

An Enemy of the People Study Guide

An Enemy of the People by Arthur Miller

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Plot Summary

"An Enemy of the People," a play by Arthur Miller adapted from the drama by Henrik Ibsen, focuses on a conflict between two brothers, Dr. Tom Stockmann and Peter Stockmann, and a conflict between the freedom and the suppression of speech. The Stockmanns live in an unnamed town that has recently completed construction of a medicinal bath on the outskirts of town known as the Kirsten Springs. Peter Stockmann is the mayor of the town and is boasting about the potential benefits that the Springs will provide to the town. Peter envisions the Springs bringing in visitors and tourists, which will increase the town's revenues, provide sufficient jobs for the population and make business boom. Peter has hopes that his town will ultimately become known as one of the region's top resorts.

Dr. Tom Stockmann is a medical doctor and a scientist. Tom has recommended against the town building the Springs in the location they have selected. However, Peter and the other Council members ignore his advice. Tom comes to suspect that the water that poured into the Springs might be contaminated. Tom does not reveal his concerns to anyone since he does not want to unnecessarily alarm anyone in case he is wrong. Tom sends water samples away to a University for analysis. The University's report reveals that the water is contaminated with an infection of organic matter. The editor of the local newspaper, Hovstad, gets wind of the report and wanted to publish it in his newspaper. Tom asks the editor to delay printing the report until he informs his brother, the Mayor, about its contents. He is certain that his brother will want the report published so that the townspeople can be warned about the health risk.

After Peter reads the report, he meets with Tom to discuss it. Peter is upset that Tom chose to investigate the quality of the water behind his back. He thinks that the report is exaggerated and that Tom wants to undermine Peter's position because he despises authority. Tom is a brilliant and respected doctor who apparently has always outdone his older brother. Not only is Peter confronted with an ugly truth that could destroy his dreams of the town turning into a wealthy and popular tourist stop, he must grapple with his own personal demons in dealing with his accomplished brother.

Peter spreads the word that his brother wants to ruin the town. The townspeople, who don't want to face the ugly prospects that the water report represents, chooses to believe Peter and ostracize Tom. Tom is not allowed to publish his report in the newspaper nor speak in a public venue about the dangers that exist in the town's water supply. No matter what Tom is confronted with, whether it is isolation, threats of violence and arrest, loss of income, and even being named "an enemy of the people," Tom will not abandon the truth and winds up fighting the entire town to do the right thing that is best for the town and for its people. Although when the play ends, Tom and his family are outcasts in the town, he is certain he has chosen the correct path. Although his fight for the truth is a lonely one, he knows in the end that he is doing the right thing and that it will make him stronger.



Act I, Scene 1

Act I, Scene 1 Summary

Mr. Kill has stopped by his daughter's home. His daughter is Catherine Stockmann who is married to Dr. Tom Stockmann. Mr. Billing, is an assistant editor of The People's Daily Messenger, is urging Mr. Kill to stay for dinner but Kill insists he can't stay. Dr. Tom Stockmann is out on a walk with his sons. While Kill is preparing to leave, Peter Stockmann, Tom's brother and Mayor of the town, stops by. While Kill fills his pipe and lights it, another knock is heard on the door—it is Mr. Hovstad who is the editor of the The People's Daily Messenger.

The Mayor and Hovstad discuss the proposed newly constructed Kirsten Springs located on the outskirts of the town. These springs, the Mayor, boasts, will be as popular as those in Carlsbad. People with illnesses and disabilities will come from all over the world to receive the healing powers of the Springs. Unemployment will no longer be a problem, revenues will flow into the city coffers, real estate will be more valuable and business will be humming.

Hovstad mentions that his newspaper was running an article written by Tom. It was an article which he had written early on recommending the Kirsten Springs development. Catherine boasts that Tom literally "invented" the Springs. Peter points out that it was he who had the original idea. While Tom has lots of good ideas, it takes a person like himself, he tells her, to put them into action. Catherine subtly reminds Peter that he and his brother get along beautifully and should share the credit.

Just then, Tom returns with his and Catherine's two sons, Morten and Ejlif, along with Captain Horster. Tom greets his brother and asks him to stay for dinner. Peter is resistant, insisting that Tom and his family eat too much. Tom loves to watch his kids eat since they are the ones who will stir up the future. Peter takes offense, inferring that settled things should not be stirred up. Tom claims that Peter's views are closed and narrow due to his lack of exposure to the world. Tom claims that without something to fight for, "you are dead." Tom enjoys living extravagantly after practically starving in the past when he was up north helping the poor people. Peter asks about Tom's article on the Springs. Tom is a little mysterious about its contents and hints that now abnormal conditions may exist in the Springs. Peter is annoyed. He is in charge of the Springs and responsible for the safety and welfare of the community and that if a problem exists with the water, he should be the first to know. Peter departs in a huff.

Tom, Catherine, Hovstad, and Captain Horster enjoy hot toddies. Petra, the Stockmann's eldest child, enters. She has a letter for Tom that the mailman handed to her earlier. Tom's been looking for this letter and excuses himself to his room so that he can read it privately. A short while later, Tom returns announcing that there is going to be big news for the town. The news is that the Springs which was so costly to develop is a "pest hole." He has learned that the waste that is produced by the tannery upstream



empties into the Springs, which ironically, are designed to help the ailing. Tom tells the stunned Catherine and his guests that, due to illnesses that seemed related to the water, he had suspected as much for some time. Acting on his concerns, he had sent samples of the water to the University for analysis. The letter he receives was from the lab and confirms that the water contains infectious organic matter.

The Springs must be dismantled and the town's entire water system revamped. Petra remembers that Tom warned the town not to build the Springs downstream from the tannery. Tom puts the five-page report in an envelope and tells the maid, Randine, to rush it over to Peter. Peter should be quite satisfied that this epidemic-causing situation was discovered before the Springs were officially opened. Tom tells Hovstad to include an article on the report in the next edition of his newspaper. Billing suggests that Dr. Stockmann be honored by the town for making this discovery, an idea with Tom soundly rejects. Everyone joins Petra's toast to her father and all are in a celebratory mood.

Act I, Scene 1 Analysis

Dr. Tom Stockmann and Peter Stockmann, mayor of the town, are brothers. The subtext suggests that the two brothers have long competed with one another. Tom, the more liberal and well educated of the two, seems to have always outdone his older brother. Peter asserts his importance by reminding his accomplished and brilliant brother that, as mayor, he is in charge of the town. The competition between the two brothers, and Peter's resentment of his brother's abilities, sets up the premise of "An Enemy of the People."

