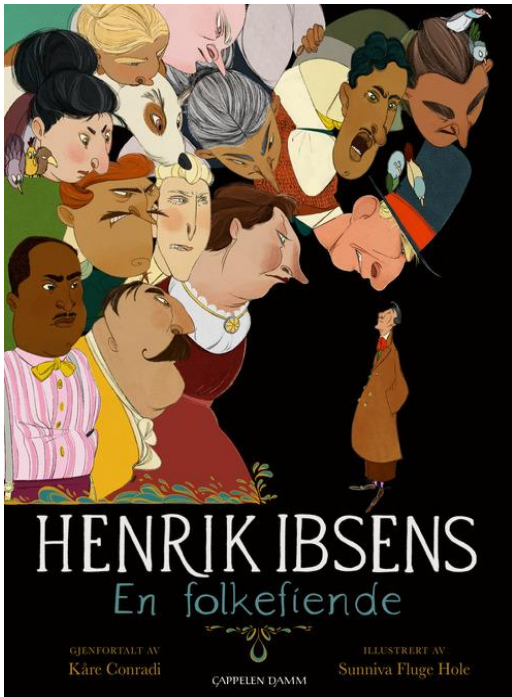


Cappelen Damm Agency *Fall 2024*



An Enemy of the People

Pp. 40, fully illustrated

Full English sample translation available

An Enemy of the People is about Dr Stockmann, who discovers that the bathing water in the city's spa is contaminated with dangerous bacteria. He expects people to value his discovery and thinks it will help improve the city. Instead, his political enemies try to destroy him, attempting to silence him with threats.

Dr Stockmann stands his ground and in the last act, he delivers one of Ibsen's most famous lines: "The strongest man in the world is he who stands most alone." *An Enemy of the People* is a play that outraged people in its day, but that has gained fresh relevance in our own era.

This is the first book in a new series for children about the works of Henrik Ibsen. With the aid of illustrations and simplified text suitable for younger readers, the series aims to introduce Ibsen's plays to new generations all over the world. Retold by Kåre Conradi, noted actor and leader of the Norwegian Ibsenkompaniet, each book in the series will feature art by some of Norway's finest illustrators.

Ibsen is the world's second-most performed playwright after Shakespeare. This series will give children an understanding of what Ibsen's texts are about, and what they can teach us today.

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An Enemy of the People
Kåre Conradi and Sunniva Fluge Hole (ill.)

Kåre Conradi and Sunniva Fluge Hole (ill.)

Kåre Conradi (b. 1972) is one of Norway's most famous actors. He's educated at the Oslo National Academy of the Arts and London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art. Conradi has acted in a number of films, TV shows and theatres, including West Side Story and Hamlet. Kåre Conradi has been an Ibsen ambassador for several years, and is the leader of the Norwegian Ibsen Company.



Sunniva Fluge Hole is an illustrator and artist. She has worked on various projects in film, with books and commercial work, including lead character design for several award-winning animated feature films.

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An Enemy of the People

RETOLD BY Kåre Conradi

ILLUSTRATED BY Sunniva Fluge Hole

TRANSLATED BY Paul Russell Garrett

This sample translation has received a support grant from NORLA – the organization for Norwegian literature abroad.

DOCTOR

Tomas Stockmann

DR STOCKMANN'S WIFE

Katrine Stockmann

CHILDREN

Eilif and Morten Stockmann

SCHOOLTEACHER

Petra Stockmann

MAYOR

Peter Stockmann

NEWSPAPER EDITOR

Hovstad

HOVSTAD'S ASSISTANT

Billing

PRINTER

Aslaksen

DR STOCKMANN'S

Father-in-law

CAPTAIN

Horster

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Kåre Conradi and Sunniva Fluge Hole (ill.)

Henrik Ibsen wrote *An Enemy of the People* in 1882 while spending time in Rome and in the alpine village of Gossensass.

Just before starting work on the play, Ibsen heard a story about a doctor in Teplice in present-day Czechia, who had gone public with news of a cholera outbreak in the town. Several large public baths had been built over the underground hot springs there, and as a result of his warning, many people were afraid to travel to the spa town. The doctor was blamed for the town losing both visitors and their money. People cast stones at his house, leaving him to flee the town.

