

Chapter 4: Extracts of Drama - (B)

An Enemy of the People

CHARACTER [PAGES 194 - 195]

Character | Q 1 | Page 194

Mayor Peter Stockmann is a contrast to Dr. Thomas Stockmann. Justify.

SOLUTION

From the extract, it can be observed that there is a sharp contrast between the Stockmann brothers. The evidence of this striking contrast is as follows:

- i. **Beliefs:** Dr. Stockmann is a person who believes in doing what is morally right, no matter the cost. He places the needs of society over his own interests. This can be seen from his eagerness to publish the report about the contaminated water so that the people can be saved from disease. On the other hand, the Mayor tries to suppress the issue as it will harm his reputation and thus protects his own interests over those of the people.
- ii. **Profession:** One is a doctor, dedicated to ensuring the good health of the community and one is a politician who is corrupt and concerned with his image in the eyes of the public and the control of power.
- iii. **Attitude towards change:** The Doctor is an advocate of change and believes in the development of new ideas whereas his brother resists change and believes in keeping things the way they are, even at the cost of the wellbeing of the society.
- iv. **Majority vs. Minority:** The Mayor represents the voice of the majority as he is one of the many who tries to stop the doctor's report from being published. On the other hand, Dr. Stockmann represents the minority as he is alone in his efforts to publish the report and reveal the truth to the world.
- v. **Brave versus cowardly:** In his role as the Mayor of the town, it is the Mayor's duty to ensure the safety of the people. However, when he discovers that the baths are contaminated, he refuses to take responsibility for the issue and instead tries to bury the truth. This shows that he is afraid of the consequences and is hence, a coward. On the other hand, Dr. Stockmann is unafraid to stand up for what is right even when nobody is willing to support him. This shows that Dr. Stockmann is brave and noble.
- vi. **Intelligence and Nature:** While the doctor is smart, he is also easily fooled, and hence, one could label him as naïve. On the other hand, the Mayor is cunning, crafty and a master of manipulation. By nature, the doctor is a goodnatured,

warm, and generous person while the Mayor is a greedy, materialistic, and dominating.

Character | Q 2 | Page 194

Write the character sketch of Dr. Stockmann.

SOLUTION

Dr. Stockmann is an idealistic man, which means that he believes in doing what is morally right. This is clear from his resolve to make sure the contamination issue of the baths is fixed at any cost. However, this also makes him impractical. He does not take into consideration the cost of the repairs or the effect of closing the baths on the town's economy. In the fight for the truth, he represents the minority. Betrayed by his supporters and left alone, Dr. Stockmann does not admit defeat but instead strengthens his commitment towards revealing the truth to the public at all costs. This displays his bravery to fight against all odds and his resolute nature. Finally, in his determination to expose the social evils of society, Dr. Stockmann is willing to put society's interest above his own, which makes him come across as a truly noble character.

Character | Q 3. (i) | Page 194

Read the given extract (Act III)

Complete the following table.

| Sr. No. | Character | Supportive Character | Incident |
|---------|-----------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. | Dr. Stockmann | 1. _____ 2. _____ | 1. _____ 2. _____ |
| 2. | Peter Stockmann | 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ | 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ |
| 3. | Aslaksen | 1. _____ 2. _____ | 1. _____ 2. _____ |

SOLUTION

| Sr. No. | Character | Supportive Character | Incident |
|---------|---------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| 1. | Dr. Stockmann | 1. Hovstad and Billing 2. Aslaksen | 1. They agree to publish the report that will expose corruption among the top authorities. |

| | | | |
|----|-----------------|---|---|
| | | 3. Mrs. Stockmann | 2. Aslaksen refuses to publish Dr. Stockmann's report even if he is offered its weight in gold. 3. Mrs. Stockmann supports her husband when everyone has betrayed him. |
| 2. | Peter Stockmann | 1. Hovstad 2. Aslaksen 3. Dr. Stockmann | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peter Stockmann tries to turn Hovstad against Dr. Stockmann. • Peter Stockmann hands the official statement to Hovstad and he agrees to print it. • Peter Stockmann flatters Aslaksen so he can convince him to not print the report. • Peter Stockmann reveals to the doctor that Hovstad won't print his article. |
| 3. | Aslaksen | 1. Billing 2. Hovstad 3. Dr. Stockmann | 1. Aslaksen observes that although Billing encourages criticism of the local authorities, he has applied for a political position himself. 2. Aslaksen announces the arrival of the Mayor into the newspaper office. He mentions that the Mayor entered from the back door in order to avoid being seen. 3. Aslaksen and Hovstad dismiss Dr. Stockmann's queries about the progress of the report because by then, they no longer wish to print it. Their decision is a direct result of the Mayor's influence. |

Character | Q 3. (ii) | Page 195

Read the given extract (Act III)

Match 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 |

SOLUTION

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

PLOT [PAGE 195]

Plot | Q 1 | Page 195

Describe the climax scene in your own words. Write your comments on it.

