

# **It Takes A Nation Of Norwegians To Hold Us Back!**

By Mike Mariano

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*Lights up on a secluded courtyard at The Baths, a spa and health resort in a small coastal town. At rise, a bikini-clad young woman, LINA, lies, reclined in a chair. On her face is a green peel-away mask, while on her eyes are two cucumber slices. After a moment, another woman, KIRSTEN, enters. She reclines next to LINA, waits a moment, then vomits into a bucket next to her chair.*

**LINA**

Don't hold back, Kirsten. Tell me how you really feel.

**KIRSTEN**

Awful.

**LINA**

There we go.

**KIRSTEN**

This is the worst vacation I've ever been on.

**LINA**

Kirsten, please. For some of us, this is work.

**KIRSTEN**

Work. I can't believe you, Lina. This is what a water inspector does?

**LINA**

*Peeling off the mask:*

One of my many duties, yes. One day I crawl into a sewer. The next I'm here. It balances out about even.

**KIRSTEN**

Good for you.

**LINA**

Thank you.

**KIRSTEN**

I wish I had even.

**LINA**

I am confined to strict professionalism on this trip. I'm a government official. On very official business. But you, Kirsten: have some fun!

**KIRSTEN**

I'd have fun in the emergency room—

**LINA**

You aren't going to meet any guys carrying around that bucket.

**KIRSTEN**

A doctor, maybe.

**LINA**

Stop that! Have some confidence. We are enjoying one of the most exclusive, most modern spa resorts in the area, and I'd like to hear more positive things from you about it.

**KIRSTEN**

*Noncommittal:*

The weather's nice.

**LINA**

There you go! Best thing they ever did here was to build The Baths. It made people a lot of money. It put this town on the map. And it gave me a very work-related reason to pull out this two-piece.

**KIRSTEN**

*Pulling at her mid-section:*

How much of this is fat and how much of this will be throw-up?

**LINA**

Kirsten, it's time to lie down. Do it.

**KIRSTEN**

Lina! Oh....

*She does so.*

**LINA**

Relax, let go of the bucket. You are in a very calm place.

*LINA turns to the remainder of her cucumber and begins slicing. KIRSTEN stares straight ahead, unreassured.*

Now, I want you to take these, recline, and forget about your gastrointestinal roller coaster ride.

*LINA puts down the knife and turns around. KIRSTEN, meanwhile, absentmindedly eats both cucumber slices.*

**KIRSTEN**

You know, you're some friend. I want chicken soup and a big fluffy bathrobe, not a spa trip.

**LINA**

They have bathrobes here.

**KIRSTEN**

Not the right kind. These are all white, terrycloth, spa robes. I'm talking about big, plaid, grandpa robes. Really heavy. And slippers.

**LINA**

You ate the cucumbers.

**KIRSTEN**

Yeah?

**LINA**

*Cutting again:*

You put them on your eyes.

**KIRSTEN**

*Complying:*

Whatever.

**LINA**

Thank God you don't have a bag of chips. You'd scrape my avocado mask from my face.

**KIRSTEN**

Avocado mask? You're so gullible.

**LINA**

I'm not gullible; you know nothing—

**KIRSTEN**

"Oh, let me go to the supermarket, smear guacamole on my face...."

**LINA**

...It's not guacamole....

**KIRSTEN**

"...Let me pay ninety dollars to wear my groceries."

**LINA**

Oh, don't worry. The government's buying.

**KIRSTEN**

I figured.

*The pair recline. A moment passes.*

I think it's the water. Something's wrong.

**LINA**

The water.

**KIRSTEN**

You would know.

**LINA**

I would. There's nothing wrong with the water.

**KIRSTEN**

*Sitting up:*

How do you know that?

**LINA**

I inspect it.

**KIRSTEN**

Yeah, but how do you know? This place, it advertises "fresh mountain streams" or whatever. I'm soaking in water from nature: how healthy is that? I don't think the water's that fresh.

**LINA**

You're paranoid.

**KIRSTEN**

I'm not!

**LINA**

Eat some more cucumber.

**KIRSTEN**

I can't eat anything! I hope you shut this place down.

**LINA**

What?

**KIRSTEN**

Rat trap! It's a rat trap here!