Peter, who in the past apparently took credit for some of his brother's ideas, boasts that he is a man of action unlike his brother who provides only rhetoric. Since it is obvious that a real schism will develop between the two brothers over the safety of the town's water supply, describing conflicts the two had experienced in the past sets the stage for a major confrontation. Tom, a doctor and a scientist, has overwhelming proof that the town's water supply is contaminated. Peter, the town's mayor who was boasting about the revenues and employment that the newly constructed Kirsten Springs will bring to the town, will be in no mood to hear about this change of fortunes. The two are headed for a major battle of wits and power.

A question is already posed before the audience. Will Peter's pride and long-term resentment of his brother prevent him from doing the right thing for the town and shut down the Springs? Will Tom, who is known as a fighter, take a stand against his brother for the sake of the town's health?



Act I, Scene 2

Act I, Scene 2 Summary

The next morning, Tom receives an envelope from Peter. He has returned the analysis with a note saying he'd drop by later to discuss the matter. Tom suspects that Peter will want to take credit for making the discovery of the contaminated water. Mr. Kill, who heard about the analysis, stops by asking if the story about the water system is true. Tom confirms the veracity of the story. Kill is convinced that Tom is trying to pull a fast one on his brother, the Mayor. Kill ignores Tom's protestations and assumes that the whole thing is a joke adding that the pompous Peter and the City Council deserve to be made jackasses out of.

Hovstad enters. Kill assumes that he's in on the "joke" and will have an article in the paper to convince the Mayor that the ruse is indeed true. Kill leaves before anyone, including his daughter, can change his mind. Hovstad and Tom discuss the possibility that instead of the impurities coming from Windmill Valley as Tom suggests, perhaps it comes from the same dump that is polluting the town's society. Hovstad connects everything that's wrong with the town on the bureaucrats. These men are all rich and powerful. Tom feels certain that even though these men built the Springs against his recommendations, that, with the new information from the University lab, that they will come to their senses and rebuild it.

Hovstad refers to the situation as a scandal and plans to portray it as such in his newspaper. Tom cautions him not to jump the gun—it's not a scandal yet. Hovstad tells Tom that when he took over as editor of *The Daily Messenger*, he vowed to fight the bureaucrats. He sees this situation as his opportunity to keep his word. Hovstad comments about his simple beginnings and that he has been the underdog all his life. Mr. Aslaksen, who is the printer for *The Daily Messenger* and represents small businessmen as well as the Temperance Society, stops by. He wants to hold a rally in favor of Dr. Stockmann's "campaign." Tom explains that there is no campaign, it is simply a scientific report. Mr. Aslaksen warns Hovstad not to include any radical elements in his reporting about the matter. Tom is glad to hear that his findings have support among good, solid townspeople.

After Aslaksen leaves, Hovstad accuses him of being cowardly and in fear of standing up to authority. Hovstad indicates he will print the analysis in the paper. Tom insists that he wait until after his discussion with Peter—he is positive that Peter will want it printed. Hovstad plans to write an editorial about the situation in the meantime. Hovstad departs.

Peter drops by for his discussion about the water analysis, beginning with an expression of his disappointment that Tom conducted the investigation behind his back. Tom defends himself by explaining that he didn't want to alarm people in the event he was mistaken. Peter accuses Tom of exaggerating the situation. Peter talked with the City Engineering department that morning. It was that department's finding that if the



overhaul of the water system is necessary, it is not an emergency and can wait. The project would take hundreds of thousands of crowns and two years to complete. Peter accuses Tom of being frivolous in not thinking of the costs of overhauling the town's water supply. Peter angrily tells Tom that he is bent on ruining his own town. Once word would get around about the report, no one would visit the town and tourism and revenues would suffer.

Peter is not convinced that the water is as dangerous as Tom portrays it to be. He wants Tom to agree to make recommendations for improvements to the Council rather than provide them with the damaging report. Tom is appalled that Peter would think he would cooperate with such trickery. Tom accuses Peter of being unable to admit that he approved the construction of the Springs in an desirable location. Peter tells Tom that he is going to withhold the report from the Board of the Kirsten Springs Institute, where Tom is employed as an adviser, and warns Tom not to let a word of it out. But, Tom, informs him Hovstad plans to print the report so that the townspeople are made aware of its findings.

Peter tells Tom that he is concerned about his own reputation, a reputation that has suffered from the wild ideas and actions of his own brother. He warns Tom that he and his family could suffer if he chooses to fight him on this matter. In addition, the public will be better off not knowing about the report. Peter then orders his brother to deny the accuracy of the report once it becomes known. When Tom vows to stand up for his findings, Peter warns him that he will see to it that the Institute fires him. Tom will fight Peter to the end, he tells him. It is he, Tom, who truly cares about the people of the town. Peter contends that Tom is determined to ruin the largest source of revenue the town has. In fact, Peter says, Tom is a traitor. The men almost come to blows but are separated by Catherine and Petra.

After Peter leaves, Catherine who supports her husband reminds him that Peter has all the power. But, Tom responds, he has the truth. Catherine stuns Tom and Petra when she says, "What good is truth, without power?" Catherine is concerned that the family will suffer if Tom has a public fight with his brother. Petra, who is very much like her father, defends him. Tom could not live with himself if he ignored the truth and lived with a lie. Catherine worries about the family if Tom loses his income from the Institute. The boys come home from school and sense that their parents are in the middle of a conflict. Tom tells the boys that he will be teaching them what a man is.

Act I, Scene 2 Analysis

All the characters have a different reaction to the truth. Miller (Ibsen) cleverly presents an unbiased scientific report from an apparently neutral University as the "truth." In that way, the "truth" has one definition in this drama and cannot be easily disregarded. Therefore, the characters must scramble and be creative in how they refute it in whole or in part. Tom Stockmann is a doctor and scientist. He insists that the report is accurate and above reproach and that the townspeople should be told that the report has found that the town's water supply is contaminated and should be reconstructed. Tom has



always been honest and sees no reason for not being completely forthcoming about this or any matter. His background and training and own personal characteristics and experiences have resulted in a view of life that objectively recognizes and supports the truth. To him, there are no options.

