

HOVSTAD. It's quite thinkable. And, if so—?

DR. STOCKMANN. Well, then I promise you—listen—then you can print my report—complete and uncut.

HOVSTAD. May I? Your word on that?

DR. STOCKMANN (*hands him the manuscript*). Here it is. Take it along. It can't hurt if you read it through; and you can give it back to me later.

HOVSTAD. Very good; I'll do that. Good-bye then, Doctor.

DR. STOCKMANN. Good-bye, good-bye. Yes, you'll see now, it'll all go smoothly, Mr. Hovstad. Very smoothly.

HOVSTAD. Hm—we'll see. (*He bows and goes out by the hall door.*)

DR. STOCKMANN (*goes over to the dining room and looks in*). Katherine—! Oh, are you back, Petra?

PETRA (*entering*). Yes, I just came from school.

MRS. STOCKMANN (*entering*). He's still not been in?

DR. STOCKMANN. Peter? No. But I had a long talk with Hovstad. He's very much excited by the discovery I've made. Its repercussions go a lot farther, apparently, than I thought at first. So he's put his paper at my disposal, if it comes to that.

MRS. STOCKMANN. Do you think it will come to that?

DR. STOCKMANN. Oh, of course not. But all the same, it's a heady feeling to know you've got the independent liberal press on your side. Yes, and guess what? I also had a visit from the chairman of the Home Owners Council.

MRS. STOCKMANN. Oh? And what did he want?

DR. STOCKMANN. To support me, as well. They'll all support me, if things get rough. Katherine—do you know what I have backing me up?

MRS. STOCKMANN. Backing you up? No, what do you have?

DR. STOCKMANN. The solid majority.

MRS. STOCKMANN. Really. And that's a good thing, is it, Thomas?

DR. STOCKMANN. Well, I should hope it's a good thing! (*Paces up and down, rubbing his hands together.*) My Lord, how gratifying it is to stand like this, joined together in brotherhood with your fellow citizens.

PETRA. And then to accomplish so much that's fine and useful, Father!

DR. STOCKMANN. And for one's own birthplace in the bargain.

MRS. STOCKMANN. There's the bell.

DR. STOCKMANN. That's got to be him. (*A knock at the door.*) Come in!

MAYOR STOCKMANN (*entering from the hall*). Good morning.

DR. STOCKMANN. Good to see you, Peter!

MRS. STOCKMANN. Morning, Peter. How's everything with you?

MAYOR STOCKMANN. Just so-so, thank you. (*To the* DOCTOR.) Yesterday, after office hours, I received a report from you, discussing the condition of the water at the baths.

DR. STOCKMANN. Yes. Have you read it?

MAYOR STOCKMANN. I have.

DR. STOCKMANN. What have you got to say about it?

MAYOR STOCKMANN (*glancing at the others*). Hm—

MRS. STOCKMANN. Come along, Petra.

(*She and* PETRA *go into the room on the left.*)

MAYOR STOCKMANN (*after a moment*). Was it necessary to press all these investigations behind my back?

DR. STOCKMANN. Well, as long as I didn't have absolute proof, then—

MAYOR STOCKMANN. And now you think you do?

DR. STOCKMANN. You must be convinced of that yourself.

MAYOR STOCKMANN. Is it your object to put this document before the board of directors by way of an official recommendation?

DR. STOCKMANN. Of course. Something has to be done about this. And fast.

MAYOR STOCKMANN. As usual, in your report you let your language get out of hand. You say, among other things, that what we're offering our summer visitors is guaranteed poison.

DR. STOCKMANN. But, Peter, how else can you describe it? You've got to realize—this water *is* poison for internal *or* external use! And it's foisted on poor, suffering creatures who turn to us in good faith and pay us exorbitant fees to gain their health back again!

MAYOR STOCKMANN. And then you arrive at the conclusion, by your line of reasoning, that we have to build a sewer to drain off these so-called impurities from Mølledal, and that all the water mains have to be relaid.

DR. STOCKMANN. Well, do you see any other way out? I don't.

MAYOR STOCKMANN. I invented a little business this morning down at the town engineer's office. And in a half-joking way, I brought up these proposals as something we perhaps ought to take under advisement at some time in the future.

DR. STOCKMANN. Some time in the future!

MAYOR STOCKMANN. He smiled at my whimsical extravagance—naturally. Have you gone to the trouble of estimating just what these proposed changes would cost? From the information I received, the expenditure would probably run up into several hundred thousand crowns.

DR. STOCKMANN. As high as that?

MAYOR STOCKMANN. Yes. But that's not the worst. The work would extend over at least two years.

DR. STOCKMANN. Two years? Two full years?

MAYOR STOCKMANN. At the least. And meanwhile what do we do with the baths? Shut them down? Yes, we'll have to. Do you really think anyone would make the effort to come all the distance here if the rumor got out that the water was contaminated?

DR. STOCKMANN. Yes, but Peter, that's what it is.

MAYOR STOCKMANN. And then all this happens now—just now, when the baths were being recognized. Other towns in this area have the same resources for development as health resorts. Don't you think they'll leap at the chance to attract the whole flow of tourists to them? No question of it. And there we are, left stranded. We'll most likely have to abandon the whole costly enterprise; and then you'll have ruined the town you were born in.

DR. STOCKMANN. I—ruined—!

MAYOR STOCKMANN. It's through the baths alone that this town has any future to speak of. You can see that just as plain as I can.

DR. STOCKMANN. But then what do you think ought to be done?

MAYOR STOCKMANN. From your report I'm unable to persuade myself that the condition of the baths is as critical as you claim.

DR. STOCKMANN. Look, if anything, it's worse! Or it'll be that by summer, when the warm weather comes.

MAYOR STOCKMANN. Once again. I think you're exaggerating considerably. A capable doctor must know the right steps to take—he should be able to control toxic elements, and to treat them if they make their presence too obvious.

DR. STOCKMANN. And then—? What else—?

MAYOR STOCKMANN. The water system for the baths as it now stands is simply a fact and clearly has to be accepted as such. But in time the directors will more than likely agree to take under consideration to what extent—depending on the funds available—they can institute certain improvements.

DR. STOCKMANN. And you can think I'd play along with that kind of trickery!

MAYOR STOCKMANN. Trickery?

DR. STOCKMANN. Yes, it's a trick—a deception, a lie, an out-and-out crime against the public and society at large!

MAYOR STOCKMANN. As I've already observed, I've not yet persuaded myself that there's any real impending danger here.

DR. STOCKMANN. Yes, you have! There's no alternative. My report is perfectly accurate, I know that! And you're very much aware of it, Peter, but you won't admit it. You're the one who got the baths and the water system laid out where they are today; and it's *this*—it's this hellish miscalculation that you won't concede. Pah! You don't think I can see right through you?

MAYOR STOCKMANN. And even if it were true? Even if I seem a bit overanxious about my reputation, it's all for the good of the town. Without moral authority I could hardly guide and direct affairs in the way I believe serves the general welfare. For this reason—among many others—it strikes me as imperative that your report not be submitted to the board of directors. It has to be withheld for the common good. Then, later, I'll bring the matter up for discussion, and we'll do the very best we can, as quietly as possible. But nothing—not the slightest word of this catastrophe must leak out to the public.

DR. STOCKMANN. My dear Peter, there's no stopping it now.

MAYOR STOCKMANN. It must and it will be stopped.

DR. STOCKMANN. I'm telling you, it's no use. Too many people know already.

MAYOR STOCKMANN. Know already! Who? Not those fellows from the *Courier*—?

DR. STOCKMANN. Why, of course they know. The independent liberal press is going to see that you do your duty.

MAYOR STOCKMANN (*after a short pause*). You're an exceptionally thoughtless man, Thomas. Haven't you considered the consequences that can follow for you?

DR. STOCKMANN. Consequences? For me?

MAYOR STOCKMANN. For you and your family as well.

DR. STOCKMANN. What the devil does *that* mean?

MAYOR STOCKMANN. I think, over the years, I've proved a helpful and accommodating brother to you.

DR. STOCKMANN. Yes, you have, and I'm thankful to you for that.

MAYOR STOCKMANN. I'm not after thanks. Because, in part, I was forced into it—for my own sake. I always hoped I could keep you in check somewhat if I helped better your economic status.

DR. STOCKMANN. What? Just for your own sake—!

MAYOR STOCKMANN. In part, I said. It's embarrassing for a public servant when his closest relative goes and compromises himself again and again.

DR. STOCKMANN. And that's what you think I do?

MAYOR STOCKMANN. Yes, unfortunately you do, without your knowing it. You have a restless, unruly, combative nature. And then this unhappy knack of bursting into print on all kinds of likely and unlikely subjects. You're no sooner struck by an idea than right away you have to scribble a newspaper article on it, or a whole pamphlet even.

DR. STOCKMANN. Well, but isn't it a citizen's duty to inform the public if he comes on a new idea?

MAYOR STOCKMANN. Oh, the public doesn't need new ideas. The public is served best by the good, old, time-tested ideas it's always had.

DR. STOCKMANN. That's putting it plainly!

MAYOR STOCKMANN. I have to talk to you plainly for once. Up till now I've always tried to avoid that because I know how irritable you are; but now I'm telling you the truth, Thomas. You have no conception how much you injure yourself with your impetuosity. You complain about the authorities and, yes, the government; you rail against them—and insist you're being passed over and persecuted. But what can you expect—someone as troublesome as you.

DR. STOCKMANN. Ah—so I'm troublesome, too?

MAYOR STOCKMANN. Yes, Thomas, you're a very troublesome man to work with. I know from experience. You show no consideration at all. You seem to forget completely that I'm the one you can thank for your post here as staff physician at the baths—

DR. STOCKMANN. I was the inevitable choice—I and nobody else! I was the first to see that this town could

become a flourishing spa; and I was the *only* one who could see it then. I stood alone fighting for that idea for years; and I wrote and wrote—

MAYOR STOCKMANN. Unquestionably. But the right moment hadn't arrived yet. Of course you couldn't judge that from up there in the wilds. But when the opportune time came, and I—and a few others—took the matter in hand—

DR. STOCKMANN. Yes, and bungled the whole magnificent plan. Oh yes, it's really coming out now what a brilliant crew you've been!

MAYOR STOCKMANN. All that's coming out, to my mind, is your usual hunger for a good fight. You want to attack your superiors—it's your old pattern. You can't stand any authority over you; you resent anyone in a higher position and regard him as a personal enemy—and then one weapon's as good as another to use. But now I've acquainted you with the vital interests at stake here for this whole town—and, naturally, for me as well. And so I'm warning you, Thomas, I'll be adamant about the demand I am going to make of you.

DR. STOCKMANN. What demand?

MAYOR STOCKMANN. Since you've been so indiscreet as to discuss this delicate issue with outsiders, even though it should have been kept secret among the directors, it of course can't be hushed up now. All kinds of rumors will go flying around, and the maliciously inclined will dress them up with trimmings of their own. It'll therefore be necessary that you publicly deny these rumors.

DR. STOCKMANN. I! How? I don't understand.

MAYOR STOCKMANN. We can expect that, after further investigation, you'll arrive at the conclusion that things are far from being as critical or dangerous as you'd first imagined.

DR. STOCKMANN. Ah—you expect that!

MAYOR STOCKMANN. Moreover, we expect that you'll support and publicly affirm your confidence in the present directors to take thorough and conscientious measures, as necessary, to remedy any possible defects.

DR. STOCKMANN. But that's utterly out of the question for me, as long as they try to get by with patchwork. I'm telling you that, Peter; and it's my unqualified opinion—!

MAYOR STOCKMANN. As a member of the staff, you're not entitled to any personal opinions.

DR. STOCKMANN (*stunned*). Not entitled—?

MAYOR STOCKMANN. As a staff member, I said. As a private person—why, that's another matter. But as a subordinate official at the baths, you're not entitled to express any opinions that contradict your superiors.

DR. STOCKMANN. That's going too far! I, as a doctor, a man of science, aren't entitled to—!

MAYOR STOCKMANN. What's involved here isn't a purely scientific problem. It's a mixture of both technical and economic considerations.

DR. STOCKMANN. I don't care what the hell it is! I want the freedom to express myself on any problem under the sun!

MAYOR STOCKMANN. Anything you like—except for the baths. We forbid you that.

DR. STOCKMANN (*shouting*). You forbid—! You! A crowd of—!

MAYOR STOCKMANN. *I* forbid it—*I*, your supervisor. And when I forbid you, then you obey.

DR. STOCKMANN (*controls himself*). Peter—if you weren't my brother—

PETRA (*flinging the door open*). You don't have to take this, Father!

MRS. STOCKMANN (*following her*). Petra, Petra!

MAYOR STOCKMANN. Ah, an ear to the keyhole.

MRS. STOCKMANN. You were so loud, we couldn't avoid—

PETRA. Oh, but I was there, listening.

MAYOR STOCKMANN. Well, I'm just as glad, really—

DR. STOCKMANN (*approaching him*). You were talking to me about forbidding and obeying—?

MAYOR STOCKMANN. You forced me to adopt that tone.

DR. STOCKMANN. So you want me to stand up in public and confess I'm a liar?

MAYOR STOCKMANN. We find it absolutely essential that you make a public statement along the lines I've indicated.

DR. STOCKMANN. And what if I don't—obey?

MAYOR STOCKMANN. Then we ourselves will issue a statement to soothe the public.

DR. STOCKMANN. Very well. But then I'll attack you in print. I'll stand my ground. I'll prove that I'm right, and you're wrong. And then what will you do?

MAYOR STOCKMANN. Then I won't be able to prevent your dismissal.

DR. STOCKMANN. What—!

PETRA. Father—dismissal!

MRS. STOCKMANN. Dismissal!

MAYOR STOCKMANN. You'll be dismissed from the staff. I'll find myself obliged to see you put on immediate notice and suspended from all activities involving the baths.

DR. STOCKMANN. And you'll dare that!

MAYOR STOCKMANN. You're the one playing the daredevil.

PETRA. Uncle, this is a shameful way to treat a man like Father!

MRS. STOCKMANN. Will you please be quiet, Petra!

MAYOR STOCKMANN (*regarding* PETRA). Ah, so we've already learned to voice opinions. Yes, naturally. (*To* MRS. STOCKMANN.) Katherine, I expect you're the most sensible member of this household. Use whatever influence you have over your husband, and make him understand what effect this will have on both his family—

DR. STOCKMANN. My family concerns no one else but me.

MAYOR STOCKMANN. As I was saying, on both his family and the town he lives in.

DR. STOCKMANN. I'm the one who really wants the best for the town! I want to expose failings that'll come to light sooner or later anyway. That ought to show that I love this town.

MAYOR STOCKMANN. Yes, by setting out in blind spite to cut off our major source of revenue.

DR. STOCKMANN. That source is poisoned, man! Are you crazy! We live by marketing filth and corruption. The whole affluence of this community has its roots in a lie!

MAYOR STOCKMANN. Sheer fantasy—or something worse. Any man who could hurl such nauseating charges at his own home town must be an enemy of society.

DR. STOCKMANN (*going for him*). You dare—!

MRS. STOCKMANN (*throws herself between them*). Thomas!

