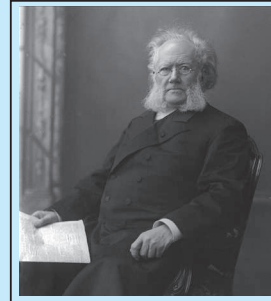


4.3.(B) An Enemy of the People

Henrik Johan Ibsen (20 March 1828 – 23 May 1906), was a Norwegian playwright, theatre director and poet. As one of the founders of modernism in theatre, Ibsen is often referred to as “the father of realism” and one of the most influential playwrights of his time. In 1869, he began to write prose plays. Some critics would say that at this point in his life, Ibsen abandoned poetry and took up realism. In 1877, he began what became a series of five plays in which he examines the moral faults of modern society. In order of appearance, the plays were The Pillars of Society, A Doll’s House, Ghosts, An Enemy of the People, and The Wild Duck.



Like all of Ibsen’s plays, An Enemy of the People was originally written in Norwegian and is full of untranslatable wordplay. Specifically, a number of the character’s titles exists only in Norwegian bureaucracy.

The holder of the truth, the man who can see the essence of the situation, is bound to be unpopular, even if the masses catch up with his ideas in due course. That is why Stockmann finally sums up, the oft-quoted line: ‘The strongest man in the world is he who stands alone!’

Theme

An Enemy of the People, a realistic play by Ibsen, boldly tackles the municipal politics of a Norwegian town and exposes the hypocrisy and cowardice of the Progressives and the Democrats. Like all the plays in this series, moral conflict is a significant element. It deals with the extent to which individual desires and beliefs are compromised by society. In particular, the play focuses on the ways in which an individual can be ostracized by the society he is trying to help. The problems of the play’s hero, Dr. Stockmann, are not far removed from the problems that Ibsen experienced after the publication of *Ghosts*. In a letter written around the time of the play’s composition, Ibsen noted: “Dr. Stockmann and I got on excellently together; we agree on so many subjects.”

Dr. Stockmann, the central character of the play eventually wins his point, even though by that time he is ahead of the masses.

You will find this play still relevant to our times as Ibsen attacks the social evils of his times, notably the status of women and the squeamishness of the nineteenth century about the open discussion of moral problems.

Plot

The protagonist of the play Dr. Stockmann, a medical officer of the municipal baths, suspects that the bath water is contaminated. He is proven right after clinical tests. Therefore he wants to publish an article and expose the corruption. However, Peter Stockmann, his brother and the mayor of the town and the Chairman of the Bath committee, warns him of terrible consequences for him and his family if he publishes the article. Hovstad, the editor of People's Messenger and Aslaksen, the printer, are hand in glove with Peter and decide not to publish the article. So Dr. Stockmann decides to hold a town meeting which turns disastrous, in which town people shout, "He is an enemy of the people." His home is pelted with stones, windows are smashed, he becomes the target of people's ire. His contract as medical officer is terminated, his daughter Petra is removed from her job as a teacher, his landlord wants to evict him and his family from their home. But he stands firm in the face of difficulties and ignores Peter's advice to leave the town for a few months. His wife is afraid that people might drive him out of the town. But Dr. Stockmann replies that he intends to stay and make the people understand "that considerations of expediency turn morality and justice upside down." What is convenient is not always morally right. He ends by proclaiming, "The strongest man in the world is he who stands alone."

Synopsis of the extract

Dr. Stockmann has discovered that the new baths built in his town are infected with a deadly disease and instructs the town to repair or close the baths. The Mayor, who is Dr. Stockmann's brother, does not believe the report and refuses to close the baths because it will cause the financial ruin of the town.

Dr. Stockmann tries to take his case to the people, but the mayor intercedes and explains to the people how much it will cost to repair the baths. He explains that the Doctor is always filled with wild, fanciful ideas. In a public meeting, he has his brother declared enemy of the people. The doctor decides to leave the town, but at the last minute comes to the realization that he must stay and fight for the things he believes to be right.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Dr. Thomas Stockmann, Medical Officer of the Municipal Baths

Mrs. Stockmann, his wife

Petra (their daughter) a teacher

Ejlif & Morten (their sons, aged 13 and 10 respectively)

Peter Stockmann (the Doctor's elder brother), Mayor of the Town and Chief Constable, Chairman of the Baths' Committee, etc.

Morten Kiil, a tanner (Mrs. Stockmann's adoptive father)

Hovstad, editor of the "People's Messenger"

Billing, sub-editor

Captain Horster

Aslaksen, a printer

Men of various conditions and occupations, a few women, and a troop of schoolboys—the audience at a public meeting.

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

ACT III

(SCENE.—The editorial office of the "People's Messenger." The entrance door is on the left-hand side of the back wall; on the right-hand side is another door with glass panels through which the printing room can be seen. Another door in the right-hand wall. In the middle of the room is a large table covered with papers, newspapers and books. In the foreground on the left a window, before which stands a desk and a high stool. There are a couple of easy chairs by the table, and other chairs standing along the wall. The room is dingy and uncomfortable; the furniture is old, the chairs stained and torn. In the printing room the compositors are seen at work, and a printer is working a handpress. HOVSTAD is sitting at the desk, writing. BILLING comes in from the right with DR. STOCKMANN'S manuscript in his hand.)

Billing : Well, I must say!

Hovstad : (still writing). Have you read it through?

