

**THE LADY FROM
THE SEA: A DRAMA
IN FIVE ACTS**

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The Lady from the Sea: A Drama in Five Acts by Henrik Ibsen

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HENRIK IBSEN

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THE SEA: A DRAMA
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THE LADY FROM THE SEA

A DRAMA IN FIVE ACTS

By HENRIK IBSEN

TRANSLATED FROM THE NORWEGIAN BY
CLARA BELL

Copyright, 1890, by JOHN W. LOVELL Co.

BOSTON
WALTER H. BAKER & CO.

CHARACTERS.

DOCTOR WANGEL, *A Parish Doctor.*

MRS. ELLIDA WANGEL, *His Second Wife.*

BOLETTE, { *His Daughters by His First Wife.*
HILDA, }

ARNHOLM, *A Professor.*

LYNGSTRAND.

BALLESTED.

A STRANGER.

YOUNG PEOPLE OF THE TOWN.

TOURISTS.

SUMMER VISITORS.

The action takes place in the summer season, at a small town on a fjord on the north coast of Norway.

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THE LADY FROM THE SEA.

ACT I

[DOCTOR WANGEL's house with a large furnished verandah to the left. A garden in front and round the house. In front of the veranda a flagstaff. In the garden to the right a summer-house with a table and seats; a fence with a small gate in the background. Beyond the fence a path along the shore. A walk leads to this gate. Between trees the fiord is seen, with high hills and peaks in the distance. It is a warm, bright summer day.]

[BALLESTED, middle-aged, dressed in an old velvet jacket and broad felt hat, stands by the flagstaff arranging the ropes. The flag lies on the ground. A little way off are an easel and canvas; beside them on a camp-stool lie brushes, a palette and a paint-box.]

[BOLETTE WANGEL comes out of the house on to the veranda. She carries a large vase with flowers, which she places on a table.]

BOLETTE. Well, Ballested, can you make it work?

BALLESTED. Certainly, Miss Wangel; that is a very small matter. May I ask do you expect a stranger to see you to-day?

BOLETTE. Yes; we expect Professor Arnholm this morning. He arrived in the town last night.

BALLESTED. Arnholm? Stay, was not Arnholm the name of the man who was tutor here some time since?

BOLETTE. Yes; it is the same.

BALLESTED. Ah, indeed. Then he is coming into the neighborhood again?

BOLETTE. That is why we wish the flag to fly.

BALLESTED. Why, that is very natural.

BOLETTE *goes back into the room. Soon after* LYGSTRAND *comes along from the path on the right and stands interested by the easel and painting things. He is a slight young man, simply but decently dressed, and looks ill.]*

LYGSTRAND (*outside the fence*). Good morning.

BALLESTED (*turning round*). Heh! Good morning. (*He hoists the flag.*) That's done—now for the next thing. (*He fastens the ropes and busies himself at the easel.*) Good morning—I have not indeed the pleasure—

LYGSTRAND. You it would seem are a painter.

BALLESTED. So it would seem. Otherwise I should not be painting.

LYGSTRAND. That is self-evident. Might I be allowed to come in?

BALLESTED. You would perhaps like to see it closer?

LYGSTRAND. Yes, very gladly.

BALLESTED. There is not much to see. But pray come in. You can walk round.

LYGSTRAND. Many thanks. (*He comes in at the garden gate.*)

BALLESTED (*painting*). It is the fiord out there among the islands that I am trying to paint.

LYGSTRAND. Yes; I see that.

BALLESTED. But figures are still wanting. Here in the town there is not a model to be found.

LYNGSTRAND. Then there are to be figures in it?

BALLESTED. Yes. Here by the rock in the foreground a half-dead mermaid is to be lying.

LYNGSTRAND. Why half-dead?

BALLESTED. She has wandered in from the sea and can not find her way out again. And so she lies dying in the brackish water you are to understand.

LYNGSTRAND. Aye, to be sure.

BALLESTED. It was the lady of the house here who put it into my head to paint something of the kind.

LYNGSTRAND. What will you call the picture when it is finished?

BALLESTED. I thought of calling it the Mermaid's Death.

LYNGSTRAND. That does capitally. You can make a good thing of it, I am sure.

BALLESTED (*looking at him*). One of the profession, perhaps?

LYNGSTRAND. A painter, do you mean?

BALLESTED. Yes.

LYNGSTRAND. No, not exactly. But I mean to be a sculptor. My name is Hans Lyngstrand.

BALLESTED. And you are a sculptor? Aye, aye. Sculpture is a beautiful and pleasing art. I believe I have seen you about the streets and roads. Have you been staying long hereabouts?

LYNGSTRAND. No; I have been here only a fortnight. But I shall see if I can remain through the summer.

BALLESTED. Do you enjoy the watering-place life?

LYNGSTRAND. Yes. I shall see if it gives me a little strength.

BALLESTED. But you are not weak?

LYNGSTRAND. Yes I am rather weak. But it is nothing serious. It is only a little tightness about the chest.

BALLESTED. Oh, a mere trifle. Still you should take the advice of a clever physician.

LYNGSTRAND. I thought of taking an opportunity of consulting Dr. Wangel.

BALLESTED. Aye, do so (*looking out to the left*). Here comes the steamboat; crowded with passengers on deck. Certainly traveling has developed in the most amazing way these last few years.

LYNGSTRAND. There is a great deal of traffic here it seems to me.

BALLESTED. The place is full of summer visitors. I fear very much that our good town will lose its primitive character, from the advent of so many strangers.

LYNGSTRAND. Are you a native of the place?

BALLESTED. No, but I have acclimatized myself here. I am bound to the spot by the ties of time and habit.

LYNGSTRAND. Then you have lived here a long time?

BALLESTED. Well, seventeen or eighteen years. I came with Skive's Theatrical Company. But we got into financial difficulties, and so the company was broken up and scattered to the winds.

LYNGSTRAND. But you yourself remained behind?

BALLESTED. I remained. And it has turned out well for me. I worked at first at decorative painting principally, I must tell you.

BOLETTE *comes out with a rocking chair which she places in the veranda.*

BOLETTE (*speaking into the room*). Hilda, see if you can find the worked footstool for father.