This story served as inspiration for *An Enemy of the People*, a play about Tomas Stockmann and the poisoned bathing waters.

An Enemy of the People was first staged at Christiania Theatre on 13 January 1893. Due to the strong opinions expressed in the piece, Henrik Ibsen was forced to weather many storms. It is difficult to read *An Enemy of the People* without thinking of the environmental struggle, of pollution and contagion. The bathing waters turn out to be poisoned and no one wants to pay what it would cost to remedy the matter.

Henrik Ibsen is a world-famous playwright whose works are still performed at theatres around the world. After William Shakespeare, he is the most performed playwright in the world. The themes Ibsen touches upon continue to be relevant to this day. Ibsen was an ‘outpost’, as Doctor Stockmann puts it in *An Enemy of the People*, one of the few people who dared to challenge the majority. It often only takes one person who dares to speak out.

Kåre Conradi

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An Enemy of the People

Kåre Conradi and Sunniva Fluge Hole (ill.)

It is evening in the small, bustling town. Doctor Tomas Stockmann, is hosting a dinner party for the editor of the local newspaper, Hovstad, his assistant, Billing, and Aslaksen, the printer. Doctor Stockmann's wife, Katrine, and two of their children, Eilif and Morten, are also there.

While the guests are still eating, Tomas' brother knocks at the door. His name is Peter Stockmann and he is the mayor of the town. The mayor speaks boastfully about the town's new health spa.

'Our fabulous resort will be the salvation of the town! People will travel from afar to be rejuvenated by the waters. They can bathe in the water and drink it too. And since so many people will travel to our town, there will also be plenty of work for everyone who lives here!'

'Yes, it truly is splendid!' Tomas' wife Katrine replies. 'Now come inside and have a bite to eat!'

But Peter says he cannot stay and takes his leave.

A moment later, Petra, Tomas' daughter, arrives. She has a letter for him.

'Oh, it's finally here!' Tomas says.

Then he goes into the bedroom to read the letter.

'He's been waiting for that letter for a long time,' Katrine says.

'What could it be?' Petra wonders aloud.

When Tomas returns, he looks completely horrified.

‘Well, now they will *have* to believe me!’ he exclaims. ‘The spa is a pesthole! The waters are poisoned!’

‘What?’ Billing says in astonishment.

‘I have the results here,’ Stockmann exclaims, waving the letter. ‘Bacteria is coming from the pipes because they lie too low!’

The men gasp. This sounds serious!

Tomas tells them he has written a report that he intends to send to his brother Peter, the mayor of the town. ‘We have to get the news out at once so no one gets ill!’ he says.

The others agree. As soon as Tomas gives the go-ahead, Hovland and Billing will print his findings in the town paper.

‘You’ll be the hero of the town, Tomas, they’ll hold a parade in your honour,’ the men say.

‘No, no, I’ve only done my civic duty,’ Tomas says. He is moved by their belief in him.

That evening there are both tears and laughter. Katrine and their three children are so proud of Tomas. Papa. The town doctor. Hero of the people!

The next morning, Tomas' father-in-law shows up.

'Is it true what I've heard?' he asks. 'This madness about the poisoned water? It sounds strange to hear of bacteria in the water when you can't see it!

'The bacteria are so small they are invisible to the human eye!' Tomas says. 'It's all in the letter!'

'Your brother is never going to believe this,' his father-in-law says as he leaves.

Tomas shakes his head, but it soon turns out that his father-in-law is right. His brother Peter comes barging into the living room. And he is furious!

He has read the report Tomas sent him and cannot fathom how his own brother could go behind his back and carry out such unwarranted investigations.

'You use such strong language,' Tomas Stockmann! Do you really believe the spa guests will be poisoned for the rest of their lives?'

'Yes,' Tomas begins.

'Do you realise how much it will cost to relay the pipes and renovate the entire resort?' Peter shouts. 'The spa will have to close for two whole years! Everyone in town will lose their jobs!'

'But the water IS poisoned,' Tomas says, confused. 'Think of all the people who will get ill!'

'I cannot see any immediate danger,' Peter says. 'Would you truly sacrifice the future of the entire town, and that of your own brother, based solely on what you THINK? The resort is the town's most important source of income!'

