

Black On White

By Ephraim Kishon

Play no. 149

Opening show 29/12/1956

Creative team

Directed by: Yoel Zilberg

Setting by: Paul Levi

Music by: Moshe Vilensy

Lighting: A. Kopilievitch, M. Frank

Lyrics by: Uri Sela

Mimics : Shlomo Bachar

Cast

White Mice

Tsadik Tsimuk, head of the family: Rafael Klatchkin

Tselofana, his wife: Tamar Robbins

Tsina, their daughter: Gila Almagor

Tsnon, their youngest son: Shlomo Bar-Shavit

Tsibaleh, their son, aged 15: Shmuel Segal

Trubadour: Itzhak Bareket

Black Mice

Avisheleg Shibolet, head of the family: Misha Asherov

Shampu, his first wife: Elisheva Michaeli

Shira, his second wife: Bat-Sheva Dar

Sheleg, son of Avisheleg: Avraham Ninio

Garina, Maid to the Tsimuk family: Jona Atari

Trubadour: Albert Cohen

Act 1

Tselofana and "kids" are in their hole, which is "furnished" with some of the things Man From Above threw away. They are expecting Father Tsimuk, who might bring some cheese. The "Roar of a Lion" is heard, which is, of course, only the meeiow of The Cat. If Man is to the Mice what God is to Man, no wonder the Cat is the Devil himself. Having seen Him with his own eyes and escaped, Tsadik is in need of a glass of water, whilst Tsnon falls on his knees praying for Deliverance. The ensuing discussion amongst members of the family reveals their "Religious" and social philosophy, the latter relates to the Grey Mice, who live in the deeper layers of the earth. Father-Tsadik and even Tselofana are revealed as "Progressives" on the question of Colour, whilst the boys disclose an instinctive enmity to the Greys, however, even the progressive parents believe that Man had created the White Mice in His Own Image. Tsadik tells of the days when "Our Fathers lived in the Golden Cage and Man himself served them cheese". Since all are hungry, cheese is indeed the next subject of discussion, when, suddenly they notice that Daughter-Tsina had disappeared. The Cat's Meeiow is heard again and everybody trembles.

Tsina was having her dated with Sheleg, the young Grey Mouse when the Cat's threatening noise sent her straight into his arms. As they escape to the threshold of the Tsimuk Hole, Tsina voices fear lest her parents find out about their relationship. Tselofana and Tsadik, who have ventured out to look for their daughter, discover her and invite the young mouse as well to enter their hole, where in the full light, his greyness is immediately noticed and the attitude towards him changes, by words and

behaviour various differences between the White and the Grey are now brought out. Somewhat frightened, Sheleg lies and claims his mother to have been White. The Tsimuks welcome him to spend the night in their hole, unconscious, of course, of the relationship between him and their daughter.

Everybody retires to "to bed", but after a while Sheleg gets up in an attempt to get to his won hole. Tsibaleh notices this and wakes Tsina up. Sheleg informs his sweetheart that he will never come here again, after the kind of "welcome" he received. Tsina begs him not to desert her and Sheleg embraces and kisses her when Father-Tsadik awakes. Blowing his top with "You Dirty Grey One" he throws Sheleg out and challenges Tsina to go with him, which she does. The young couple enters together the big wide world with hopes of happiness and truth, but fall into a mouse-trap.

Tsadik and Tsibaleh ultimately hear Tsina's cries and arrive on the scene. Father-Tsadik regrets by now that he had turned his daughter out of his house. No less is he ashamed of the bad language he used towards Sheleg. Essentially, however, his opinion about the romance of the young couple has not changed. Avischeleg appears. He had been worrying, when Sheleg did not turn up for the night, and finally went to look for him. He too is not happy, for why should his son be found in the company of a White female-mouse? Weren't there enough Grey Beauties down-there? In vain Tsibaleh tries to persuade both fathers to stop quarreling and to something to save the young couple. Only when he imitates the Cat's meeiow do they employ a fork as a lever, helping the young ones to freedom.

Act 2

The Tsimuk Hole is in a State Emergency, for there is nothing left to eat, when Tson enters holding a tray thickly spread with poisonous stuff, which he declares to be cheese. General mobilization is declared, to bring in the lot, before any neighbours chance upon the treasure discovered by Tson. Finding himself alone for a moment, Father-Tsa-dik licks the 'cheese" and by the time everybody is ready to start the family dinner, he writhes a pain. Sure of his imminent passing-away, Tsadik eulogizes himself, and when the Trubadours sound prayers for him Tsdadik even confesses young Grey female, yet with his last breath he tries to extract from Tsina a promise never to marry a Grey Male. Sheleg bursts in having heard of the accident from the Trubadours, and saves Tsadik. The Tsimuks are a grateful, but when he asks for Tsina's hand, everything is back where it was. Tson and Tsibaleh, listening to the terrible quarrel that ensues between father and daughter, resolve to bring the question before Man who dwells above, and hear his opinion.

Man's opinion they never hear, because the moment Man sees them he throws at them the first thing he could grab, which shakes the holes to their foundations and our young heroes run for their lives. The news they bring home, shakes Tsimuks even more. They have seen Man and he was Grey.

The last scene shows the Tsimuk abode getting ready for the wedding of Tsina and Sheleg. The Tsimuks having learnt that Man had actually made the Grey. Mice after His Own Image, concluded for their benefit both here and in the hereafter, to marry into a grey family. Tselofana is still fearful of the hard lot she imagines her daughter will have to suffer with the Greys, but it is too late. Avischeleg and Family arrive for their first visit. Both sides try their best, but differences in behaviourism and sensitivities, again and again threaten to wreck the good prospects. The dowry negotiations are successfully concluded, but when Avischeleg is served cheese-with-sugar instead of cheese-with-onion, the quarrel over the respective merits of the dish, embroil everybody hopelessly. This time even Sheleg is engulfed, identifying himself with his Colour and concluding that indeed White and Grey is Grey.

It is then that the Cat's meeiow is again heard and all recognize that, if for no other reason, than because of the Outside Enemy, they must unite.

