

Mayor \ Stockmann

Mayor Not a word. All those tests and not a word to me.

Stockmann I needed to be certain.

Mayor And now you are?

Stockmann You've read it. Is it not obvious?

Mayor And you intend to present this to the committee as an official statement?

Stockmann That's my intention, yes.

Mayor You chose to use some very vivid wording. 'Lethal'. 'Toxic'. What else? 'Chronic poisoning'. A bit theatrical, no?

Stockmann Taken internally or exposed to bare skin, the water is poisonous. It is lethal. I don't use such words lightly. When I wrote it I had in my head all the poor, sick people who come here in good faith and pay us a fortune to improve their health.

Mayor And to remedy this all we have to do is simply build another sewer that will drain away the first sewer at Molledalen, yes? Then dig up and re-lay our entire water system?

Stockmann There's no other viable solution.

Mayor This morning I asked an engineer for an estimate - confidentially of course. The cost of your proposed changes? Several hundred thousand.

Stockmann That much?

Mayor Which would take at least two years to complete. During which the Baths would have to close - unless you imagine people would continue to come here knowing they may be 'chronically poisoned' -?

Stockmann I'll say it again. That is what will happen.

Mayor This year will be our biggest so far. And, of course, neighboring towns won't just stand by. They've seen our success. Within a year, I guarantee you, they'll have transformed themselves into bathing resorts and we will be forgotten. A ghost town. No one will ever come back to us. Your report will have ruined us.

Stockmann Ruined?

Mayor Did you never for a moment consider that, Thomas?

Stockmann Tell me what you think should be done?

Mayor After some consideration, I am not convinced it's quite as bad as you make out.

Stockmann No, it's more likely worse. Or it will be, in the summer when the weather gets warmer and the bacteria multiply.

Mayor I really do believe you've exaggerated the case. A competent doctor knows how to treat a patient's symptoms and remedy them if they become too pronounced . . .

Stockmann What are you saying?

Mayor The water system that we installed will remain where it is and will continue to serve the town. Now, it could well be in the near future, that the committee does come to an agreement that there are sufficient grounds for certain improvements.

Stockmann I don't understand how any doctor could do that. I do understand deception.

Mayor This is not deception.

Stockmann It is fraud and suppression of the truth and it shows contempt for the people who live in this community.

Mayor Thomas, how else can I put it? I am just not convinced that there is any immediate danger to public health.

Stockmann Yes, you are. My report couldn't be clearer. You are but you won't admit it. You and your committee rushed through the siting of the water pipes. No consultation whatsoever.

Mayor I govern and work for the good of this town and its people. I cannot be associated with a scandal. I won't have that. Your report will not go to the committee. It will not leave this room. I may bring the matter up at a later date.

Stockmann There are people who already know.

Mayor (*after a moment*) You've told Hovstad . . .

Stockmann Who will make sure you do your duty.

Mayor Reckless, Thomas. Stupid. Irresponsible. Do you know what the consequences of this could be? For all of you?