PETRA (*seizing her father by the arm*). Easy, Father!

MAYOR STOCKMANN. I don't have to subject myself to violence. Now you've been warned. Just consider what you owe yourself and your family. Good-bye. (*He leaves.*)

DR. STOCKMANN (*pacing up and down*). And I have to take this treatment! In my own house, Katherine! What do you say to that!

MRS. STOCKMANN. Of course it's humiliating, Thomas—

PETRA. Oh, what I could do to Uncle—!

DR. STOCKMANN. It's my own fault. I should have faced them down long ago—shown my teeth—and bit back! Call *me* an enemy of society! So help me God, I'm not going to swallow that!

MRS. STOCKMANN. But, Thomas dear, your brother does have the power—

DR. STOCKMANN. Yes, but I'm in the right!

MRS. STOCKMANN. The right? Ah, what does it help to be in the right if you don't have any power?

PETRA. Mother, no—why do you talk like that?

DR. STOCKMANN. You mean it doesn't help in a free society to be on the side of right? Don't be absurd, Katherine. And besides—don't I have the independent

liberal press to lead the way—and the solid majority behind me? There's power enough in them, I'd say!

MRS. STOCKMANN. But Thomas, for heaven's sake—surely you're not thinking of—

DR. STOCKMANN. Thinking of what?

MRS. STOCKMANN. Of setting yourself up against your brother.

DR. STOCKMANN. What in hell do you want me to do? Abandon everything that's true and right?

PETRA. Yes, I'd ask the same.

MRS. STOCKMANN. But it won't do you the least bit of good. If they won't, they won't.

DR. STOCKMANN. Oh ho, Katherine, just give me time! You'll see, I'll push this fight through to the end.

MRS. STOCKMANN. Yes, maybe you'll just push yourself out of your job—that's what you'll do.

DR. STOCKMANN. Then anyway I'll have done my duty to the people—to society. Though they call me its enemy!

MRS. STOCKMANN. And to your family, Thomas? To us at home? You think that's doing your duty to those who depend on you?

PETRA. Oh, stop always thinking of us first of all, Mother.

MRS. STOCKMANN. Yes, it's easy for *you* to talk. If need be, you can stand on your own feet. But remember the boys, Thomas. And think of yourself a little, and of me—

DR. STOCKMANN. You must be utterly mad, Katherine! If I had to crawl like an abject coward to Peter and his damned cohorts—do you think I'd ever know one moment's happiness for the rest of my life?

MRS. STOCKMANN. I don't know about that. But God preserve us from the kind of happiness we'll share if you press your defiance. You'll be back again where you started—no position, no assured income. I thought we'd had enough of that in the old days. Remember that, Thomas; and think of what lies ahead.

DR. STOCKMANN (*clenching his fists and writhing in inner conflict*). And this is how these bureaucrats can

clamp down on a plain, honest man! It's despicable, Katherine, isn't it?

MRS. STOCKMANN. Yes, they've acted shamefully toward you, of course. But, my Lord, there's so much injustice that people have to bear with in this world— There are the boys, Thomas! Look at them! What'll become of them? No, no, you wouldn't have the heart—

(*As she speaks,* EILIF *and* MORTEN *come in, carrying their schoolbooks.*)

DR. STOCKMANN. The boys—! (*Suddenly resolved.*) I don't care if all the world caves in, I'm not going to lick the dust. (*He heads for his study.*)

MRS. STOCKMANN (*following him*). Thomas—what are you doing?

DR. STOCKMANN (*at the door*). I want the chance to look my boys straight in the eyes when they've grown up to be free men. (*He goes within.*)

MRS. STOCKMANN (*bursting into tears*). Oh, God help us all!

PETRA. Father—he's wonderful! He's not giving in.

(*The boys, in bewilderment, ask what has happened;* PETRA *signals them to be quiet.*)

ACT THREE

The editorial office of the People's Courier. *At the back, left, is the entrance door; to the right in the same wall is another door, through which one can see the pressroom. In the wall to the right, a third door. At the center of the room is a large table covered with papers, newspapers, and books. In the foreground at the left a window and, next to it, a writing desk with a high stool. A couple of armchairs are drawn up by the table; several other chairs along the walls. The room is barren and cheerless, the furnishings old, the armchairs grimy and torn. In the pressroom two typesetters can be seen at work, and, beyond them, a handpress in operation.*

HOVSTAD *is seated at the desk, writing. After a moment* BILLING *enters from the right, the* DOCTOR*'s manuscript in his hand.*

BILLING. Well, that's really something—!

HOVSTAD (*writing*). Did you read it all?

BILLING (*lays the manuscript on the desk*). I'll say I did.

HOVSTAD. He makes a pretty sharp statement, doesn't he?

BILLING. Sharp? Ye gods, it's pulverizing! Every word hits home like a sledgehammer.

HOVSTAD. Yes, but that crowd isn't going to come down at one blow.

BILLING. That's true. But then we'll keep on hitting them—blow upon blow, till their whole leadership crumbles. When I sat in there reading this, it was exactly as if I could see the revolution breaking like the dawn.

HOVSTAD (*turning*). Shh! Don't say that so Aslaksen hears.

BILLING (*dropping his voice*). Aslaksen's a chicken-livered coward; there's no spine in the man. But this time you'll carry your own will through, uh? Right? You'll run the doctor's article?

HOVSTAD. Yes, if only the mayor doesn't give in—

BILLING. That'd be boring as hell.

HOVSTAD. Well, fortunately, no matter what happens, we can make something out of the situation. If the mayor won't buy the doctor's proposal, then he gets the small businessmen down on his neck—the Home Owners Council and that sort. And if he does buy it, he'll fall out with a whole host of the big stockholders in the baths, the ones who've been his best supporters up to now—

BILLING. Yes, that's right; they'll have to kick in a lot of new capital—

HOVSTAD. You bet they will! And then the ring is broken, see. And day after day in the paper we'll keep drumming it into the public that the mayor's incompetent on one score after another, and that all the elective offices in town—the whole administration—ought to be placed in the hands of the liberals.

BILLING. Ye gods, that's the living truth! I see it—I can see it! We're right on the verge of a revolution!

(*A knock at the door.*)

HOVSTAD. Shh! (*Calls out.*) Come in!

(DR. STOCKMANN *enters by the door at the back, left.*)

HOVSTAD (*goes to meet him*). Ah, here's the doctor. Well?

DR. STOCKMANN. Roll your presses, Mr. Hovstad!

HOVSTAD. Then it's come to that?

BILLING. Hurray!

DR. STOCKMANN. I said, roll your presses. Yes, it's come to that. But now they'll get what they're asking for. Now it's war in this town, Mr. Billing!

BILLING. War to the knife, I hope! Lay into them, Doctor!

DR. STOCKMANN. This article's only the beginning. My head's already brimming with ideas for four or five more pieces. Where do I find Aslaksen?

BILLING (*shouting into the pressroom*). Aslaksen, come here a minute!

HOVSTAD. Four or five more pieces, you say? On the same subject?

DR. STOCKMANN. No, not by a long shot. No, they're on totally different topics. But they all originate from the water system and the sewers. One thing leads to another, you know. It's the way it is when you start patching up an old building. Precisely like that.

BILLING. Ye gods, but that's the truth. You find out you'll never be done with it till you've torn down the whole rotten structure.

ASLAKSEN (*comes in from the pressroom*). Torn down! You don't plan to tear down the baths, Doctor?

HOVSTAD. Not at all. Don't get frightened.

DR. STOCKMANN. No, that was something else entirely. Well, what do you say about my article, Mr. Hovstad?

HOVSTAD. I think it's a pure masterpiece—

DR. STOCKMANN. Yes, isn't it—? Well, I'm most gratified, most gratified.

HOVSTAD. It's so clear and readable; you don't have to be a specialist at all to follow the argument. I daresay you'll have every reasonable man on your side.

ASLAKSEN. And all the moderates, too?

BILLING. Moderates and immoderates both—well, I mean, practically the entire town.

ASLAKSEN. Then we might take a chance on running it.

DR. STOCKMANN. Yes, I should think so!

HOVSTAD. It'll go in tomorrow morning.

DR. STOCKMANN. Good grief, it better; we can't waste a single day. Look, Mr. Aslaksen, I know what I wanted to ask you: would you give the manuscript your personal attention?

ASLAKSEN. I certainly will.

DR. STOCKMANN. Handle it like gold. No misprints; every word is vital. I'll stop back in again later; maybe I could glance over the proofs. Oh, I can't tell you how I'm dying to see this thing in print—delivered—

BILLING. Delivered—like a lightning-bolt!

DR. STOCKMANN. —addressed to the judgment of every thinking man. Ah, you can't imagine what I've been subjected to today. They've threatened me from all sides; they've tried to deprive me of my most fundamental human rights—

HOVSTAD. Of your rights!

DR. STOCKMANN. They've tried to humiliate me, and turn me into a jellyfish, and make me deny my deepest and holiest convictions for private profit.

BILLING. Ye gods, that's unforgivable.

HOVSTAD. Oh well, you have to expect anything from that crowd.

DR. STOCKMANN. But with me it's not going to work: they're going to get it, spelled out in black and white. I'm going to drop anchor right here at the *Courier* and rake them with broadsides: a fresh article every day—

ASLAKSEN. Yes, but now listen—

BILLING. Hurray! It's war—war!

DR. STOCKMANN. I'll smash them into the ground and shatter them! I'll wreck their defenses in the eyes of every fair-minded man! That's what I'll do!

ASLAKSEN. But do it temperately, Doctor. War, yes—in moderation.

BILLING. No, no! Don't spare the dynamite!

DR. STOCKMANN (*continues, unruffled*). Because now, you see, this isn't simply a matter of sewers and water mains anymore. No, it's the whole society that has to be purged and disinfected—

BILLING. That's the remedy!

DR. STOCKMANN. All these lunkheads in the old generation have to be dumped. And that means: no matter *who* they are! I've had such endless vistas opening up for me today. I haven't quite clarified it yet, but I'm working it out. My friends, we have to go forth and search out fresh, young standard-bearers; we have to have new commanders for all our outposts.

BILLING. Hear, hear!

DR. STOCKMANN. And if we only can stick together, everything will go off smoothly. The entire revolution will be launched as trim as a ship down the ways. Don't you think so?

HOVSTAD. For my part, I think we now have every prospect of seeing community control put right where it belongs.

ASLAKSEN. And if we just move ahead in moderation, I can't believe there's likely to be any danger.

DR. STOCKMANN. Who the hell cares about danger! Whatever I do will be done in the name of truth, for the sake of my conscience.

HOVSTAD. You're a man who deserves support, Doctor.

ASLAKSEN. Yes, that's a fact: the doctor's a true friend to the town, and a real friend to society.

BILLING. Ye gods, Aslaksen; Doctor Stockmann is the people's friend!

ASLAKSEN. I can imagine the Home Owners Council may pick that up as a slogan.

DR. STOCKMANN (*moved, pressing their hands*). Thank you, thank you, my dear, unfailing friends—it's so heartening to hear you say these things—my esteemed brother called me something quite different. Well, I swear he's going to get it back, with interest! But now I've got to look in on a patient, poor devil. I'll stop by again, as I said. Don't forget to look out for my manuscript, Mr. Aslaksen—and, whatever you do, don't cut any exclamation points. If anything, put a few more in! Fine, fine! Good-bye till later, good-bye, good-bye!

(*Amid mutual farewells, he is escorted to the door and departs.*)

HOVSTAD. He can be an exceptionally useful man for us.

ASLAKSEN. As long as he limits himself to the baths. But if he goes further, then it wouldn't be politic to join forces with him.

HOVSTAD. Hm, that all depends—

BILLING. You're always so damn fearful, Aslaksen.

ASLAKSEN. Fearful? Yes, as far as the local authorities go, I'm fearful, Mr. Billing. Let me tell you, it's something I've learned in the school of experience. But put me in the arena of national politics, opposed to the government itself, and then you'll see if I'm fearful.

BILLING. No, you're certainly not. But that's exactly where you're so inconsistent.

ASLAKSEN. I'm a man of conscience, that's the thing. As long as you attack the government, you can't do any real damage to society. You see, the men on that level, they aren't affected—they just ride it out. But the *local* authorities, *they* can be ousted; and then you might wind up with a lot of bunglers in power, who could do enormous damage to the property owners, among others.

HOVSTAD. But how about self-government as part of a citizen's education—don't you care about that?

ASLAKSEN. When a man has material assets at stake, he can't go thinking of everything.

HOVSTAD. Then I hope I'm never burdened with material assets.

BILLING. Hear, hear!

ASLAKSEN (*smiles*). Hm. (*Pointing at the desk.*) In that editor's chair, right there, your predecessor, Councilman Stengaard, used to sit.

BILLING (*spits*). Pah! That renegade.

HOVSTAD. I'm no double-dealer—and I never will be.

ASLAKSEN. A politician has to keep all possibilities open, Mr. Hovstad. And you, Mr. Billing—I think you better take a reef or two in your sails, now that you've put in for a job in the town clerk's office.

BILLING. I—!

HOVSTAD. *You* have, Billing?

BILLING. Yes, uh—you can damn well imagine I only did it to needle the establishment.

ASLAKSEN. Well, it's no business of mine, of course. But when I get labeled fearful and inconsistent in my stand, there's one thing I want to emphasize: my political record is available to all comers. I've never changed my position, except that I've become more moderate. My heart belongs to the people, always; but I can't deny that my reason disposes me toward the authorities—I mean, only the local ones, that is.

(*He goes into the pressroom.*)

BILLING. Shouldn't we call it quits with him, Hovstad?

HOVSTAD. You know any other printer who'll extend us credit for paper and labor costs?

BILLING. It's damnable that we don't have any capital.

HOVSTAD (*sitting at the desk*). Yes, if we only had that—

BILLING. How about approaching Stockmann?

HOVSTAD (*leafing through some papers*). What use would there be in that? He has nothing.

BILLING. No, but he's got a good man backing him: old Morten Kiil—the one they call the Badger.

HOVSTAD (*writing*). How can you know for sure *he* has anything?

BILLING. Ye gods, of course he does! And some part of it has to come to the Stockmanns. He's got to make provision—at least for the children.

HOVSTAD (*half turning*). Are you figuring on *that?*

BILLING. Figuring? I never figure on anything.

HOVSTAD. That's wise. And you'd better not figure on that job with the town, because I can promise you—you won't get it.

BILLING. Don't you think I've known that all along? There's nothing I'd welcome more than not getting it. A rejection like that really kindles your fighting spirit—it's

almost like an infusion of fresh gall, and that's exactly what you need in an anthill like this, where hardly anything ever happens to really stir you up.

HOVSTAD (*continues writing*). How true, how true.

BILLING. Well—they'll soon be hearing from *me!* Now I'll go in and write that appeal to the Home Owners Council. (*He goes into the room to the right.*)

HOVSTAD (*sits at the desk, chews the end of his pen and says slowly*). Hm—so that's how it is. (*A knock at the door.*) Come in!

(PETRA *enters by the door at the back, left.*)

HOVSTAD (*getting up*). Oh, it's you? What are you doing here?

PETRA. You'll have to excuse me—

HOVSTAD (*pulls an armchair forward*). Won't you sit?