Billing : (laying the MS. on the desk). Yes, indeed I have.

Hovstad : Don't you think the Doctor hits them pretty hard?

Billing : Hard? Bless my soul, he's crushing! Every word falls like—how shall I put it?—like the blow of a sledgehammer.

- Hovstad** : Yes, but they are not the people to throw up the sponge at the first blow.
- Billing** : That is true; and for that reason we must strike blow upon blow until the whole of this aristocracy tumbles to pieces. As I sat in there reading this, I almost seemed to see a revolution in being.
- Hovstad** : (turning round). Hush!—Speak so that Aslaksen cannot hear you.
- Billing** : (lowering his voice). Aslaksen is a chicken-hearted chap, a coward; there is nothing of the man in him. But this time you will insist on your own way, won't you? You will put the Doctor's article in?
- Hovstad** : Yes, and if the Mayor doesn't like it—
- Billing** : That will be the devil of a nuisance.
- Hovstad** : Well, fortunately we can turn the situation to good account, whatever happens. If the Mayor will not fall in with the Doctor's project, he will have all the small tradesmen down on him—the whole of the Householders' Association and the rest of them. And if he does fall in with it, he will fall out with the whole crowd of large shareholders in the Baths, who up to now have been his most valuable supporters—
- Billing** : Yes, because they will certainly have to fork out a pretty penny—
- Hovstad** : Yes, you may be sure they will. And in this way the ring will be broken up, you see, and then in every issue of the paper we will enlighten the public on the Mayor's incapability on one point and another, and make it clear that all the positions of trust in the town, the whole control of municipal affairs, ought to be put in the hands of the Liberals.
- Billing** : That is perfectly true! I see it coming—I see it coming; we are on the threshold of a revolution!
- (A knock is heard at the door.)
- Hovstad** : Hush! (Calls out.) Come in! (DR. STOCKMANN comes in by the street door. HOVSTAD goes to meet him.) Ah, it is you, Doctor! Well?
- Dr. Stockmann** : You may set to work and print it, Mr. Hovstad!
- Hovstad** : Has it come to that, then?
- Billing** : Hurrah!
- Dr. Stockmann** : Yes, print away. Undoubtedly it has come to that. Now they must take what they get. There is going to be a fight in the town, Mr. Billing!
- Billing** : War to the knife, I hope! We will get our knives to their throats, Doctor!

- Dr. Stockmann** : This article is only a beginning. I have already got four or five more sketched out in my head. Where is Aslaksen?
- Billing** : (calls into the printing-room). Aslaksen, just come here for a minute!
- Hovstad** : Four or five more articles, did you say? On the same subject?
- Dr. Stockmann** : No—far from it, my dear fellow. No, they are about quite another matter. But they all spring from the question of the water supply and the drainage. One thing leads to another, you know. It is like beginning to pull down an old house, exactly.
- Billing** : Upon my soul, it's true; you find you are not done till you have pulled all the old rubbish down.
- Aslaksen** : (coming in). Pulled down? You are not thinking of pulling down the Baths surely, Doctor?
- Hovstad** : Far from it, don't be afraid.
- Dr. Stockmann** : No, we meant something quite different. Well, what do you think of my article, Mr. Hovstad?
- Hovstad** : I think it is simply a masterpiece.
- Dr. Stockmann** : Do you really think so? Well, I am very pleased, very pleased.
- Hovstad** : It is so clear and intelligible. One need have no special knowledge to understand the bearing of it. You will have every enlightened man on your side.
- Aslaksen** : And every prudent man too, I hope?
- Billing** : The prudent and the imprudent—almost the whole town.
- Aslaksen** : In that case we may venture to print it.
- Dr. Stockmann** : I should think so!
- Hovstad** : We will put it in tomorrow morning.
- Dr. Stockmann** : Of course—you must not lose a single day. What I wanted to ask you, Mr. Aslaksen, was if you would supervise the printing of it yourself.
- Aslaksen** : With pleasure.
- Dr. Stockmann** : Take care of it as if it were a treasure! No misprints—every word is important. I will look in again a little later; perhaps you will be able to let me see a proof. I can't tell you how eager I am to see it in print, and see it burst upon the public—
- Billing** : Burst upon them—yes, like a flash of lightning!
- Dr. Stockmann** : -and to have it submitted to the judgment of my intelligent fellow townsmen. You cannot imagine what I have gone through today. I have been threatened first with one thing and then with another; they have tried to rob me of my most elementary rights as a man—