Hovstad, the newspaper editor, sees the report as a chance to expose the Mayor and City Council as incompetent bureaucrats. Hovstad sees himself as a victim of bureaucrats, having led a life void of special privilege unlike many of the rich and powerful men of the town's city council. He relates to the position of the powerless underdog and sees the town as the victim of dishonest, corrupt and incompetent politicians. He wants to use the truth to further his own private convictions and for retribution against real or perceived slights in his past.

Catherine feels powerless in the face of the truth. She fears for the welfare of her family. If Tom fights against the town's Mayor and Council, in favor of rebuilding the entire water system, she worries how it will impact her family. Tom may lose his position with the Kirsten Springs Institute and her family would suffer financially. The family struggled in the past and those memories and the possibility of returning to poverty causes Catherine to place more value in survival than in exposing the truth. Peter, who made a bad decision by placing the Springs in a less than ideal position, does not want his reputation hurt by the report about the contaminated water. Further, the town had the potential of becoming a boom town once the Springs began attracting tourists and people seeking medical benefit from them. Tourism would suffer, the tax revenues would decrease and unemployment would soar. On a more personal level, Peter does not want to be outdone once again by his brilliant, younger brother who had warned the Council against constructing the Springs in the location they ultimately selected.

Aslaksen supports reporting the results of the water analysis; however, he is most concerned with "moderation" which suggests that he wants the impact of the report to be softened. Aslaksen cautions against including any radical ideas in the report. Mr. Kill, Catherine's mother, is in the most denial. He thinks the report is a prank and that the whole matter is a joke designed to make the Mayor and the Council look like fools. The only person who supports Tom and the exposure of the truth is his daughter, Petra, who has many of the same qualities as her father.



Act II, Scene 1

Act II, Scene 1 Summary

Billing is reading the University report in the editorial office of The People's Daily Messenger. Billing finishes reading the report which he declares, to Hovstad, is devastating. Hovstad tells Billing to lower his voice as Aslaksen, the printer, is within earshot. Billing asserts that Aslaksen, who claims to be a moderate, is in fact just a coward and too yellow to really stand up for what he believes in. Hovstad comments that even Aslaksen will be rebelling if the Mayor rejects the report that calls for reconstruction of the water supply system. Hovstad predicts that the situation will lead to the bankruptcy of the town and will expose the Mayor and the Council as incompetent and corrupt.

Tom enters and tells Hovstad to print the report immediately. He tells the two men how Peter tried to force him into lying about the report. Peter has declared war, he tells them, and war is what he will get. Aslaksen overhears the commotion and cautions Tom to act with moderation. Tom insists that Aslaksen print the report in full, not changing one word. Billing is exhilarated since this could be the "day truth was born" he proclaims. Stockmann leaves the office to treat a patient who is waiting for him. Hovstad comments to Aslaksen that Tom might prove to be very valuable to them. Aslaksen recommends a moderate approach to the situation—after all they all have to live in the town. Unlike Billing and Hovstad, he wants the article limited to the current matter and is not in favor of going after the entire city administration. Aslaksen has seen plenty of "fire-eating" liberals temper their beliefs over time. But Aslaksen, a man of moderate ideas, has maintained the same convictions throughout the years.

Billing suggests to Hovstad that they seek the support of Tom who would back a newspaper that would not be fearful of exposing the truth or featuring unpopular opinions. Mr. Kill, his father-in-law, is wealthy and could provide the financial backing. Petra enters the newspaper office with a book that Hovstad asked her to translate for publication in the newspaper. Petra points out that everything in the book is against the liberal ideas they claim to support. Hovstad tells her that people like to read all kinds of things, and that after all, he and Billing are newspaper men. But that stance is surprising to her since Billing is known as a radical. Hovstad explains that people wear many hats. Billing, in fact, has applied for a job as secretary of the Magistrate. Petra accuses them of being hypocrites and of not standing for their principles. She suspects that they are using her father. Petra leaves in a huff.

Peter enters through a back door. He mentions the report to Hovstad who acts cagey, not admitting that he planned to print the report. Peter demands to see the report, promising to help with the "spelling." Peter glances at the report and asks Aslaksen if he was going to print it in its present form. Aslaksen replies that he is just the printer and defers to the editor—who he feels has the freedom to print it. When Peter points out that the community will be taxed if the water system is dismantled and rebuilt. Aslaksen does



not feel a taxation of the residents is justified since the Kirsten Springs Institute is a private corporation. Peter counters that the Institute built it at the town's request. If the people want it changed, they have to pay for it. He reminds Aslaksen that not only will he, as a small businessman, suffer from lack of tourism, he will be hit with a hefty tax to rebuild the Springs.

Hovstad corrects Peter's characterization of the contamination as a hallucination, insisting that the report is based on scientific fact. Peter angrily responds that the report is based on hatred of authority. Peter will see to it that the people understand that it is his brother's disrespect for authority and desire to destroy the town that is driving the report. Hovstad is suddenly torn. He had never thought how much the citizens would have to be taxed. He entertains the idea that perhaps Tom is an egomaniac. Peter supplies the most "practical" solution. He has conducted a review of the situation and determined the problems with the water can be corrected gradually at the town's expense without burdening the citizens with additional taxes.

Billing announces that Tom is about to enter the newspaper office. Hovstad and Billing show Peter out the back way so he can avoid running into his brother. Peter absentmindedly leaves his hat and cane behind. Aslaksen sits on Peter's hat to hide it. Tom wants to see the proofs but learns that there aren't any yet. Tom emphasizes again to Aslaksen that he wants no dinner held in his honor and does not want to be treated like a hero. Just then, Catherine enters. She is angry at Tom and demands that he come home immediately. She is upset that he is dragging his family into the "disaster." Catherine lashes out at Hovstad for being a fraud and making a fool out of Tom. She tells Tom that Hovstad is not his friend.

Tom is stunned to see that his brother's cane is leaning against the table. He demands to know what Peter was doing there. Peter returns for his forgotten items. To show Peter that his position is that of the people, Tom puts Peter's hat on. The cane, he tells him, represents the baton of command which is handed down from person to person.

Aslaksen tells Tom that since he himself is not a scientist he cannot attest to the report's accuracy. Hovstad has changed his mind about printing it. The town will not want to rebuild the Springs. Aslaksen refuses to print the report as a pamphlet. Tom vows to march through town and spread the truth about the water system.

