

ENRICHMENT GUIDE

# AN ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE



PROUD CORNERSTONE MEMBER  
  
UNITED PERFORMING ARTS FUND



## DEAR FIRST STAGE FRIENDS,

What happens when one man's quest to do right is seemingly at odds with the best interests of his community? Can reason and science win out over rumor and fear? When Dr. Stockmann makes a literally poisonous discovery, his brother, the Mayor, begins a war of innuendo and half-truths that threatens to tear their family – and their community – apart.

This is a Young Company Performance Project – an actor-driven presentation using elemental production values. By stripping down to a nearly bare stage, the connection of actor to audience is enhanced, and the words of the play come alive in exciting ways, allowing our award-winning students to showcase their graduate level skills with full length material, from Shakespeare to American classics to pieces commissioned specially for them.

Enjoy the show,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brinn Hill". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of "Brinn" and "Hill" being capitalized and prominent.

Brinn Hill

Interim Education Director

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# SYNOPSIS

## ACT 1 SCENE 1

Morten Kiil and Billing are sitting in the living room of Dr. Stockmann and his wife Catherine. Morten Kiil is Catherine's father and a tanner. Billing is the sub-editor of the town's local paper *The People's Messenger*. Catherine enters and asks her father to stay but he hurriedly exits insisting he has business to conduct. Peter Stockmann enters the home, he is both the Mayor of the town and Dr. Stockmann's brother. As Peter and Catherine are conversing, Hovstad, the editor of the local paper, enters the home expecting to see the Doctor but is surprised to see the Mayor. Hovstad assures Peter he is here to discuss an article written by the doctor for the paper. Peter reminisces about the many past articles his brother has written vouching for the new Medical Springs they have built for the town, Kirsten Springs. Peter talks about how the Springs will bring in tourism and wealth for the town. Dr. Stockmann, his two sons Morten and Eilif enter the living room with Captain Horster who is a friend of the Doctor. Dr. Stockmann and Peter talk. Dr. Stockmann alludes to the Springs and how he may or may not write an article; he's being very vague for the time being. Peter assures his brother that if there is anything worth reporting about Kirsten Springs it must be brought to the board's attention first before reaching the public as both brothers currently sit on the Springs board. As Peter is leaving, Dr. Stockmann's daughter Petra returns home from teaching school. She has

a letter for her father that the mailman gave her and in it the test results the Doctor has been waiting for about tests he has conducted on the water quality of Kirsten Springs. We discover that the water is indeed poisonous from the run-off water from the tannery up stream of the Springs. Hovstad states they should write an article on the report in the next paper. Everyone congratulates Dr. Stockmann on his discovery and he states that he will send this information to the board of Kirsten Springs as well.

## ACT 1 SCENE 2

Catherine and Dr. Stockmann are in their living room the following morning. They are awaiting Peter's arrival since he has read the report and would like to talk with his brother personally. Kiil enters the living room asking if the discovery is true about the Spring water. Once the Doctor confirms the report is in fact true, Kiil wonders if the Doctor is doing all this simply to mess with his brother. Kiil leaves, running into Hovstad on the way out. Hovstad tells Stockmann that his discovery ties in with much more than just impurities in the town's water, but rather the political atmosphere of their town. Aslaksen, the publisher of the local paper, enters. As everyone discusses the discovery, words like 'scandal' and 'campaign' are being thrown around which makes Dr. Stockmann uncomfortable. Aslaksen tells the Doctor he has the power to arrange a demonstration where the townspeople will

# SYNOPSIS

praise the Doctor for his discovery. He assures the Doctor that the little man is behind him. Hovstad asks to print the Doctor's report right away but Stockmann insists not until he has spoken to his brother, however he gives Hovstad the O.K to print the report regardless because he believes his brother will be in favor of letting the townspeople know about the polluted water. Peter enters asking Stockmann why he has gone behind his back investigating the Springs. He asks his brother if he has thought about the realistic cost of fixing the Springs to which he says it will take at least \$300,000 and at least 2 years of labor. Peter urges his brother that it is very important that the report does not reach the public and that they must move forward with caution so as not to interfere with the opening of Kirsten Springs. Stockmann tells his brother that *The People's Messenger* will be printing the report and Peter calls his brother an, "unbelievably irresponsible man". Peter orders his brother to deny rumors of the Springs water being contaminated and forbids his brother from making comments about the Institute. Stockmann tells his brother he cannot be silenced, to which Peter says he will remove Stockmann from the board of Kirsten Springs, costing him his job.