PETRA. No, thanks—I can't stay.

HOVSTAD. Is it something from your father that—?

PETRA. No, it's something from me. (*Takes a book out of her coat pocket.*) Here's that English story.

HOVSTAD. Why are you giving it back?

PETRA. Because I don't want to translate it.

HOVSTAD. But you promised me, definitely—

PETRA. Well, I hadn't read it then. And of course you haven't read it either.

HOVSTAD. No. You know I don't understand English; but—

PETRA. All right, that's why I wanted to tell you that you'll have to find somebody else. (*Lays the book on the table.*) This could never be used in the *Courier.*

HOVSTAD. Why not?

PETRA. It's totally opposed to everything you stand for.

HOVSTAD. Well, actually—

PETRA. You still don't understand me. It shows how a supernatural power, watching over the so-called good people of this world, arranges everything for the best in their

lives—and how all the so-called wicked get their punishment.

HOVSTAD. But that's fair enough. It's exactly what the public wants.

PETRA. And do you want to be the one who feeds the public that sort of thing? You don't believe a word of it yourself. You know perfectly well things don't happen like that in reality.

HOVSTAD. You're perfectly right; but then an editor can't always do what he might prefer. You often have to bow to public opinions in lesser matters. After all, politics is the main thing in life—for a newspaper, in any event. And if I want to lead people toward greater liberation and progress, then I mustn't scare them away. When they find a moral story like this in the back pages, they're more willing to accept what we print up front—they feel more secure.

PETRA. Oh, come! You wouldn't be so tricky and lay snares for your readers. You're not a spider.

HOVSTAD (*smiles*). Thank you for thinking so well of me. No, it really was Billing's scheme, and not mine.

PETRA. Billing's!

HOVSTAD. Yes. At any rate, he was speaking of it just the other day. It's Billing who's been so hot about getting that story in; I don't know the book.

PETRA. But how could Billing, with his liberal attitude—?

HOVSTAD. Oh, Billing is a many-sided man. Now I hear he's out for a job in the town clerk's office.

PETRA. I don't believe it, Hovstad. How could he ever conform himself to that?

HOVSTAD. That's something you'll have to ask him.

PETRA. I never would have thought it of Billing.

HOVSTAD (*looks more sharply at her*). You wouldn't? Does it surprise you so?

PETRA. Yes. Or maybe not, really. Oh, honestly, I don't know—

HOVSTAD. We journalists don't amount to much, Miss Stockmann.

PETRA. You actually mean that?

HOVSTAD. It's what I think sometimes.

PETRA. Yes, in your normal day-to-day existence—I can understand that well enough. But now that you're lending a hand in a great cause—

HOVSTAD. This matter of your father, you mean?

PETRA. Exactly. Now I think you must feel like a man who's more valuable than most.

HOVSTAD. Yes, I feel something of that today.

PETRA. Yes, you do, don't you? Oh, it's a glorious calling you've chosen! To pioneer the way for embattled truths and daring new insights—or simply to stand up fearlessly for a man who's been wronged—

HOVSTAD. Especially when that man who's been wronged is—hm—I don't quite know how to put it—

PETRA. When he's so direct and honest, you mean?

HOVSTAD (*in a softer voice*). No, I meant—especially when he's your father.

PETRA (*startled*). It's *that!*

HOVSTAD. Yes, Petra—Miss Petra.

PETRA. Is *that* the main thing for you? Not the issue itself? Not the truth? Not my father's compassion for life?

HOVSTAD. Why, yes—of course, that too.

PETRA. No, thanks, Mr. Hovstad; you betrayed yourself. And now I'll never trust you again, in anything.

HOVSTAD. How can you be so hard on me, when it's mostly for your own sake—?

PETRA. What I'm mad at you about is you haven't played fair with Father. You've talked to him as if the truth and the good of the community lay closest to your heart. You've made fools of both him and me. You're not the man you pretend to be. And for that I'll never forgive you—never!

HOVSTAD. You shouldn't be so bitter, Miss Petra—paticularly right now.

PETRA. Why not now?

HOVSTAD. Because your father can't dispense with my help.

PETRA (*scanning him*). And you're that kind, too? So!

HOVSTAD. No, no, I'm not. I don't know what brought that on. You have to believe me.

PETRA. I know what I have to believe. Good-bye.

ASLAKSEN (*entering from the pressroom, brusquely and cryptically*). God Almighty, Hovstad— (*Sees* PETRA.) Oh, what a mess—

PETRA. There's the book; you can give it to somebody else. (*Goes toward the entrance door.*)

HOVSTAD (*following her*). But, Miss Petra—

PETRA. Good-bye. (*She leaves.*)

ASLAKSEN. Mr. Hovstad, listen!

HOVSTAD. Yes, all right, what is it?

ASLAKSEN. The mayor's out there in the pressroom.

HOVSTAD. You say, the mayor?

ASLAKSEN. Yes, he wants to talk to you. He came in the back entrance—didn't want to be seen, I guess.

HOVSTAD. What's this all about? No, wait, I'll go—

(*He crosses to the door of the pressroom, opens it, and beckons the* MAYOR *in.*)

HOVSTAD. Keep an eye out, Aslaksen, so nobody—

ASLAKSEN. I understand— (*Goes into the pressroom.*)

MAYOR STOCKMANN. I imagine you hardly expected to see me here, Mr. Hovstad.

HOVSTAD. No, I really hadn't.

MAYOR STOCKMANN (*looking about*). You've certainly made yourself quite comfortable here. Very nice.

HOVSTAD. Oh—

MAYOR STOCKMANN. And now I come along unceremoniously and monopolize your time.

HOVSTAD. By all means, Mr. Mayor; I'm at your service. But please, let me take your things— (*Sets the* MAYOR*'s hat and stick on a chair.*) Won't you have a seat?

MAYOR STOCKMANN (*sitting at the table*). Thank you.

(HOVSTAD *likewise sits at the table.*)

MAYOR STOCKMANN. I've gone through—really a most troublesome episode today, Mr. Hovstad.

HOVSTAD. Yes? Oh well, with all the cares that the mayor has—

MAYOR STOCKMANN. It involves the staff physician at the baths.

HOVSTAD. You mean, the doctor?

MAYOR STOCKMANN. He's penned a kind of report to the board of directors, alleging that the baths have certain deficiencies.

HOVSTAD. He has?

MAYOR STOCKMANN. Yes, didn't he tell you—? I thought he said—

HOVSTAD. Oh yes, that's true. He made some mention of it—

ASLAKSEN (*entering from the pressroom*). I need to have that manuscript—

HOVSTAD (*vexed*). Hm, it's there on the desk.

ASLAKSEN (*locating it*). Good.

MAYOR STOCKMANN. But look—that's *it*, exactly—

ASLAKSEN. Yes, that's the doctor's article, Mr. Mayor.

HOVSTAD. Oh, is *that* what you were talking about?

MAYOR STOCKMANN. None other. What do you think of it?

HOVSTAD. I'm really no expert, and I've barely skimmed through it.

MAYOR STOCKMANN. Still, you're going to print it.

HOVSTAD. A man of his reputation I can hardly refuse—

ASLAKSEN. I have no say at all in this paper, Mr. Mayor.

MAYOR STOCKMANN. Naturally.

ASLAKSEN. I only print what's put in my hands.

MAYOR STOCKMANN. Quite properly.

ASLAKSEN. So, if you'll pardon me— (*Goes toward the pressroom.*)

MAYOR STOCKMANN. No, just a minute, Mr. Aslaksen. With your permission, Mr. Hovstad—

HOVSTAD. My pleasure.

MAYOR STOCKMANN. You're a sober-minded and thoughtful man, Mr. Aslaksen.

ASLAKSEN. I'm glad Your Honor holds that opinion.

MAYOR STOCKMANN. And a man of influence in many circles.

ASLAKSEN. That's mostly among the little people.

MAYOR STOCKMANN. The small taxpayers are the great majority—here, as elsewhere.

ASLAKSEN. That's the truth.

MAYOR STOCKMANN. And I don't doubt that you know the general sentiment among most of them. Am I right?

ASLAKSEN. Yes, I daresay I do, Mr. Mayor.

MAYOR STOCKMANN. Well—if there's such a worthy spirit of self-sacrifice prevailing among the town's less affluent citizens, then—

ASLAKSEN. How's that?

HOVSTAD. Self-sacrifice?

MAYOR STOCKMANN. It's a beautiful token of community spirit, an exceptionally beautiful token. I was close to saying that I wouldn't have expected it. But you know the feelings of these people far better than I.

ASLAKSEN. Yes, but, Your Honor—

MAYOR STOCKMANN. And as a matter of fact, it's no small sacrifice this town will be asked to bear.

HOVSTAD. The town?

ASLAKSEN. But I don't follow— It's the baths—!

MAYOR STOCKMANN. At a tentative estimate, the changes that our staff physician finds desirable run up to a couple of hundred thousand crowns.

ASLAKSEN. That's a lot of money, but—

MAYOR STOCKMANN. Of course it'll be necessary for us to take out a municipal loan.

HOVSTAD (*rises*). It can't be your intention for the town to—

ASLAKSEN. Not out of property taxes! Out of the empty pockets of the home owners!

MAYOR STOCKMANN. Well, my dear Mr. Aslaksen, where else would the capital come from?

ASLAKSEN. The men who own the baths can raise it.

MAYOR STOCKMANN. The owners find themselves in no position to extend themselves further than they are already.

ASLAKSEN. Is that quite definite, Mr. Mayor?

MAYOR STOCKMANN. I've ascertained it for a fact. So if one wants all these elaborate changes, the town itself will have to pay for them.

ASLAKSEN. But hell and damnation—excuse me, sir!—but this is a totally different picture, Mr. Hovstad.

HOVSTAD. It certainly is.

MAYOR STOCKMANN. The worst part of it is that we'll be forced to shut down the baths for a two-year period.

HOVSTAD. Shut down? Completely?

ASLAKSEN. For two years!

MAYOR STOCKMANN. Yes, the work has to take that long—at the least.

ASLAKSEN. But, God Almighty, we'll never last that out, Mr. Mayor! What'll we home owners live on in the meantime?

MAYOR STOCKMANN. Unhappily, it's extremely difficult to answer that, Mr. Aslaksen. But what do you want us to do? You think we'll get a single summer visitor here if anyone goes around posing suppositions that the water is polluted, that we're living in a pesthole, that the whole town—

ASLAKSEN. And it's all just supposition?

MAYOR STOCKMANN. With the best will in the world, I haven't been able to persuade myself otherwise.

ASLAKSEN. Yes, but then it's absolutely indefensible of Dr. Stockmann—begging your pardon, Mr. Mayor, but—

MAYOR STOCKMANN. It's distressingly true, what you imply, Mr. Aslaksen. I'm afraid my brother's always been a reckless man.

ASLAKSEN. And in spite of this, you want to go on supporting him, Mr. Hovstad!

HOVSTAD. But how could anyone have suspected—?

MAYOR STOCKMANN. I've drawn up a brief statement of the relevant facts, as they might appear to a disinterested observer; and I've suggested therein how any possible deficiencies might well be covered without exceeding the current budget for the baths.

HOVSTAD. Do you have this statement with you, Mr. Mayor?

MAYOR STOCKMANN (*groping in his pocket*). Yes, I took it along just in case—

ASLAKSEN (*abruptly*). Oh, my God, there he is!

MAYOR STOCKMANN. Who? My brother?

HOVSTAD. Where—where!

ASLAKSEN. Coming through the pressroom.

MAYOR STOCKMANN. How embarrassing! I don't want to run up against him here, and I still have things to talk to you about.

HOVSTAD (*pointing toward the door at the right*). Step in there for a moment.

MAYOR STOCKMANN. But—?

HOVSTAD. It's just Billing in there.

ASLAKSEN. Quick, Your Honor! He's coming!

MAYOR STOCKMANN. Yes, all right, but try to get rid of him fast.

(*He goes out the door, right, as* ASLAKSEN *opens and closes it for him.*)

HOVSTAD. Look like you're doing something, Aslaksen.

(*He sits and starts to write.* ASLAKSEN *rummages in a pile of papers on a chair to the right.*)

DR. STOCKMANN (*entering from the pressroom*). Here I am again. (*Puts down his hat and stick.*)

HOVSTAD (*writing*). Already, Doctor? Get going on what we were talking about, Aslaksen. We can't waste time today.

DR. STOCKMANN (*to* ASLAKSEN). I gather, no proofs as yet.

ASLAKSEN (*without turning*). How could you expect that, Doctor?

DR. STOCKMANN. No, no, I'm just impatient—you have to understand. I won't have a moment's peace till I see it in print.

HOVSTAD. Hm—it's bound to be a good hour still. Don't you think so, Aslaksen?

ASLAKSEN. Yes, I'm afraid so.

DR. STOCKMANN. My dear friends, that's quite all right; I'll come back. I'll gladly come back twice, if necessary. With anything so important—the welfare of this whole town—it's no time to take it easy. (*Starts to go, then pauses and returns.*) Oh, listen—there's still something I want to mention to you.

HOVSTAD. Sorry, but couldn't we some other time—?

DR. STOCKMANN. I can say it in two seconds. It's simply this—when people read my article in the paper tomorrow and find out as well that I've spent the whole winter in seclusion, working for the good of the town—

HOVSTAD. Yes, but Doctor—

DR. STOCKMANN. I know what you'll say. You don't think it was any more than my blasted duty—ordinary civic responsibility. Well, of course; I know that just as well as you do. But my fellow townspeople, you see—bless their souls, they hold such a high regard for me—

ASLAKSEN. Yes, the people have held you in the highest regard—up till now, Doctor.

DR. STOCKMANN. Yes, and it's just the reason I'm afraid that— What I'm trying to say is this: my article, if it affects the people—especially the deprived classes—as an incitement to take the future affairs of the town into their own hands—

HOVSTAD (*getting up*). Hm, Doctor, I don't want to mislead you—

DR. STOCKMANN. Aha—I thought there was something brewing! But I won't hear of it. So if they go preparing anything—

HOVSTAD. Such as?

DR. STOCKMANN. Oh, anything of the kind—a parade or a banquet or a testimonial award or whatever, then you promise me by all that's holy to get it quashed. And you too, Mr. Aslaksen; you hear me!

HOVSTAD. Pardon me, Doctor, but we'd better tell you the unvarnished truth right now—

(MRS. STOCKMANN, *in hat and coat, comes in by the entrance door, back left.*)

MRS. STOCKMANN (*seeing the* DOCTOR). I thought so!

HOVSTAD (*going toward her*). Mrs. Stockmann, you too?

DR. STOCKMANN. Katherine, what the deuce are you doing here?

MRS. STOCKMANN. You know very well what I want.

HOVSTAD. Won't you have a seat? Or perhaps—

MRS. STOCKMANN. Thanks, but don't bother. And please, don't be offended that I'm here to fetch Stockmann; because I'm the mother of three children, I want you to know.

DR. STOCKMANN. Oh, bosh! We know all that.

MRS. STOCKMANN. Well, it really doesn't seem as if you're thinking much of your wife and children these days, or else you wouldn't have gone on this way, hurling us all into perdition.