- Billing** : What! Your rights as a man!
- Dr. Stockmann** : —they have tried to degrade me, to make a coward of me, to force me to put personal interests before my most sacred convictions.
- Billing** : That is too much—I’m damned if it isn’t.
- Hovstad** : Oh, you mustn’t be surprised at anything from that quarter.
- Dr. Stockmann** : Well, they will get the worst of it with me; they may assure themselves of that. I shall consider the “People’s Messenger” my sheet-anchor now, and every single day I will bombard them with one article after another, like bombshells—
- Aslaksen** : Yes, but
- Billing** : Hurrah!—it is war, it is war!
- Dr. Stockmann** : I shall smite them to the ground—I shall crush them—I shall break down all their defenses, before the eyes of the honest public! That is what I shall do!
- Aslaksen** : Yes, but in moderation, Doctor—proceed with moderation.
- Billing** : Not a bit of it, not a bit of it! Don’t spare the dynamite!
- Dr. Stockmann** : Because it is not merely a question of water-supply and drains now, you know. No—it is the whole of our social life that we have got to purify and disinfect—
- Billing** : Spoken like a deliverer!
- Dr. Stockmann** : All the incapables must be turned out, you understand—and that in every walk of life! Endless vistas have opened themselves to my mind’s eye today. I cannot see it all quite clearly yet, but I shall in time. Young and vigorous standard-bearers—those are what we need and must seek, my friends; we must have new men in command at all our outposts.
- Billing** : Hear, hear!
- Dr. Stockmann** : We only need to stand by one another, and it will all be perfectly easy. The revolution will be launched like a ship that runs smoothly off the stocks. Don’t you think so?
- Hovstad** : For my part I think we have now a prospect of getting the municipal authority into the hands where it should lie.
- Aslaksen** : And if only we proceed with moderation, I cannot imagine that there will be any risk.
- Dr. Stockmann** : Who the devil cares whether there is any risk or not! What I am doing, I am doing in the name of truth and for the sake of my conscience.
- Hovstad** : You are a man who deserves to be supported, Doctor.
- Aslaksen** : Yes, there is no denying that the Doctor is a true friend to the

town—a real friend to the community, that he is.

- Billing** : Take my word for it, Aslaksen, Dr. Stockmann is a friend of the people.
- Aslaksen** : I fancy the Householders' Association will make use of that expression before long.
- Dr. Stockmann** : (affected, grasps their hands) Thank you, thank you, my dear staunch friends. It is very refreshing to me to hear you say that; my brother called me something quite different. By Jove, he shall have it back, with interest! But now I must be off to see a poor devil—I will come back, as I said. Keep a very careful eye on the manuscript, Aslaksen, and don't for worlds leave out any of my notes of exclamation! Rather put one or two more in! Capital, capital! Well, good-bye for the present—goodbye, goodbye! (They show him to the door, and bow him out.)
- Hovstad** : He may prove an invaluable useful man to us.
- Aslaksen** : Yes, so long as he confines himself to this matter of the Baths. But if he goes farther afield, I don't think it would be advisable to follow him.
- Hovstad** : Hm!—that all depends—
- Billing** : You are so infernally timid, Aslaksen!
- Aslaksen** : Timid? Yes, when it is a question of the local authorities, I am timid, Mr. Billing; it is a lesson I have learned in the school of experience, let me tell you. But try me in higher politics, in matters that concern the government itself, and then see if I am timid.
- Billing** : No, you aren't, I admit. But this is simply contradicting yourself.
- Aslaksen** : I am a man with a conscience, and that is the whole matter. If you attack the government, you don't do the community any harm, anyway; those fellows pay no attention to attacks, you see—they go on just as they are, in spite of them. But local authorities are different; they can be turned out, and then perhaps you may get an ignorant lot into office who may do irreparable harm to the householders and everybody else.
- Hovstad** : But what of the education of citizens by self government—don't you attach any importance to that?
- Aslaksen** : When a man has interests of his own to protect, he cannot think of everything, Mr. Hovstad.
- Hovstad** : Then I hope I shall never have interests of my own to protect!
- Billing** : Hear, hear!
- Aslaksen** : (with a smile) Hm! (Points to the desk.) Mr. Sheriff Stensgaard was your predecessor at that editorial desk.

- Billing** : (spitting) Bah! That turncoat.
- Hovstad** : I am not a weathercock—and never will be.
- Aslaksen** : A politician should never be too certain of anything, Mr. Hovstad. And as for you, Mr. Billing, I should think it is time for you to be taking in a reef or two in your sails, seeing that you are applying for the post of secretary to the Bench.
- Billing** : I—!
- Hovstad** : Are you, Billing?
- Billing** : Well, yes—but you must clearly understand I am only doing it to annoy the bigwigs.
- Aslaksen** : Anyhow, it is no business of mine. But if I am to be accused of timidity and of inconsistency in my principles, this is what I want to point out: my political past is an open book. I have never changed, except perhaps to become a little more moderate, you see. My heart is still with the people; but I don't deny that my reason has a certain bias towards the authorities—the local ones, I mean. (Goes into the printing room.)
- Billing** : Oughtn't we to try and get rid of him, Hovstad?
- Hovstad** : Do you know anyone else who will advance the money for our paper and printing bill?
- Billing** : It is an infernal nuisance that we don't possess some capital to trade on.
- Hovstad** : (sitting down at his desk). Yes, if we only had that, then—
- Billing** : Suppose you were to apply to Dr. Stockmann?
- Hovstad** : (turning over some papers). What is the use? He has got nothing.
- Billing** : No, but he has got a warm man in the background, old Morten Kiil—"the Badger," as they call him.
- Hovstad** : (writing). Are you so sure he has got anything?
- Billing** : Good Lord, of course he has! And some of it must come to the Stockmanns. Most probably he will do something for the children, at all events.
- Hovstad** : (turning half round). Are you counting on that?
- Billing** : Counting on it? Of course I am not counting on anything.
- Hovstad** : That is right. And I should not count on the secretaryship to the Bench either, if I were you; for I can assure you—you won't get it.
- Billing** : Do you think I am not quite aware of that? My object is precisely not to get it. A slight of that kind stimulates a man's fighting power—it is like getting a supply of fresh bile—and I am sure one needs that badly enough in a hole-and-corner place like this, where

