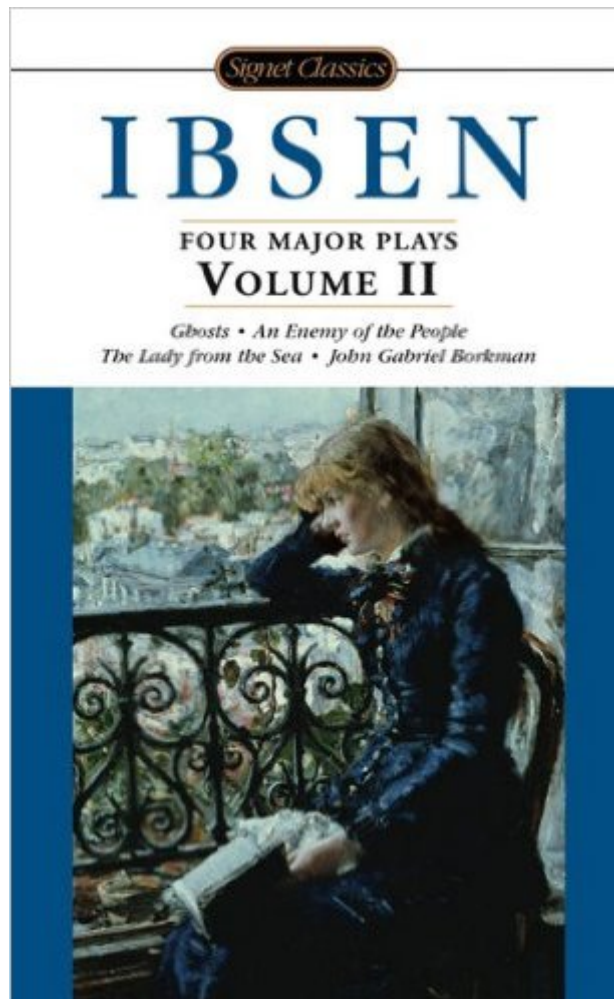


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Ibsen: 4 Major Plays, Vol. 2: Ghosts/An Enemy Of The People/The Lady From The Sea/John Gabriel Borkman (Signet Classics)



Synopsis

The foremost dramatist of his age, Ibsen changed theatre forever with his realistic dialogue and depiction of contemporary social problems. Here are four of his greatest works: Ghosts, An Enemy of the People, The Lady From the Sea, and John Gabriel Borkman.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I intend only to review one play of these four, An Enemy of the People. As for the Signet editions and their translations, well, in terms of paper and print, you get what you pay for. You can carry them in your jeans pocket, but don't wait too long to read them, lest the paper yellows and crumbles in your fingers. An Enemy of the People is Ibsen's most explicitly political play, and the one that critics refer to most often when attempting to pin down the playwright's political stance. The fourth act of the drama consists chiefly of Doctor Stockman's spontaneous ranting and raving against the tyranny of the majority - the democratic mass of ignorant and short-sighted ordinary people who have failed to accept his advice. "The majority is never right!" he declares; "That's one of those social lies that any free man who thinks for himself has to rebel against.... all over this whole wide earth, the stupid are in a fearsomely overpowering majority..... The right is with me, and the other few, the solitary individuals. The minority is always right." Later in his tirade, he continues: "I'm thinking of the few, the individuals among us, who've mastered all the new truths that have been germinating. Those men are out there holding their positions like outposts, so far in the vanguard that the solid majority hasn't even begun to catch up..." Such anti-democratic, anti-liberal

declarations have earned Ibsen a reputation among some critics of being a prophet of fascism -- he was in fact Hitler's favorite playwright -- but a careful comparison will show that Doctor Stockman sounds a good deal more like a character in an Ayn Rand novel than like the 'hero' of Mein Kampf.

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