DR. STOCKMANN. Are you utterly insane, Katherine? Does a man with a wife and children have no right to proclaim the truth—no right to be an effective citizen—or to serve the town he lives in?

MRS. STOCKMANN. All those things—in moderation, Thomas!

ASLAKSEN. I agree. Moderation in all things.

MRS. STOCKMANN. That's why you wrong us terribly, Mr. Hovstad, when you inveigle my husband out of house and home and down here to make a fool of himself in this.

HOVSTAD. I don't make fools of people—

DR. STOCKMANN. Fools! Nobody fools *me!*

MRS. STOCKMANN. Oh yes, they do. I know you're the smartest man in town, but you're so very easy to fool, Thomas. (*To* HOVSTAD.) And just consider that he'll lose his job at the baths if you print what he's written—

ASLAKSEN. What!

HOVSTAD. Yes, but you know, Doctor—

DR. STOCKMANN (*laughing*). Just let them try! Oh, no—they won't dare. Because, you see, I've got the solid majority behind me.

MRS. STOCKMANN. Yes, that's the trouble, exactly. An ugly lot like that behind you.

DR. STOCKMANN. Balderdash, Katherine! Go home and take care of your house and let me take care of society. How can you be so scared, when I'm so secure and happy? (*Walks up and down, rubbing his hands.*) Truth and the people will win the battle, you can count on that. Oh, I can see all the liberal-minded citizens everywhere gathering into a victorious army—! (*Stops by a chair.*) What—what the hell is *this?*

ASLAKSEN (*looking over*). Ow-ah!

HOVSTAD (*likewise*). Hm—!

DR. STOCKMANN. Here we see the summit of authority. (*He takes the* MAYOR*'s hat delicately between his fingertips and holds it high.*)

MRS. STOCKMANN. The mayor's hat!

DR. STOCKMANN. And here's the scepter of command, too. How in blazes—?

HOVSTAD. Well, uh—

DR. STOCKMANN. Ah, I get it! He's been here to coax you over. Ho ho, he knew right where to come. And then he caught sight of me in the pressroom. (*Explodes with laughter.*) Did he run, Mr. Aslaksen?

ASLAKSEN (*hurriedly*). Oh yes, Doctor, he ran off.

DR. STOCKMANN. Ran away from his stick and his—My eye! Peter never runs from anything. But where the devil have you put him? Ah—inside, of course. Now you watch this, Katherine!

MRS. STOCKMANN. Thomas—please—!

ASLAKSEN. Watch yourself, Doctor!

(DR. STOCKMANN *sets the* MAYOR*'s hat on his head and takes his stick; he then goes over, throws open the door, and raises his hand in salute. The* MAYOR *comes in, red with anger.* BILLING *enters behind him.*)

MAYOR STOCKMANN. What's the meaning of this rowdyism?

DR. STOCKMANN. Some respect, if you will, Peter. I'm the authority in town now. (*He parades up and down.*)

MRS. STOCKMANN (*nearly in tears*). Thomas, no!

MAYOR STOCKMANN (*following him*). Give me my hat and my stick!

DR. STOCKMANN. If you're the police chief, then I'm the mayor. I'm in charge of the whole town, see!

MAYOR STOCKMANN. I'm telling you, take off that hat. Remember, that's an insignia of office!

DR. STOCKMANN. Pah! Do you think the waking lion of the people's strength is going to be scared of a hat? Yes, because you better know: tomorrow we're making a revolution in town. You threatened me with my dismissal, but now I'm dismissing you—from all your public offices. You don't think I can? Oh yes, you'll see. I've got the ascendant forces of society on my side. Hovstad and Billing will thunder in the *People's Courier;* and Aslaksen will take the field, leading the whole Home Owners Council—

ASLAKSEN. I won't do it, Doctor.

DR. STOCKMANN. Why, of course you will—

MAYOR STOCKMANN. Ah, but perhaps, even so, Mr. Hovstad will be joining this rebellion?

HOVSTAD. No, Mr. Mayor.

ASLAKSEN. No, Mr. Hovstad isn't so crazy that he'd go and wreck both himself and the paper for the sake of a mere surmise.

DR. STOCKMANN (*looking about*). What's going on here?

HOVSTAD. You've presented your case in a false light, Doctor; and that's why I can't support it.

BILLING. No, after what the mayor was good enough to tell me in there—

DR. STOCKMANN. False! You can leave that to me. Just print my article. I can take care of defending it.

HOVSTAD. I'm not printing it. I cannot and will not and dare not print it.

DR. STOCKMANN. You dare not? What kind of rot is that? You're the editor, aren't you? And it's the editors who run the press, I hope!

ASLAKSEN. No, it's the readers, Doctor.

MAYOR STOCKMANN. Thankfully, yes.

ASLAKSEN. It's public opinion, the informed citizens, the home owners, and all the rest—they're the ones that run the press.

DR. STOCKMANN (*comprehending*). And all these powers I have against me?

ASLAKSEN. That's right. If your article is printed, it'll mean absolute ruin for this town.

DR. STOCKMANN. I see.

MAYOR STOCKMANN. My hat and my stick!

(DR. STOCKMANN *removes the hat and sets it, along with the stick, on the table.*)

MAYOR STOCKMANN (*reclaiming them both*). That was a sudden end to your first term in office.

DR. STOCKMANN. It's not the end yet. (*To* HOVSTAD.)

Then there's no possibility of getting my article in the *Courier?*

HOVSTAD. None whatever. Partly out of regard for your family.

MRS. STOCKMANN. Oh, never mind about this family, Mr. Hovstad.

MAYOR STOCKMANN (*takes a sheet of paper from his pocket*). For the protection of the public, it will be sufficient if this goes in. It's an authorized statement. If you will.

HOVSTAD (*taking the sheet*). Good. We'll insert it right away.

DR. STOCKMANN. But not mine! People think they can stifle me and choke off the truth! But it won't go as smooth as you think. Mr. Aslaksen, would you take my manuscript and issue it at once as a pamphlet—at my expense—under my own imprint. I'll want four hundred copies; no, five—six hundred I'll need.

ASLAKSEN. Even if you gave me its weight in gold, I couldn't put my plant to that use, Doctor. I wouldn't dare, in view of public opinion. You won't get that printed anywhere in this town.

DR. STOCKMANN. Then give it back.

HOVSTAD (*hands him the manuscript*). There.

DR. STOCKMANN (*picks up his hat and stick*). It's coming out, no matter what. I'll hold a mass meeting and read it aloud. All my fellow townspeople are going to hear the voice of truth.

MAYOR STOCKMANN. There's not an organization in town that'll rent you a hall for such a purpose.

ASLAKSEN. Not one. I'm positive of that.

BILLING. Ye gods, no!

MRS. STOCKMANN. But this is shameful. Why do they all turn against you, these men?

DR. STOCKMANN (*furiously*). I'll tell you why! It's because all the so-called men in this town are old women—like you. They all just think of their families and never the common good.

MRS. STOCKMANN (*taking his arm*). Then I'll show them a—an old woman who can be a man for once. I'm standing with you, Thomas!

DR. STOCKMANN. That was well said, Katherine. And, by God, I'll get this out! If I can't rent a hall, then I'll hire a drummer to walk the town with me, and I'll cry out the truth on every street corner.

MAYOR STOCKMANN. You're not going to act like a raving maniac!

DR. STOCKMANN. Yes, I am!

ASLAKSEN. In this whole town, you won't get one solitary man to go with you.

BILLING. Ye gods, I'll say you won't!

MRS. STOCKMANN. Don't give in, Thomas. I'll ask the boys to go with you.

DR. STOCKMANN. That's a marvelous idea!

MRS. STOCKMANN. Morten would love to do it; and Eilif—he'll go along.

DR. STOCKMANN. Yes, and Petra too! And you yourself, Katherine!

MRS. STOCKMANN. No, no, that's not for me. But I'll stand at the window and watch you; that I'll do.

DR. STOCKMANN (*throws his arms about her and kisses her*). Thanks for that! And now, gentlemen, let's try our steel. I'd just like to see if conniving hypocrisy can gag the mouth of a patriot who's out to clean up society!

(*He and* MRS. STOCKMANN *leave by the entrance door, back left.*)

MAYOR STOCKMANN (*gravely shaking his head*). Now he's driven her crazy, too.

ACT FOUR

A large, old-fashioned room in CAPTAIN HORSTER'*s house. Double doors, standing open at the back, lead to an anteroom. Spaced along the wall, left, are three windows. At the middle of the opposite wall a platform has been prepared, with a small table; on it are two candles, a water carafe, a glass, and a bell. The room is mainly illuminated by wall lamps between the windows. In the left foreground stands a table with candles on it, and a chair. Farther forward at the right is a door, with several chairs beside it.*

There is a large assemblage of TOWNSPEOPLE *from all levels of society. Scattered among them are a few* WOMEN *and some* SCHOOLBOYS. *More and more people gradually crowd in from the rear, until the room is full.*

A CITIZEN (*to another, as he jostles against him*). Are you here too, Lamstad?

SECOND CITIZEN. I never miss a public meeting.

THIRD CITIZEN. I hope you brought along your whistle?

SECOND CITIZEN. You bet I did. And you?

THIRD CITIZEN. Of course. Skipper Evensen has a whopping big horn he said he'd bring.

SECOND CITIZEN. He's a character, that Evensen.

(*Laughter among the group.*)

FOURTH CITIZEN (*joining them*). Say, tell me, what's going on here tonight?

SECOND CITIZEN. It's Dr. Stockmann; he's giving a speech against the mayor.

FOURTH CITIZEN. But the mayor's his brother.

FIRST CITIZEN. What of it? The doctor isn't afraid.

THIRD CITIZEN. Yes, but he's all wrong. The *Courier* said so.

SECOND CITIZEN. Yes, he really must be this time, because nobody'll rent him a hall—neither the Home Owners Council nor the civic club.

FIRST CITIZEN. Even the hall at the baths wouldn't have him.

SECOND CITIZEN. Well, that you can imagine.

A MAN (*in another group*). Who are we backing in this?

ANOTHER MAN (*next to him*). Just watch Aslaksen and do what he does.

BILLING (*with a portfolio under his arm, forcing his way through the crowd*). Excuse me, gentlemen! If you'll let me by, please? I'm covering this for the *Courier*. Thank you so much! (*He sits at the table on the left.*)

A WORKMAN. Who's he?

ANOTHER WORKMAN. You don't know *him?* That's Billing—writes for Aslaksen's paper.

(CAPTAIN HORSTER *conducts* MRS. STOCKMANN *and* PETRA *in through the door to the right.* EILIF *and* MORTEN *follow.*)

HORSTER. I was thinking the family could sit here. If anything should happen, you could slip out quietly.

MRS. STOCKMANN. Do you think there'll be a disturbance?

HORSTER. You never can tell—with so many people. But sit down and rest easy.

MRS. STOCKMANN (*sitting*). How kind of you to offer Thomas this room.

HORSTER. When nobody else would, then—

PETRA (*who also has seated herself*). And it was brave of you, too, Captain Horster.

HORSTER. Oh, I don't think it took much courage for that.

(HOVSTAD *and* ASLAKSEN *make their way forward at the same time, but separately, through the crowd.*)

ASLAKSEN (moves across to HORSTER). Hasn't the doctor come yet?

HORSTER. He's waiting inside.

(*A flurry of activity by the doorway in back.*)

HOVSTAD (*to* BILLING). Here's the mayor. Look!

BILLING. Ye gods, he showed up after all!

(*The* MAYOR *proceeds quietly through the crowd, exchanging polite greetings, and then stations himself by the wall, left. After a moment* DR. STOCKMANN *enters through the door to the right. He is dressed in a black frock coat with a white tie. There is scattered, hesitant applause, which is met by subdued hissing. The room grows silent.*)

DR. STOCKMANN (*in an undertone*). How do you feel, Katherine?

MRS. STOCKMANN. Oh, I'm all right. (*Lowering her voice.*) Now, Thomas, don't fly off the handle.

DR. STOCKMANN. I can manage myself, you know that. (*Looks at his watch, then ascends the platform and bows.*) It's already a quarter past—so I'd like to begin— (*Taking his manuscript out.*)

ASLAKSEN. First, we really ought to elect a chairman.

DR. STOCKMANN. No, that's quite unnecessary.

SEVERAL VOICES (*shouting*). Yes, yes!

MAYOR STOCKMANN. I also submit that we ought to elect a moderator.

DR. STOCKMANN. But I've called this meeting to present a lecture, Peter!

MAYOR STOCKMANN. The doctor's lecture is likely to arouse some contrary opinions.

MORE VOICES FROM THE CROWD. A chairman! A moderator!

HOVSTAD. The will of the people seems to demand a chairman.

DR. STOCKMANN (*restraining himself*). All right, then, let the will of the people rule.

ASLAKSEN. Would the mayor agree to accept the chair?

THREE GENTLEMEN (*applauding*). Bravo! Bravo!

MAYOR STOCKMANN. For certain self-evident reasons, I must decline. But luckily we have in our midst a man whom I think we can all accept. I'm referring to the chairman of the Home Owners Council, Mr. Aslaksen.

MANY VOICES. Yes, yes! Aslaksen! Hurray for Aslaksen!

(DR. STOCKMANN *puts away his manuscript and leaves the platform.*)

ASLAKSEN. If my fellow townspeople express their confidence in me, I cannot refuse—

(*Applause and shouts of approval.* ASLAKSEN *mounts the platform.*)

BILLING (*writing*). So—"Mr. Aslaksen chosen by acclamation—"

ASLAKSEN. And since I'm standing here now in this role, permit me to say a few brief words. I am a man of peace and quiet who's dedicated himself to prudent moderation and to—and to moderate prudence; everyone who knows me can attest to that.

MANY VOICES. Right! You said it, Aslaksen!

ASLAKSEN. I've learned in life's school of experience that moderation is the most rewarding of all virtues for the citizen—

MAYOR STOCKMANN. Hear, hear!

ASLAKSEN. And, moreover, that prudence and temperance are what serve society best. Therefore, I would urge the estimable gentleman who convened this meeting that he make every effort to stay within the bounds of moderation.

A DRUNK (*near the door*). To the Temperance Union, skoal!

A VOICE. Shut the hell up!

MANY VOICES. Sh, sh!

ASLAKSEN. No interruptions, gentlemen! Does anyone have something to say?

MAYOR STOCKMANN. Mr. Chairman!

ASLAKSEN. The chair recognizes the mayor.

MAYOR STOCKMANN. Considering my close relationship, which you all know, to the present staff physician of the baths, I would very much have wished not to express myself here this evening. But my official connection with the baths, and a due regard for the crucial interests of this town, compel me to present a proposal. I think it safe to assume that not a single citizen here tonight would find it desirable that exaggerated and unreliable charges about the sanitary conditions of the baths should gain currency abroad.

MANY VOICES. No, no, no! Of course not! We protest!

MAYOR STOCKMANN. I therefore move that this gathering refuse to permit the staff physician to read or otherwise report on his version of the matter.

DR. STOCKMANN (*infuriated*). Refuse permission—What's that?

MRS. STOCKMANN (*coughing*). Hm, hm!

