

STOCKMANN: Of course... very good! (*rubbing his hands as he walks up and down*)  
Ah! By God! What a fine thing it is to have such comradery with one's fellow citizens.

PETRA: And to do so much good and to be of such help.

STOCKMANN: And to do it in one's birthplace.

MRS. STOCKMANN: There's the doorbell.

STOCKMANN: That must be Peter. (*knock at the hall door*) Come in!  
(*Mayor Stockmann enters from the hall.*)

MAYOR: Good morning!

STOCKMANN: I'm glad to see you, Peter.

MRS. STOCKMANN: Good morning, Peter, how are you?

MAYOR: So...so. Thank you. (*to the Doctor*) Yesterday evening, after office hours, I received a report from you about the condition of the water.

STOCKMANN: Yes. Have you read it?

MAYOR: I have.

STOCKMANN: And what do you think?

MAYOR: H'm...(*glancing at the women*).

MRS. STOCKMANN: Come along, Petra,

(*She and Petra go into the room, left.*)

MAYOR: (*after a pause*) Was it necessary to carry on all those investigations behind my back?

STOCKMANN: Yes, it was...it was until I was absolutely certain I...

MAYOR: So you are certain now?

STOCKMANN: Yes, and I imagine you also are convinced.

MAYOR: Is it your intention to submit this report to the Board of Directors as an official document?

STOCKMANN: Of course. Something must be done about this matter and be done right away.

MAYOR: As usual, Thomas, you have employed very strong words in the report. You actually say that we offer visitors deadly bacteria.

STOCKMANN: Peter, can it be called anything else? Think...water that's poisonous both internally and externally! For the ill who come to us in good faith and pay us handsomely to heal them.

MAYOR: And because of this you concluded that we must build a sewer to carry off all the supposed poisonous matter from Molledal and that the existing pipes must be re-laid.

STOCKMANN: Yes. Can you suggest any other alternative?... I know of none.

MAYOR: I visited the town engineer's office this morning and... half in jest... I brought up this as a problem which we might possibly have to attend to in the future.

STOCKMANN: Possibly in the future!

MAYOR: He laughed at my extravagant suggestion. Have you taken the time to think about what these alterations will cost? From what I've found out, the expense would run to several hundred thousand crowns!

STOCKMANN: That much?

MAYOR: Yes, and the worst is to come. The work would take at least two years.

STOCKMANN: Two years; are you saying two whole years?

MAYOR: At least. And what are we to do in the meantime? Are we simply to shut the water off? For that is what it would come to. Besides, do you imagine that anyone would come here if a rumor got around that the water is dangerous to human health?

STOCKMANN: But, Peter, you know it is dangerous.

MAYOR: And all this now, just now, when the project was beginning to do well. The neighboring towns have some idea of establishing the same thing. Don't you see that they would immediately try to divert the full stream of visitors to themselves? Of course, they would. And we should be left stranded! We should probably have to give up the whole costly undertaking; and so you would have ruined your birthplace.

STOCKMANN: I...ruined!

MAYOR: It's only through the water that the town has any future worth speaking of. You know that as well as I do.

STOCKMANN: But what do you think should be done?

MAYOR: Your report does not convince me that the condition of the water is as harmful as you represent it to be.

STOCKMANN: If anything, it's worse...or will be in the summer, when the hot weather arrives.

MAYOR: The existing water supply is a fact. We must treat it as a fact. It's reasonable to think that the directors, at some future time will not be opposed to endure some financial sacrifices to improve the supply.

STOCKMANN: Do you imagine I could agree to such a deception?

MAYOR: Deception?

STOCKMANN: Yes, it would be a deception...a fraud, a lie; a major crime against the public, against all society.

MAYOR: As I have already said, I am not convinced that there is any imminent danger.

STOCKMANN: You must be convinced. I've demonstrated it so clearly. I'm sure of that! And you know it, Peter, only you won't admit it. It was you that insisted the project should be laid out where it is now; and it's that damned blunder you won't confess. Ah! Don't you think I see through you?

MAYOR: And even if that were so? If, perhaps, I do watch over my reputation with some care, you must know that I do it for the good of the town. Without respect and moral authority, I cannot guide and direct affairs in such a manner as I think fit and necessary for the welfare of the whole community. Therefore...in addition to other reasons...it is important to me that your report should not be submitted to the Board of Directors. The report must be held back for the good of all. Later on I will bring up the matter for discussion, and we will do the best we can quietly; but nothing whatever, not a single word, of this unfortunate affair must be made public.

STOCKMANN: But that can't be helped now, Peter.

MAYOR: It must be "helped"—it must be prevented.