## ACT 2 SCENE 1

Billing and Hovstad are conversing in the editorial office of *The People's Messenger*. They talk about how this report will cause a

revolution in the town and ruin Kirsten Springs. Stockmann enters and angrily tells them to put the report on the press immediately. Aslaksen enters and tells the doctor he agrees with him but he must be moderate in his claims as well. Hovstad says the article will be ready for tomorrow's paper. Everyone celebrates how liberating it is to expose the truth of the town. Stockmann and Aslaksen exit while Billing and Hovstad wonder if Stockmann could pay for the printing of the paper so that they could write what they truly please. Petra enters the office saying she has been working on translating an English novel for the paper just as they asked. However she is confused as to why they wanted it printed because it seems to go against the editor's progressive radical ideologies. Hovstad assures her the paper can slip in political sentiments but can't outwardly, "buck the public". Petra accuses Hovstad of simply using her father for their own agenda and exits the office. Peter arrives at the office and asks Hovstad and Aslaksen if they really are going to print the report and they assure him they will. Peter alerts them that if the Springs have to be rebuilt it's not the stockholders that'll pay, it's the taxpayers that will. The news shocks Aslaksen and Hovstad into questioning whether or not they want to print the doctor's report at all. Stockmann is about to enter the office as Peter hides. Stockmann asks to see the first rough draft of the paper but Hovstad and Aslaksen stall him, Catherine enters the shop and asks the doctor



# SYNOPSIS

to come home immediately. Catherine accuses the men in the shop of using her husband, telling them that he will lose his job if they print the article. The Doctor is at first confused, but then sees his brother's cane sitting on one of the tables. Stockmann is enraged that his brother has come to talk to the press about the Springs. There is a major shift: Aslaksen and Hovstad were once sure of the reports whereas now they aren't sure if the data is correct. Stockmann urges them to print the article but Hovstad firmly states that he will not be printing the article anymore. Peter urges his brother to forget the article and move on but Stockmann gets his article from Aslaksen and he and Catherine both exit together.

## ACT 2 SCENE 2

Captain Horster is in his home, waiting for Dr. Stockmann's town lecture to begin. It was the only place in town Stockmann could occupy to share his discovery. We discover that the local paper has printed the Mayor's report and not a word about Dr. Stockmann's discoveries about the Spring water. Peter and the townspeople congregate and agree it would be democratic to elect a chairman for the meeting so as to have order. They vote Aslaksen as the chairman for the meeting. Stockmann tries to speak but Aslaksen asks the mayor to speak first. While Peter has the floor he begins to say that his brother has plans to destroy Kirsten Springs. He reminds the townspeople how beautiful the Springs will be and how

wealthy tourists will travel to their town to spend their money there. Aslaksen sets up a vote of whether or not the Doctor should be allowed to speak but Stockmann calls for a 'Point of Order' that allows him to speak for just a few moments before Aslaksen calls for a vote again on whether or not the Doctor should be allowed to speak at the lecture. Defeated, Stockmann asks to speak not about the Springs but about a new discovery he has made. Stockmann thought he had the majority for a second after he made his discovery, at first it felt wonderful but he soon discovered that, "the majority is always wrong". The townspeople go mad over what Stockmann is saying, calling him a "revolutionist" and a "traitor". Stockmann would rather take his family and flee to America than remain in this town any longer, he makes plans to leave on Captain Horster's ship to America as soon as possible.

## ACT 3 SCENE 1

The scene opens up in Stockmann's living room but it is not warm and inviting but rather cold with its new busted windows, broken glass and rocks scattered across the floor. The Stockmann's have been evicted, their daughter Petra has been fired from her job as a school teacher and Captain Horster comes to the house and announces he's also been fired from the ship sailing to America. Peter enters their home, telling his brother that the board of the Springs has decided to fire him. Peter