DR. STOCKMANN (*controls himself*). Permission refused—all right.

MAYOR STOCKMANN. In my statement to the *People's Courier*, I've acquainted the public with the pertinent facts, so that every right-minded citizen can easily form his own judgment. You'll see there that the doctor's proposal—besides being a vote of no confidence in the leadership of this town—would actually mean afflicting our local taxpayers with a needless expenditure of at least a hundred thousand crowns.

(*Cries of outrage and the sound of whistles.*)

ASLAKSEN (*ringing the bell*). Quiet, gentlemen! Allow me to second the mayor's proposal. It's *my* opinion, also, that the doctor's agitation has an ulterior motive. He talks about the baths, but it's a revolution he's after. He wants to put the government into different hands. No one doubts the doctor's honest intentions; Lord knows there's no divided opinion on that. I'm also a friend of self-

determination by the people—as long as it doesn't hit the taxpayer too hard. But that exactly would be the case here; and it's why I'll be damned—excuse me—if I can go along with Dr. Stockmann in this. You can pay too much, even for gold; that's *my* opinion.

(*Lively approval from all sides.*)

HOVSTAD. Likewise I feel obligated to clarify my own position. Dr. Stockmann's agitation seemed at first to be winning a good deal of acceptance, and I supported it as impartially as I could. But then we began to sense that we'd let ourselves be misled by a false interpretation—

DR. STOCKMANN. False—!

HOVSTAD. A less reliable interpretation, then. The mayor's statement has proved that. I hope no one here tonight would challenge my liberal sentiments; the *Courier*'s policy on our great political issues is well known to all of you. Still, I've learned from men of wisdom and experience that in purely local matters a paper ought to move with a certain caution.

ASLAKSEN. I agree perfectly.

HOVSTAD. And, in the matter in question, it's now indisputable that Dr. Stockmann has the will of the majority against him. But an editor's first and foremost responsibility—what is that, gentlemen? Isn't it to work in collaboration with his readers? Hasn't he received something on the order of an unspoken mandate to strive actively and unceasingly on behalf of those who share his beliefs? Or maybe I'm wrong in this?

MANY VOICES. No, no, no! He's right.

HOVSTAD. It's been a bitter struggle for me to break with a man in whose home I've lately been a frequent guest—a man who, until today, could bask in the undivided esteem of the community—a man whose only fault, or whose greatest fault at least, is that he follows his heart more than his head.

SOME SCATTERED VOICES. That's true! Hurray for Dr. Stockmann!

HOVSTAD. But my duty to society compelled me to break with him. And then there's another consideration that prompts me to oppose him and, if possible, to deter

him from the ominous course he's chosen: namely, consideration for his family—

DR. STOCKMANN. Stick to the sewers and water mains!

HOVSTAD. —consideration for his wife and his distressed children.

MORTEN. Is that us, Mother?

MRS. STOCKMANN. Hush!

ASLAKSEN. I hereby put the mayor's proposal to a vote.

DR. STOCKMANN. Never mind that! It's not my intention to speak tonight of all that squalor in the baths. No, you're going to hear something quite different.

MAYOR STOCKMANN (*muttering*). Now what?

THE DRUNK (*from the main doorway*). I'm a taxpayer! And, therefore, so I got rights to an opinion! And I have the sotted—solid and incomprehensible opinion that—

SEVERAL VOICES. Quiet over there!

OTHERS. He's drunk! Throw him out!

(*The* DRUNK *is ejected.*)

DR. STOCKMANN. Do I have the floor?

ASLAKSEN (*ringing the bell*). Dr. Stockmann has the floor!

DR. STOCKMANN. If it had been only a few days ago that anyone had tried to gag me like this tonight—I'd have fought for my sacred human rights like a lion! But it doesn't matter to me now. Because now I have greater things to discuss.

(*The* CROWD *presses in closer around him;* MORTEN KIIL *becomes visible among them.*)

DR. STOCKMANN (*continuing*). I've been thinking a lot these past few days—pondering so many things that finally my thoughts began running wild—

MAYOR STOCKMANN (*coughs*). Hm—!

DR. STOCKMANN. But then I got everything in place again, and I saw the whole structure so distinctly. It's why I'm here this evening. I have great disclosures to make, my friends! I'm going to unveil a discovery to you of vastly different dimension than this trifle that our water

system is polluted and that our health spa is built on a muckheap.

MANY VOICES (*shouting*). Don't talk of the baths! We won't listen! Enough of that!

DR. STOCKMANN. I've said I'd talk about the great discovery I've made these last few days: the discovery that all the sources of our spiritual life are polluted, and that our entire community rests on a muckheap of lies.

STARTLED VOICES (*in undertones*). What's he saying?

MAYOR STOCKMANN. Of all the insinuations—

ASLAKSEN (*his hand on the bell*). The speaker is urged to be moderate.

DR. STOCKMANN. I've loved my birthplace as much as any man can. I was barely grown when I left here; and distance and deprivation and memory threw a kind of enchantment over the town, and the people, too.

(*Scattered applause and cheers.*)

For many years, then, I practiced in the far north, at the dead end of nowhere. When I came in contact with some of the people who lived scattered in that waste of rocks, I many times thought it would have done those poor starved creatures more good if they'd gotten a veterinary instead of someone like me.

(*Murmuring among the crowd.*)

BILLING (*setting down his pen*). Ye gods, why I never heard such—!

HOVSTAD. That's an insult to the common man!

DR. STOCKMANN. Just a minute—! I don't think anyone could ever say that I'd forgotten my home town up there. I brooded on my egg like an eider duck; and what I hatched—was the plan for the baths.

(*Applause and objections.*)

And finally, at long last, when fate relented and allowed me to come back home—my friends, then it seemed as though I had nothing left to wish for in this world. No, I did have one wish: a fierce, insistent, burning desire to contribute to the best of my town and my people.

MAYOR STOCKMANN (*gazing into space*). It's a funny way to—hm.

DR. STOCKMANN. And so I went around, exulting in my blind happiness. But yesterday morning—no, actually it was the night before last—the eyes of my spirit were opened wide, and the first thing I saw was the consummate stupidity of the authorities—

(*Confusion, outcries, and laughter.* MRS. STOCKMANN *coughs vigorously.*)

MAYOR STOCKMANN. Mr. Chairman!

ASLAKSEN (*ringing his bell*). By the powers vested in me—!

DR. STOCKMANN. It's petty to get hung up on a word, Mr. Aslaksen! I only mean that it came to me then what a consummate mess our local leaders had made out of the baths. Our leaders are one group that, for the life of me, I can't stand. I've had enough of that breed in my days. They're like a pack of goats in a stand of new trees—they strip off everything. They get in a free man's way wherever he turns—and I really don't see why we shouldn't exterminate them like any other predator—

(*Tumult in the room.*)

MAYOR STOCKMANN. Mr. Chairman, can you let such a statement pass?

ASLAKSEN (*his hand on the bell*). Doctor—!

DR. STOCKMANN. I can't imagine why I've only now taken a really sharp look at these gentlemen, because right before my eyes almost daily I've had a superb example—my brother Peter—slow of wit and thick of head—

(*Laughter, commotion, and whistles.* MRS. STOCKMANN *coughs repeatedly.* ASLAKSEN *vehemently rings his bell.*)

THE DRUNK (*who has gotten in again*). Are you referring to me? Yes, my name's Pettersen all right—but I'll fry in hell, before—

ANGRY VOICES. Out with that drunk! Throw him out!

(*Again the* DRUNK *is ejected.*)

MAYOR STOCKMANN. Who was that person?

A BYSTANDER. I don't know him, Your Honor.

ANOTHER. He's not from this town.

A THIRD. It must be that lumber dealer from over in—(*The rest is inaudible.*)

ASLAKSEN. The man was obviously muddled on Munich beer. Go on, Dr. Stockmann, but try to be more temperate.

DR. STOCKMANN. So then, my friends and neighbors, I'll say nothing further about our leading citizens. If, from what I've just said, anyone imagines that I'm out to get those gentlemen here this evening, then he's wrong—most emphatically wrong. Because I nourish a benign hope that all those mossbacks, those relics of a dying world of thought, are splendidly engaged in digging their own graves—they don't need a doctor's aid to speed them off the scene. And besides, *they're* not the overwhelming menace to society; *they're* not the ones most active in poisoning our spiritual life and polluting the very ground we stand on; *they're* not the most insidious enemies of truth and freedom in our society.

SHOUTS FROM ALL SIDES. Who, then! Who are they? Name them!

DR. STOCKMANN. Yes, you can bet I'll name them! Because *that's* exactly my great discovery yesterday. (*Raising his voice.*) The most insidious enemy of truth and freedom among us is the solid majority. Yes, the damned, solid, liberal majority—that's it! Now you know.

(*Wild turmoil in the room. Almost all those present are shouting, stamping, and whistling. Several elderly gentlemen exchange sly glances and appear to be amused.* EILIF *and* MORTEN *move threateningly toward the* SCHOOLBOYS, *who are making a disturbance.* ASLAKSEN *rings his bell and calls for order. Both* HOVSTAD *and* BILLING *are talking, without being heard. Finally quiet is restored.*)

ASLAKSEN. As chairman, I urge the speaker to withdraw his irresponsible comments.

DR. STOCKMANN. Not a chance, Mr. Aslaksen. It's that same majority in our community that's stripping away my freedom and trying to keep me from speaking the truth.

HOVSTAD. The majority is always right.

BILLING. And it acts for truth. Ye gods!

DR. STOCKMANN. The majority is never right. I say, never! That's one of those social lies that any free man who thinks for himself has to rebel against. Who makes up the majority in any country—the intelligent, or the stupid? I think we've got to agree that, all over this whole wide earth, the stupid are in a fearsomely overpowering majority. But I'll be damned to perdition if it's part of the eternal plan that the stupid are meant to rule the intelligent!

(*Commotion and outcries.*)

Oh yes, you can shout me down well enough, but you can't refute me. The majority has the might—unhappily —but it lacks the *right*. The right is with me, and the other few, the solitary individuals. The minority is always right.

(*Renewed turmoil.*)

HOVSTAD (*laughs*). So, in a couple of days, the doctor's turned aristocrat.

DR. STOCKMANN. I've told you I'm not going to waste any words on that wheezing, little, narrow-chested pack of reactionaries. The tide of life has already passed them by. But I'm thinking of the few, the individuals among us, who've mastered all the new truths that have been germinating. Those men are out there holding their positions like outposts, so far in the vanguard that the solid majority hasn't even begun to catch up—and *there's* where they're fighting for truths too newly born in the world's consciousness to have won any support from the majority.

HOVSTAD. Well, and now he's a revolutionist!

DR. STOCKMANN. Yes, you're damn right I am, Mr. Hovstad! I'm fomenting a revolution against the lie that only the majority owns the truth. What are these truths the majority flocks around? They're the ones so ripe in age they're nearly senile. But, gentlemen, when a truth's grown that old, it's gone a long way toward becoming a lie.

(*Laughter and jeers.*)

Oh yes, you can believe me as you please; but truths aren't at all the stubborn old Methuselahs people imagine. An ordinary, established truth lives, as a rule—let's say—some seventeen, eighteen, at the most twenty years; rarely more.

But those venerable truths are always terribly thin. Even so, it's only *then* that the majority takes them up and urges them on society as wholesome spiritual food. But there isn't much nutriment in that kind of diet, I promise you; and as a doctor, I know. All these majority-truths are like last year's salt meat—like rancid, tainted pork. And there's the cause of all the moral scurvy that's raging around us.

ASLAKSEN. It strikes me that the distinguished speaker has strayed rather far from his text.

MAYOR STOCKMANN. I must agree with the chairman's opinion.

DR. STOCKMANN. You're out of your mind, Peter! I'm sticking as close to the text as I can. Because this is exactly what I'm talking about: that the masses, the crowd, this damn solid majority—that *this* is what I say is poisoning our sources of spiritual life and defiling the earth under our feet.

HOVSTAD. And the great liberal-minded majority does this because they're reasonable enough to honor only basic, well-accepted truths?

DR. STOCKMANN. Ah, my dear Mr. Hovstad, don't talk about basic truths! The truths accepted by the masses now are the ones proclaimed basic by the advance guard in our grandfathers' time. We fighters on the frontiers today, we no longer recognize them. There's only one truth that's basic in my belief: that no society can live a healthy life on the bleached bones of that kind of truth.

HOVSTAD. Instead of standing there rambling on in the blue, it might be interesting to describe some of those bleached bones we're living on.

(*Agreement from various quarters.*)

DR. STOCKMANN. Oh, I could itemize a whole slew of abominations; but to start with, I'll mention just one recognized truth that's actually a vicious lie, though Mr. Hovstad and the *Courier* and all the *Courier*'s devotees live on it.

HOVSTAD. That being—?

DR. STOCKMANN. That being the doctrine inherited from your ancestors, which you mindlessly disseminate far and

wide—the doctrine that the public, the mob, the masses are the vital core of the people—in fact, that they *are* the people—and that the common man, the inert, unformed component of society, has the same right to admonish and approve, to prescribe and to govern as the few spiritually accomplished personalities.

BILLING. Well, I'll be—

HOVSTAD (*simultaneously, shouting*). Citizens, did you hear that!

ANGRY VOICES. Oh, we're not the people, uh? So, only the accomplished rule!

A WORKMAN. Out with a man who talks like that!

OTHERS. Out the door! Heave him out!

A MAN (*yells*). Evensen, blow the horn!

(*Deep blasts on a horn are heard; whistles and furious commotion in the room.*)

DR. STOCKMANN (*when the noise has subsided a bit*). Now just be reasonable! Can't you stand hearing the truth for a change? I never expected you all to agree with me on the spot. But I really did expect that Mr. Hovstad would admit I'm right, after he'd simmered down a little. Mr. Hovstad claims to be a freethinker—

STARTLED VOICES (*in undertones*). What was that? A freethinker? Hovstad a freethinker?

HOVSTAD (*loudly*). Prove it, Dr. Stockmann! When have I said that in print?

DR. STOCKMANN (*reflecting*). No, by God, you're right—you've never had the courage. Well, I don't want to put you in hot water. Let's say I'm the freethinker then. Because I'm going to demonstrate scientifically that the *Courier*'s leading you shamelessly by the nose when they say that you—the public, the masses—are the vital core of the people. You see, that's just a journalistic lie! The masses are no more than the raw material out of which a people is shaped.

(*Mutterings, laughter, and disquiet in the room.*)

Well, isn't that a fact throughout all the rest of life? What about the difference between a thoroughbred and a hybrid

animal? Look at your ordinary barnyard fowl. What meat can you get off such scrawny bones? Not much! And what kind of eggs does it lay? Any competent crow or raven could furnish about the same. But now take a purebred Spanish or Japanese hen, or a fine pheasant or turkey—there's where you'll see the difference! Or again with dogs, a family we humans so closely resemble. First, think of an ordinary stray dog—I mean, one of those nasty, ragged, common mongrels that run around the streets, and spatter the walls of houses. Then set that stray alongside a poodle whose pedigree runs back through a distinguished line to a house where fine food and harmonious voices and music have been the rule. Don't you think the mentality of that poodle will have developed quite differently from the stray's? Of course it will! A young pedigreed poodle can be raised by its trainer to perform the most incredible feats. Your common mongrel couldn't learn such things if you stood him on his head.