But Tomas stands his ground. ‘The spa is poisoned! If you refuse to hear the truth, I’ll find others who will!’

Peter is furious. ‘You’re an enemy of this town! Think this through carefully,’ he says and storms out the door.

Tomas and Katrine stand by the door and watch him leave.

‘Are you sure about this, Tomas?’ Katrine asks in concern. ‘You say you’re thinking about what’s best for the town, but how about what’s best for us? Your brother holds all the power in town.’

‘Yes,’ Peter holds the power, but I hold the truth,’ Tomas replies. ‘I will not yield, not even if the entire world goes to pieces!’

Tomas marches off to the printers so that the newspaper can publish his discoveries as soon as possible.

At the printers, it is about as busy as it gets for a local newspaper. Tomas comes racing in. ‘All right, it’s time to put everything else aside and start printing!’

‘That’s wonderful!’ Hovstad says. ‘Your article is a masterpiece!’

‘People will be only too happy to learn the truth!’ Tomas says excitedly.

‘We’ll get started straight away!’ Hovstad says. He sets to work at once.

Tomas promises to return later to check that everything is proceeding to plan. He is anxious and can hardly wait. Now the truth will finally come out! Will they really hold a parade in his honour?

But just after Tomas leaves, Peter comes barging into the printers to speak to Hovstad, the editor of the newspaper.

‘Are you really going to print the article?’

Hovstad, Aslaksen and Billing hesitate for a moment, then Hovstad says:

‘Well, when such an important man has something on his mind ...’

‘Yes, it’s not up to me to decide what people write,’ Aslaksen says.

‘No, but you do want to have a job in the future, don’t you?’ Peter asks. ‘Do you not realise the spa will have to close for several years to remedy the problem? And it’s the townspeople who will have to pay for everything! It’s THEIR tax money that will be spent on setting right everything that my brother wants the town to BELIEVE!’

Hovstad swallows. When he realises the graveness of the matter, he grows uncertain.

‘*Wants* them to believe?’ he says. ‘Is it only a matter of belief, then?’

‘Yes,’ Peter says. ‘However much I would like to think otherwise, I cannot see it as anything but that!’

Immediately the atmosphere at the printers changes.

‘But that’s completely unwarranted!’ Aslaksen says. ‘We cannot print the article!’

A little while later, Tomas returns to the printers. Peter quickly hides behind a door.

‘Is the article ready for printing?’ Tomas asks.

‘No, it may take some time ...’ Aslaksen says.

‘Yes, perhaps it would be better to print it some other time ...’ Hovstad says.

‘What?’ Tomas says. ‘Did we not agree the matter was urgent?’

‘Well ...’ Hovstad says. ‘In fact, we’re not sure we should print the article after all.’

Tomas is completely bewildered. Suddenly he notices his brother’s hat on a chair!

He grabs the hat, puts it on and marches directly over to where his brother is hiding. Now he understands why, out of nowhere, the article will not be published!

‘Come out, come out, wherever you are’ he shouts, then marches back and forth like a drum major in a band.

Peter comes out from his hiding place. ‘What’s all this commotion about?’

‘Now I am the one who holds the power,’ Tomas says, swinging his brother’s hat. ‘I have the town and the newspaper behind me!’

‘No, you do not,’ Hovstad says meekly. ‘Not when you’ve told us something that is not true.’

‘Not true?’ Tomas shouts. ‘Just print it and I’ll be man enough to stand behind my words!’

‘I will not print it, I dare not print it!’ Hovstad says.

‘You dare not?’ Tomas says. ‘But you’re the editor and I should think the editor gets to decide, no?’

‘No,’ Hovstad says. ‘It is those who subscribe to the newspaper that decide! And they will lose money if this comes out!’

‘Fine, I’ll print a brochure instead,’ Tomas says. ‘A brochure that informs everyone what is happening!’

But Aslaksen refuses to let him use the printers.

Instead, Tomas says he will hire a room and summon everyone to a town meeting. But Peter just looks at him sternly.

‘NOBODY will let you hire a room!’ Then he snatches back his hat.

Katrine has now arrived at the printers. She had actually come to prevent her husband from doing anything stupid. But when she hears that everyone is against him, she becomes angry and stands by Tomas' side.

'We'll show you!' she says. 'Don't give in, Tomas!'