# SYNOPSIS



tells his brother he thinks this has all gone too far, Stockmann is still his brother and he never wanted to see him ruined. Peter asks his brother for a signed statement that takes back what he said about the springs so that he can get his job back. He assures his brother that with time they can gradually make the changes to the springs to make them safe for tourists. Stockmann stays true and turns down the deal from his brother. Peter then reveals that Morten Kiil has been going around the town and buying up all of the Kirsten Springs stocks. Peter accuses Stockmann of working with his father-in-law to acquire cheap stock in the Springs. Stockmann fervently denies the claims. As Peter leaves, Kiil enters the living room. Kiil hands Stockmann the Kirsten Springs shares he just purchased for a very cheap price. He tells Stockmann that he must protect his Tannery that's been in his family for generations and the reports about the Spring water would ruin him. Kiil then reveals that he went around town buying all the Kirsten Springs stock with his daughter Catherine's money. He tells Stockmann to take another test

of the water and come out with a new report so as to save his family from ruin. Kiil leaves Stockmann with his thoughts and Hovstad and Aslaksen enter. They tell Stockmann they can change his reputation through their paper but are asking for money in return to, "make up for the deficit" in their sales. If not, they will continue printing as usual with Stockmann being labeled an enemy of the people. Stockmann refuses to pay for the paper and Hovstad calls him a "madman". Stockmann's sons come home from school beaten and bruised. They were sent home early by their teacher. The kids at school beat Morten and Eilif while calling Dr. Stockmann a traitor. Stockmann tells Hovstad and Aslaksen that the town is poisoned and he wants nothing to do with their paper. Stockmann is now alone with his family. He decides they are not going to flee, they are going to stay and fight. He decides he'd rather be lonely fighting for truth than to be with the majority. He says to his family, "...and the strong must learn to be lonely."



# PRE-SHOW QUESTIONS



1. *An Enemy of the People* was written in 1950 by Arthur Miller, who is known for his realistic and complicated characters and dialogue. Knowing that this was written over 70 years ago, how might the dialogue be similar to what we hear today in movies, TV shows, and plays? How might the dialogue be different?
2. In *An Enemy of the People*, many of the characters fight to improve the community for the better. What are some things in your community you would want to improve? What would you need to do to improve them?
3. Dr. Thomas Stockmann struggles throughout the play to get people to believe him. Think of a time you felt like you weren't being listened to or believed. How did this make you feel? What things did you try to do to get people to listen to you and believe you?

# TOWN HALL MEETING



A pivotal moment in this show is when the members of the town are asked to meet and make their opinions heard with a vote. Some people try to silence others, begging them not to bring up factual information.

Explain to students that they should each choose a familiar “townsperson” character to portray for this activity. Examples could be a teacher, a doctor, the mayor, the grocer, a mechanic, factory worker, etc. Once students have chosen which townsperson they will be playing, have them draw a picture of what their character looks like and include a few facts about them (if they have a family, how old they are, what their name is, etc.) After students have spent some time developing their characters, tell them that as you move forward with the activity, they will be responding as this character and not as themselves. Have students share their character study with the class, and then have them vote as to who will be the neutral chairperson for the meeting, deciding who can speak when.

As the teacher, you will go into the role of “the scientist” making a pitch and stating facts. Dialogue can go as follows:

“Good morning respected members of the town, I’ve decided to speak to you today against the recommendation of my peers. I will stand alone because I believe it is the right thing to do, and I want you all to be able to make an informed and educated decision. I have done significant testing and I have come to the conclusion that our water supply has been contaminated by runoff from a nearby factory. We need to do something about this as soon as possible to avoid long term health effects. I am suggesting we shut down the factory to avoid further contamination in our water supply, despite the fact that this will result in some people losing their jobs. It is critical that we decide to put our health and safety first.”

Once everyone knows the issue that is being brought forward, allow them to have a discussion moderated by their elected chairperson and intervene as necessary. If most members of the town are in favor of shutting down the factory, bring up some arguments that could be made from the other side and have some students argue those points as well (loss of jobs, time and money lost, disbelief in the credibility of the source, etc)

After a few minutes of the chairperson allowing different townspeople to share their opinions, they should put the motion to a vote. Write on the board the number of people who vote yes and no.



# TOWN HALL MEETING



## DISCUSSION

1. After the vote has been cast, invite students to go out of role.
2. Ask students to reflect on their discussion: What was challenging? Are they happy with the results of the vote? What did they enjoy? Did they learn anything new?
3. If there is still time, allow students to bring up another potential issue that could be facing their town and go through the meeting and vote again.

# POST SHOW QUESTIONS



1. *An Enemy of the People* is an adaptation of the 1882 play of the same title by Henrik Ibsen. Why do you think this play is relevant today? In 1950? What can you infer was going on in 1882 that would make Ibsen write the original play?
2. Why did the community decide to ignore and refuse Stockmann's plan to fix the springs? Was Stockmann actually the people's enemy? Why did the community refuse to see him as anything else?
3. Stockmann chooses to refuse everyone's plans to clear his name and refuses to leave town, despite everyone's threats and his family's pleas to run away. What do you think is going to happen to Stockmann and his family?