- it is so seldom anything happens to stir one up.
- Hovstad** : (writing) Quite so, quite so.
- Billing** : Ah, I shall be heard of yet!—Now I shall go and write the appeal to the Householders' Association. (Goes into the room on the right.)
- Hovstad** : (sitting at his desk, biting his penholder, says slowly). Hm!—that's it, is it. (A knock is heard.) Come in! (PETRA comes in by the outer door. HOVSTAD gets up.) What, you!—here?
- Petra** : Yes, you must forgive me—
- Hovstad** : (pulling a chair forward) Won't you sit down?
- Petra** : No, thank you; I must go again in a moment.
- Hovstad** : Have you come with a message from your father, by any chance?
- Petra** : No, I have come on my own account. (Takes a book out of her coat pocket.) Here is the English story.
- Hovstad** : Why have you brought it back?
- Petra** : Because I am not going to translate it.
- Hovstad** : But you promised me faithfully.
- Petra** : Yes, but then I had not read it, I don't suppose you have read it either?
- Hovstad** : No, you know quite well I don't understand English; but—
- Petra** : Quite so. That is why I wanted to tell you that you must find something else. (Lays the book on the table.) You can't use this for the "People's Messenger."
- Hovstad** : Why not?
- Petra** : Because it conflicts with all your opinions.
- Hovstad** : Oh, for that matter—
- Petra** : You don't understand me. The burden of this story is that there is a supernatural power that looks after the so-called good people in this world and makes everything happen for the best in their case—while all the so-called bad people are punished.
- Hovstad** : Well, but that is all right. That is just what our readers want.
- Petra** : And are you going to be the one to give it to them? For myself, I do not believe a word of it. You know quite well that things do not happen so in reality.
- Hovstad** : You are perfectly right; but an editor cannot always act as he would prefer. He is often obliged to bow to the wishes of the public in unimportant matters. Politics are the most important thing in life—for a newspaper, anyway; and if I want to carry my public with me on the path that leads to liberty and progress, I must not frighten

them away. If they find a moral tale of this sort in the serial at the bottom of the page, they will be all the more ready to read what is printed above it; they feel more secure, as it were.

- Petra** : For shame! You would never go and set a snare like that for your readers; you are not a spider!
- Hovstad** : (smiling) Thank you for having such a good opinion of me. No; as a matter of fact that is Billing's idea and not mine.
- Petra** : Billing's!
- Hovstad** : Yes; anyway, he propounded that theory here one day. And it is Billing who is so anxious to have that story in the paper; I don't know anything about the book.
- Petra** : But how can Billing, with his emancipated views—
- Hovstad** : Oh, Billing is a many-sided man. He is applying for the post of secretary to the Bench, too, I hear.
- Petra** : I don't believe it, Mr. Hovstad. How could he possibly bring himself to do such a thing?
- Hovstad** : Ah, you must ask him that.
- Petra** : I should never have thought it of him.
- Hovstad** : (looking more closely at her). No? Does it really surprise you so much?
- Petra** : Yes. Or perhaps not altogether. Really, I don't quite know.
- Hovstad** : We journalists are not much worth, Miss Stockmann.
- Petra** : Do you really mean that?
- Hovstad** : I think so sometimes.
- Petra** : Yes, in the ordinary affairs of everyday life, perhaps; I can understand that. But now, when you have taken a weighty matter in hand—
- Hovstad** : This matter of your father's, you mean?
- Petra** : Exactly. It seems to me that now you must feel you are a man worth more than most.
- Hovstad** : Yes, today I do feel something of that sort.
- Petra** : Of course you do, don't you? It is a splendid vocation you have chosen—to smooth the way for the march of unappreciated truths, and new and courageous lines of thought. If it were nothing more than because you stand fearlessly in the open and take up the cause of an injured man—
- Hovstad** : Especially when that injured man is—ahem!—I don't rightly know how to—

- Petra** : When that man is so upright and so honest, you mean?
- Hovstad** : (more gently). Especially when he is your father I meant.
- Petra** : (suddenly checked). That?
- Hovstad** : Yes, Petra—Miss Petra.
- Petra** : Is it that, that is first and foremost with you? Not the matter itself? Not the truth?—not my father’s big generous heart?
- Hovstad** : Certainly—of course—that too.
- Petra** : No, thank you; you have betrayed yourself, Mr. Hovstad, and now I shall never trust you again in anything.
- Hovstad** : Can you really take it so amiss in me that it is mostly for your sake—?
- Petra** : What I am angry with you for, is for not having been honest with my father. You talked to him as if the truth and the good of the community were what lay nearest to your heart. You have made fools of both my father and me. You are not the man you made yourself out to be. And that I shall never forgive you—never!
- Hovstad** : You ought not to speak so bitterly, Miss Petra—least of all now.
- Petra** : Why not now, especially?
- Hovstad** : Because your father cannot do without my help.
- Petra** : (looking him up and down). Are you that sort of man too? For shame!
- Hovstad** : No, no, I am not. This came upon me so unexpectedly—you must believe that.
- Petra** : I know what to believe. Goodbye.
- Aslaksen** : (coming from the printing room, hurriedly and with an air of mystery). Damnation, Hovstad!—(Sees PETRA.) Oh, this is awkward—
- Petra** : There is the book; you must give it to some one else. (Goes towards the door.)
- Hovstad** : (following her). But, Miss Stockmann—
- Petra** : Goodbye. (Goes out.)
- Aslaksen** : I say—Mr. Hovstad—
- Hovstad** : Well well!—what is it?
- Aslaksen** : The Mayor is outside in the printing room.
- Hovstad** : The Mayor, did you say?
- Aslaksen** : Yes he wants to speak to you. He came in by the back door—didn’t want to be seen, you understand.

