

PETRA: Poor man! He works so hard...too hard. (*mixes her drink*) Ah! This will be good.

HOVSTAD: Have you been teaching class at night school as well?

PETRA: (*sipping her drink*) Two hours.

BILLING: And four hours in the morning at the Institute.

PETRA: (*sits at the table*) Five hours.

MRS. STOCKMANN: And you have essays to mark tonight?

PETRA: Yes, a bundle of essays.

HORSTER: It seems you have plenty of work to do yourself.

PETRA: Yes, but it's wonderful. I am delightfully tired after doing this work.

BILLING: Do you really like it?

PETRA: Yes, it helps me to sleep...to sleep so well.

MORTEN: Petra, you must be a great sinner.

PETRA: A sinner!

MORTEN: Yes—a sinner, if you must work so hard. Mr. Rorland says that work is a punishment for sin.

EJLIF: (*with a superior air*) Hah! You're an idiot if you believe that!

MRS. STOCKMANN: Ejlif! Please.

BILLING: (*laughing*) Oh, that's a good one!

HOVSTAD: Morten, would you like to work very hard?

MORTEN: No, I wouldn't.

HOVSTAD: Well, then, what shall you grow up to be?

MORTEN: I hope, a Viking.

EJLIF: Well, then you'd be a non-believer.

MORTEN: All right then, I'll just be a non-believer.

BILLING: I agree with Morten; I'd answer the same.

MRS. STOCKMANN: (*making a sign to him*) No, Mr. Billing, no, you wouldn't.

BILLING: God! If I wouldn't! I don't believe—I'm proud of it. Anyway you'll see we all shall be faithless soon.

MORTEN: And then we'll be able to do anything we please? Anything will be allowable?

BILLING: Well, you'll see, Morten.

MRS. STOCKMANN: Go on now, boys; I'm sure there are lessons to do for tomorrow.

EJLIF: I may just stay a little longer.

MRS. STOCKMANN: No—the both of you. Go on now.

*(The boys say good night and go off to their room on the left.)*

HOVSTAD: Do you think it does the boys any harm to hear these things?

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

PETRA: I think that's ridiculous of you, Mother.

MRS. STOCKMANN: Perhaps, but I don't like such talk here in the house.

PETRA: There's so much falseness both at home and at school! At home you must remain silent and at school, you have to stand up and lie to the children.

HORSTER: What do you mean you have "to lie"?

PETRA: It's true; you know we have to teach all sorts of things we don't believe.

BILLING: Yes, we know that only too well.

PETRA: I'd start a school myself, if I could only afford it—things would be different then.

BILLING: Ah, yes, the money—

HORSTER: If you're really thinking of doing that, Miss Stockmann, I'd be pleased to offer some room at my house. The big, old place is nearly empty; on the ground floor, there's a large dining room—

PETRA: *(laugh)* That's kind, thank you—but nothing will come of it.

HOVSTAD: No, I suspect Petra is more likely to become a journalist and to that point, have you had time to look at the English novel you promised to translate for us?

PETRA: No, not yet. But you'll have it in good time.

STOCKMANN: *(coming out of the study, waving the letter in his hand)* Here is some news, I think, which will startle the town!

BILLING: News?

MRS. STOCKMANN: What news?

STOCKMANN: A great revelation...a discovery, Katrina.

HOVSTAD: Really?

MRS. STOCKMANN: A discovery you've made?

STOCKMANN: Yes, a discovery. *(walks up and down)* Now let them come as they usually do and say it's some disturbed individual's idea! This time they'll have to be careful—they'll have to be careful. Hah! I know they'll have to be careful.

PETRA: Papa, what is it?