Act II, Scene 1 Analysis

The hypocrisy of the characters begins to unravel. Although Hovstad and Billing are known as radical liberals, Petra exposes both men when she realizes that the book they want translated for inclusion in the newspaper stands against every idea they reportedly support. Hovstad explains that, bottom line, they are "newspapermen" which indicates their willingness to compromise their convictions for profit and success. Billing, who is known as a radical who distrusts the bureaucrats, has applied for a position with the same government that he derides. Hovstad reveals in a comment to Aslaksen that Tom



could prove "useful" to them, indicating that he is not above manipulating the situation for his own benefit versus truly supporting an idea he believes in.

Peter, whose concern with self has never been hidden, displays even more bitterness and dishonesty. He threatens his own brother with the loss of income unless he is willing to lie and swear that the water analysis report is inaccurate. Peter vows to ruin his brother. By controlling the newspaper and the town halls, Peter disallows his brother from speaking out publicly about the danger the citizens face from the contaminated water. Peter is able to get the formerly "liberal" newspaper on his side by telling the staff that if the Springs need to be reconstructed, it will cause an increase in taxes. Hovstad fears loss of readership if he supports a campaign that will cost the residents more tax dollars. Peter tells the others that Tom is not concerned with the citizens, rather he is a man who hates authority and wants to destroy the town. All of Peter's words are self-serving and shows his lack of concern for the people of the town who he was elected to protect. The truth is unimportant to him—he is only concerned with his own power and reputation.

Tom has lost all support. Aslaksen, who at first trusted the report, indicates that since he's not a scientist, he cannot attest to its accuracy. He glosses over the fact that Tom is a scientist and believes in the report. Aslaksen is most concerned with keeping his taxes low and avoiding a disruption in the town's success. Catherine has become enraged that Hovstad plans to use her husband for his own purposes. Petra continues to come to her father's defense and proves to be an outspoken and idealistic young woman who, like her father, is not fearful of standing up for what she believes in.

Miller, having adapted Ibsen's work in 1950 shortly after the end of World War II, is making not-so-veiled references to Nazi Germany, the Soviet Union and other countries that suppress freedom of speech. As in these countries, the newspaper in this town is controlled by the government and unpopular opinions are not welcomed in a public venue.



Act II, Scene 2

Act II, Scene 2 Summary

Captain Horster is in his house, tidying up the kitchen when Billing enters. Horster has agreed to hold a public meeting in his house. Even though he's not political himself, Horster has traveled to many countries that don't allow people to speak publicly about unpopular things. Horster doesn't have an opinion on the current water contamination controversy. Members of the town begin to enter for the meeting. Catherine and Petra enter. Catherine wonders why the people outside don't come in. Horster assumes they're waiting for the Mayor. Billing tells Catherine that the meeting will prove to not be a place for ladies. She asks him why he printed the Mayor's editorial and not her husband's report. She is upset—everyone on the street is against him.

Peter enters the gathering. Apparently Tom is rounding up more people for the meeting. Peter warns Petra that he could have her arrested for posting a large sign on the town hall. Petra dares him to do so but he claims he was just teasing her. Tom arrives ushering in more townspeople. When he begins to speak some complain that there is no chairman for the meeting—that there must be some control of the proceedings. Tom responds that the gathering is not a meeting, it was advertised as a lecture. Against the objection of some, Aslaksen is named chairman of the meeting. Several men speak up. They are wary of Dr. Stockmann because of the things they've read about him in the paper. Tom explains that he had to hold a lecture since no one would rent him a hall and he could not get his report printed in the newspaper. Aslaksen cautions that opinions should be moderated.

Aslaksen allows Peter to talk first. He quickly announces that Tom, his brother, wants to destroy Kirsten Springs and thereby ruin the town. A man in the crowd shouts that Tom should be run out of town. Peter wants no violence. He only wants the town to understand that his brother's motive is to ridicule and destroy authority. In ordinary times in a democracy, all people's voices should be heard. But in the current crises, his brother's words will only cause chaos and confusion. Although Tom tries to defend himself, the crowd grows angry and starts to advance on him. Peter goes on to promise that if the Springs are allowed to remain as they are, within five years everyone in town will be wealthier, schools will be improved, the population will grow. On the other hand, if his brother's attack is allowed to be heard, he will defame and ruin a town which had the potential of becoming a top resort spot.

Peter encourages those present to band together and prevent Tom from speaking. He makes a motion that Tom be prohibited from reading his report. His motion is met with a round of applause from the crowd. Aslaksen begins to take a vote. Tom protests, demanding to speak. Petra calls a point of order—her father wants to discuss the motion. Tom begins to read the report but is met with loud protests. Tom makes a compromise—he will not mention the Institute by name. Aslaksen allows Tom to proceed. First Tom congratulates Hovstad for his radicalism. Hovstad denies that his



approach has been radical. Tom corrects himself—stating that in the past Hovstad had fought for free speech. Hovstad responds that if the majority of the town is against something, he will not impose it on them.

Tom begins his remarks with a recollection of his time up north when he helped the poor who had little to eat and nothing to keep them warm. He explains to the crowd that the dream he had for the Springs was not to bring in tourists; rather, it was to provide a way to cure people who were sick and dying. Also, he felt the town would benefit from the wisdom and knowledge of visitors from all over the world. Several in the crowd call Tom a revolutionist. Tom responds that he does revolt—he revolts against the conventional wisdom that the majority is always right! Hovstad calls him an aristocrat. Tom references how the majority crucified Jesus. And how Galileo was brought to his knees for teaching that the earth orbited around the sun. The majority is never right until it does right. Hovstad announces that Tom is no longer his friend. Tom blurts out that the water is poison. The crowd is angry and threatens violence. The Mayor demands quiet.

The people demand that Tom be thrown out of the meeting. Tom tells them that if he's not allowed to say his piece, he will go to newspapers outside the community so that the entire country will learn about the water contamination. Hovstad asserts that Tom wants to ruin the town. Others call for his arrest, calling him a traitor and a revolutionary. Aslaksen, the man of moderation, suggests that Tom be declared an enemy of the people. Only Captain Horster and the town drunk vote against the declaration. Tom is officially named an enemy of the people. Tom asks if he and his family can have passage on his ship on his next trip to America. Horster tells Tom that they are welcome on any of his journeys. The crowd grows angrier, repeatedly calling him "enemy."

