

## 4.3 (B) An Enemy of the People

### 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 characters
1	Dr. Stockmann	a. Katherine b. Petra
2	Peter stockmann	a. Billing b. Hovstad c. Aslaksen
3	Aslaksen	a. Peter stockmann b. Hovstad

(table continue here)

Incident
(a) At the end of the Act, she promises to stand by her husband and ask the children to do so too. (b) When Petra is talking to Hovstad, she continuously praises her father, calling him honest, upright, having a generous heart and courageous lines of thought. Petra also praises Hovstad for taking up her father's worthy cause.
(a) Supporting the Mayor, he states that the doctor will not get a single hall or a single person to support him. (b) He refuses to publish the doctor's article, and instead agrees to publish the Mayor's version. (c) He refuses to lend his press to publish the doctor's article, and refuses to take the field at the head of the Householders' Association.
(a) He considers Aslaksen to be a thoughtful and discreet man, a man with influence with the small tax payers. (b) Hovstad supports him because he pays for the paper and the printing of the newspaper.

(ii) Match the Column A with column B.

Column A	Column B
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(1) Dr. Thomas Stockmann	(a) Opportunist
(2) Katherine	(b) Vulnerable
(3) Peter Stockmann	(c) Honest and upright
(4) Petra	(d) Coward
(5) Hovstad	(e) Timid but supportive
(6) Billing	(f) Cunning and corrupt
(7) Aslaksen	(g) Courageous

**Ans.** (1) Thomas Stockmann - Honest and Dr. upright

(2) Katherine - Timid but supportive

(3) Peter Stockmann - Cunning and corrupt

(4) Petra - Courageous

(5) Hovstad Opportunist

(6) Billing - Vulnerable

(7) Aslaksen – Coward

## Plot

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

**Ans.** In the climax, Dr. Stockmann realizes that Hovstad will not print his manuscript, and no one in town will rent him a space to hold a town meeting so that he can make it public. He declares angrily that he will hire a drum and parade the town with it and read his manuscript at every corner. He promises that his report will be made public in spite of all threats. Outraged at how everyone has turned against her husband, Mrs. Stockmann, who was initially upset with him, makes an about turn and takes his side. She assures him that their children will do the same.

The climax shows how fickle opportunists like Hovstad and Aslaksen can be. It makes one believe that there is such a thing as 'family loyalty'. It shows that an honest man is always ready to fight for the truth, come what may. The most important thing it proves is that 'that the strongest man in the world is he who stands alone'.

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

**Ans.** Initially, Petra has a good opinion of Hovstad. She thinks that he is helping her father because her father is an honest and upright man. However, when he

says that he is doing it because Dr. Stockmann is her, Petra's, father, he reveals his true colours. He hints that one of the reasons he's supporting her father is to get on Petra's good side. When she gets angry, he tries to tell her that she must not speak so bitterly to him because her father needs his help. At this indirect emotional blackmail, Petra gets even angrier and leaves the office.

**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.**

**Ans.** 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.

**(b) Mayor Peter Stockmann persuades Mr. Hovstad and Mr. Billing from printing the article.**

**Ans.** 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.

**(c) Aslaksen declares that he would not print Dr. Stockmann's article.**

**Ans.** 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.

**(d) Katherine encourages Dr. Stockmann to proceed in his attempts in the cause of public attempts.**

**Ans.** 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:**

**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.**

**Ans.** Act III centres around the initial acceptance and then rejection of Dr. Stockmann's manuscript for printing in the newspaper, the "People's Messenger". If this manuscript is published, the whole town will come to know about the contamination of the Baths. The welfare of the town was at stake. The

Act also discusses the publication in the newspaper of a brief note from the Mayor. All the action centres around the editorial office of the "People's Messenger," and the publication/non-publication of the article in the newspaper. Hence it is a 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**

**(Note: There is no envelope or letter in this extract.)**

**Ans.** Hat and Stick: The hat and stick represent the power of the Mayor. Dr. Stockmann thought that the 'People's Messenger' would publish his article, and there would be a new revolution in the town. He thought that he would have the social forces behind him, and that he would be taking power away from his brother, the Mayor. Thus, taking away the Mayor's official hat and cane is symbolic of this. When the doctor realizes that his article is not going to be printed, and that his brother would continue as Mayor, he gives back the symbolic hat and stick. He realizes that he's the one without power now.

**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!**

**Ans.** This is said by Hovstad to Billing, when they decide to publish the doctor's article. This means that once the article is published, either the whole of the Householders' Association will turn against the Mayor, or the whole crowd of large shareholders in the baths will turn against him. This will show the public how incompetent the Mayor is, and the ring of politicians will be broken. Hovstad also wants all the positions of trust to be put in the hands of the Liberals.

**(b) From now on 'The Herald' shall be my artillery.**

**Ans.** Dr. Stockmann is thrilled that his article is going to be printed. He tells Hovstad and his companions that he will now expose all the corruption in the town through the pages of the People's Messenger'. The newspaper would be his weapon for exposing the corrupt politicians before the eyes of the honest public and crushing them.

**(c) You ought to be ashamed of yourself.**

**Ans.** This is said by Petra to Hovstad when he reveals his true colours. Hovstad hints that one of the reasons he's supporting her father is to get on Petra's good side. He also says that Dr. Stockmann needs his, Hovstad's, help more than ever now, indirectly suggesting that Petra could not be angry with him now. This makes her even angrier and she tells him that he ought to be ashamed of himself.

**(d) Because your father can't do without my help.**

**Ans.** This statement was made by Hovstad to Petra, when Petra is angry with him for taking on her father's cause for the wrong reasons. Petra tells Hovstad angrily that he has made fools of both her and her father and that she will never forgive him for that. At this point, Hovstad says that her father cannot do without his help if he wants his article to be published in the People's Messenger'.

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

**Ans.** This is said by Peter Stockmann to Hovstad and Aslaksen. He explains to them that if Dr. Stockmann's article about the contamination of the baths is published, alterations will have to be made in the Baths. These alterations will cost a lot money, which will have to be provided by the people of the town. As the people were not wealthy, this would mean a big sacrifice on their part.