**LINA**

Kirsten, if anything you have brought a disease here. Some ebola/hanta cocktail that's going to spread from—not to you. That is, if it isn't all just psychosomatic.

**KIRSTEN**

What? So now I'm like psychic?

**LINA**

You're certainly unique.

**KIRSTEN**

Lina, I really hope that as a professional water inspecting public official, you realize that you're the line between people like me and people who want to make me sick.

**LINA**

I walk the line.

**KIRSTEN**

Yes.

**LINA**

The thin blue line. Blue like water.

**KIRSTEN**

Lina, I'm serious.

**LINA**

Water's my job; I take it seriously. If I shut the place down, I'll do it over Andreas.

**KIRSTEN**

Andreas?

**LINA**

My masseur.

**KIRSTEN**

You did something.

**LINA**

He did something. After my massage this morning.

**KIRSTEN**

Tell me!

**LINA**

First of all, the massage was incredible. To the point of hallucination. It was as if he was molding me, sculpting me a new back.

**KIRSTEN**

This was a good thing?

**LINA**

I'm not doing it justice. It was the best thing. And we talked. Endlessly. We really had a connection. But it ended too soon. Andreas was called away for some emergency before we got to the heated rocks. As he's packing up, I see him—OK, this is unforgivable, what he did to me.

**KIRSTEN**

What?

**LINA**

I turn around and I see him putting his wedding ring back on.

**KIRSTEN**

Ohhh...he's married.

**LINA**

Married! And leading me on like that, by being good at his job. Shameful.

**KIRSTEN**

I think masseurs have to be married. Otherwise we wouldn't let them stop.

**LINA**

Yours was married?

**KIRSTEN**

Yeah. And I puked on him.

**LINA**

I hope he washed his hands.

**KIRSTEN**

Lina, I really don't feel good. I think it's the cucumbers now.

**LINA**

*Getting up:*

Can you keep a secret?

**KIRSTEN**

You know I can't.

*LINA rummages through a bag and retrieves an anonymous vial of pills.*

**LINA**

Swallow.

**KIRSTEN**

I don't want more drugs. I took so many—

**LINA**

You didn't take these; come on.

**KIRSTEN**

All right....

*She swallows the pills.*

What is it?

**LINA**

Rat poison.

**KIRSTEN**

*Smiles:*

You're my best friend.

**LINA**

Would I lie to you?

**KIRSTEN**

*Retrieving a stack of towels:*

Now that I'm drugged up, I am going to cover myself in towels and try to fall asleep.

**LINA**

Towels.

**KIRSTEN**

There's no bathrobe, but whatever. I will wrap myself up. A mummy. Pack me in salt, dehydrate me. Because I do not trust the water. I don't want it in my body.

*At this point, KIRSTEN has covered herself from the neck down with towels. She has wriggled her arms underneath.*

**LINA**

Happy?

**KIRSTEN**

Do my head.

**LINA**

And smother you?

**KIRSTEN**

You've been dreaming of it, I'm sure.

*LINA drops a towel onto KIRSTEN's head.*

**LINA**

Don't stain the towel.

**KIRSTEN**

*From underneath the towel:*

It's a resort towel. Anything I don't ralph in I'm stealing.

**LINA**

Well...back to work.

*LINA lies back. DOCTOR THOMAS STOCKMANN enters. He is dressed in a full suit and carries a messy folder of papers and newspaper clippings. He also carried a large box. STOCKMANN is quietly excited.*

**STOCKMANN**

Inspector?

**LINA**

Hmmm....

**STOCKMANN**

Inspector Selland?

**LINA**

Inspector? Oh, I'm not called that.

**STOCKMANN**

But that's you, isn't it? I'm Doctor Thomas Stockmann. We've been in correspondence.

**LINA**

That's right; Tom.... It's good to meet you.

**STOCKMANN**

I am more than happy to meet with you, Inspector. I'm sorry to interrupt you if you're—

**LINA**

Oh, no. That's fine. I'm as on-duty as I need to be.

**STOCKMANN**

I brought extra copies of what I sent to you. Notes, a map of the waterways, independently verified data. Everything you need to know about the water.

**KIRSTEN**

*From the towels:*

Water?

**LINA**

*To STOCKMANN:*

That's Kirsten.

**KIRSTEN**

*Sitting up:*

The water is bad!

**STOCKMANN**

It is, isn't it? The fools who run this place, even the tourists are catching on.