- Hovstad** : What can he want? Wait a bit—I will go myself. (Goes to the door of the printing room, opens it, bows and invites PETER STOCKMANN in.) Just see, Aslaksen, that no one—
- Aslaksen** : Quite so. (Goes into the printing-room.)
- Peter Stockmann** : You did not expect to see me here, Mr. Hovstad?
- Hovstad** : No, I confess I did not.
- Peter Stockmann** : (looking round). You are very snug in here—very nice indeed.
- Hovstad** : Oh—
- Peter Stockmann** : And here I come, without any notice, to take up your time!
- Hovstad** : By all means, Mr. Mayor. I am at your service. But let me relieve you of your—(takes STOCKMANN's hat and stick and puts them on a chair). Won't you sit down?
- Peter Stockmann** : (sitting down by the table). Thank you. (HOVSTAD sits down.) I have had an extremely annoying experience to-day, Mr. Hovstad.
- Hovstad** : Really? Ah well, I expect with all the various business you have to attend to—
- Peter Stockmann** : The Medical Officer of the Baths is responsible for what happened today.
- Hovstad** : Indeed? The Doctor?
- Peter Stockmann** : He has addressed a kind of report to the Baths Committee on the subject of certain supposed defects in the Baths.
- Hovstad** : Has he indeed?
- Peter Stockmann** : Yes—has he not told you? I thought he said—
- Hovstad** : Ah, yes—it is true he did mention something about—
- Aslaksen** : (coming from the printing-room). I ought to have that copy.
- Hovstad** : (angrily) Ahem!—there it is on the desk.
- Aslaksen** : (taking it) Right.
- Peter Stockmann** : But look there—that is the thing I was speaking of!
- Aslaksen** : Yes, that is the Doctor's article, Mr. Mayor.
- Hovstad** : Oh, is THAT what you were speaking about?
- Peter Stockmann** : Yes, that is it. What do you think of it?
- Hovstad** : Oh, I am only a layman—and I have only taken a very cursory glance at it.
- Peter Stockmann** : But you are going to print it?
- Hovstad** : I cannot very well refuse a distinguished man.
- Aslaksen** : I have nothing to do with editing the paper, Mr. Mayor—

Peter Stockmann : I understand.

Aslaksen : I merely print what is put into my hands.

Peter Stockmann : Quite so.

Aslaksen : And so I must— (moves off towards the printing-room).

Peter Stockmann : No, but wait a moment, Mr. Aslaksen. You will allow me, Mr. Hovstad?

Hovstad : If you please, Mr. Mayor.

Peter Stockmann : You are a discreet and thoughtful man, Mr. Aslaksen.

Aslaksen : I am delighted to hear you think so, sir.

Peter Stockmann : And a man of very considerable influence.

Aslaksen : Chiefly among the small tradesmen, sir.

Peter Stockmann : The small tax-payers are the majority—here as everywhere else.

Aslaksen : That is true.

Peter Stockmann : And I have no doubt you know the general trend of opinion among them, don't you?

Aslaksen : Yes I think I may say I do, Mr. Mayor.

Peter Stockmann : Yes. Well, since there is such a praiseworthy spirit of self-sacrifice among the less wealthy citizens of our town—

Aslaksen : What?

Hovstad : Self-sacrifice?

Peter Stockmann : It is pleasing evidence of a public-spirited feeling, extremely pleasing evidence. I might almost say I hardly expected it. But you have a closer knowledge of public opinion than I.

Aslaksen : But, Mr. Mayor—

Peter Stockmann : And indeed it is no small sacrifice that the town is going to make.

Hovstad : The town?

Aslaksen : But I don't understand. Is it the Baths—?

Peter Stockmann : At a provisional estimate, the alterations that the Medical Officer asserts to be desirable will cost somewhere about twenty thousand pounds.

Aslaksen : That is a lot of money, but—

Peter Stockmann : Of course it will be necessary to raise a municipal loan.

Hovstad : (getting up). Surely you never mean that the town must pay—?

Aslaksen : Do you mean that it must come out of the municipal funds?—out of the ill-filled pockets of the small tradesmen?

Peter Stockmann : Well, my dear Mr. Aslaksen, where else is the money to come from?