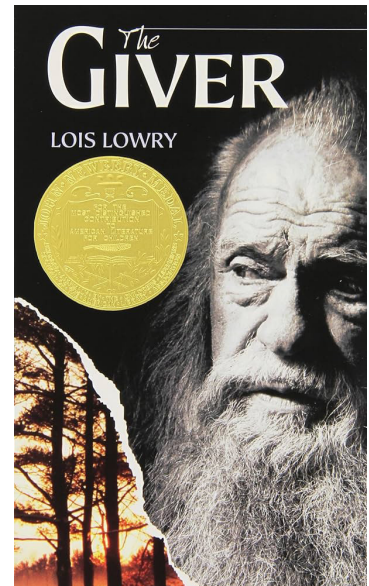
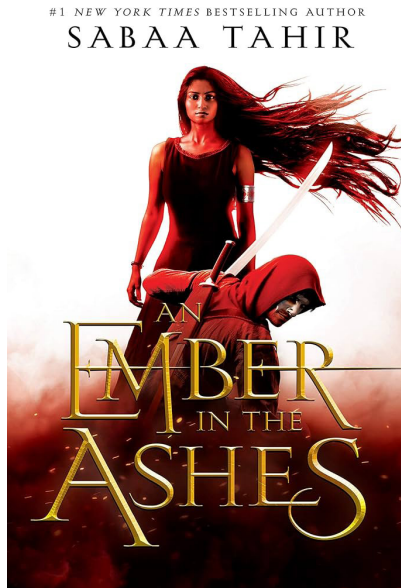
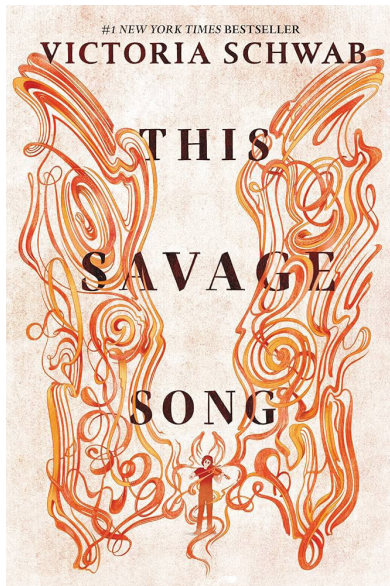


# WHO SAID IT?

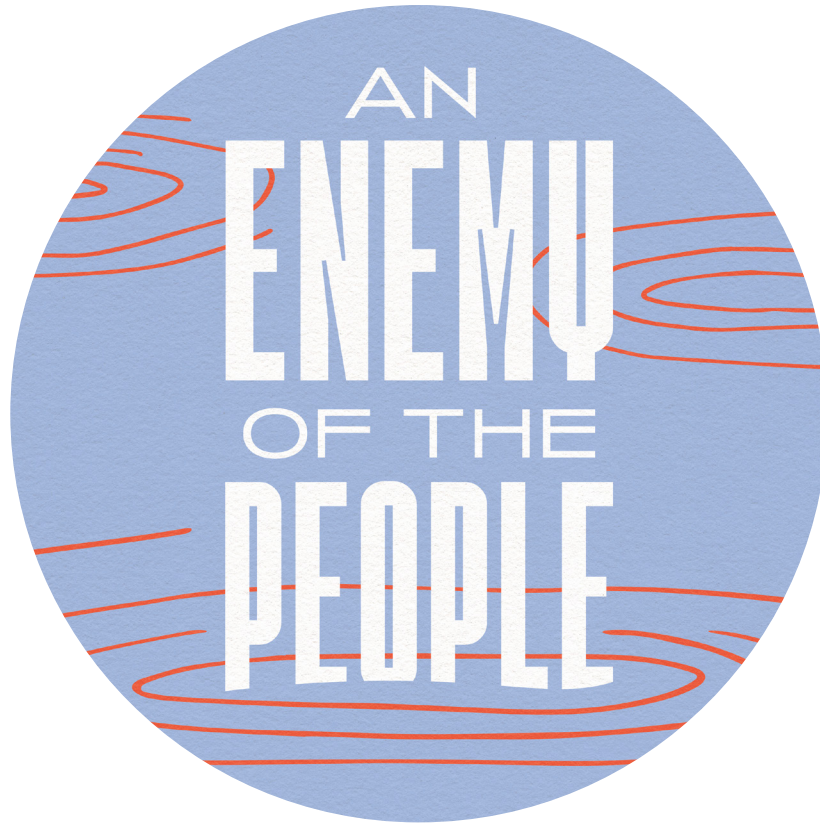
1. "Good? It's wonderful. You can't imagine the feeling, Catherine, to know that your own town feels like a brother to you. I haven't felt so at home in this town since I was a boy."
2. "The public doesn't need new ideas---the public is much better off with old ideas."
3. "But remember now, everybody. You are fighting for the truth, and that's why you're alone. And that makes you strong---we're the strongest people in the world... And the strong must learn to be lonely"
4. "Without power, what good is the truth?"
5. "Rights are sacred until it hurts for somebody to use them."
6. "There are ruins of nations and there are ruins of towns all over the world, and they were wrecked by people who in the guise of reform and pleading for justice and so on, broke down all authority and left only revolution and chaos."
7. "I proclaim it now! I am in revolt against the age-old lie that the majority is always right!"
8. "Well, it shows you, that's all. Man goes out to fight for the truth should never wear his best pants."
9. "You admit there's some doubt in your mind about the water, you admit there may be ways to disinfect it, and yet you went after your brother as though the only way to cure the thing was to blow up the whole Institute! There's hatred in that, boy, don't forget it."
10. "Oh, naturally. The big patriots with their anonymous indignation, scrawling out the darkness of their minds onto dirty little slips of paper---that's morality, and I'm the traitor!"
11. "The trouble is that certain men are never satisfied to share, Catherine."
12. "A word can be like a needle sticking in your heart, Captain. It can dig and corrode like an acid, until you become what they want you to be---really an enemy of the people."