**KIRSTEN**

I'm Kirsten.

**STOCKMANN**

Doctor Thomas Stockmann; a pleasure to meet you.

**KIRSTEN**

You're a doctor?

**STOCKMANN**

Yes.

**KIRSTEN**

A medical doctor?

**STOCKMANN**

Among other things, yes.

**KIRSTEN**

Because I'm feeling awful.

**STOCKMANN**

Are you?

**KIRSTEN**

It's as if I was foaming. Like I was filled with foam. Foam packed into my brain, in my lungs, and then as big as a pile of mush in my stomach.

**STOCKMANN**

Foam?

**KIRSTEN**

Painful foam!

**STOCKMANN**

I see the Inspector has been taking care of you.

**KIRSTEN**

That's what she'd tell you....

**STOCKMANN**

Kirsten, I'd love to help, but I don't know if I can diagnose foam.

**KIRSTEN**

Well, there's a whole digestive system flume ride to go with that; I guess that's a little more traditional.

**STOCKMANN**

It is. It's too traditional around here.

**KIRSTEN**

Should I go to a hospital?

**STOCKMANN**

I'd recommend it. You're young and healthy; you should recover.

**KIRSTEN**

Oh, a chance of survival.

**STOCKMANN**

If you were a child it might be very serious. If you have what I suspect, you're not alone, not by far.

**KIRSTEN**

This is bad! So I have the plague?

**STOCKMANN**

Oh, not the plague. Trace amounts of plague, if anything. Typhoid, probably.

**KIRSTEN**

Terrific!

**STOCKMANN**

*To LINA:*

I have this all in my notes. Everything you need to know.

**LINA**

*Extending a hand:*

Please.

*STOCKMANN hands her a few pages.*

**STOCKMANN**

This is a comparison of the water two weeks ago with my analysis eight months earlier. This is directly what goes into The Baths. It hasn't gotten any better.

**KIRSTEN**

Ohhh....

**STOCKMANN**

The people at this resort swim in this, bathe in it, relax in it. Everyone gets infected. Not everyone can fight off the disease.

**LINA**

What's in the box?

**STOCKMANN**

*Hesitant:*

I brought evidence. Direct evidence.

**LINA**

Ooh...you're very intriguing, Doctor. Let's see it.

**STOCKMANN**

It's better if we go over these reports; get a background—

**LINA**

Doctor—Tom—I have a background. If this evidence is special, I'd like to be aware of it.

**STOCKMANN**

It's special, no doubt about that, but...it's sensitive. I don't know, in a place like this...well, all right.

*STOCKMANN sets down his papers and prepares to open the box.*

**KIRSTEN**

I don't like that smell.

**STOCKMANN**

Oh, no one does. But in the name of science, this is a triumph!

*STOCKMANN opens the box and retrieves a sopping wet mass of fur.*

**LINA**

What is that?

**STOCKMANN**

*Checking a tag on the object:*

Muffin.

**LINA**

That's a dog?

**KIRSTEN**

Oh, God!

**LINA**

You wanted me to see a dead dog?!

**KIRSTEN**

I'm—

*Gags:*

I need to go.

*She runs off.*

**STOCKMANN**

*Replacing Muffin:*

I'm sorry; it's shocking, yes, but this is an important link. You need to know this.

**LINA**

I'm sure.

*KIRSTEN enters, retrieving her bucket. She begins to exit again.*

**KIRSTEN**

*To STOCKMANN:*

Nice meeting you.

*Exits.*

**STOCKMANN**

*To LINA:*

Have her see a doctor. Just to be safe.

**LINA**

She's a hypochondriac.

**STOCKMANN**

They get sick, too.

**LINA**

You've got my attention, Tom. A dead dog. This is our fate if we wade in The Baths.

**STOCKMANN**

Not exactly, no. Muffin drowned. She must have paddled out to the wrong part of the river and was sucked into an intake. One of the same pipes feeding The Baths. In that pipe, what Muffin got was a concentrated dose of the same tainted water that surrounds us right now.

**LINA**

An intake?

**STOCKMANN**

That's problem number one; what I've been saying from the beginning: if your water is coming in from close enough to the riverbank where a dog can swim to it, it's too close. We're sucking in the worst that the river can offer. Plus, sucking in a dog: that means that a grating or bars are missing on the intake. That should be something for you, Inspector. Something to inspect.

