

# THE LEAGUE OF YOUTH

BY **HENRIK IBSEN**

ADAPTED BY **JEFFREY  
HATCHER**



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*The League of Youth* was commissioned and first produced by Commonwealth Theatre. It was directed by Hal Cropp; the scenic design was by Kit Mayer; the lighting design was by Thomas White; the costume design was by Barb Portinga; the sound design was by David Wasserman; the props design was by Kami Spaulding; the stage manager was Baily Otto. The cast was as follows:

STENSGAARD .....	Gary Danciu
MR. BRATTSBERG .....	Scott Dixon
DANIEL HEJRE .....	Ben Gorman
ERIK BRATTSBERG .....	Brandt Roberts
ANDERS LUNDESTAD .....	David Hennessey
MRS. MONSEN .....	Miriam Monasch
RAGNA MONSEN .....	Abbie Cathcart
THORA BRATTSBERG .....	Elizabeth Dunn
MRS. RUNDHOLMEN .....	Megan K. Pence

## *Dramatis Personae*

STENSGAARD: 30s, not as clever as he thinks

MR. BRATTSBERG: 60s, not as smart as he thinks

DANIEL HEJRE: 40s/50s, brown at the edges, sardonic, sly

ERIK BRATTSBERG: 20s, passionate, foolish, decent

ANDERS LUNDESTAD: 60s, corrupt, groveling, but likeable

MRS. MONSEN: 50s, peasant-cunning, but nicely coiffed

RAGNA MONSEN: 20s, pretty, shy

THORA BRATTSBERG: 30, lovely, vivid

MRS. RUNDHOLMEN: 40s, overripe and lusty

## *Setting*

A small town in Norway. Late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### ACT I

Scene 1—A park. Noon. Independence Day.

Scene 2—Brattsberg's terrace. That afternoon.

### ACT II

Scene 1—Brattsberg's terrace. One hour later.

Scene 2—Rundholmen's hotel private dining room.

That evening.

# THE LEAGUE OF YOUTH

## ACT I

### Scene 1

*A park. A day in summer. Noon.*

*A picnic table is the sole piece of furniture.*

*Stensgaard, in a rumpled summer suit or jacket, is alone on stage. He holds a beer mug.*

*We hear a speech o.s., along with the unseen crowd's response.*

*Stensgaard considers joining them to listen to the speech, then decides not to. He sees the picnic table. He goes to it. He looks around. Then he sits.*

*Mrs. Rundholmen enters pushing a cart. On it: champagne bottles, pitchers of beer, mugs, glasses.*

*Mrs. Rundholmen sees Stensgaard sitting at the table and stops in her tracks.*

MRS. RUNDHOLMEN. You can't do that.

STENSGAARD. What?

MRS. RUNDHOLMEN. Sit there. That's Mr. Brattsberg's table.

STENSGAARD. I thought it was the park's table.

MRS. RUNDHOLMEN. It's the table Mr. Brattsberg sits at on Independence Day.

STENSGAARD. Mrs. Rundholmen, do you know the one about the fellow who goes to the hotel?

MRS. RUNDHOLMEN. No.

STENSGAARD. Fellow goes to a hotel and says: "Give me a room." Hotel keeper says: "We don't have any rooms." Fellow says: "If the president showed up tonight, you'd give *him* a room, wouldn't you?" Hotel keeper says: "Of course." Fellow says: "Well, the president's not coming, give me *his* room."

MRS. RUNDHOLMEN. (*After a beat.*) That's a joke.

STENSGAARD. But with a message.

*Ragna enters, unseen by Stensgaard.*

MRS. RUNDHOLMEN. When the speeches are done, Mr. Brattsberg will come, and when he does he'll want his table.

*Mrs. Rundholmen exits with her cart.*

STENSGAARD. (*Calls after her.*) It's not his table!

RAGNA. You're new.

*Stensgaard turns and sees Ragna.*

STENSGAARD. ...What's that?

RAGNA. You think it's not right that Mr. Brattsberg gets to sit at that table whenever he wants to, but you only think that because you haven't been here long. You've only lived here for three months.

STENSGAARD. I hadn't been counting. Glad someone has.

*Stensgaard grins. Ragna blushes.*

You're not listening to the speeches. Aren't you afraid you'll miss something?

RAGNA. Mr. Lundestad gives the same speech every year. It's a local custom.

*Stensgaard stands, takes Ragna's hand, and brings her to the table.*

STENSGAARD. So what else is a local custom?

RAGNA. On Independence Day? Well, there's the firing of the cannon at dawn.

STENSGAARD. I missed that.

RAGNA. Then there are the bucket dancers.

STENSGAARD. I wasn't awake yet.

RAGNA. And the fish grab.

STENSGAARD. I did see two fellas with fish in their fists.

RAGNA. After the speeches, there will be a marching band. Then the fire brigade will set off the fireworks.

STENSGAARD. Fireworks in the afternoon?

RAGNA. They tried doing them at night, but the fire brigade was too drunk by then.

STENSGAARD. So how long do the speeches go on for?

RAGNA. On Independence Day anyone who wishes to speak is allowed to.