(*Tumult and derision generally.*)

A CITIZEN (*shouting*). Now you're making us into dogs, uh?

ANOTHER MAN. We're not animals, Doctor!

DR. STOCKMANN. Oh yes, brother, we *are* animals! We're the best animals, all in all, that any man could wish for. But there aren't many animals of quality among us. There's a terrible gap between the thoroughbreds and the mongrels in humanity. And what's amusing is that Mr. Hovstad totally agrees with me as long as we're talking of four-legged beasts—

HOVSTAD. Well, but they're a class by themselves.

DR. STOCKMANN. All right. But as soon as I extend the law to the two-legged animals, Mr. Hovstad stops cold. He doesn't dare think his own thoughts any longer, or follow his ideas to a logical conclusion. So he turns the whole doctrine upside down and declares in the *Courier* that the barnyard fowl and the mongrel dog—that *these* are the real paragons of the menagerie. But that's how it always goes as long as conformity is in your system, and you haven't worked through to a distinction of mind and spirit.

HOVSTAD. I make no claim of any kind of distinction. I was born of simple peasants, and I'm proud that my roots run deep in those masses that he despises.

NUMEROUS WOMEN. Hurray for Hovstad! Hurray, hurray!

DR. STOCKMANN. The kind of commonness I'm talking of isn't only found in the depths: it teems and swarms all around us in society—right up to the top. Just look at your own neat and tidy mayor. My brother Peter's as good a common man as any that walks on two feet—

(*Laughter and hisses.*)

MAYOR STOCKMANN. I protest against these personal allusions.

DR. STOCKMANN (*unruffled*). —and that's not because he's descended, just as I am, from a barbarous old pirate from Pomerania or thereabouts—because so we are—

MAYOR STOCKMANN. A ridiculous fiction. I deny it!

DR. STOCKMANN. —no, he's that because he thinks what the higher-ups think and believes what they believe. The people who do that are the spiritually common men. And that's why my stately brother Peter, you see, is in fact so fearfully lacking in distinction—and consequently so narrowminded.

MAYOR STOCKMANN. Mr. Chairman—!

HOVSTAD. So you have to be distinguished to be liberal-minded in this country. That's a completely new insight.

(*General laughter.*)

DR. STOCKMANN. Yes, that's also part of my new discovery. And along with it goes the idea that broad-mindedness is almost exactly the same as morality. That's why I say it's simply inexcusable of the *Courier*, day in and day out, to promote the fallacy that it's the masses, the solid majority, who stand as the guardian of tolerance and morality—and that degeneracy and corruption of all kinds are a sort of by-product of culture, filtering down to us like all the pollution filtering down to the baths from the tanneries up at Mølledal.

(*Turmoil and interruptions.*)

DR. STOCKMANN (*unfazed, laughing in his enthusiasm*).

And yet this same *Courier* can preach that the deprived masses must be raised to greater cultural opportunities. But, hell's bells—if the *Courier's* assumption holds true, then raising the masses like that would be precisely the same as plunging them smack into depravity! But luckily it's only an old wives' tale—this inherited lie that culture demoralizes. No, it's ignorance and poverty and ugliness in life that do the devil's work! In a house that isn't aired and swept every day—my wife Katherine maintains that the floors ought to be scrubbed as well, but that's debatable—anyway—I say in a house like that, within two or three years, people lose all power for moral thought and action. Lack of oxygen dulls the conscience. And there must be a woeful dearth of oxygen in the houses of this town, it seems, if the entire solid majority can numb their consciences enough to want to build this town's prosperity on a quagmire of duplicity and lies.

ASLAKSEN. It's intolerable—such a gross attack on a whole community.

A GENTLEMAN. I move the chairman rule the speaker out of order

FURIOUS VOICES Yes, yes! That's right! Out of order!

DR. STOCKMANN (*vehemently*). Then I'll cry out the truth from every street corner. I'll write to newspapers in other towns! The entire country'll learn what's happened here!

HOVSTAD. It almost looks like the doctor's determined to destroy this town

DR STOCKMANN. Yes, I love my home town so much I'd rather destroy it than see it flourishing on a lie.

ASLAKSEN. That's putting it plain.

(*Tumult and whistling.* MRS. STOCKMANN *coughs in vain; the* DOCTOR *no longer hears her.*)

HOVSTAD (*shouting above the noise*). Any man who'd destroy a whole community must be a public enemy!

DR. STOCKMANN (*with mounting indignation*). What's the difference if a lying community gets destroyed! It ought to be razed to the ground, I say! Stamp them out like vermin, everyone who lives by lies! You'll contaminate this entire nation in the end, till the land itself

deserves to be destroyed. And if it comes to that even, then I say with all my heart: let this whole land be destroyed, let its people all be stamped out!

A MAN. That's talking like a real enemy of the people!

BILLING. Ye gods, but *there's* the people's voice!

THE WHOLE CROWD (*shrieking*). Yes, yes, yes! He's an enemy of the people! He hates his country! He hates all his people!

ASLAKSEN. Both as a citizen and as a human being, I'm profoundly shaken by what I've had to listen to here. Dr. Stockmann has revealed himself in a manner beyond anything I could have dreamed. I'm afraid that I have to endorse the judgment just rendered by my worthy fellow citizens; and I propose that we ought to express this judgment in a resolution, as follows: "This meeting declares that it regards Dr. Thomas Stockmann, staff physician at the baths, to be an enemy of the people."

(*Tumultuous cheers and applause. Many onlookers close in around the* DOCTOR, *whistling at him.* MRS. STOCKMANN *and* PETRA *have risen.* MORTEN *and* EILIF *are fighting with the other* SCHOOLBOYS, *who have also been whistling. Several grown-ups separate them.*

DR. STOCKMANN (*to the hecklers*). Ah, you fools—I'm telling you—

ASLAKSEN (*ringing his bell*). The doctor is out of order! A formal vote is called for; but to spare personal feelings, it ought to be a secret ballot. Do you have any blank paper, Mr. Billing?

BILLING. Here's some blue and white both—

ASLAKSEN (*leaving the platform*). Fine. It'll go faster that way. Cut it in slips—yes, that's it. (*To the gathering.*) Blue means no, white means yes. I'll go around myself and collect the votes.

(*The* MAYOR *leaves the room.* ASLAKSEN *and a couple of other citizens circulate through the crowd with paper slips in their hats.*)

A GENTLEMAN (*to* HOVSTAD). What's gotten into the doctor? How should we take this?

HOVSTAD. Well, you know how hot-headed he is.

ANOTHER GENTLEMAN (*to* BILLING). Say, you've visited there off and on. Have you noticed if the man drinks?

BILLING. Ye gods, I don't know what to say. When anybody stops in, there's always toddy on the table.

A THIRD GENTLEMAN. No, I think at times he's just out of his mind.

FIRST GENTLEMAN. I wonder if there isn't a strain of insanity in the family?

BILLING. It's quite possible.

A FOURTH GENTLEMAN. No, it's pure spite, that's all. Revenge for something or other.

BILLING. He was carrying on about a raise at one time—but he never got it.

ALL THE GENTLEMEN (*as one voice*). Ah, there's the answer!

THE DRUNK (*within the crowd*). Let's have a blue one! And—let's have a white one, too!

CRIES. There's that drunk again! Throw him out!

MORTEN KIIL (*approaching the* DOCTOR). Well, Stockmann, now you see what your monkeyshines come to?

DR. STOCKMANN. I've done my duty.

MORTEN KIIL. What was that you said about the tanneries at Mølledal?

DR. STOCKMANN. You heard it. I said all the pollution came from them.

MORTEN KIIL. From *my* tannery, too?

DR. STOCKMANN. I'm afraid your tannery's the worst of them.

MORTEN KIIL. You're going to print *that* in the papers?

DR. STOCKMANN. I'm sweeping nothing under the carpet.

MORTEN KIIL. That could cost you plenty, Stockmann. (*He leaves.*)

A FAT GENTLEMAN (*going up to* HORSTER, *without greeting the ladies*). Well, Captain, so you lend out your house to enemies of the people?

HORSTER. I think I can dispose of my property, sir, as I see fit.

THE MAN. So you'll certainly have no objection if I do the same with mine.

HORSTER. What do you mean?

THE MAN. You'll hear from me in the morning. (*He turns and leaves.*)

PETRA (*to* HORSTER). Doesn't he own your ship?

HORSTER. Yes, that was Mr. Vik.

ASLAKSEN (*ascends the platform with ballots in hand and rings for order*). Gentlemen, let me make you acquainted with the outcome. All of the votes with one exception—

A YOUNG MAN. That's the drunk!

ASLAKSEN. All of the votes, with the exception of an intoxicated man, are in favor of this assembly of citizens declaring the staff physician of the baths, Dr. Thomas Stockmann, an enemy of the people. (*Shouts and gestures of approval.*) Long live our ancient and glorious community! (*More cheers.*) Long live our capable and effective mayor, who so loyally has suppressed the ties of family! (*Cheers.*) This meeting is adjourned. (*He descends from the platform.*)

BILLING. Long live the chairman!

THE ENTIRE CROWD. Hurray for Aslaksen!

DR. STOCKMANN. My hat and coat, Petra. Captain, have you room for several passengers to the New World?

HORSTER. For you and your family, Doctor, we'll make room.

DR. STOCKMANN (*as* PETRA *helps him on with his coat*). Good. Come, Katherine! Come on, boys!

(*He takes his wife by the arm.*)

MRS. STOCKMANN (*dropping her voice*). Thomas, dear, let's leave by the back way.

DR. STOCKMANN. No back ways out, Katherine. (*Raising his voice.*) You'll be hearing from the enemy of the people before he shakes this dust off his feet! I'm not as

meek as one certain person; I'm not saying, "I forgive them, because they know not what they do."

ASLAKSEN (*in an outcry*). That's a blasphemous comparison, Dr. Stockmann!

BILLING. That it is, so help me— It's a bit much for a pious man to take.

A COARSE VOICE. And then he threatened us, too!

HEATED VOICES. Let's smash his windows for him! Dunk him in the fjord!

A MAN (*in the crowd*). Blast your horn, Evensen! Honk, honk!

(*The sound of the horn; whistles and wild shrieks. The* DOCTOR *and his family move toward the exit,* HORSTER *clearing the way for them.*)

THE WHOLE CROWD (*howling after them*). Enemy! Enemy! Enemy of the people!

BILLING (*organizing his notes*). Ye gods, I wouldn't drink toddy at the Stockmanns' tonight!

(*The crowd surges toward the exit; the noise diffuses outside; from the street the cry continues: "Enemy! Enemy of the people!"*)

ACT FIVE

DR. STOCKMANN's *study. Bookcases and cabinets filled with various medicines line the walls. In the back wall is a door to the hall; in the foreground, left, the door to the living room. At the right, opposite, are two windows, with all their panes shattered. In the middle of the room is the* DOCTOR's *desk, covered with books and papers. The room is in disorder. It is morning.* DR. STOCKMANN, *in a dressing gown, slippers, and a smoking cap, is bent down, raking under one of the cabinets with an umbrella; after some effort, he sweeps out a stone.*

DR. STOCKMANN (*calling through the open living-room door*). Katherine, I found another one.

MRS. STOCKMANN (*from the living room*). Oh, I'm sure you'll find a lot more yet.

DR. STOCKMANN (*adding the stone to a pile of others on the table*). I'm going to preserve these stones as holy relics. Eilif and Morten have got to see them every day; and when they're grown, they'll inherit them from me. (*Raking under a bookcase.*) Hasn't—what the hell's her name—the maid—hasn't she gone for the glazier yet?

MRS. STOCKMANN (*enters*). Of course, but he said he didn't know if he could come today.

DR. STOCKMANN. More likely he doesn't dare.

MRS. STOCKMANN. Yes, Randina thought he was afraid of what the neighbors might say. (*Speaking into the living room.*) What do you want, Randina? Oh yes. (*Goes out*

and comes back immediately.) Here's a letter for you, Thomas.

DR. STOCKMANN. Let me see. (*Opens it and reads.*) Of course.

MRS. STOCKMANN. Who's it from?

DR. STOCKMANN. The landlord. He's giving us notice.

MRS. STOCKMANN. Is that true! He's such a decent man—

DR. STOCKMANN (*reading on in the letter*). He doesn't dare not to, he says. It pains him to do it, but he doesn't dare not to—in fairness to his fellow townspeople—a matter of public opinion—not independent—can't affront certain powerful men—

MRS. STOCKMANN. You see, Thomas.

DR. STOCKMANN. Yes, yes, I see very well. They're cowards, all of them here in town. Nobody dares do anything, in fairness to all the others. (*Hurls the letter on the table.*) But that's nothing to us, Katherine. We're off for the New World now—

MRS. STOCKMANN. But, Thomas, is that really the right solution, to emigrate?

DR. STOCKMANN. Maybe I ought to stay here, where they've pilloried me as an enemy of the people, branded me, smashed in my windows! And look at this, Katherine; they even tore my black trousers.

MRS. STOCKMANN. Oh, no—and they're the best you have!

DR. STOCKMANN. One should never wear his best trousers when he goes out fighting for truth and freedom. It's not that I'm so concerned about the trousers, you understand; you can always mend them for me. But what grates is that mob setting on me bodily as if they were my equals—by God, that's the thing I can't bear!

MRS. STOCKMANN. Yes, they've abused you dreadfully in this town, Thomas. But do we have to leave the country entirely because of *that?*

DR. STOCKMANN. Don't you think the common herd is just as arrogant in other towns as well? Why, of course—

it's all one and the same. Ahh, shoot! Let the mongrels yap; they're not the worst. The worst of it is that everyone the country over is a slave to party. But *that's* not the reason—it's probably no better in the free United States; I'm sure they have a plague of solid majorities and liberal public opinions and all the other bedevilments. But the scale there is so immense, you see. They might kill you, but they don't go in for slow torture; they don't lock a free soul in the jaws of a vise, the way they do here at home. And, if need be, there's space to get away. (*Pacing the floor.*) If I only knew of some primeval forest, or a little South Sea island at a bargain price—

MRS. STOCKMANN. But, Thomas, think of the boys.

DR. STOCKMANN (*stopping in his tracks*). You are remarkable, Katherine! Would you rather they grew up in a society like ours? You saw yourself last night that half the population are raging maniacs; and if the other half haven't lost their reason, it's because they're such muttonheads they haven't any reason to lose.

MRS. STOCKMANN. Yes, but dear, you're so intemperate in your speech.

DR. STOCKMANN. Look! Isn't it true, what I'm saying? Don't they turn every idea upside down? Don't they scramble right and wrong up completely? Don't they call everything a lie that I know for the truth? But the height of insanity is that here you've got all these full-grown liberals going round in a bloc and deluding themselves and the others that they're independent thinkers! Did you ever hear the like of it, Katherine?

MRS. STOCKMANN. Yes, yes, it's all wrong of course, but—

(PETRA *enters from the living room.*)

MRS. STOCKMANN. You're back from school already?

PETRA. Yes. I got my notice.