Act II, Scene 2 Analysis

The abuse of power by the government and the fear that the people have of organized government is at the forefront in this act. Peter, the Mayor, is allowed to talk extensively about the evil motivations of his brother, Tom. Although it was Tom who advertised the meeting as a lecture where he planned reveal the truth about the town's water supply. His brother's filibuster, the shouts of the angry crowd and the failure of the meeting chairman to be fair, keep Tom from speaking. Even though Tom plans only to provide information, the crowd insists that a chairman be named to "control" the meeting which is another way in which those opposing Tom suppress free speech.

Peter, who makes wild, unsubstantiated claims about his brother's motivation, is not questioned about his comments. His words are accepted by everyone and he is able to turn the entire town against his brother. Tom is finally allowed to speak and tells an angry crowd that the majority is not always right. But even though Tom had been a respected doctor and scientist, the threat of the government in raising taxes and making life miserable for the townspeople overcomes their of reason. Even though Tom has no reason to lie about the report—in fact, it is a University's report that finds the water unsafe—he is given no credence. It is easier and for everyone to believe Peter rather than take the risk of taking a stand against the government.



Since Tom is not be easily silenced, the town people threaten him with violence, arrest and exile. The "moderate" Aslaksen makes a motion that Tom be named an "enemy of the people." Tom represents the "truth." By making him the "enemy of the people," they are symbolically making truth their enemy.

Act III

Act III Summary

Tom and Catherine are at home where, late in the night, they are picking up stones that have been thrown at their house while their housekeeper is sweeping up broken glass. Catherine tells Tom that the window repairman has refused to fix their windows, afraid of retribution from others. They find a letter among the debris and learn that they are being evicted from their home. Tom tells Catherine they will be fine when they relocate to America. Catherine really doesn't want to move to America—how can they be sure it will be better or any different there?

Tom expresses his disappointment that his former "liberal" friends totally abandoned him. Petra enters the room and tells her parents that she was fired from her job as a school teacher. She was let go because of anonymous letters received about her radical views. Captain Horster stops by to see how the family is faring. Tom asks when they will be able to sail with him. Unfortunately, Captain Horster lost his position with his company because of his friendship with Tom and will no longer be in command of the ship. He reassures Tom that he will be able to secure a position as ship captain with another company. Peter then stops by with news that Tom has lost his position with the Institute. He claims the Board had no choice based on the current public opinion.

Peter tells Tom that he is totally ruined. A petition is being circulated to each family to vow not to call on Tom for their medical needs. Peter feels things have gone too far—he really didn't want his brother destroyed. Tom accuses Peter of being concerned that Tom will spread the news about the town's water to other parts of the country. Peter admits that he is worried about Tom publicizing the report. Peter appeals to Tom to behave more sensibly for once. Peter asks Tom to sign a statement that he had exaggerated the results of the water analysis. If he does so, he will have his job back and Peter's promise that the water system will gradually be brought up to speed.

Peter accuses Tom of being in cahoots with his father-in-law. Mr. Kill is buying up every share of Kirsten Springs stock he can get his hands on. Peter feels that Tom took his stance about the water to drive down the price of stock and thus allow his father-in-law to buy it up at a depressed rate. Tom refuses to sign any such statement. Peter warns Tom that if he attempts to publicize the report in other regions, he will issue a subpoena for his arrest and launch a conspiracy investigation against him. Kill enters just as Peter departs. Kill grins as he shows Tom the large stack of Kirsten Springs stock he just purchased.

Kill tells Tom that the townspeople are upset at him mainly because they believe the report. Kill, who owns the tannery that is polluting the water, tells Tom that he will not risk the reputation of his family name by operating a company that is polluting the town's water and making people sick. Kill bought up the shares with the money he intended to leave to Catherine and the children so therefore Tom is actually the owner the stock.



Since he owns the stock, Kill reasons, he will be compelled to reverse his stance on the water. If he doesn't, it will confirm that he is crazy! Kill suggests that perhaps the people who seemed to become sick from the water were already sick when they came to the town or became sick from something else like food. How can Tom be sure it was the water? Tom begins to show some signs of doubt, admitting that nothing is ever 100 percent accurate.

Kill attributes much of Tom's action to the hatred he has for his brother. Tom denies he hates his brother and that it was not his motivation for wanting to publicize the report. Tom asks Kill to sell back the shares so that Catherine can have what's rightfully hers. Kill warns him to retract his words or he will give the stocks away to charity. All Kill wants is for his family to have a good name. Kill leaves, demanding an answer right away. Hovstad and Aslaksen enter, asking to speak with Tom. Tom lashes out at them for abandoning him and their own principles.

Hovstad tells Tom that the newspaper will agree to support him. The paper couldn't support him at the meeting because it would have been ruined and gone bankrupt. But now they are willing to wage a campaign fully supporting him—telling the people that he forced the stock down so that he could own the Springs and make the necessary improvements for the sake of public safety. However, Hovstad fears they will lose money when they first start showing their support for him and ask that he get Kill's financial backing until support builds for Tom. Tom would like to clean up his name although he never thought there was anything wrong with it in the first place.

Tom maintains that the water is indeed poison. He asks Hovstad if the paper will support the tax that will be levied for the reconstruction of the Springs. Hovstad insists that the important thing is to get Tom back as medical adviser to the Springs—he could see to it that the reconstruction is delayed. Tom realizes that Hovstad wants to make Tom a hero, repair his reputation but avoid addressing the real condition of the water. Tom is not interested in their proposal. Hovstad and Aslaksen depart, warning him that he will wind up in prison without the backing of the newspaper. Hovstad taunts Tom by declaring that he is a madman who is hurting his own family. Tom's sons return early from school. Morten was beat up at school for defending his father. The teacher thought it best that both boys stay home all week. Morten swears he will kill the next kid that calls his father a traitor. The incident with his sons does not Tom change his mind. He is called an enemy of the people but he has the truth. The water is poisoned. Tom orders Hovstad and Aslaksen to leave his house. Tom announces that they will stay in the town and see the crisis through. He will establish a new school where he and Petra will teach children to be free and independent people. Horster volunteers the use of his house for the school. Catherine is worried because everyone in town is against them. Tom assures her that those who fight for the truth are often alone but they are made stronger because of their struggle.



Act III Analysis

Things have deteriorated for the entire family. Tom has been called a traitor and an enemy of the people; Petra lost her job; the sons are beaten up for defending their father; the family is losing their house; and, Catherine is worried about the very survival of her family. Not only has Tom lost his income from the Institute, a petition is being circulated asking the townspeople not to use the medical services of Tom—further decreasing his income. The only happy person in the family is Mr. Kill, who bought up all the stock for the Springs which lost value due to the controversy. The author piles as much bad news on Tom and his family as possible to showcase the strength of the main character. The storyline keeps forcing Tom in a corner—trying to make him give up his fight and agree to put his head in the sand like the rest of the town. But no amount of adversity compels Tom to even consider abandoning the truth.