**LINA**

I'll look into it.

**STOCKMANN**

Good, good.

**LINA**

This is fascinating, Tom, really. But how did you acquire Muffin? You went diving for—[doggies]?

**STOCKMANN**

Oh, no. She wound up with a vet I know. I took the body and ran my own tests—I'll send them to you in time—though I wanted you to have the direct evidence for yourself.

**LINA**

Tom, you're the only man who's ever given me a puppy.

**STOCKMANN**

Oh, well...Inspector....

**LINA**

You know, you have a reputation, Tom. You've been against these Baths since the beginning.

**STOCKMANN**

No, in the beginning I was for them; I was the strongest proponent. Done right, a place like this would be a boon for tourism and a genuine benefit to the health of the people. But mistakes were made from the beginning. Then the cover-ups—a small town acting in concert against their own best interests. And now The Baths are open for business. It's started.

**LINA**

So far business seems just fine.

**STOCKMANN**

So far. It's still a honeymoon period. Making the sick sicker shouldn't make the Board of Directors optimistic about repeat business. But you know what I've discovered? You know my objections.

**LINA**

I'm sure I haven't heard your version of the story.

**STOCKMANN**

Few have. Or rather, more than a few. No one listens.

**LINA**

I'm listening, Tom.

**STOCKMANN**

I'm surprised you haven't turned up anything independently. Your river's the same as mine.

**LINA**

My inspections have turned up questions, but nothing conclusive.

**STOCKMANN**

I wish my own results were as optimistic.

**LINA**

Oh, there's something wrong; but we're not ready to point fingers just yet.

**STOCKMANN**

Oh, there's plenty of blame to go around. You have a number of options and the authority to carry them out. Tell the Board to dig a new set of pipes. Tell the factories upstream to stop polluting. At the very least, tell the people about this very real danger to the public health! These can be real solutions if you make the effort.

**LINA**

Tom, I appreciate your suggestions; I'll consider them. But I want you to know, I have my own solutions. And my own timetable. Not all the facts are in. More study is needed about our effect on the river and what it means for The Baths.

**STOCKMANN**

I'll give you more study.

**LINA**

You've given me Muffin. Considering your reputation I'm not sure if you should give me anything more.

**STOCKMANN**

Oh, damn my reputation. Facts are facts!

**LINA**

Facts have sources. I have to consider them. Tom, Tom, I'm not prejudiced against you. That's why you wrote me, right?

**STOCKMANN**

An out-of-towner. I lost everyone closer.

**LINA**

Then be patient, Tom. I'll need evidence—my own evidence—and the time to weigh it. Maybe next season I'll have some recommendations—

**STOCKMANN**

Next season? Inspector, we have an epidemic right now. You've seen it with your own eyes. Kirsten.

**LINA**

What about her?

**STOCKMANN**

I would hope she'd inspire you to move more quickly. She's a friend.

**LINA**

I'm a bureaucrat. I can count the number of things we'd budge for on one hand. If you want quick results, Tom, I don't think I'm your woman.

**STOCKMANN**

You come close. You're still speaking with me.

**LINA**

If you really want to put the pressure on The Baths, forget about algae growth and water tables and give the people something more compelling: Muffin.

**STOCKMANN**

Muffin?

**LINA**

Grandma gets cramps—big deal; she's getting old. But here's somebody's puppy dog, treated like a lemon seed in a straw! Crushed in the gears of the machine. The dark side of the sunny place we call The Baths. Tell them: your spa vacation kills puppies.

**STOCKMANN**

Muffin's death is hardly a coherent argument. People will want to see the data.

**LINA**

Forget about the science; you've got a corpse! Did you see Kirsten squeal on her way out of here? Multiply that by a thousand—ten thousand—and no one will want to come to The Baths again!

**STOCKMANN**

Inspector, those aren't the tactics I want to use. Or the results. We need a temporary close of The Baths. We need a directorship that will look beyond their bank accounts and make the necessary renovations. I don't want a scandal.

**LINA**

Tom, you are a scandal. Why not share the wealth? What difference does it make if The Baths shape up or if they close for good? Either way people stop getting sick. That's what you want.

