

The Treasure

By **I. D. Berkowitz**

Adapted from: **Shalom Aleichem**

Play no.7

Opening show: 29/11/1928

Creative team

Staged by: A. D. Dicky

Settings by : A. El-Hanani

Music : S. Rosovsky

Cast

Levi Mosgovoyer: B. Chemerinsky

Bath-Sheva, his wife: A. Govinska

Esther, their daughter: F. Liubitz

Beny Ben, Bat-Sheva nephew: A. Varsgawer

Zelde, maid in Levi's home: T. Robins / N. Shein

Idel, the money-changer: I. Bertonoff

Itzik, his son: H. Hender

Nisi, Av Harachmim; Ben-Haim

Feige-Leah, his wife: A. Meskin

Leizer-Wolf, the butcher : S. Finkel

Shimon-Elie"Shma Kolenu" : R. Klatzkin

Ephraim Lakerda : A. Baratz

Elke, the widow : Y. Yudelveitz

Holoveshka, a policeman, a renegade : M. Genesin

Shalom, the matchmaker: S. Bruk

Avremele "Melamed" (tutor): M. Benjamini

Arieh, the sexton: Z. Friedland

In the market place of some distant town in the Jewish Pale, on an ordinary week day, Jewish vendors are sitting around waiting for customers, yawning and waiting, waiting and yawning, but no one appears. Artisans are without work, shops without customers. They pass their time in talking of miracles and wonders. In the course of this idle talk the old traditional legend of the town is again told; In the cemetery a "treasure" is interred; it was placed there by Napoleon when he passed through the town with the army – but no one know its place. Levi Mosgovoer, who is an honorable member of the community and who has in his possession a genealogical letter which goes as far back as Levi the elder of the community, carries this legend about with him. It was handed down to him by his grandparents. In his dreams and while awake he is always shown certain signs and intimations about the place of the hidden treasure.

Levi announces to the members of his community the new decision of the government to construct a railway in the town, and lay it through the town; this will necessitate digging up the cemetery. He shows them what danger there is in store for all of them: the treasure will most certainly be found by the government and then automatically pass over to it. He arouses them all to come at night and dig up the cemetery and search for the treasure. The news spreads over the whole town, and in this tumult and confusion. Holoveshks, the renegade, is also drawn in; he comes and demands his share in the treasure, or else he threatens to let out the secret plot of the community to the government official.

Just then, Esther, Mosgovoyer's daughter, comes along bringing a letter from a cousin in America. He writes that he is about to visit his relatives. The letter is read aloud and again all fear that this visit is made with an eye for the treasure.

In the midst of the confusion Avremele Melamed comes. He brings with him his pupil, Itzik, Idel the money-changer's son, who, while playing with his friends, found a gold coin from Napoleon's days. The whole mystery of the reassurance is now even more clear to all. They drag the youngster to the cemetery to have him show the place of the treasure, but his father objects, wanting to be the only one to get the treasure which his son discovered.

A fight ensues but finally a compromise is reached; the two sides are to intermarry – Mosgovoyer's daughter, should be married off to the widower, in order to get the consent of both to dig for the treasure. Shalom the matchmaker settles the whole matter of the match in the presence of all.

In the meantime the American cousin, Beny Ben, comes, and everyone is certain that he means to change, pay him a visit in order to investigate.

Elke the widow learns of the gold coin and comes to Mosgovoyer's house to ask her treasure. Everyone thinks her mad.

Beny takes a liking to Esther and decides to annul the match and take her for his own wife. He seeks a way to undo the whole treasure complex, in which all are involved and decides to show them how nonsensical the whole thing is. He therefore gets in touch with Holoveshka, bribes him to come on the night of the excavations to be made in the cemetery and to speak out of the graves of the honourable dead only that which he tells him to say; In the name of the dead Rabbi and in the name of Reb Levi, the elder of the community, the grandfather of Mosgovoyer, he will order the match with the money-changer to be annulled; he will order the coin to be returned to Elke; he will order the marriage of the money-changer, the widower, with Elke, the widow, and that of Esther with Ben the American, and only then the treasure will be found.

At night, during the excavations, the voices of the dead are heard, and everyone goes off to do as he is ordered.

At dawn everyone comes to get his share of the treasure – and Beny enlightens them all on his plot and the whole treasure-myth.