It turns out to be more difficult than Tomas had expected. Because in fact, NOBODY will let him hire a room. They search and they search and they are close to giving up. But then they run into Captain Horster.

Captain Horster is the bravest man in town. He has travelled the seven seas and knows what life is about. Most importantly, he admires other brave people, like Tomas. He is a sailor who has weathered many fierce storms in his life.

And he is happy to let Tomas hire his room.

NOW the town will hear the news!

The captain's room fills with excited people. Tomas prepares to go up to the lectern to tell people the truth.

But before he has a chance to say a word, his brother Peter takes the floor. He looks across the room and the townspeople fall completely silent. Then he speaks in a clear voice:

'Tomas Stockmann is spreading lies and fabrications!' he says. 'He should not even be permitted to speak! Because what my brother wants to tell you, although it's not true, could still spread quickly across the country as rumours! And do the people of our fine town really want THAT to happen?'

The people look around at each other. Then Peter says that he will of course recount his brother's message in a brief article. But most importantly: 'The doctor's proposal will cost the people of this town lots and lots of money!'

A commotion arises. Everyone is talking over each other and everyone refuses to let Tomas speak about the spa and the discoveries he has made. No, nobody can afford that. And they do not want to read such an article in the newspaper, and Tomas should not be allowed to spread rumours.

Tomas is indignant. He goes up to the lectern and says:

‘Fine then, I will not talk about the resort. Instead, I will talk about the pettiness of all the leading men and women of this town. And in the world in general. I will talk about the pettiness lying over each and every one of you who believes it is those who BUY the newspaper who get to decide what a person writes! That is what the PEOPLE believe to hold true! Do you not know,’ he continues, ‘that by the time EVERYONE agrees that something holds true, it has taken so long to decide, it is not certain what they agreed holds true any longer?’

He looks out at the crowd of people. ‘That is precisely why it is not the crowd or the majority that is in the right. But it is these few, these small, strong, brave people, these outposts, who stand up to fight so far out on the field that nobody can yet see them ... THESE are the people who are in the right. It is just that they are so small and so few that nobody listens to them until it is too late.’

Tomas is now so upset that his voice cracks. ‘That will not happen now. Now the people must listen! And if NONE of you will listen, then I will tell the entire country, and then you’ll be ruined, all of you!’

The people in the room are now howling. What did he say? Does he intend to ruin the town?

‘Yes!’ Tomas shouts, for now he is truly furious. ‘I would rather this entire town fall to ruin than continue to live off a poisonous lie!’

‘He’s an enemy of the people!’ they all shout. Then they vote NO on the small blue-and-white slips of paper before the ill-tempered crowd chases Tomas and his family home in the dusk.

‘Enemy of the people!’ they shout at him. ‘Enemy of the people!’

The next morning, Tomas and Katrine are standing inside their shattered house. The angry mob broke the windows, leaving shards of glass everywhere.

Tomas walks around picking up stones that have been thrown in. The boys are at school and Petra is at work.

‘Look here, Katrine, I found another one!’

‘Oh, Tomas, we can’t endure this! Everyone hates us,’ Katrine says. ‘Even the glazier refuses to come to replace the windows.’

‘No, I suppose he doesn’t dare,’ Tomas sighs and looks down at his trousers. There is a large tear in them.

‘Hmph,’ he says. ‘One should never wear one’s best trousers when fighting for freedom and truth.’

Then Tomas says they will have to leave town because clearly, they can no longer live here.

‘But is that the right thing to do, to leave?’ Katrine asks. ‘What about the children?’

‘Do you want the children to grow up in a society like this? Where what you KNOW to be true, everyone else considers a lie?’

Just then, Petra comes home. She is a schoolteacher, but she has just been fired.

‘I suppose they dare not do otherwise,’ Petra sighs.

‘No, they are spineless,’ Tomas says. ‘It was mostly pebbles they threw last night. Few of them were very large. And although they threatened to come inside and strike me down, no one did. Even in THAT, they were spineless!’

Captain Horster arrives and tells them that he has also been fired, that there will be no more sailings anytime soon. Finally, Peter arrives to tell Tomas that he has been dismissed as the town doctor.

All of them have lost their job, and if that were not bad enough, the owner of their house intends to cancel their tenancy agreement. They no longer have a place to live.