MRS. STOCKMANN. Your notice.

DR. STOCKMANN. You, too!

PETRA. Mrs. Busk gave me my notice, so I thought it better to leave at once.

DR. STOCKMANN. You did the right thing!

MRS. STOCKMANN. Who would have thought Mrs. Busk would prove such a poor human being!

PETRA. Oh, Mother, she really isn't so bad. It was plain to see how miserable she felt. But she said she didn't dare not to. So I got fired.

DR. STOCKMANN (*laughs and rubs his hands*). She didn't dare not to, either. Oh, that's charming.

MRS. STOCKMANN. Well, after that awful row last night—

PETRA. It was more than just that. Father, listen now!

DR. STOCKMANN. What?

PETRA. Mrs. Busk showed me no less than three letters she'd gotten this morning.

DR. STOCKMANN. Anonymous, of course?

PETRA. Yes.

DR. STOCKMANN. Because they don't *dare* sign their names, Katherine.

PETRA. And two of them stated that a gentleman who's often visited this household had declared in the club last night that I had extremely free ideas on various matters—

DR. STOCKMANN. And that you didn't deny, I hope.

PETRA. No, you know that. Mrs. Busk has some pretty liberal ideas herself, when it's just the two of us talking. But with this all coming out about me, she didn't dare keep me on.

MRS. STOCKMANN. And to think—it was one of our regular visitors! You see, Thomas, there's what you get for your hospitality.

DR. STOCKMANN. We won't go on living in a pigsty like this. Katherine, get packed as soon as you can. Let's get out of here, the quicker the better.

MRS. STOCKMANN. Be quiet—I think there's someone in the hall. Have a look, Petra.

PETRA (*opening the door*). Oh, is it you, Captain Horster? Please, come in.

HORSTER (*from the hall*). Good morning. I thought I ought to stop by and see how things stand.

DR. STOCKMANN (*shaking his hand*). Thanks. That certainly is kind of you.

MRS. STOCKMANN. And thank you, Captain Horster, for helping us through last night.

PETRA. But how did you ever make it home again?

HORSTER. Oh, no problem. I can handle myself pretty well; and they're mostly a lot of hot air, those people.

DR. STOCKMANN. Yes, isn't it astounding, this bestial cowardice? Come here, and I'll show you something. See, here are all the stones they rained in on us. Just look at them! I swear, there aren't more than two respectable paving blocks in the whole pile; the rest are nothing but gravel—only pebbles. And yet they stood out there, bellowing, and swore they'd hammer me to a pulp. But action—action—no, you don't see much of that in this town!

HORSTER. I'd say this time that was lucky for you, Doctor.

DR. STOCKMANN. Definitely. But it's irritating, all the same; because if it ever comes to a serious fight to save this country, you'll see how public opinion is all for ducking the issue, and how the solid majority runs for cover like a flock of sheep. That's what's so pathetic when you think of it; it makes me heartsick— Damn it all, no—this is sheer stupidity; they've labeled me an enemy of the people, so I better act like one.

MRS. STOCKMANN. You never could be that, Thomas.

DR. STOCKMANN. Don't count on it, Katherine. To be called some ugly name hurts like a stabbing pain in the lung. And that damnable label—I can't shake it off; it's fixed itself here in the pit of my stomach, where it sits and rankles and corrodes like acid. And there's no magnesia to work against that.

PETRA. Oh, Father, you should just laugh at them.

HORSTER. People will come around in their thinking, Doctor.

MRS. STOCKMANN. As sure as you're standing here, they will.

DR. STOCKMANN. Yes, maybe after it's too late. Well, they've got it coming! Let them stew in their own mess

and rue the day they drove a patriot into exile. When are you sailing, Captain Horster?

HORSTER. Hm—as a matter of fact, that's why I stopped by to talk to you—

DR. STOCKMANN. Oh, has something gone wrong with the ship?

HORSTER. No. But it looks like I won't sail with her.

PETRA. You haven't been fired, have you?

HORSTER (*smiles*). Yes, exactly.

PETRA. You, too.

MRS. STOCKMANN. See there, Thomas.

DR. STOCKMANN. And all this for the truth! Oh, if only I could have foreseen—

HORSTER. Now, don't go worrying about me; I'll find a post with some shipping firm out of town.

DR. STOCKMANN. And there we have Mr. Vik—a merchant, a man of wealth, independent in every way—! What a disgrace!

HORSTER. He's quite fair-minded otherwise. He said himself he'd gladly have retained me if he dared to—

DR. STOCKMANN. But he didn't dare? No, naturally!

HORSTER. It's not so easy, he was telling me, when you belong to a party—

DR. STOCKMANN. There's a true word from the merchant prince. A political party—it's like a sausage grinder; it grinds all the heads up together into one mash, and then it turns them out, link by link, into fatheads and meatheads!

MRS. STOCKMANN. Thomas, really!

PETRA (*to* HORSTER). If you just hadn't seen us home, things might not have gone like this.

HORSTER. I don't regret it.

PETRA (*extending her hand to him*). Thank you!

HORSTER (*to the* DOCTOR). So, what I wanted to say was, if you're still serious about leaving, then I've thought of another plan—

DR. STOCKMANN. Excellent. If we can only clear out of here fast—

MRS. STOCKMANN. Shh! Didn't someone knock?

PETRA. It's Uncle, I'll bet.

DR. STOCKMANN. Aha! (*Calls.*) Come in!

MRS. STOCKMANN. Thomas dear, you must promise me—

(*The* MAYOR *enters from the hall.*)

MAYOR STOCKMANN (*in the doorway*). Oh, you're occupied. Well, then I'd better—

DR. STOCKMANN. No, no, come right in.

MAYOR STOCKMANN. But I wanted to speak to you alone.

MRS. STOCKMANN. We'll go into the living room for a time.

HORSTER. And I'll come by again later.

DR. STOCKMANN. No, you go in with them, Captain Horster. I need to hear something more about—

HORSTER. Oh yes, I'll wait then.

(*He accompanies* MRS. STOCKMANN *and* PETRA *into the living room. The* MAYOR *says nothing, but glances at the windows.*)

DR. STOCKMANN. Maybe you find it a bit drafty here today? Put your hat on.

MAYOR STOCKMANN. Thank you, if I may. (*Does so.*) I think I caught cold last night. I was freezing out there—

DR. STOCKMANN. Really? It seemed more on the warm side to me.

MAYOR STOCKMANN. I regret that it wasn't within my power to curb those excesses last evening.

DR. STOCKMANN. Do you have anything else in particular to say to me?

MAYOR STOCKMANN (*taking out a large envelope*). I have this document for you from the board of directors.

DR. STOCKMANN. It's my notice?

MAYOR STOCKMANN. Yes, effective today. (*Places the envelope on the table.*) This pains us deeply, but—to be

quite candid—we didn't dare not to, in view of public opinion.

DR. STOCKMANN (*smiles*). Didn't dare? Seems as though I've already heard those words today.

MAYOR STOCKMANN. I suggest that you face your position clearly. After this, you mustn't count on any practice whatsoever here in town.

DR. STOCKMANN. To hell with the practice! But how can you be so sure?

MAYOR STOCKMANN. The Home Owners Council is circulating a resolution, soliciting all responsible citizens to dispense with your services. And I venture to say that not one single householder will risk refusing to sign. Quite simply, they wouldn't dare.

DR. STOCKMANN. I don't doubt it. But what of it?

MAYOR STOCKMANN. If I could give you some advice, it would be that you leave this area for a while—

DR. STOCKMANN. Yes, I've been half thinking of just that.

MAYOR STOCKMANN. Good. Then, after you've had some six months, more or less, to reconsider things, if on mature reflection you find yourself capable of a few words of apology, acknowledging your mistakes—

DR. STOCKMANN. Then maybe I could get my job back, you mean?

MAYOR STOCKMANN. Perhaps. It's not at all unlikely.

DR. STOCKMANN. Yes, but public opinion? You could hardly dare, in that regard.

MAYOR STOCKMANN. Opinion tends to go from one extreme to another. And to be quite honest, it's especially important to us to get a signed statement to that effect from you.

DR. STOCKMANN. Yes, wouldn't you lick your chinchoppers for that! But, damnation, don't you remember what I already said about that kind of foxy game?

MAYOR STOCKMANN. Your position was much more favorable then. You could imagine then that you had the whole town in back of you—

DR. STOCKMANN. Yes, and I feel now as if the whole town's on my back— (*Flaring up.*) But even if the devil and his grandmother were riding me—never! Never, you hear me!

MAYOR STOCKMANN. A family provider can't go around risking everything the way you do. You can't risk it, Thomas!

DR. STOCKMANN. Can't risk! There's just one single thing in this world a free man can't risk; and do you know what that is?

MAYOR STOCKMANN. No.

DR. STOCKMANN. Of course not. But *I'll* tell you. A free man can't risk befouling himself like a savage. He doesn't dare sink to the point that he'd like to spit in his own face.

MAYOR STOCKMANN. This all sounds highly plausible; and if there weren't another prior explanation for your stubborn arrogance—but then of course, there is—

DR. STOCKMANN. What do you mean by *that?*

MAYOR STOCKMANN. You understand perfectly well. But as your brother and as a man of some discernment, let me advise you not to build too smugly on prospects that might very well never materialize.

DR. STOCKMANN. What in the world are you driving at?

MAYOR STOCKMANN. Are you actually trying to make me believe you're ignorant of the terms of Morten Kiil's will?

DR. STOCKMANN. I know that the little he has is going to a home for destitute craftsmen. But how does that apply to me?

MAYOR STOCKMANN. First of all, the amount under discussion is far from little. Morten Kiil is a rather wealthy man.

DR. STOCKMANN. I hadn't the slightest idea—!

MAYOR STOCKMANN. Hm—really? And you hadn't any idea, either, that a considerable part of his fortune will pass to your children, with you and your wife enjoying the interest for life. He hasn't told you that?

DR. STOCKMANN. Not one blessed word of it! Quite the contrary, he goes on fuming endlessly about the outrageously high taxes he pays. But how do you know this for sure, Peter?

MAYOR STOCKMANN. I have it from a totally reliable source.

DR. STOCKMANN. But, my Lord, then Katherine's provided for—and the children too! I really must tell her—(*Shouts.*) Katherine, Katherine!

MAYOR STOCKMANN (*restraining him*). Shh, don't say anything yet!

MRS. STOCKMANN (*opening the door*). What is it?

DR. STOCKMANN. Nothing, dear. Go back inside.

(MRS. STOCKMANN *shuts the door.*)

DR. STOCKMANN (*pacing the floor*). Provided for! Just imagine—every one of them, provided for. And for life! What a blissful feeling, to know you're secure!

MAYOR STOCKMANN. Yes, but that's precisely what you aren't. Morten Kiil can revise his will any time he pleases.

DR. STOCKMANN. But, my dear Peter, he won't do that. The Badger's enraptured by the way I've gone after you and your smart friends.

MAYOR STOCKMANN (*starts and looks penetratingly at him*). Aha, that puts a new light on things.

DR. STOCKMANN. What things?

MAYOR STOCKMANN. So this whole business has been a collusion. These reckless, violent assaults you've aimed, in the name of truth, at our leading citizens were—

DR. STOCKMANN. Yes—were what?

MAYOR STOCKMANN. They were nothing more than a calculated payment for a piece of that vindictive old man's estate.

DR. STOCKMANN (*nearly speechless*). Peter—you're the cheapest trash I've known in all my days.

MAYOR STOCKMANN. Between us, everything is through.

Your dismissal is irrevocable—for now we've got a weapon against you. (*He goes.*)

DR. STOCKMANN. Why, that scum—aaah! (*Shouts.*) Katherine! Scour the floors where he's been! Have her come in with a pail—that girl—whozzis, damn it—the one with the smudgy nose—

MRS. STOCKMANN (*in the living-room doorway*). Shh, Thomas. Shh!

PETRA (*also in the doorway*). Father, Grandpa's here and wonders if he can speak to you alone.

DR. STOCKMANN. Yes, of course he can. (*By the door.*) Come in.

(MORTEN KIIL *enters. The* DOCTOR *closes the door after him.*)

DR. STOCKMANN. Well, what is it? Have a seat.

MORTEN KIIL. Won't sit. (*Looking about.*) You've made it very attractive here today, Stockmann.

DR. STOCKMANN. Yes, don't you think so?

MORTEN KIIL. Really attractive. And fresh air, too. Today you've got enough of that oxygen you talked about yesterday. You must have a marvelous conscience today, I imagine.

DR. STOCKMANN. Yes, I have.

MORTEN KIIL. I can imagine. (*Tapping his chest.*) But do you know what *I* have here?

DR. STOCKMANN. Well, I'm hoping a marvelous conscience, too.

MORTEN KIIL. Pah! No, it's something better than that. (*He takes out a thick wallet, opens it, and displays a sheaf of papers.*)

DR. STOCKMANN (*stares at him, amazed*). Shares in the baths.

MORTEN KIIL. They weren't hard to get today.

DR. STOCKMANN. And you were out buying—?

MORTEN KIIL. As many as I could afford.

DR. STOCKMANN. But, my dear Father-in-law—with everything at the baths in jeopardy!

MORTEN KIIL. If you go back to acting like a reasonable man, you'll soon get the baths on their feet again.

DR. STOCKMANN. You can see yourself, I'm doing all I can; but the people are crazy in this town.

MORTEN KIIL. You said yesterday that the worst pollution came from my tannery. But now if that *is* true, then my grandfather and my father before me and I myself over numbers of years have been poisoning this town right along, like three angels of death. You think I can rest with that disgrace on my head?

DR. STOCKMANN. I'm afraid you'll have to learn how.

MORTEN KIIL. No thanks. I want my good name and reputation. People call me the Badger, I've heard. A badger's a kind of pig, isn't it? They're not going to be right about that. Never. I want to live and die a clean human being.

DR. STOCKMANN. And how are you going to do that?

MORTEN KIIL. You'll make me clean, Stockmann.

DR. STOCKMANN. I!

MORTEN KIIL. Do you know where I got the money to buy these shares? No, you couldn't know that, but now I'll tell you. It's the money Katherine and Petra and the boys will be inheriting from me someday. Yes, because, despite everything, I've laid a little aside, you see.

DR. STOCKMANN (*flaring up*). So you went out and spent Katherine's money for *those!*

MORTEN KIIL. Yes, now the money's completely bound up in the baths. And now I'll see if you're really so ranting, raging mad after all, Stockmann. Any more about bugs and such coming down from my tannery, it'll be exactly the same as cutting great strips out of Katherine's skin, and Petra's, and the boys'. But no normal man would do that—he'd *have* to be mad.

DR. STOCKMANN (*pacing back and forth*). Yes, but I *am* a madman; I *am* a madman!

MORTEN KIIL. But you're not so utterly out of your senses as to flay your wife and children.

DR. STOCKMANN (*stopping in front of him*). Why

couldn't you talk with me before you went out and bought all that worthless paper?

MORTEN KIIL. When a thing's been done, it's best to hang on.

DR. STOCKMANN (*paces the room restlessly*). If only I weren't so certain in this—! But I'm perfectly sure I'm right.