STENSGAARD. Can't people speak the rest of the year?

RAGNA. They can speak, but on Independence Day we have to listen.

STENSGAARD. So I can just get up on the platform and...?

RAGNA. Do whatever you like.

*Mrs. Monsen enters.*

MRS. MONSEN. Ragna!

*Ragna stands quickly. Mrs. Monsen, seeing Ragna with Stensgaard, shifts gears and smiles.*

Well, hello, Mr. Stensgaard.

STENSGAARD. Mrs. Monsen. Are the speeches over?

MRS. MONSEN. Mr. Lundestad isn't finished clearing his throat. Ragna, you're being very piggy, I want a little time with Mr. Stensgaard myself.

RAGNA. Yes, Mother.

*Ragna starts to hurry off.*

MRS. MONSEN. I didn't say run off, Ragna.

RAGNA. I'm sorry.

MRS. MONSEN. Get us some champagne.

RAGNA. How many glasses?

MRS. MONSEN. A bottle.

RAGNA. And glasses?

MRS. MONSEN. Yes, Ragna.

RAGNA. Should I pay the...?

MRS. MONSEN. Tell Mrs. Rundholmen to put it on my charge.

RAGNA. Yes, Mother.

MRS. MONSEN. *Now run off.*

*Ragna hurries o.s.*

You've got a lot of brass, taking this table.

STENSGAARD. I just sat down.

MRS. MONSEN. (*Notes a ring from the mug.*) Long enough to leave a mark.

STENSGAARD. It'll fade.

MRS. MONSEN. You'd better hope. It's the Committee's fault. They should have put up more tables. It's silly not to with all the people tramping through here during the day.

STENSGAARD. Especially if Mr. Brattsberg takes his table and goes home. Why do you let him get away with it?

MRS. MONSEN. It's his table. He donated it.

STENSGAARD. To the park.

MRS. MONSEN. Which he also donated. That's why it's called "Brattsberg Park." And on Independence Day, Mr. Brattsberg sitting at Mr. Brattsberg's table is a local custom.

*Mrs. Monsen smiles and shakes her head at Stensgaard.*

You people from the city. You rent apartments, you sign leases, you never own anything, then you move to the country and get confused. Sometimes I wonder what made you come to our little valley of grief.

STENSGAARD. I had become disillusioned with life in the capital. I wanted to embrace nature, find a less frenzied pace. I know this valley doesn't have what a *lot* of places have, but it...it's...

MRS. MONSEN. The word you're looking for is "rustic."

STENSGAARD. Rustic, yes, but that's part of its charm.

MRS. MONSEN. I've been trying to find that charm for fifty years. I heard there was a woman.

STENSGAARD. Pardon?



MRS. MONSEN. The reason you left the city. A girl you were engaged to...?

STENSGAARD. Who told you that story?

MRS. MONSEN. Someone, I can't remember. It's not true?

STENSGAARD. We weren't engaged. Not formally. I broke it off.

MRS. MONSEN. Ohh.

STENSGAARD. Hardest thing I've ever done. Then I came here.

*Ragna enters with a bottle of champagne and three glasses.*

*(Grins at Ragna.)* And I thank God I did.

MRS. MONSEN. Did you charge it to me?

RAGNA. No.

MRS. MONSEN. Ragna, you didn't *pay* for it, did you?

RAGNA. Mrs. Rundholmen said to say "Compliments of the Committee."

MRS. MONSEN. That means I'll pay for it some other way. Well, pour it out, Ragna.

RAGNA. Yes, Mother.

*Ragna pours out two glasses.*

MRS. MONSEN. We're going to toast Mr. Stensgaard.

RAGNA. Why?

MRS. MONSEN. Because he's young, because he's good looking, and most of all, because he's *here*. Pour yourself a glass, Ragna.

RAGNA. Really?

MRS. MONSEN. Today, yes.

*Ragna blushes, pours her glass.*

To Mr. Stensgaard.

STENSGAARD. And local customs.

*They toast, drink.*

So the fella that's talking now...Mr. Lundestad?

MRS. MONSEN. Represents the district, yes.

STENSGAARD. He doesn't sound like he's going to stop.

MRS. MONSEN. Years ago somebody told Mr. Lundestad he was an



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5M, 4W

In an adaptation full of sparkling wit and cynical humor, this political comedy follows the meteoric rise of ambitious young Stensgaard, an office-seeker who's willing to say anything to win an election. Forming the "League of Youth" to lobby against his opposition, Stensgaard schemes, romances, and manipulates in his rush to power. Ibsen's most popular play in his lifetime, **THE LEAGUE OF YOUTH** caused fighting in the streets, with conservatives claiming it was an attack on their party and liberals claiming it was an attack on theirs! A thought-provoking comedy that's sure to feel shockingly familiar.

*"[THE LEAGUE OF YOUTH] could just as well have been written this year, rather than 150 years ago. ... While entertaining, Ibsen's tale is also disheartening in its timeless and universal nature... there's fun all around in this fast-moving show—a show that will blow away many of your preconceived notions about Ibsen."*

*—507 Magazine*

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