In this story, Tom is symbolic of the truth which is often difficult for people to face. Many people who are faced with an unpleasant truth often choose to deny it or avoid dealing with it as many of the townspeople do in this play. But just as the truth doesn't go away, Tom does not "go away" either. No matter what names the townspeople called him or what repercussions they threatened him with, Tom was still there just as the truth about the water was still there no matter how much the town didn't want it to be. The "truth" and Tom's insistence in exposing it would eventually force the townspeople face some undesirable options. They could ignore the warnings and drink the water and become ill or even die. Or they could choose to fix the water system and be burdened with hefty taxes. Neither option was popular—however, their refusal to face the facts did not diminish their veracity.

Rather than escape to a new and uncertain land, Tom decided that his family would stay and see the crisis through. He vowed to teach the town's children the importance of exposing the truth. When people take an unpopular position, they are often derided by others and feel alone. But as Tom points out to his wife, the struggle to expose the truth and believe in one's conviction makes one stronger and builds character and serves an example to younger people.



Characters

Dr. Tom Stockmann

Dr. Tom Stockmann is a scientist and a medical doctor. His brother, Peter, is the mayor of the small town where they both live. Tom becomes embroiled in a bitter conflict with his brother and ultimately with the entire town over a controversy surrounding the safety of the town's water system. Tom had suspected that the town's water supply was tainted and collected samples of the water which he sent to a University lab for analysis. The result of the water analysis confirmed Tom's fears that the water was indeed contaminated.

Feeling certain that his brother will be grateful that the contamination was discovered before the newly developed Kirsten Springs was opened to the public, Tom provides the University's report to Peter for his review and action. Peter is angered by the report and accuses Tom of being a traitor and wanting to undermine his authority. Peter manages to turn the entire town against his brother. But no matter what Tom is threatened with including violence, incarceration, isolation and being officially named "an enemy of the people," Tom refuses to abandon the truth and his struggle to have the townspeople warned about the danger of their water supply. Even though he has little support, Tom knows that he could not ignore the truth and that his fight to expose it to the townspeople would only make him stronger, build character and be serve as a good example for his children.

Mayor Peter Stockmann

Peter Stockmann is the mayor of the town where he and his younger brother, Dr. Tom Stockmann, live. Peter is happily anticipating the opening of the newly constructed springs located on the edge of town. Peter is certain that this new venture, which he approved, will increase tourism, boost the town's revenues and solve its unemployment problems.

When Peter is presented with the grim news that the water in the springs is contaminated with an infectious bacteria, he is extremely disappointed. His disappointment soon turns to anger and revenge when he decides that the person behind the water analysis, his own brother Dr. Stockmann, is bent on ruining his reputation and destroying the town. Through his lies and by denying his brother the opportunity to publicize his report, Peter convinces the majority of the townspeople that his brother is out to destroy the town and raise their taxes.

Peter is most concerned with his own position and power and is willing to risk the health of the people who elected him to protect them. Peter is threatened by his brother, a scientist who sees the truth as black or white rather than in degrees, and by the prospect that his dreams of a successful term as mayor have been dashed. Peter is



dealing with the current crisis as well as a past in which his younger, brighter brother had always outdone him. The bitterness of his past collide with his current predicament and his weakness of character compels him to choose the coward's way out by concealing the truth and ruining the career and reputation of his own brother who was attempting to do the right thing.

Catherine Stockmann

Catherine Stockmann is the wife of Dr. Tom Stockmann. While Catherine loves and supports her husband, she fears that his outspokenness about the town's water supply with eventually harm her family.

Hovstad

Hovstad is the editor of The People's Daily Messenger, the town's liberal newspaper. When Dr. Stockmann receives the water analysis report, Hovstad wants to immediately publish it in his newspaper. When he learns that his newspaper would have to support a tax increase, which would upset his readers, her refuses to publish it.

Aslaksen

Aslaksen owns the small printing business that prints The People's Daily Messenger. Aslaksen is politically a moderate and tries to caution Tom Stockmann against making any radical statements about the water supply analysis.

Billing

Billing is an associate editor of The People's Daily Messenger. He is a proud liberal and an opponent of the town's administration. However, Billing is exposed as a hypocrite when it is discovered that he has applied for the position of Secretary of the Magistrate.

Petra Stockmann

Petra Stockmann is the eldest child of Tom and Catherine Stockmann. She is a school teacher who loses her position when she speaks out in support of her father. She is idealistic and has many of the same characteristics as her father.

Captain Horster

Captain Horster lives in the town and is the commander of a ship which travels all over the world. He allows Tom to gather townspeople at his home so that Tom can warn them



about the contaminated water. Captain Horster loses his position because of his support for Tom Stockmann.

Morten Kill

Morten Kill is Tom Stockmann's father-in-law. When he hears about the water report, he thinks it's a prank and designed to make a fool out of the mayor and city council. He is a wealthy man who buys up all the stock of Kirsten Springs after it is devalued due to the contamination report.

Morten and Ejlif

Morten and Ejlif are the young sons of Catherine and Tom Stockmann. Morten is punched in the eye at school when he defends his father from kids who are calling him a traitor. After this incident, Tom decides that the boys will be educated at home by him and Petra.



Objects/Places

Small Unnamed Town

"An Enemy of the People" takes place in a small and unnamed town. There are hints that the town is in Europe. Henrik Ibsen, who wrote the drama that the Arthur Miller play is based on, lived in Norway and the surnames of the characters appear to be Scandinavian. One element of the play is the main character's wish to move to America which supports the probability that the play takes place in Europe.

Dr. Tom Stockmann's Residence

Both scenes in Act I take place in the residence of Dr. Tom Stockmann. Stockmann lives in the house with his wife, Catherine, and three children—Petra, Morten and Ejlif.

The University's Water Analysis Report

When Dr. Stockmann suspects that the town's water supply might be contaminated, he sends water samples to a local university lab for analysis. The report that the university sends back to Dr. Stockmann is what sparks the controversy and the conflict between the two brothers.

The People's Daily Messenger

The People's Daily Messenger is the town's local newspaper. The newspaper is known as a "liberal" publication that keeps a watchful eye on the town's administration.