- Aslaksen** : The gentlemen who own the Baths ought to provide that.
- Peter Stockmann** : The proprietors of the Baths are not in a position to incur any further expense.
- Aslaksen** : Is that absolutely certain, Mr. Mayor?
- Peter Stockmann** : I have satisfied myself that it is so. If the town wants these very extensive alterations, it will have to pay for them.
- Aslaksen** : But, damn it all—I beg your pardon—this is quite another matter, Mr. Hovstad!
- Hovstad** : It is, indeed.
- Peter Stockmann** : The most fatal part of it is that we shall be obliged to shut the Baths for a couple of years.
- Hovstad** : Shut them? Shut them altogether?
- Aslaksen** : For two years?
- Peter Stockmann** : Yes, the work will take as long as that—at least.
- Aslaksen** : I'm damned if we will stand that, Mr. Mayor! What are we householders to live upon in the meantime?
- Peter Stockmann** : Unfortunately, that is an extremely difficult question to answer, Mr. Aslaksen. But what would you have us do? Do you suppose we shall have a single visitor in the town, if we go about proclaiming that our water is polluted, that we are living over a plague spot, that the entire town—
- Aslaksen** : And the whole thing is merely imagination?
- Peter Stockmann** : With the best will in the world, I have not been able to come to any other conclusion.
- Aslaksen** : Well then I must say it is absolutely unjustifiable of Dr. Stockmann—I beg your pardon, Mr. Mayor.
- Peter Stockmann** : What you say is lamentably true, Mr. Aslaksen. My brother has unfortunately always been a headstrong man.
- Aslaksen** : After this, do you mean to give him your support, Mr. Hovstad?
- Hovstad** : Can you suppose for a moment that I—?
- Peter Stockmann** : I have drawn up a short resume of the situation as it appears from a reasonable man's point of view. In it I have indicated how certain possible defects might suitably be remedied without outrunning the resources of the Baths Committee.
- Hovstad** : Have you got it with you, Mr. Mayor?
- Peter Stockmann** : (fumbling in his pocket). Yes, I brought it with me in case you should—
- Aslaksen** : Good Lord, there he is!

- Peter Stockmann** : Who? My brother?
- Hovstad** : Where? Where?
- Aslaksen** : He has just gone through the printing room.
- Peter Stockmann** : How unlucky! I don't want to meet him here, and I had still several things to speak to you about.
- Hovstad** : (pointing to the door on the right). Go in there for the present.
- Peter Stockmann** : But—?
- Hovstad** : You will only find Billing in there.
- Aslaksen** : Quick, quick, Mr. Mayor—he is just coming.
- Peter Stockmann** : Yes, very well; but see that you get rid of him quickly. (Goes out through the door on the right, which ASLAKSEN opens for him and shuts after him.)
- Hovstad** : Pretend to be doing something, Aslaksen. (Sits down and writes. ASLAKSEN begins foraging among a heap of newspapers that are lying on a chair.)
- Dr. Stockmann** : (coming in from the printing room). Here I am again. (Puts down his hat and stick.)
- Hovstad** : (writing) Already, Doctor? Hurry up with what we were speaking about, Aslaksen. We are very pressed for time today.
- Dr. Stockmann** : (to ASLAKSEN) No proof for me to see yet, I hear.
- Aslaksen** : (without turning round). You couldn't expect it yet, Doctor.
- Dr. Stockmann** : No, no; but I am impatient, as you can understand. I shall not know a moment's peace of mind until I see it in print.
- Hovstad** : Hm!—It will take a good while yet, won't it, Aslaksen?
- Aslaksen** : Yes, I am almost afraid it will.
- Dr. Stockmann** : All right, my dear friends; I will come back. I do not mind coming back twice if necessary. A matter of such great importance—the welfare of the town at stake—it is no time to shirk trouble, (is just going, but stops and comes back.) Look here—there is one thing more I want to speak to you about.
- Hovstad** : Excuse me, but could it not wait till some other time?
- Dr. Stockmann** : I can tell you in half a dozen words. It is only this. When my article is read tomorrow and it is realised that I have been quietly working the whole winter for the welfare of the town—
- Hovstad** : Yes but, Doctor—
- Dr. Stockmann** : I know what you are going to say. You don't see how on earth it was any more than my duty—my obvious duty as a citizen. Of course it wasn't; I know that as well as you. But my fellow citizens,

you know—! Good Lord, think of all the good souls who think so highly of me—!

Aslaksen : Yes, our townsfolk have had a very high opinion of you so far, Doctor.

Dr. Stockmann : Yes, and that is just why I am afraid they—. Well, this is the point; when this reaches them, especially the poorer classes, and sounds in their ears like a summons to take the town's affairs into their own hands for the future...

Hovstad : (getting up) Ahem! Doctor, I won't conceal from you the fact—

Dr. Stockmann : Ah I—I knew there was something in the wind! But I won't hear a word of it. If anything of that sort is being set on foot—

Hovstad : Of what sort?

Dr. Stockmann : Well, whatever it is—whether it is a demonstration in my honour, or a banquet, or a subscription list for some presentation to me—whatever it is, you most promise me solemnly and faithfully to put a stop to it. You too, Mr. Aslaksen; do you understand?

Hovstad : You must forgive me, Doctor, but sooner or later we must tell you the plain truth—

(He is interrupted by the entrance Of MRS. STOCKMANN, who comes in from the street door.)

Mrs. Stockmann : (seeing her husband) Just as I thought!

Hovstad : (going towards her) You too, Mrs. Stockmann?

Dr. Stockmann : What on earth do you want here, Katherine?

Mrs. Stockmann : I should think you know very well what I want.

Hovstad : Won't you sit down? Or perhaps—

Mrs. Stockmann : No, thank you; don't trouble. And you must not be offended at my coming to fetch my husband; I am the mother of three children, you know.

Dr. Stockmann : Nonsense!—we know all about that.

Mrs. Stockmann : Well, one would not give you credit for much thought for your wife and children today; if you had had that, you would not have gone and dragged us all into misfortune.

Dr. Stockmann : Are you out of your senses, Katherine! Because a man has a wife and children, is he not to be allowed to proclaim the truth—is he not to be allowed to be an actively useful citizen—is he not to be allowed to do a service to his native town!