**STOCKMANN**

I'd like to do it without making this a ghost town. If I'd have any effect at all. I've been painted as a raving maniac. The locals see me waving around my research and call it nonsense. They see me waving around a dog carcass and who knows what they'd think. I wouldn't blame them.

**LINA**

Oh, Tom, you're not a maniac. You have been abused for so long. You deserve revenge!

**STOCKMANN**

No, I'm not going to sacrifice Muffin's dignity in exchange for my own. Shrewd thinking, though. I didn't expect that in you.

**LINA**

Overly clever. It's on my resume.

**STOCKMANN**

I've heard too much cleverness. No offense. Starting out, I had dozens of close allies, people falling over each other to use my research like a shiv. Foil somebody's reelection. Humiliate a rival business. Those weren't my motives. I wanted the truth for the truth. You can't sharpen the truth—reality—and shape it to your whim and still call it the truth. My allies tried. I stood against them. I lost them all.

**LINA**

Who needs friends when you have pages of data?

**STOCKMANN**

Turn that around: my pages of data showed me who I could really consider a friend. I went dredging riverbeds and discovered a scummy side of human nature. A primitive selfishness that tied these townspeople to the algae on their shores. Algae does that: with no fish around, it multiplies on the top of the water, blocking out sun and suffocating everything below, taking an entire ecosystem for itself. I asked the people to look beyond this pre-animal instinct. Instead they rioted.

**LINA**

You've got more than algae now, Tom. You have a dog. A dead dog. Muffin is a fact.

**STOCKMANN**

Inspector, out of anyone here Muffin has suffered the least from disease. My reforms won't make things much safer for drowning dogs.

**LINA**

Well.

**STOCKMANN**

What?

**LINA**

Tom, I don't know. It sounds like you really don't want to win.

**STOCKMANN**

Inspector, I am a certified Public Enemy. With nothing to lose, I'll win on my own terms.

**LINA**

An Enemy of the People. You've grown awfully comfortable calling yourself that.

**STOCKMANN**

What do you want, Inspector? You have the truth right in front of you. You don't seem to care much about my town or The Baths. I assume you want clean water.

**LINA**

Or something like it. That's good enough.

**STOCKMANN**

No it's not! Where's your conviction? Inspector, bureaucracy doesn't breed champions. I know that. But I need you to be a champion. Look at the data. Study Muffin. Make the right choice.

**LINA**

You're such a lonely man, Tom. Your show of strength, it looks like loneliness to me. I know about your wife.

**STOCKMANN**

Most do.

**LINA**

Oh, Tom, it's horrible that they would print that. I have no business knowing, but anyone who picked up a newspaper—

**STOCKMANN**

Newspapers; the medium has failed.

**LINA**

She shouldn't have done that.

**STOCKMANN**

It's all right.

**LINA**

She took the boys and ran off with a sea captain.

**STOCKMANN**

I don't blame her for that.

**LINA**

Oh, of course not.

**STOCKMANN**

Katrine showed me patience. Incredible patience. She was my last ally.

**LINA**

That's sad.

**STOCKMANN**

Yes.

**LINA**

I'm sorry.

**STOCKMANN**

Inspector, I still want to believe that you can make that "sorry" mean something.

**LINA**

Tom? Call me "Lina".

**STOCKMANN**

Lina.

**LINA**

Not "Inspector." Not "Miss Selland." I call you "Tom."

**STOCKMANN**

Lina. It's a pretty name.

**LINA**

I robbed it from my grandmother. She's pretty.

**STOCKMANN**

When you leave here, you'll bring Muffin with you.

**LINA**

I will, Tom. I'll contact the lab when I'm done.

**STOCKMANN**

You will?

**LINA**

You've convinced me, Tom. It's worth a closer look. And you're worth a second chance.

**STOCKMANN**

*Flustered:*

Lina....

**LINA**

Tom.

**STOCKMANN**

Sorry; I'm being unusual. But—you're a public servant. I'm a public enemy. And you're taking me seriously. It's been so long.

**LINA**

It's the least I can do.

**STOCKMANN**

Thank you.

**LINA**

I'd like you to do something for me, though.

**STOCKMANN**

What?

**LINA**

Stop talking about dead dogs.

**STOCKMANN**

*Smiles:*

I'll keep myself in line.

**LINA**

And another thing, Tom: my back. I didn't get my full massage this afternoon.