SOLUTION

The climax of Act III occurs when Dr. Stockmann notices the Mayor's official hat and office staff (stick) in the newspaper office. Because of this discovery, Dr. Stockmann realizes that the Mayor must have visited Hovstad and Aslaksen in order to stop the publication of the report through his influence. He quickly concludes that the Mayor must be hiding from him in the other room. At this moment, the doctor is still convinced of everyone's support for his report and on discovering his brother's attempts to manipulate the press, he is further encouraged to give him a piece of his mind.

With this confidence, the doctor puts on the Mayor's hat himself and opens the door to the room, mocking the Mayor in the process. This leaves Peter enraged. The doctor's moment of confidence is short-lived as he quickly finds that Hovstad and Aslaksen no longer wish to print his report. They accuse Dr. Stockmann's concerns as being imaginary and state that printing the report would offend the public's opinion of the paper and hence, they declare that they will not print it.

On seeing everyone turn against her husband, Mrs. Stockmann, who initially had concerns about the consequences of the report on her family, overcomes her anxiety and offers her support to her husband. Disheartened but not defeated by the betrayal,

Dr. Stockmann pledges to reveal the report to the public one way or the other, including issuing a pamphlet or renting a hall to hold a public meeting and reading it aloud to the people. To this, the Mayor remarks that nobody will be willing to rent a hall to Dr. Stockmann. The Act ends with the doctor stating that if a hall cannot be arranged, he will march around town with a drum and read the report aloud. Mrs. Stockmann offers her resounding support to her husband's resolve and they leave.

In my opinion, the climax perfectly delivers the message of the act, by noting that the one who fights for the truth often walks alone on his path. This is evident when the Doctor realizes he has been betrayed by everybody.

It also highlights the extent to which the majority (the Mayor, the newspapermen) will go to make sure that the truth is not revealed. This is clear from their decision to not publish the report and their mockery of Dr. Stockmann's decision to try other ways of making it public.

Plot | Q 2 | Page 195

Describe in your own words the incident when Hovstad's real intention to help Dr. Stockmann is exposed.

SOLUTION

Petra enters the office of the "People's Messenger" to return the English book that contained the story she had promised to translate for publishing in the paper. She states that the story contradicts Hovstad's opinions and hence cannot be printed. However, Hovstad says that the book is exactly what the readers want to read and that he is willing to compromise his beliefs in order to sell more papers. Disappointed at his hypocrisy, Petra notes that since Hovstad had decided to publish her father's report, which deals with the social evils of society, she assumed he would be more willing to protect his moral beliefs. In response, Hovstad unintentionally reveals that his support for her father is due to his attraction towards her. Disgusted at the revelation, Petra criticizes him. When Hovstad threatens to withdraw his support if Petra continues to be bitter towards him, Petra leaves in anger.

Plot | Q 3. (a) | Page 195

Write down the consequences of the following occurrences with the help of the play.

Dr. Thomas Stockmann wants an article exposing social evils to be printed in the newspaper.

SOLUTION

This enrages Dr. Stockmann's brother, who sees this as an attack on his authority and reputation as the Mayor of the town. Consequently, the Mayor decides to provoke the people against the doctor.

Plot | Q 3. (b) | Page 195

Write down the consequences of the following occurrences with the help of the play.

Mayor Peter Stockmann persuades Mr. Hovstad and Mr. Billing from printing the article.

SOLUTION

Both Hovstad and Aslaksen, believe the Mayor's lie that Dr. Stockmann's report is based on his imagination and is far from the truth. This makes them turn against Dr. Stockmann and his cause and they decide to instead print the statement given to them by Mayor Peter Stockmann.

Plot | Q 3. (c) | Page 195

Write down the consequences of the following occurrences with the help of the play.

Alaksen declares that he would not print Dr. Stockmann's article.

SOLUTION

As Aslaksen had initially supported the doctor in his decision to print the report, Dr. Stockmann is disappointed at his refusal to do so. Moreover, as this betrayal was a result of his brother's manipulation, the doctor is furious with Aslaksen and resolves to make every effort to reveal the truth to the public.

Plot | Q 3. (d) | Page 195

Write down the consequences of the following occurrences with the help of the play.

Katherine encourages Dr. Stockmann to proceed in his attempts in the cause of public attempts.

SOLUTION

This instills confidence in Dr. Stockmann, who by this point has been betrayed by everyone. With the assurance of his wife's support, Dr. Stockmann's doubts disappear and he openly challenges the men to stop him from being a true patriot and doing the right thing.

SETTING [PAGE 195]

Setting | Q 1 | Page 195

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.

SOLUTION

The most shocking betrayal of the action occurs in the newspaper office. It is here that Dr. Stockmann learns that the Mayor has successfully managed to convince Hovstad and Aslaksen to not print the report. The newspaper office is a symbol of the role of media in society. By manipulating the newspapermen, it is implied that the Mayor has manipulated the media. Thus, the setting highlights the fact that Dr. Stockmann has been betrayed by the media as a whole. As, in an ideal society, the media must remain unaffected by the influence of politicians and always strive to report the truth, the setting of the betrayal of the truth in the newspaper office highlights the play's theme of the corruption of the media.