# RECOMMENDED READING

## FOR TEEN READERS:







# **GOING TO A SHOW AT THE TODD WEHR THEATER**

**SOCIAL STORY**

**I am going to see a First Stage show  
at the Milwaukee Youth Arts Center.**



I am going to see the show with

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**Watching a play is like watching  
TV or a movie, except people  
are on stage in front of us.**



They are called actors. They can see and hear me too.  
I can't turn the channel or turn the volume up and down.



# A play is made up of many interesting things.



Costumes



Scenery



Sound



Lighting

When we drive to the Milwaukee Youth Arts Center, we will park in the parking lot or on the street.



We may need to wait in line to scan our tickets.



When we are waiting, I can stay with my family or teacher.



**Once we have  
our tickets, we will  
go down the long  
blue hallway...**



...into a large and colorful  
commons area.



There are bathrooms in the commons  
area. If I need to, I can use the bathroom  
before we go to our seats.

**Someone will show us where to sit.**



The audience area is for all of us.



The stage is for the actors only.

## **When I am in the theater waiting for the show to start:**

1. I can talk to my family or friends.
2. I can take a short break in the lobby.

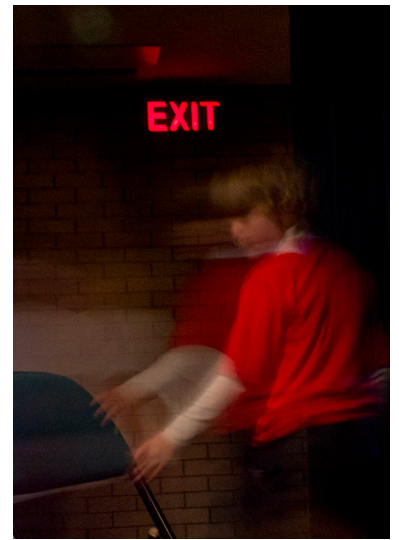




# There will be a lot of people in theater and it may get noisy.

If it gets too loud:

1. I can bring headphones if I want.
2. I can put my hands over my ears.
3. I can leave the room and take a short break in the lobby.



I can come back when I am ready.

## During the show:

1. I can watch and listen to the actors quietly.
2. I can applaud if I like something.
3. I can hold things in my hand that make me feel comfortable.



## If I need to talk:

1. I can talk quietly to my family.
2. I can write down what I want to say.
3. I can leave the room.

## **After the show there will be a “talkback.”**

**The talkback is a chance for me to ask questions.**

1. I will raise my hand to show that I want to ask a question.
2. I will wait for the leader to call on me to ask my question.
3. I don't have to ask a question if I don't want.



**I can ask different kinds of questions:**

1. I can ask questions about the show.
2. I can ask questions about the scenery, costumes, lights, or sound.



**After the show is finished,  
I will leave the theater with my family.**