The Editorial Offices of the Daily Messenger

The conflict between Tom and Peter Stockmann erupts in the first scene of Act II in the editorial offices of the People's Daily Messenger. The hypocrisy of the "liberal" newspaper is revealed in these offices.

Kirsten Springs

Mayor Peter Stockmann is anticipating the opening of Kirsten Springs which is a newly constructed medicinal bath center just on the outskirts of the town. The Springs is at the center of the controversy about the safety of the town's water supply.



Windmill Valley

Dr. Stockmann theorizes that the unsafe water that pours into Kirsten Springs originates in Windmill Valley.

The Tannery

Dr. Stockmann's father-in-law, Morten Kill, is the owner of the tannery in Windmill Valley which is thought to be responsible for dumping toxic materials into the town's water supply.

Captain Horster's House

When Dr. Stockmann is unable to publish his report about the town's water supply in the local newspaper and is prohibited from holding a meeting in a public forum, Captain Horster hosts the doctor's lecture in his home.

America

Dr. Stockmann wants to move his family to America where the freedom of speech will allow him and his family to speak openly about unpopular issues.



Themes

Freedom of Speech

Having adapted Ibsen's drama shortly after World War II ended, Miller obviously had Nazi Germany in mind when focusing on a man's attempt to tell his town important information he has discovered but is prohibited from doing so by the government. He is not allowed to print the information in the local newspaper and is banned from discussing the matter in a public forum. Peter Stockmann, the mayor of the town and Dr. Stockmann's brother, who is suppressing Dr. Stockmann's freedom of speech, tells him that the people are better off not knowing the truth.

Just as Hitler's diatribes were left unanswered, the Mayor is allowed to speak freely to the townspeople and tell them lies about Dr. Stockmann and his motivations without being questioned or allowing the doctor to defend himself. That Dr. Stockmann wants to move his family to America, the world's foremost defender of the freedom of speech, is another indication that the threats that Europe faced from Nazi Germany were not far from Miller's thoughts when he adapted the play.

Believing Mayor Stockmann's propaganda and unwilling to consider the ugly truth, the townspeople turn on Dr. Stockmann. When he persists in telling the people the truth, which is vital information for their long-term benefit, the citizens of the town turn on him demanding his arrest and exile. Those who support Dr. Stockmann including his daughter and Captain Horster who hosts a meeting for him, lose their employment. Dr. Stockmann himself loses all his sources of income as a result of his struggle to inform the public of the information he has. All these actions against Stockmann and his handful of supporters are done in the name of the suppression of speech. That Dr. Stockmann wants to move his family to America, known for its laws that defend the freedom of speech, is another sign that the play took place in a nation whose society was oppressed and where "truth" was what the government decided it was.

Hypocrisy

When Dr. Stockmann first receives the lab report that the town's water is contaminated, the liberals who run the town's newspaper, "The People's Daily Messenger," are anxious to reprint the report so that the townspeople are immediately made aware of the toxic condition that exists in the town's water supply. The editor, Hovstad, and the assistant editor, Billing, are both proud progressives and boast about their liberal beliefs. However, as the story progresses and they learn more information about the water issue, they begin to abandon their philosophies and liberal convictions.

When the Mayor, Peter Stockmann, tells the newspaper editors that the residents of the town will have to be heavily taxed to pay for the reconstruction of the water system, the men begin to change their plans. They know that if they wage a campaign in their



newspaper that involves a tax increase they will lose readership and thereby income. They decide to hold off on printing the damaging report, a decision that stands against their convictions but in favor of their coffers.

Billing, who claims to be a radical liberal, is anxious to print the report in the newspaper initially so that the town's mayor and council could be exposed as incompetent and corrupt. However, the thought of losing money made him less anxious to print the damaging exposé. Petra exposes both men when she angrily points out that the book they wanted her to translate for publication in the newspaper is against everything they supposedly believe in. Their weak response is that they must provide what the readers want.

Convictions and Beliefs

The characters in Arthur Miller's "An Enemy of the People, who stick with their convictions can literally be counted on one hand. The protagonist, Dr. Tom Stockmann, is a medical doctor and a scientist. When he is presented with a scientific analysis that finds the town's water supply to be contaminated, to him there is nothing to weigh or decide. The report is an unbiased lab report that is accurate. When trouble begins to brew over the report and the issue becomes a huge controversy, Dr. Stockmann's wife, Catherine, asks what truth is without power. She is expressing her concern that if her husband became embroiled in a battle with the city administration that her family might suffer as a result. As history will attest, fear sometimes make people abandon even closely held convictions.

The newspaper editors who boast about their liberal credentials quickly abandon them when the going gets tough. Not wanting to take on an unpopular stand and lose readership and revenue, the editors decide to deny the doctor's request to print the damaging report. The mayor's belief system appears to be limited to his own interests. Other than what it does to him or for him, the truth is meaningless to him.

Other than Doctor Stockmann, only Petra, his eldest child, sticks to her principles and speaks out for the truth to be exposed. While Captain Horster supports Dr. Stockmann's right to speak out, he is apolitical and has no opinion on the controversy.



Style

Point of View

"An Enemy of the People," a three-act play by Arthur Miller, is based on the drama by Henrik Ibsen. Ibsen was a late 19th century dramatist who focused many of his works on "truth." Arthur Miller, who adapted the Ibsen drama for the American stage, focuses on truth and by extension, on the suppression of speech. Since World War II had just concluded a few years before Miller adapted the play, an allusion to Nazi Germany is apparent in Miller's version of the play. Much of the dialog in the play depicts the reaction of people to news that requires difficult changes and decisions. The mayor of the city decides that the people are better off if they don't the truth and it is the mayor who will decide what the truth is. The Mayor risks the health and well-being of his "people" in order to maintain his position and power. Miller has one character state that the source of the water's contamination might be the same one that tainted the town's people—a rather transparent reference to a society that has been "poisoned."

The mayor is free to prattle on about the evil motivations of Dr. Stockmann for wanting to publicize the report that found the town's water supply to be contaminated. The people, like sheep and like much of the German populace during Hitler's rise, did not question his propaganda about the water supply or the his attack on the doctor who was not even allowed to defend himself. When the protagonist states his desire to move to America, the preeminent defender of speech, it is obvious that Miller has made an allegorical connection between the ostensible story and Nazi Germany.