Setting | Q 2. (a) | Page 195

Explain the use of the following property in the development of the play.

Hat

SOLUTION

The hat refers to the official hat of the Mayor. In order to avoid being seen by his brother (Dr. Stockmann), the Mayor hides in a separate room but leaves his hat and stick in plain sight. Since the hat is the official hat of the Mayor, it easily reveals the presence of the Mayor in the newspaper office to Dr. Stockmann who notices it and proceeds to mock the Mayor by wearing it himself and tipping it in salute as he exposes him. The hat is the first item to be noticed and thus sparks the final conflict of the Act between the two brothers. This conflict exposes the true colours of the characters as the manipulative nature of the Mayor and the corrupt nature of the newspapermen (the media as a whole), is revealed.

Setting | Q 2. (b) | Page 195

Explain the use of the following property in the development of the play.

Stick

SOLUTION

The stick refers to the official staff (stick) of the Mayor. In order to avoid being seen by his brother (Dr. Stockmann), the Mayor hides in a separate room but leaves his hat and stick in plain sight. Dr. Stockmann notices the hat first followed by the stick. He quickly concludes that the stick must belong to the Mayor because it is the official staff. When Aslaksen tries to convince him that the Mayor has left, Dr. Stockmann remains doubtful because the Mayor would not leave without his stick. This leads to the final scene of the act, which results in a conflict between the two brothers and reveals the corrupt nature of the majority (the Mayor, the newspapermen) and the bravery of Dr. Stockmann.

Setting | Q 2. (c) | Page 195

Explain the use of the following property in the development of the play.

An envelope containing the letter

SOLUTION

'An envelope containing the letter' is mentioned in Act I of this play. The contents of the envelope were the results of the tests that Dr. Stockmann had ordered to check whether the Baths were contaminated. As this letter confirmed the contamination of the water, Dr. Stockmann decided that he would have the report printed in the paper for everyone to see. This is how the envelope containing the letter contributed to the development of the play.

Setting | Q 3. (a) | Page 195

Explain the following statement with reference to the context.

And then, once the ring's broken, we'll get to work and show the public every day just how incompetent the Mayor is!

SOLUTION

This line refers to the following dialogue:

"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."

It is said by Hovstad in conversation with Billing, as they celebrate Dr. Stockmann's decision to publish the report on the contamination of the baths. From this dialogue, Hovstad's true intentions can be understood. He wants to publish the doctor's report so that he can attack the local authorities and the Mayor by writing about their failures in his paper and eventually bring about their downfall.

Setting | Q 3. (b) | Page 195

Explain the following statement with reference to the context.

From now on The Herald shall be my artillery.

SOLUTION

This line refers to the following dialogue:

"I shall consider the "People's Messenger" my sheet-anchor now."

It is said by Dr. Stockmann in his conversation with Billing, Hovstad, and Aslaksen. The dialogue conveys the extent of the doctor's trust in them. He genuinely believes that in his fight for the truth, he will always have their support and that they will help him use the newspaper as a weapon in his effort to expose the social evils of society. Thus, he calls the newspaper his 'sheet-anchor'.

Setting | Q 3. (c) | Page 195

Explain the following statement with reference to the context.

You ought to be ashamed of yourself.

SOLUTION

This line refers to the following dialogue:

"For shame! You would never go and set a snare like that for your readers; you are not a spider!"

These words are uttered by Dr. Stockmann's daughter, Petra, who angrily criticises Hovstad, the editor of the local newspaper, on discovering that Hovstad is willing to compromise his ideals in order to publish a story just because it will sell more papers. When confronted by Petra, Hovstad defends his actions. The above dialogue is then uttered by Petra in an effort to convince Hovstad not to fool his readers.

Setting | Q 3. (d) | Page 195

Explain the following statement with reference to the context.

Because your father can't do without my help.

SOLUTION

This dialogue is said by Hovstad to Petra, shortly after Petra discovers that the only reason Hovstad had offered support to her father was because of his own attraction to her. This discovery infuriates Petra and she voices her disappointment and mistrust of Hovstad. In response to her bitterness, Hovstad remarks that she should be careful not to be rude to him because her father needs his help. The dialogue is clearly meant as a threat as if to say that if Petra offends Hovstad, he would withdraw his support to her father.

Setting | Q 3. (e) | Page 195

Explain the following statement with reference to the context.

And it's by no means the small sacrifice the town will have to make.

SOLUTION

This line refers to the dialogue:

"And indeed it is no small sacrifice that the town is going to make."

It is said by Peter Stockmann in his conversation with Aslaksen and Hovstad when he visits the office of the local newspaper in order to convince them to not print the doctor's report. The dialogue is clearly uttered as a way of letting them know that the consequences of publishing the report will be faced by the general public. By pointing out that their own interests are at stake, the Mayor successfully manipulates them into withdrawing their support for Dr. Stockmann.