

STOCKMANN: See, Katrina, they didn't even dare give his names—

PETRA: And two of them said that a certain gentleman who frequently visits our house, stated at the club last night that I had extremely advanced views on all sorts of subjects.

STOCKMANN: And, of course, you didn't deny that?

PETRA: Of course. You know Mrs. Buch herself has pretty advanced views when we're alone together; but now that this had been expressed publicly about me, she didn't dare keep me on.

MRS. STOCKMANN: And to think—it was someone who came to our house! Now you see, Thomas, what comes of all that hospitality of yours.

STOCKMANN: We shall not live any longer in the midst of such a foul place. Katrina, pack up as quickly as you can; let's leave here—the sooner, the better.

MRS. STOCKMANN: Be quiet! I think there's someone in the hall. Go and see, Petra.

PETRA: (*opening the door to the hall*) It's you, Captain Horster? Please come in.

HORSTER: (*from the hall*) Good morning. I thought I'd drop by and see how you're all getting on..

STOCKMANN: (*holding out his hand*) Thank you; that's so kind of you.

MRS. STOCKMANN: Thank you, Captain Horster, for seeing us home last night.

PETRA: But, did you make it back home.

HORSTER: It wasn't bad. I'm strong and these people's bark is worse than their bite.

STOCKMANN: Isn't their cowardice even trivial? How marvelously trivial! Come, I want to show you something! Look at the stones they threw in at us. Look at them! There aren't more than two worth in the whole lot—the rest—well, it's even small for gravel—nothing for a real fight. And they stood there, yelling and swearing that they would kill me—me a corrupt misfit! But as for deeds, for real deeds—they don't even know how to break glass windows with courage in this town!

HORSTER: Well, this time it was good for you they didn't.

STOCKMANN: Of course it was. But I'm annoyed all the same; for should a serious, crucial struggle ever come, you'll see, Captain Horster, that this public will take to their heels—this compact majority runs away like a herd of swine. How disappointing this cowardice of the public—it bothers me...but who cares anyway?...if they want to call me an enemy of the people, then I shall be an enemy of the people.

MRS. STOCKMANN: Thomas, you'll never be that.

STOCKMANN: Don't count on it, Katrina. A bad name can have its advantages like a prick of a pin—this damned name I'll never get rid of—its become a part of me inside, where it lies and gnaws and eats on me like an acid. And there's no magnesia to ingest for such an acid.

PETRA: Ah—you should just laugh at them.

HORSTER: Doctor, the people will change their minds.

MRS. STOCKMANN: Thomas, you can count on that.

STOCKMANN: Yes—perhaps when it's too late. Much good it'll do them then! Let them sit here in this mess and repent of sending a patriot into exile. Now when do you sail, Captain Horster?

HORSTER: H'm!—that's why I came—

STOCKMANN: Is something wrong with the ship?

HORSTER: No—it's just that I'm not going with the ship.

PETRA: You haven't been let go?

HORSTER: *(smiling)* Yes, I have.

PETRA: You too!

MRS. STOCKMANN: There you see, Thomas.

STOCKMANN: "Let go" for the sake of the truth! Ah! had I thought such a thing—

HORSTER: Don't worry about it; I'll find something with some other company.

STOCKMANN: And this businessman Viik! A wealthy man, independent of anyone! By God—

HORSTER: In any other matter, he would be absolutely fair—in fact, he says himself that he would gladly have kept me on if only he dared.

STOCKMANN: And it goes without saying—he didn't dare.

HORSTER: It isn't easy, he said, when you belong to a political party—

STOCKMANN: A true saying from an honorable man! A party is like a sausage machine; it grinds all the heads together into one mash and produces a mindless seething mass!

MRS. STOCKMANN: Thomas, really!

PETRA: *(to Horster)* If only you hadn't see us home, it wouldn't have come to this for you.

HORSTER: I don't regret it.

PETRA: *(holding out her hands)* Thank you for that!

HORSTER: *(to Dr. Stockmann)* What I wanted to say to you was this: if you really want to leave, I've thought of another way—

STOCKMANN: That's good—if only we can leave—

MRS. STOCKMANN: Isn't that a knock?

PETRA: I'm sure that's uncle.

STOCKMANN: Aha! *(calls)* Come in.

MRS. STOCKMANN: Thomas, for once, promise me—

*(Mayor enters from the hall.)*

MAYOR: *(in the doorway)* Oh! You're busy—I'd better—

STOCKMANN: No, no; come in.

MAYOR: But I wanted to speak with you alone.

MRS. STOCKMANN: We'll go into the sitting room.

HORSTER: And I'll come around again.

STOCKMANN: No, no, go with them, Captain Horster. I want to talk more with you—

HORSTER: All right, then I'll wait.

*(He follows Mrs. Stockmann and Petra into the living room. The Mayor says nothing, but glances at the windows.)*

STOCKMANN: You might find it drafty in here today? Put your hat on.

MAYOR: Thank you, if I may *(puts on his hat)*. I think I caught a cold yesterday as I stood there shivering.

STOCKMANN: Really? I thought it was rather warm.

MAYOR: I regret that I didn't have the power to prevent the excesses of last night.

STOCKMANN: Is there anything particular you want to tell me besides that?

MAYOR: *(producing a large letter)* I have this document for you from the Board of Directors.

STOCKMANN: I'm dismissed?

MAYOR: Yes; as of today *(places letter on the table)*. We are very sorry—but frankly, we dared not to act otherwise on account of public opinion.

STOCKMANN: *(smiling)* Dared not: I've heard those words already today.

MAYOR: I want you to reflect carefully on your position here. In the future, you cannot count upon any sort of medical practice here in the town.

STOCKMANN: To the devil with the practice! But are you so sure of this?

MAYOR: The Property Owners Association is sending a petition from house to house, in which all sensible citizens are called upon not to use your services; not a single head of a household will dare to refuse to sign.

STOCKMANN: Well, well; I don't doubt that. But then what?

MAYOR: If I might give you a piece of advice, it would be this—go away for a while.

STOCKMANN: I've had the thought of leaving.

MAYOR: Good. When you've had six months to reflect, you could then decide to acknowledge your error in a few words of regret—

STOCKMANN: Then you think, I might be reinstated.

MAYOR: It's not impossible.

STOCKMANN: But what about public opinion. You wouldn't dare to do this because of public opinion.