**STOCKMANN**

You want a massage?

**LINA**

Are the rocks hot?

**STOCKMANN**

Rocks?

**LINA**

Andreas was heating them for the massage. They should still be warm.

*STOCKMANN locates the rocks.*

**STOCKMANN**

Do I need a mitt?

**LINA**

My back won't.

**STOCKMANN**

Of course. I assume this is self-explanatory?

**LINA**

Assume nothing.

**STOCKMANN**

Lie back.

*LINA does. STOCKMANN picks up a rock.*

**STOCKMANN** (cont.)

Now, if I have this right, I press.....

*He places the rock against LINA's back. She shudders.*

Hold...then rub....

*STOCKMANN begins to rub in circles on her back. LINA reacts. STOCKMANN retrieves another rock and continues.*

Like this?

**LINA**

Mmmm....

**STOCKMANN**

It wasn't so long ago that rocks like this were coming through my window. By people who wanted The Baths, no matter how flawed.

**LINA**

*Not a response, just pleasure:*

Uhhh....

**STOCKMANN**

Who would even think it was flawed? The two of us, like this, nearly make this Eden. You can almost ignore the poison.

**LINA**

Bad poison....

**STOCKMANN**

Be careful; you've been swimming in it.

**LINA**

No, don't worry.

**STOCKMANN**

Don't worry?

**LINA**

I haven't been swimming.

**STOCKMANN**

Really?

**LINA**

Really.

**STOCKMANN**

No sauna or steam baths?

**LINA**

Nuh-uh....

**STOCKMANN**

Lina, how long have you been here?

**LINA**

This is my first full day. So far I've exercised. I got a massage. I ate.

**STOCKMANN**

*Frowns:*

But you haven't gone near the water....

**LINA**

Can you untie me?

**STOCKMANN**

Can I?

**LINA**

The string's in the way of the rocks.

**STOCKMANN**

Of course.

*Gently, he pulls the string of her bikini top until the knot comes loose. The strings fall to the side.  
STOCKMANN continues his massage.*

You didn't think anything was wrong with the water.

**LINA**

Mostly OK; yes...

**STOCKMANN**

No preconceptions.

**LINA**

None at all.

**STOCKMANN**

Yet once you came here, began your inspection, you did everything but go in the water.

**LINA**

One thing at a time, Tom. You sound suspicious.

**STOCKMANN**

It is suspicious. You told you you don't know if my theories are correct. But you act like they are, and that you've known all along.

**LINA**

*Sitting up:*

No, no...Tom, no....

**STOCKMANN**

I can't trust you.

**LINA**

You can't trust anybody, Tom! It's been too long. Everyone's your enemy. Everyone has held you back. I won't do that to you.

**STOCKMANN**

What's your angle...?

**LINA**

Tom!

**STOCKMANN**

I wonder. You're not working for The Baths; I know that.

**LINA**

You're above this, Tom.

**STOCKMANN**

Are you?

*LINA huffs, turning to fasten her top.*

Lina! Lina, I'm sorry.

**LINA**

Don't be. Why should I have the same noble motives as the good doctor?

**STOCKMANN**

I would love that; I'm a fool to consider anything else. But I've seen so much self-interest, self-interest that overwhelms the greater good. It's instinct. I look at you and ask: what's your angle?

**LINA**

My angle.

*Silently, gently, LINA kisses STOCKMANN on the lips. She pulls away. They share a look.*

**STOCKMANN**

Should I believe that?

**LINA**

I don't know. Ask me again.

*STOCKMANN lifts LINA, embraces her, and kisses her passionately. She kisses back, ripping off his jacket. They continue; STOCKMANN begins kissing LINA's body as she breathes deeply.*

**STOCKMANN**

Lina....

**LINA**

Tom....

**STOCKMANN**

*Between kisses:*

Let's go in the water.

**LINA**

The water? No....

**STOCKMANN**

Yes....

**LINA**

But Tom...Tom...you'll get sick.

**STOCKMANN**

*Between kisses:*

We'll get sick. Together. We'll get well together. A baptism....

**LINA**

Baptism.... No, Tom; that's not true.

**STOCKMANN**

Oh?

**LINA**

You see—

*KIRSTEN reenters.*

**KIRSTEN**

*With disdain:*

You were right about the pills, so gloat awa—Oh!