MORTEN KIIL (*weighing the wallet in his hand*). If you keep on with this foolishness, then these aren't going to be worth much, will they? (*He replaces the wallet in his pocket.*)

DR. STOCKMANN. Damn it, science should be able to provide some counter-agent, some kind of germicide—

MORTEN KIIL. You mean something to kill those little animals?

DR. STOCKMANN. Yes, or else make them harmless.

MORTEN KIIL. Couldn't you try rat poison?

DR. STOCKMANN. Oh, that's nonsense! But—everyone says this is all just imagination. Well, why not? Let them have what they want! Stupid, mean little mongrels—didn't they brand me enemy of the people? And weren't they spoiling to tear the clothes off my back?

MORTEN KIIL. And all the windows they broke for you.

DR. STOCKMANN. And I do have family obligations! I must talk this over with Katherine; she's very shrewd in these things.

MORTEN KIIL. Good. You pay attention to a sensible woman's advice.

DR. STOCKMANN (*turning on him*). And you, too—how could you make such a mess of it! Gambling with Katherine's money; tormenting me with this horrible dilemma! When I look at you, I could be seeing the devil himself—!

MORTEN KIIL. I think I'd better be going. But by two o'clock I want your answer: yes—or no. If it's no, the stock gets willed to charity—and right this very day.

DR. STOCKMANN. And what does Katherine get then?

MORTEN KIIL. Not a crumb.

(*The hall door is opened.* HOVSTAD and ASLAKSEN *come into view, standing outside.*)

MORTEN KIIL. Well, will you look at *them?*

DR. STOCKMANN (*staring at them*). *What—!* You still dare to come around here?

HOVSTAD. Of course we do.

ASLAKSEN. You see, we've something to talk with you about.

MORTEN KIIL (*in a whisper*). Yes or no—by two o'clock.

ASLAKSEN (*glancing at* HOVSTAD). Aha!

(MORTEN KIIL *leaves.*)

DR. STOCKMANN. Well now, what do you want? Cut it short.

HOVSTAD. I can easily realize your bitterness toward us for the posture we took at last night's meeting—

DR. STOCKMANN. You call that a posture! Yes, that was a lovely posture! I call it spinelessness, like a bent old woman—holy God!

HOVSTAD. Call it what you will, we couldn't do otherwise.

DR. STOCKMANN. You didn't *dare,* you mean. Isn't that right?

HOVSTAD. Yes, if you like.

ASLAKSEN. But why didn't you pass us the word beforehand? Just the least little hint to Hovstad or me.

DR. STOCKMANN. A hint? What about?

ASLAKSEN. The reason why.

DR. STOCKMANN. I simply don't understand you.

ASLAKSEN (*nods confidentially*). Oh, yes, you do, Dr. Stockmann.

HOVSTAD. Let's not make a mystery out of it any longer.

DR. STOCKMANN (*looking from one to the other*). What in sweet blazes *is* this—!

ASLAKSEN. May I ask—hasn't your father-in-law been combing the town to buy up stock in the baths?

DR. STOCKMANN. Yes, he's bought a few shares today; but—?

ASLAKSEN. It would have been more clever if you'd gotten someone else to do it—someone less closely related.

HOVSTAD. And you shouldn't have moved under your own name. No one had to know the attack on the baths came from you. You should have brought me in on it, Doctor.

DR. STOCKMANN (*stares blankly in front of him; a light seems to dawn on him, and he says as if thunderstruck*). It's unbelievable! Do these things happen?

ASLAKSEN (*smiles*). Why, of course they do. But they only happen when you use finesse, if you follow me.

HOVSTAD. And they go better when a few others are involved. The risk is less for the individual when the responsibility is shared.

DR. STOCKMANN (*regaining his composure*). In short, gentlemen, what is it you want?

ASLAKSEN. Mr. Hovstad can best—

HOVSTAD. No, Aslaksen, you explain.

ASLAKSEN. Well, it's this—that now that we know how it all fits together, we thought we might venture to put the *People's Courier* at your disposal.

DR. STOCKMANN. Ah, so now you'll venture? But public opinion? Aren't you afraid there'll be a storm raised against us?

HOVSTAD. We're prepared to ride out the storm.

ASLAKSEN. And you should be prepared for a quick reversal in position, Doctor. As soon as your attack has served its purpose—

DR. STOCKMANN. You mean as soon as my father-in-law and I have cornered all the stock at a dirt-cheap price—?

HOVSTAD. I suppose it's mostly for scientific purposes that you want control of the baths.

DR. STOCKMANN. Naturally. It was for scientific purposes that I got the old Badger in with me on this. So we'll tinker a bit with the water pipes and dig around a little on the beach, and it won't cost the town half a crown. That ought to do it, don't you think? Hm?

HOVSTAD. I think so—as long as you've got the *Courier* with you.

ASLAKSEN. The press is a power in a free society, Doctor.

DR. STOCKMANN. How true. And so's public opinion. Mr. Aslaksen, I assume you'll take care of the Home Owners Council?

ASLAKSEN. The Home Owners Council and the Temperance Union both. You can count on that.

DR. STOCKMANN. But, gentlemen—it embarrasses me to mention it, but—*your* compensation—?

HOVSTAD. Preferably, of course, we'd like to help you for nothing, as you can imagine. But the *Courier*'s on shaky legs these days; it's not doing too well; and to shut the paper down now when there's so much to work for in the larger political scene strikes me as insupportable.

DR. STOCKMANN. Clearly. That would be a hard blow for a friend of the people like you. (*In an outburst.*) But *I'm* an enemy of the people! (*Lunges about the room.*) Where do I have my stick? Where in hell is that stick?

HOVSTAD. What's this?

ASLAKSEN. You're not going to—?

DR. STOCKMANN (*stops*). And what if I didn't give you one iota of my shares? We tycoons aren't so free with our money, don't forget.

HOVSTAD. And don't *you* forget that this matter of shares can be posed in two different lights.

DR. STOCKMANN. Yes, you're just the man for that. If I don't bail out the *Courier,* you'll put a vile construction on it all. You'll hound me down—set upon me—try to choke me off like a dog chokes a hare!

HOVSTAD. That's the law of nature. Every animal has to struggle for survival.

ASLAKSEN. We take our food where we can find it, you know.

DR. STOCKMANN. Then see if you can find yours in the gutter! (*Striding about the room.*) Because now we're going to learn, by God, who's the strongest animal among the three of us! (*Finds his umbrella and flourishes it.*) Hi, look out—!

HOVSTAD. Don't hit us!

ASLAKSEN. Watch out with that umbrella!

DR. STOCKMANN. Out of the window with you, Hovstad.

HOVSTAD (*by the hall door*). Have you lost your mind?

DR. STOCKMANN. Out of the window, Aslaksen! I said, jump! Don't be the last to go.

ASLAKSEN (*running around the desk*). Moderation, Doctor! I'm out of condition—I'm not up to this—(*Shrieks.*) Help! Help!

(MRS. STOCKMANN, PETRA, and HORSTER *enter from the living room.*)

MRS. STOCKMANN. My heavens, Thomas, what's going on in here?

DR. STOCKMANN (*swinging his umbrella*). Jump, I'm telling you! Into the gutter!

HOVSTAD. This is unprovoked assault! Captain Horster, I'm calling you for a witness. (*He scurries out down the hall.*)

ASLAKSEN (*confused*). If I just knew the layout here—(*Sneaks out through the living-room door.*)

MRS. STOCKMANN (*holding onto the* DOCTOR). Now you control yourself, Thomas!

DR. STOCKMANN (*flings the umbrella away*). Damn, they got out of it after all!

MRS. STOCKMANN. But what did they want you for?

DR. STOCKMANN. You can hear about it later. I have other things to think about now. (*Goes to the desk and writes on a visiting card.*) See, Katherine. What's written here?

MRS. STOCKMANN. "No," repeated three times. Why is that?

DR. STOCKMANN. You can hear about that later, too. (*Holding the card out.*) Here, Petra, tell Smudgy-face to run over to the Badger's with this, quick as she can. Hurry!

(PETRA *leaves with the card by the hall door.*)

Well, if I haven't had visits today from all the devil's envoys, I don't know what. But now I'll sharpen my pen into a stiletto and skewer them; I'll dip it in venom and gall; I'll sling my inkstand right at their skulls!

MRS. STOCKMANN. Yes, but we're leaving here, Thomas.

(PETRA *returns.*)

DR. STOCKMANN. Well?

PETRA. It's on its way.

DR. STOCKMANN. Good. Leaving, you say? The hell we are! We're staying here where we are, Katherine!

PETRA. We're staying?

MRS. STOCKMANN. In this town?

DR. STOCKMANN. Exactly. This is the battleground; here's where the fighting will be; and here's where I'm going to win! As soon as I've got my trousers patched, I'm setting out to look for a house. We'll need a roof over our heads by winter.

HORSTER. You can share mine.

DR. STOCKMANN. I can?

HORSTER. Yes, perfectly well. There's room enough, and I'm scarcely ever home.

MRS. STOCKMANN. Oh, how kind of you, Horster.

PETRA. Thank you!

DR. STOCKMANN (*shaking his hand*). Many, many thanks! So that worry is over. Now I can make a serious start right today. Oh, Katherine, it's endless, the number of things that need looking into here! And it's lucky I have

so much time now to spend—yes, because, I meant to tell you, I got my notice from the baths—

MRS. STOCKMANN (*sighing*). Ah me, I've been expecting it.

DR. STOCKMANN. And then they want to take my practice away, too. Well, let them! I'll keep the poor people at least—the ones who can't pay at all; and, Lord knows, they're the ones that need me the most. But, by thunder, they'll have to hear me out. I'll preach to them in season and out of season, as someone once said.

MRS. STOCKMANN. But, dear, I think you've seen how much good preaching does.

DR. STOCKMANN. You really are preposterous, Katherine. Should I let myself be whipped from the field by public opinion and the solid majority and other such barbarities? No, thank you! Besides, what I want is so simple and clear and basic. I just want to hammer into the heads of these mongrels that the so-called liberals are the most insidious enemies of free men—that party programs have a way of smothering every new, germinal truth—that acting out of expediency turns morality and justice into a hollow mockery, until it finally becomes monstrous to go on living. Captain Horster, don't you think I could get people to recognize that?

HORSTER. Most likely. I don't understand much about such things.

DR. STOCKMANN. Don't you see—let me explain! The party leaders have to be eradicated—because a party leader's just like a wolf, an insatiable wolf that needs so and so many smaller animals to feed off per annum, if he's going to survive. Look at Hovstad and Aslaksen! How many lesser creatures haven't they swallowed up—or they maul and mutilate them till they can't be more than home owners and subscribers to the *Courier!* (*Sitting on the edge of the desk.*) Ah, come here, Katherine—look at that sunlight, how glorious, the way it streams in today. And how wonderful and fresh the spring air is.

MRS. STOCKMANN. Yes, if we only could live on sunlight and spring air, Thomas.

DR. STOCKMANN. Well, you'll have to skimp and save a

bit here and there—it'll turn out. That's my least concern. No, what's worse is that I don't know any man who's free-spirited enough to carry my work on after me.

PETRA. Oh, don't think of that, Father; you've lots of time. Why, look—the boys, already.

(EILIF and MORTEN *come in from the living room.*)

MRS. STOCKMANN. Did you get let out early?

MORTEN. No. We had a fight with some others at recess—

EILIF. That isn't true; it was the others that fought us.

MORTEN. Yes, and so Mr. Rørland said we'd better stay home for a few days.

DR. STOCKMANN (*snapping his fingers and jumping down off the desk*). I've got it! So help me, I've got it! You'll never set foot in school again.

THE BOYS. No more school?

MRS. STOCKMANN. But, Thomas—

DR. STOCKMANN. I said, never! I'll teach you myself—by that, I mean, you won't learn a blessed fact—

THE BOYS. Hurray!

DR. STOCKMANN. But I'll make you into free-spirited and accomplished men. Listen, you have to help me, Petra.

PETRA. Yes, of course I will.

DR. STOCKMANN. And the school—that'll be held in the room where they assailed me as an enemy of the people. But we have to be more. I need at least twelve boys to begin with.

MRS. STOCKMANN. You'll never get them from this town.

DR. STOCKMANN. Let's see about that. (*To the* BOYS.) Don't you know any boys off the street—regular little punks—

MORTEN. Sure, I know lots of them!

DR. STOCKMANN. So, that's fine. Bring around a few samples. I want to experiment with mongrels for a change. There might be some fantastic minds out there.

MORTEN. But what'll we do when we've become free-spirited and accomplished men?

DR. STOCKMANN. You'll drive all the wolves into the Far West, boys!

(EILIF *looks somewhat dubious;* MORTEN *jumps about and cheers.*)

MRS. STOCKMANN. Ah, just so those wolves aren't hunting you anymore, Thomas.

DR. STOCKMANN. Are you utterly mad, Katherine! Hunt *me* down! Now, when I'm the strongest man in town!

MRS. STOCKMANN. The strongest—now?

DR. STOCKMANN. Yes, I might go further and say that now I'm one of the strongest men in the whole world.

MORTEN. You mean it?

DR. STOCKMANN (*lowering his voice*). Shh, don't talk about it yet—but I've made a great discovery.

MRS. STOCKMANN. What, again?

DR. STOCKMANN. Yes, why not! (*Gathers them around him and speaks confidentially.*) And the essence of it, you see, is that the strongest man in the world is the one who stands most alone.

MRS. STOCKMANN (*smiling and shaking her head*). Oh, Thomas, Thomas—!

PETRA (*buoyantly, gripping his hands*). Father!

APPENDIX

THE PLAYS OF IBSEN

Catiline (1850)
The Warrior's Barrow (1850)
Norma (1851)
St. John's Eve (1853)
Lady Inger of Østraat (1855)
The Feast at Solhaug (1856)
Olaf Liljekrans (1857)
The Vikings in Helgeland (1858)
Love's Comedy (1862)
The Pretenders (1863)
Brand (1866)
Peer Gynt (1867)
The League of Youth (1869)
Emperor and Galilean (1873)
Pillars of Society (1877)
A Doll House (1879)
Ghosts (1881)
An Enemy of the People (1882)
The Wild Duck (1884)
Rosmersholm (1886)
The Lady from the Sea (1888)
Hedda Gabler (1890)
The Master Builder (1892)
Little Eyolf (1894)
John Gabriel Borkman (1896)
When We Dead Awaken (1899)

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IBSEN IN THE AMERICAN THEATER: AN ABBREVIATED STAGE HISTORY OF THE MAJOR PROSE PLAYS

The following compilation covers first professional English-language productions, as well as a representative selection of revivals, of the twelve Ibsen dramas from *Pillars of Society* to *When We Dead Awaken,* as staged in the United States from the single performance of *Thora* (*A Doll House*) on December 7, 1883, in Louisville, Kentucky, by a touring company starring Helena Modjeska and Maurice Barrymore, down to shortly before the playwright's sesquicentennial year of 1978.

Productions have been arranged chronologically by date of opening, under the heading of each play in the sequence of authorship. Where the name of the theater is not followed by the city and state in parentheses, the location is New York City. Production credits (individual or organizational producer, director, settings, costumes, lighting) are fragmentary or non-