‘They want nothing to do with us, none of them,’ Tomas says.

No one believes him and nobody is ever going to give him a job again.

Peter looks at Tomas.

‘Could you not just offer an apology?’ he says. ‘Then things will be set right.’

But why should Tomas offer an apology? All he wants is to tell people the truth.

Now his family has to move and Tomas no longer cares what happens to the town, the people or the spa. Why should he care, after the way everybody has treated him?

Then, Tomas' father-in-law arrives.

'As a father, Tomas Stockmann, I suppose you're worried about your children's future?' his father-in-law asks.

'Yes, but they'll be far better off a long ways from here,' Tomas replies.

His father-in-law looks at him. 'No, they will not,' he says.

Tomas is taken aback. 'Why not?'

'Well, Tomas, when I realised you would ruin our town and shut down the spa, I decided to buy into the resort.'

'You did what?' Tomas says.

'I've spent all my savings on buying shares into the spa. All the money your children were to inherit. So if the spa is shut down, there will be nothing left for them!'

'But I can't do anything about the spa if everyone refuses to listen,' Tomas says.

'Then you'll have to find a way to make them listen. Because this is no longer about everyone else, Tomas. Now it's about your children's future!'

Tomas stands there silently. Just then, Aslaksen and Hovstad arrive.

‘You dare to show your faces here!’ Tomas stares at them.

The men take a step back. ‘But we come with good news!’

Now that his father-in-law has bought shares on the cheap, Tomas will have to repair the spa, which will make him rich. ‘What in the world do you mean?’ he says. ‘Do you think I did this on purpose? That I made up the report about the water being poisoned just to make the share prices fall so I could profit from it?’

‘Well, what do we know ...’ they reply. ‘But NOW you’ll have the newspaper behind you, and with that, all the subscribers!’

‘And what do you want in return?’ Tomas asks.

‘Well, we do need money to run our little newspaper,’ Hovstad and Aslaksen say.

Then Tomas grabs his umbrella and chases them around the room.

‘OUT THE WINDOW WITH YOU!’ he shouts.

And then he flaps the umbrella so that they practically FLY through the shattered window.

Katrine, Captain Horster and Petra come running over.

‘Oh, Tomas, what are you up to now?’

‘Into the gutter with you!’ Tomas shouts at Hovstad and Aslaksen as they disappear down the road.

NOW everyone will hear what sort of scoundrels there are in this town!

‘Now?’ Katrine says. ‘But weren’t we going to leave?’

‘No, not any more,’ Tomas says. ‘We’re going to stay. And if I cannot help the rich people of this town against payment, then naturally I shall help the poor. Because no matter what happens, they have nothing.’

Tomas gathers Katrine and Petra around him. ‘Here we will stay, and here will we fight for the truth! And all those leaders who simply want more power will shake in their boots! We’re staying!’

But then he remembers something ...

‘That is if we can find a place to live.’

‘You can stay with me,’ says the captain. ‘I have plenty of space and I’m rarely home!’

Mr and Mrs Stockmann smile for the first time in a long while.

Just then the boys come running home from school. They have been in a fight after some of the other young people in town bullied them.

Tomas straightens up and explains that they will no longer have to go to school. They will not need to!

What in the world does he mean? His family stares at him.

‘Listen here, boys,’ Tomas says. ‘The street kids you play with every day. I’m sure many of them are very clever, aren’t they? I suppose it’s just a matter of being unable to afford to go to school?’

‘Yes,’ the three children reply. ‘They’re the finest people in the world.’

‘Then I know what we’re to do. We’re going to start our OWN school. Maybe we can use the captain’s room. It will be a school for the street kids, too. Together we’ll teach them what is true and what is false. Because the future lies with the young people. They are the vanguard in our struggle for the truth!’

Then Petra and the boys run off excitedly. Petra already has the trust and friendship of many of the children.

Things are going to turn out all right. They have to!

Katrine and Tomas embrace. Katrine is proud of her husband, but they are both a little worried. How will they live?

‘Just you wait,’ Tomas says. ‘We’ll manage. And little by little, we’ll rebuild trust here in the town. And the spa and the town will be saved. They **MUST** be saved. For us. And for our children’s future!’