*She spies the embrace and turns from the pair.*

Wow. That's some massage.

**LINA**

Kirsten, this man is a doctor.

**KIRSTEN**

My plan doesn't cover that....

*She waves her hands.*

I took a walk, I sat down, and you're right, Lina. Your rat poison pills. Whatever. They did the trick. I'm not foamy anymore.

**STOCKMANN**

You should still see a doctor.

**KIRSTEN**

I don't know how I should take that comment.

*She turns to LINA.*

I'll leave you alone. Thanks for the pills. What are they called?

**LINA**

I'll tell you later.

**KIRSTEN**

Oh, we'll talk.

*KIRSTEN waves and exits.*

**LINA**

You can start again, Tom. And it was Kirsten; you didn't even need to stop.

*No response.*

Tom?

**STOCKMANN**

I'm following the river.

**LINA**

Tom.

**STOCKMANN**

In my mind, I'm following the river. Right up to the edge of your jurisdiction. Where at least two pharmaceutical plants reside.

**LINA**

OK, Tom.

**STOCKMANN**

Pills! You're selling pills!

**LINA**

A clinical trial, Tom.

**STOCKMANN**

You leave the water contaminated!

**LINA**

The contamination is taken care of, in one way or another. Tom, this is simple.

**STOCKMANN**

All too simple.

**LINA**

I...misled you. I know what's in the water. And I have come to an agreement with local pharmaceutical firms that allow them to develop a treatment.

**STOCKMANN**

You're letting people die!

**LINA**

I hardly think so. I have more faith in this pill than randomized water samples.

**STOCKMANN**

You were never going to test Muffin....

**LINA**

You can't give medicine to a dead dog. Now if we're done talking, Tom, you might as well work on my neck.

*LINA lies down. Purple with rage, STOCKMANN comes up behind her, grabs the strings of her bikini top, and begins to strangle her. LINA struggles, her eyes wide. STOCKMANN grunts, pulling tighter, when—SNAP—the bikini string breaks. LINA, free, collapses. She looks at the panting STOCKMANN.*

**STOCKMANN**

It broke.

**LINA**

About time I had a man rip my clothes off me.

**STOCKMANN**

Here....

*He covers LINA with his jacket. They catch their breaths.*

**STOCKMANN** (cont.)

Attempted murderer....

**LINA**

No.

**STOCKMANN**

Yes.

**LINA**

No; Tom, you just got a little upset. This is what you wanted. Not in this way, but the results are the same. These people—tourists, your former patients—get cured.

**STOCKMANN**

They don't need to be sick to begin with.

**LINA**

Tom, we're making medicine. Disease, contamination, happens all over the world. Stopping it here doesn't affect the waterways anywhere else. But this pill can go worldwide.

**STOCKMANN**

Poison is poison.

**LINA**

And cures are cures. One makes a much better investment.

**STOCKMANN**

Investment. Better for you, not better for the people who fall ill, people who die bargaining, begging for a pill—for the health that you helped take away. Don't tell me about the greater good; I hear the words that really matter. Stock prices. Investments. It's always small. You lecture me about medicine with one eye on your portfolio. It's not right.

**LINA**

It's a solution. The one we've got. I'm sorry you don't want to see it work.

*She stands and smooths the front of her jacket.*

Mind if I hold onto this?

**STOCKMANN**

You're leaving?

**LINA**

Tennis with Kirsten. I have to get dressed.

*Half-beat.*

You're not going to change my mind. I certainly didn't expect to change yours.

*LINA gathers her things.*

**STOCKMANN**

*Softly:*

It's so long. I've been fighting this for so long. And I've never advanced once.

**LINA**

Then don't fight. Stop worrying. Love The Baths.

**STOCKMANN**

I'm not the one who won't go in the water.

**LINA**

Maybe some other time. It might be fun to see you in a swimsuit.

*She begins to exit, then turns.*

You were quoted, Tom. A long time ago. Something about how you were a stronger man for standing alone. Are you feeling stronger now?

*LINA exits. STOCKMANN grabs Muffin's container.*

**STOCKMANN**

*Half-calling out to LINA:*

Strong enough...!

*Beat.*

Strong enough.... At least strong enough, to bury this dog....

*STOCKMANN begins to exit. The lights fade.*