

STOCKMANN MRS. STOCKMANN PETRA

(Stockmann's study. Bookshelves. Cupboards with medicines inside. The windows are smashed. Stockmann in dressing gown and slippers is bent over raking a small rock out from under a cupboard. He adds it to a pile of them on his writing desk.)

Stockmann Another one.

Mrs. Stockmann What are you doing?

Stockmann Building a sacred monument to ignorance. I want the children to see it every day. Has the girl gone for the window repairman yet?

Mrs. Stockmann I've already told you. He's refusing to come.

Stockmann He's too scared to. Coward.

Mrs. Stockmann (hands him a letter) This came.

Stockmann (reads it) Our landlord giving us notice.

Mrs. Stockmann Oh . . .

Stockmann 'It is with regret . . . I have no option . . . My apologies.' We don't give a damn, do we? We're leaving for the other side of the world.

Mrs. Stockmann Thomas, the United States of America is so far away . . .

Stockmann How can I stay? I'm a public enemy. I'm hated. People are smashing our windows with rocks! Look, my trousers are ripped.

Mrs. Stockmann They were so expensive.

Stockmann When you fight for freedom, never wear expensive trousers. I can still see their idiotic faces bawling at me like they were my equals.

Mrs. Stockmann Yes, they've treated you badly - but the United States of America, Thomas . . .

Stockmann It will be no different anywhere else in this country - the people here are mindless slaves. It may well be the same in the United States - the same majority and liberal public opinion and who knows what else? But it's on a much bigger scale over there. They might kill you but they won't torture you. They won't take a free man and destroy his soul. And if it doesn't work out there, we'll move on to the next place. If I could I'd buy a jungle somewhere or a South Sea island . . .

Mrs. Stockmann I'm only thinking about the children.

Stockmann You want them to grow up here? You want them to become people who walk around in herds telling themselves they are free-thinkers?

Mrs. Stockmann I know, Thomas, but . . .

(Petra enters.)

Mrs. Stockmann What are you doing back so early?

Petra I've been fired.

Mrs. Stockmann Fired?

Petra The head teacher gave me a week's notice, but I decided to leave immediately.

Stockmann You did exactly the right thing.

Mrs. Stockmann But the head teacher thought so much of you . . .

Petra She had no choice. The school has already received three letters of complaint about me.

Stockmann *(laughs, rubs his hand s)* 'She had no choice' . . . The town has descended into madness. The letters were anonymous, I take it?

Petra Of course.

Stockmann Not even the guts to sign their names.

Petra They complained I have unconventional views on a number of significant issues.

Stockmann You didn't deny it?

Petra Of course not, Dad.

Stockmann Start packing now. I refuse to live amongst this ludicrous hypocrisy. The sooner we leave the better.