Mrs. Stockmann : Yes, Thomas—in reason.

Aslaksen : Just what I say. Moderation in everything.

- Mrs. Stockmann** : And that is why you wrong us, Mr. Hovstad, in enticing my husband away from his home and making a dupe of him in all this.
- Hovstad** : I certainly am making a dupe of no one—
- Dr. Stockmann** : Making a dupe of me! Do you suppose I should allow myself to be duped!
- Mrs. Stockmann** : It is just what you do. I know quite well you have more brains than anyone in the town, but you are extremely easily duped, Thomas. (To Hovstad.) Please do realise that he loses his post at the Baths if you print what he has written.
- Aslaksen** : What!
- Hovstad** : Look here, Doctor!
- Dr. Stockmann** : (laughing) Ha-ha!—just let them try! No, no—they will take good care not to. I have got the compact majority behind me, let me tell you!
- Mrs. Stockmann** : Yes, that is just the worst of it—your having any such horrid thing behind you.
- Dr. Stockmann** : Rubbish, Katherine!—Go home and look after your house and leave me to look after the community. How can you be so afraid, when I am so confident and happy? (Walks up and down, rubbing his hands.) Truth and the People will win the fight, you may be certain! I see the whole of the broad-minded middle class marching like a victorious army—! (Stops beside a chair.) What the deuce is that lying there?
- Aslaksen** : Good Lord!
- Hovstad** : Ahem!
- Dr. Stockmann** : Here we have the topmost pinnacle of authority! (Takes the Mayor's official hat carefully between his finger-tips and holds it up in the air.)
- Mrs. Stockmann** : The Mayor's hat!
- Dr. Stockmann** : And here is the staff of office too. How in the name of all that's wonderful—?
- Hovstad** : Well, you see—
- Dr. Stockmann** : Oh, I understand. He has been here trying to talk you over. Ha-ha!—he made rather a mistake there! And as soon as he caught sight of me in the printing room. (Bursts out laughing.) Did he run away, Mr. Aslaksen?
- Aslaksen** : (hurriedly). Yes, he ran away, Doctor.
- Dr. Stockmann** : Ran away without his stick or his—. Fiddlesticks! Peter doesn't run away and leave his belongings behind him. But what the deuce

have you done with him? Ah!—in there, of course. Now you shall see, Katherine!

Mrs. Stockmann : Thomas—please don't—!

Aslaksen : Don't be rash, Doctor.

(DR. STOCKMANN has put on the Mayor's hat and taken his stick in his hand. He goes up to the door, opens it, and stands with his hand to his hat at the salute. PETER STOCKMANN comes in, red with anger. BILLING follows him.)

Peter Stockmann : What does this tomfoolery mean?

Dr. Stockmann : Be respectful, my good Peter. I am the chief authority in the town now. (Walks up and down.)

Mrs. Stockmann : (almost in tears) Really, Thomas!

Peter Stockmann : (following him about) Give me my hat and stick.

Dr. Stockmann : (in the same tone as before) If you are chief constable, let me tell you that I am the Mayor—I am the master of the whole town, please understand!

Peter Stockmann : Take off my hat, I tell you. Remember it is part of an official uniform.

Dr. Stockmann : Pooh! Do you think the newly awakened lionhearted people are going to be frightened by an official hat? There is going to be a revolution in the town tomorrow, let me tell you. You thought you could turn me out; but now I shall turn you out—turn you out of all your various offices. Do you think I cannot? Listen to me. I have triumphant social forces behind me. Hovstad and Billing will thunder in the "People's Messenger," and Aslaksen will take the field at the head of the whole Householders' Association—

Aslaksen : That I won't, Doctor.

Dr. Stockmann : Of course you will—

Peter Stockmann : Ah!—may I ask then if Mr. Hovstad intends to join this agitation?

Hovstad : No, Mr. Mayor.

Aslaksen : No, Mr. Hovstad is not such a fool as to go and ruin his paper and himself for the sake of an imaginary grievance.

Dr. Stockmann : (looking round him) What does this mean?

Hovstad : You have represented your case in a false light, Doctor, and therefore I am unable to give you my support.

Billing : And after what the Mayor was so kind as to tell me just now, I—

Dr. Stockmann : A false light! Leave that part of it to me. Only print my article; I am quite capable of defending it.