Setting

The settings that are used in the three-act play, "An Enemy of the People," are all confined to a small, unnamed town that is most probably located in a European country. Since Arthur Miller based his play on the Henrik Ibsen drama, the location could be Norwegian since that was Ibsen's homeland and because the characters in the play have Scandinavian sounding names. The play begins in the living room of the home of the protagonist, Dr. Tom Stockmann. There is activity between Stockmann's living room and the adjoining dining room where some of Stockmann's guests are seated. The story begins in the Stockmann home in the evening. Scene 2 of Act I is also set in the Stockmann home; however, it takes place the next morning.

The first scene of Act II, takes place in the editorial office of the town's local newspaper, "The People's Messenger." There is a front entrance to the newspaper offices as well as a rear entrance. The back entrance is used when Peter is visiting the office and wants to avoid running into his brother, Tom, who is approaching. Scene 2 of Act II is set in the home of a supporter of Dr. Stockmann. Captain Horster lends the use of his home to Stockmann who wants to hold a public meeting about the danger to the town's water



supply. When Stockmann's meeting is held in Captain Horster's house, a temporary platform is constructed so that the speakers are elevated above those gathered.

Language and Meaning

"An Enemy of the People," a play that Arthur Miller adapted from Henrik Ibsen's drama, is an allegory about truth and the freedom of speech. The play takes place in an unnamed town, presumably in Europe, and was written just after World War II ended. It is not a stretch to assume that the destruction of society caused by Nazi Germany was at the forefront of the writer's mind when adapting the Ibsen drama. Just as in war torn Germany when brother fought brother, the play focuses on the conflict between Dr. Tom Stockmann and Mayor Peter Stockmann—brothers who have vastly different views on the truth and how to deal with it. One character suggests that the contamination of the town's water supply might have originated from the same source that had contaminated the town's society.

Mayor Stockmann, a politician concerned about his position and power, tells Dr. Stockmann that the people would be better off not knowing the truth. As a physician and scientist, Dr. Stockmann sees things in black and white and cannot fathom compromising the truth or abandoning it. Miller uses the characters in the play to showcase how different people react to an ugly truth, one that must be dealt with and that has no easy solutions. Catherine, Dr. Stockmann's wife, feels that truth is meaningless without power. The editor of the local newspaper has his own agenda and wants to use the "truth" and Dr. Stockmann to fight his own personal battle. Aslaksen, a proud moderate, wants to temper the truth so that it is more acceptable. The angry townspeople want to arrest or exile Dr. Stockmann for wanting to tell them the truth.

Structure

"An Enemy of the People," is a three act play by Arthur Miller which he adapted for the American stage from the drama by Henrik Ibsen. The entire play covers a time frame of several consecutive days. Act I, Scene 1, takes place in the evening in Dr. Tom Stockmann's living room. In this scene, the premise of the play is established. Dr. Stockmann receives a scientific analysis that the town's water supply is contaminated. Act I, Scene 2, takes place in the same setting the next morning. In this second scene of the first act, the conflict between brothers Tom and Peter Stockmann erupts. The two disagree on what action to take as a result of the report that the town's water supply is toxic.

Act II, Scene 1, takes place in the editorial offices of the local newspaper, The People's Daily Messenger. In this first scene of the second act, the hypocrisy of the liberal newspaper is revealed. Act II, Scene 2, takes place in the residence of Captain Horster. In this scene, Dr. Stockmann holds a lecture at Captain Horster's home to announce the results of the water analysis. He is forced to hold the meeting at Horster's house since

he is been prohibited from publishing the report in the newspaper and from holding a meeting in a public forum.

Act III provides the final resolution to the conflict. Despite the isolation and threats of violence that Dr. Stockmann faces, he refuses to abandon the truth. The play concludes with Dr. Stockmann's realization that fighting for the truth is a lonely but worthy battle.



Quotes

"I don't want you to think I blame the Doctor for using your columns. After all, every performer goes for the audience that applauds him most" (Act I, Scene 1, pg. 8.)

"Society, Captain, is like a ship—every man should do something to help navigate the ship" (Act I, Scene 1, pg. 14.)

"You work so much. My teacher says that work is a punishment for our sins" (Act I, Scene 1, pg. 16.)

"The public doesn't need new ideas—the public is much better with old ideas." (Act II, Scene 1, pg. 31.)

"Without power, what good is truth?" (Act II, Scene 1, pg. 34.)

"It happens to be a fact. Plus another fact—you'll forgive me for talking about facts in a newspaper office" (Act II, Scene 1, pg. 43.)

"The people haven't spoken. And I have the people because I have the truth, my friends" (Act II, Scene 1, pg. 47.)

"Nor does one automatically become 'A Man' by having human shape, and living in a house, and feeding one's face—and agreeing with one's neighbors" (Act II, Scene 2, pg. 57.)

"I don't admit it! I proclaim it now! I am in revolt against the age-old lie that the majority is always right!" (Act II, Scene 1, pg. 58.)

"In a storm, there's just one thing to remember—it will pass...unless it kills you" (Act III, pg. 64.)

"It means, my dear, that we are all alone. And there'll be a long night before it's day" (Act III, pg. 77.)

"You are fighting for the truth, and that's why you're alone. And that makes you strong—we're the strongest people in the world. And the strong must learn to be lonely" (Chapter III, pg. 77.)



Topics for Discussion

Why doesn't Tom initially tell Peter and the others that he suspected that the town's water supply may be tainted? Who conducts the analysis of the Spring water? What are their findings?

Why does Peter choose to discredit the report that his brother, Tom, receives on the condition of the Spring water? What is Peter most concerned with in his position as Mayor of the town relative to the water system? What motivations does Peter give Tom for wanting to publicize the water analysis?

What does Peter fear if the water report is publicized? How does he convince Hovstad not to publish the water report? Why will Peter be blamed for the dangerous condition of the water? What methods of intimidation does Peter use?

How does Hovstad plan to use the water system issue to his benefit? How does he first feel toward the Mayor and the other politicians in the town's administration? What are his feelings about the men in charge of the city administration based on?

What character professes to be a moderate? In what ways does this character strive for moderation in the treatment of the water system matter? Why does this character name Tom an enemy of the people?

What character is very much like Tom Stockmann? What leads this character to expose Hovstad and Billing as hypocrites? What results from this character's outspoken defense of Tom?

The denial of what human right is at the heart of the story of Tom Stockmann's struggle to expose the truth? In what ways are Tom's rights violated? How are Tom's opinions suppressed?