STOCKMANN: It can't be prevented, I tell you; far too many people know about it already.

MAYOR: Know about it! Who knows? Not those men from the People's Messenger, who...

STOCKMANN: Oh, yes...they know. The liberal, independent press will see to it that you do your duty.

MAYOR: (*after a short pause*) Thomas, you are an extremely reckless man. Haven't you thought about what the consequences of this may be for you?

STOCKMANN: Consequences? — Consequences for me?

MAYOR: Yes—for you and your family.

STOCKMANN: What the devil are you talking about?

MAYOR: I believe I have always conducted myself towards you as a useful and helpful brother.

STOCKMANN: You have and I'm most grateful.

MAYOR: I've asked for nothing. To some extent I did this for my own sake. I always hoped by helping you to improve your financial situation, I might restrain you.

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

MAYOR: To some extent. It's painful for a man in a position of public trust when his nearest relative goes and compromises himself time after time.

STOCKMANN: And you think I do that?

MAYOR: You do and, unfortunately, you do it without knowing it. You have a turbulent, tempestuous, rebellious spirit. You also have a tendency to rush into print every possible

and impossible subject. You no sooner hit upon an idea but you must then write some newspaper article or a whole pamphlet about it.

STOCKMANN: Yes, but isn't it the duty of a citizen whenever he has a new idea to communicate it to the public?

MAYOR: Nonsense! The public doesn't need new ideas. The public is best served by the tried, accepted ideas they know already.

STOCKMANN: And you say this just like that--?

MAYOR: Yes, I must speak frankly for once. Up till now I've tried to avoid it: I know how irritable you can be but now I'm forced to speak the truth to you, Thomas. You have no idea how much you injure yourself by your rashness. You complain of the authorities, of the government itself—you criticize and laugh at them and then after all this criticizing and laughing, you claim you've been slighted, even persecuted. But what else could you expect, rebel that you are.

STOCKMANN: What next! So, I'm a rebel, too, am I?

MAYOR: Yes, Thomas, you are an extremely difficult man to work with. I know from experience. You set yourself above the rules: you have quite forgotten that it is I whom you have to thank for your part as medical officer.

STOCKMANN: I had a right to that position! I and no one else! I was the first to discover that the town might become a prosperous watering place. I was the only one who saw it. For years I stood alone fighting for this idea of mine, and I wrote and wrote—

MAYOR: No doubt. But then the right time hadn't come. Of course, up there in that out-of-the-world hole of yours in the north, you were in no position to judge. As soon as the right time came, I—and others—took the matter in hand—

STOCKMANN: Yes, and you bungled the whole wonderful plan. Now one sees what a guiding light you were.

MAYOR: In my opinion, you once again are showing your need to revolt and vent your spite. You wish to fly in the face of authority and your superiors—that's an old habit of yours. You can't endure an outside authority; you hate anyone who has a higher post than yourself; you regard such an individual as a personal enemy; then you take up any weapon against this enemy; one is as good as another. Now I have pointed this out to you, I have shown you the great interests at stake for the town, and consequently for me also. And therefore, I tell you, Thomas, that I am absolute in this demand I am about to make of you!

STOCKMANN: And what is this demand?

MAYOR: Since you have been so talkative to outsiders, even though everything should have remained an official secret, now it cannot be concealed. Rumors will fly everywhere, and the ill-disposed among us will swell these rumors and add more and more. It will be necessary for you to meet and answer these rumors.

STOCKMANN: I? How? I don't understand you.

MAYOR: We expect, after further study, you will come to the conclusion that the situation is not nearly as dangerous or serious as you first imagined.

STOCKMANN: Aha! You expect that of me do you!

MAYOR: In addition, we shall expect you to show your trust in the Board of Directors and to express your belief that the Board will thoroughly and conscientiously carry out all measures for the removal of every shortcoming.

STOCKMANN: Peter, don't you see you'll never be able to do anything by tinkering and patching. I'm sincerely and deeply convinced of this.

MAYOR: As a minor official, you've no right to have any individual conviction.

STOCKMANN: (*starting*) No right to any—

MAYOR: As an official, no. In your private life, of course, that's another matter. But as an employee of the Board, you've no right to express any conviction at variance with your employers and superiors.

STOCKMANN: That's going too far! I, a physician, an educated scientist, have no right to—

MAYOR: This is not just a question of science; it's more complex than that; the problem is both a technical and economic one.

STOCKMANN: Hah! What's that to me? What the devil do I care? I'm free to speak out upon any subject I please!

MAYOR: Then, as you please. But not on the subject of the water—we forbid that.

STOCKMANN: (*shouting*) You forbid! You! —such men—

MAYOR: I—I forbid you—I, your employer and superior; and when I forbid, you have to obey; you must submit.