- Hovstad** : I am not going to print it. I cannot and will not and dare not print it.
- Dr. Stockmann** : You dare not? What nonsense!—you are the editor; and an editor controls his paper, I suppose!
- Aslaksen** : No, it is the subscribers, Doctor.
- Peter Stockmann** : Fortunately, yes.
- Aslaksen** : It is public opinion—the enlightened public—householders and people of that kind; they control the newspapers.
- Dr. Stockmann** : (composedly) And I have all these influences against me?
- Aslaksen** : Yes, you have. It would mean the absolute ruin of the community if your article were to appear.
- Dr. Stockmann** : Indeed.
- Peter Stockmann** : My hat and stick, if you please. (DR. STOCKMANN takes off the hat and lays it on the table with the stick. PETER STOCKMANN takes them up.) Your authority as mayor has come to an untimely end.
- Dr. Stockmann** : We have not got to the end yet. (To HOVSTAD) Then it is quite impossible for you to print my article in the “People’s Messenger”?
- Hovstad** : Quite impossible—out of regard for your family as well.
- Mrs. Stockmann** : You need not concern yourself about his family, thank you, Mr. Hovstad.
- Peter Stockmann** : (taking a paper from his pocket) It will be sufficient, for the guidance of the public, if this appears. It is an official statement. May I trouble you?
- Hovstad** : (taking the paper) Certainly; I will see that it is printed.
- Dr. Stockmann** : But not mine. Do you imagine that you can silence me and stifle the truth! You will not find it so easy as you suppose. Mr. Aslaksen, kindly take my manuscript at once and print it as a pamphlet—at my expense. I will have four hundred copies—no, five or six hundred.
- Aslaksen** : If you offered me its weight in gold, I could not lend my press for any such purpose, Doctor. It would be flying in the face of public opinion. You will not get it printed anywhere in the town.
- Dr. Stockmann** : Then give it me back.
- Hovstad** : (giving him the MS.) Here it is.
- Dr. Stockmann** : (taking his hat and stick) It shall be made public all the same. I will read it out at a mass meeting of the townspeople. All my fellow-citizens shall hear the voice of truth!

- Peter Stockmann** : You will not find any public body in the town that will give you the use of their hall for such a purpose.
- Aslaksen** : Not a single one, I am certain.
- Billing** : No, I'm damned if you will find one.
- Mrs. Stockmann** : But this is too shameful! Why should every one turn against you like that?
- Dr. Stockmann** : (angrily) I will tell you why. It is because all the men in this town are old women—like you; they all think of nothing but their families, and never of the community.
- Mrs. Stockmann** : Then I will show them that an old woman can be a man for once. I am going to stand by you, Thomas!
- Dr. Stockmann** : Bravely said, Katherine! It shall be made public—as I am a living soul! If I can't hire a hall, I shall hire a drum, and parade the town with it and read it at every street-corner.
- Peter Stockmann** : You are surely not such an errant fool as that!
- Dr. Stockmann** : Yes, I am.
- Aslaksen** : You won't find a single man in the whole town to go with you.
- Billing** : No, I'm damned if you will.
- Mrs. Stockmann** : Don't give in, Thomas. I will tell the boys to go with you.
- Dr. Stockmann** : That is a splendid idea!
- Mrs. Stockmann** : Morten will be delighted; and Ejlif will do whatever he does.
- Dr. Stockmann** : Yes, and Petra!—and you too, Katherine!
- Mrs. Stockmann** : No, I won't do that; but I will stand at the window and watch you, that's what I will do.
- Dr. Stockmann** : Thank you, my dear! Now you and I are going to try a fall, my fine gentlemen! I am going to see whether a pack of cowards can succeed in gagging a patriot who wants to purify society! (He and his wife go out by the street door.)
- Peter Stockmann** : (shaking his head seriously) Now he has sent her out of her senses, too.

Glossary :

dingy	: dull, colourless
composer	: one who arranges keys of text into a composing machine
sledge hammer	: heavy hammer used for breaking rocks
mince	: cut, chop, crumble
salvation	: deliverance, escape, rescue
alderman	: an elected member of a city council / next in status to the Mayor
hypocrite	: fraud, deceiver, pretender
trivial	: unimportant, little, worthless
subscription	: membership fee, donations, contribution
trembling	: shake, shiver, vibrate

Character:

1. Mayor Peter Stockmann is a contrast to Dr. Thomas Stockmann. Justify.
2. Write the character sketch of Dr. Stockmann.
3. Read the given extract (Act III)

(i) Complete the following table.

Sr. No.	Character	Supportive Character	Incident
1.	Dr. Stockmann	(a) (b)	(a) (b)
2.	Peter Stockmann	(a) (b) (c)	(a) (b) (c)
3.	Aslaksen	(a) (b)	(a) (b)

(ii) Match the column A with column B.

Sr.No.	A	B
1.	Dr. Thomas Stockmann	Opportunist
2.	Katherine	Vulnerable
3.	Peter Stockmann	Honest and upright
4.	Petra	Coward
5.	Hovstad	Timid but supportive
6.	Billing	Cunning and corrupt
7.	Aslaksen	Courageous

Plot:

1. Describe the climax scene in your own words. Write your comments on it.
2. Describe in your own words the incident when Hovstad's real intention to help Dr. Stockmann is exposed.
3. Write down the consequences of the following occurrences with the help of the play.
 - (a) Dr. Thomas Stockmann wants an article exposing social evils to be printed in the newspaper.
 - (b) Mayor Peter Stockmann persuades Mr. Hovstad and Mr. Billing from printing the article.
 - (c) Aslaksen declares that he would not print Dr. Stockmann's article.
 - (d) Katherine encourages Dr. Stockmann to proceed in his attempts in the cause of public attempts.

Setting:

1. The setting of the act is the office of the newspaper 'The Herald'. Explain how it is the proper background for the theme of the play.
2. Explain the use of the following property in the development of the play.
 - (a) Hat
 - (b) Stick
 - (c) An envelope containing the letter
3. Explain the following statements with reference to the context.
 - (a) And then, once the ring's broken, we'll get to work and show the public every day just how incompetent the Mayor is!
 - (b) From now on 'The Herald' shall be my artillery.
 - (c) You ought to be ashamed of yourself.
 - (d) Because your father can't do without my help.
 - (e) And it's by no means the small sacrifice the town will have to make.