STOCKMANN: (*controlling himself*) Peter, if you weren't my own brother—

(*Petra throws open the door.*)

PETRA: Papa, don't obey—don't submit to this.

(*Mrs. Stockmann following.*)

MRS. STOCKMANN: Petra, Petra!

MAYOR: So, you've been listening!

MRS. STOCKMANN: You spoke so loudly; we couldn't help—

PETRA: Yes, I did stand there and listen.

MAYOR: Well, I'm glad—

STOCKMANN: (*coming nearer to him*) You spoke to me of obeying and submitting—

MAYOR: You forced me to use those words.

STOCKMANN: And I have to lie to the public?

MAYOR: We consider it absolutely necessary that you should issue a statement in the terms I have requested.

STOCKMANN: And if I don't obey?

MAYOR: If you don't, then we shall ourselves issue a statement to reassure the public.

STOCKMANN: Fine. Then I'll write against you. I'll keep my position. I shall prove that I'm right, and you wrong. And what'll you say to that?

MAYOR: Then I shall be unable to prevent your dismissal.

STOCKMANN: What—

PETRA: Papa! Dismissal!

MRS. STOCKMANN: Dismissal!

MAYOR: Your dismissal. I shall be obliged to urge that notice be given you at once, in order to dissociate you from everything and all of us.

STOCKMANN: You would dare to do that!

MAYOR: It's you who want to play a daring game.

PETRA: Uncle, such treatment of a man like Father is shameless.

MRS. STOCKMANN: Be quiet, Petra.

MAYOR: (*looking at Petra*) Ah! You already allow yourself to express an opinion. Of course! Of course! (*to Mrs. Stockmann*) Katherine, apparently you are the only one with sense in this house. Use all your persuasion with your husband; make him realize what all this will bring down, both on his family—

STOCKMANN: My family only concerns myself.

MAYOR: --both on his family and on the town in which he lives.

STOCKMANN: It's I who have the true good of the town at heart. I want to lay bare the evils that sooner or later must come to light. You shall see that I love my native town.

MAYOR: You, who, in your blind senselessness, wants to cut off the town's source of prosperity.

STOCKMANN: Sir, the source is poisoned! Are you mad! We live by trafficking in filth and corruption. Our developing social and economic life rests on a lie.

MAYOR: Idle speculations—or something worse. The man who makes such offensive accusations against his own native town must be an enemy of those people.

STOCKMANN: (*going towards him*) And you dare to—

MRS. STOCKMANN: (*throwing herself between them*) Thomas!!

PETRA: (*seizing her father's arm*) Be calm, Papa!

MAYOR: I will not expose myself to physical violence. You are warned. Reflect upon what is best for you and your family. Goodbye. *(He exits.)*

STOCKMANN: *(walking up and down)* Must I take such treatment! In my own house. Katrina! What do you think?

MRS. STOCKMANN: It's shameful...an insult, Thomas—

PETRA: If I could have got my hands on that man!

STOCKMANN: It's my fault. I ought to have taken on the whole lot of them long ago—have shown them my teeth—made them feel those teeth! So he called me an enemy of the people. Me! I won't stand for this; by God, I will not!

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

STOCKMANN: Yes, but I have what's right and truthful!

MRS. STOCKMANN: Yes...what's right and truthful. But what is the good of that when you haven't any power?

PETRA: Mama, how can you say that?

STOCKMANN: What! Useless in a free society to have truth on your side? That's unthinkable, Katrina. Besides, haven't I got the free and independent press with me? The compact majority behind me? That's power enough!

MRS. STOCKMANN: Good God! Thomas, you're surely not thinking of...

STOCKMANN: What am I not thinking of?

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

STOCKMANN: What the devil would you want me to do—not to hold to the truth?

PETRA: Yes, what would you have him do?

MRS. STOCKMANN: But you know it won't make any difference. If they won't, they won't.

STOCKMANN: Well, at least I shall have done my duty to the public—to society. I...an enemy of the people!

MRS. STOCKMANN: But what about your family, Thomas? What about us here at home? Don't you think you have a duty to those for whom you should provide?

PETRA: Ah! Mama, don't think of us first!

MRS. STOCKMANN: It's all very well for you to say that; if need be, you could stand alone. But what about the boys, Thomas, and think a little about yourself and of me—

STOCKMANN: You're mad, Katrina. I'd be a miserable coward to submit to Peter and his damned group. How could I have another happy hour in my life if I did?

MRS. STOCKMANN: I don't know. But God save us from the kind of happiness awaiting us if you insist on carrying this through. You'll be without a livelihood, without

