

Uriah's Letter

By Emil Bernhard

Play no.27

Opening show: 13/01/1935

Creative team

Hebrew by: I. Lamdan

Staged by: Z. Friedland

Setings by : M. Mukadi

Setings Executed by: Joseph Shereshevsky & A. Heller

Music by: Vardina Shlunsky

Musical direction by: Fordhaus Ben-Zissi

Cast

David: S. Finkel

Uriah: A. Meskin

Bath-Sheva, Uriah's wife: H. Rovina

Nos, Bat-Sheva maid: F. Lubitz

Igal: R. Amital

Ishbak, a wealthy man: A. Kutai

A poor man: R. Klatzkin

Act 1

David at the height of his splendor and fortune, victorious and successful. Subdued nations brings him tribute and gifts. His greatest joy, however, is his love for Bath-Sheva, who has been brought to his palace. Just then a poor man bursts into his room demanding justice of the king: his one and only ewe lamb has been taken from him and slaughtered by Ishbak, the wealthy man. The trial over the poor man's ewe lamb startles David and before long he is conscious-stricken, and feelings of deep sorrow and regret do not give him any peace of mind: Has he not done unto Uriah what the man of wealth has done unto this poor man? He soon sends a messenger to the battlefield to bring Uriah to him.

Act 2

The king's palace. Bath-sheva and her maid Nos converse. Bath-sheva has accepted her lot and gotten accustomed to it, and is indeed very happy with the love of the king. Nos is much amazed to find the change that came over her mistress who had been taken from her husband's home by force. David appears. After the exchange of loving words David informs Bath-sheva that she is to return to her home and that he has sent to call for Uriah. Bath-sheva is stunned by this sudden change and refuses to go home, but when the King's men come to take her by force she submits and goes.

Uriah returns from the battlefield. David is very kind and generous to him and bestows many gifts upon him. Uriah is surprised to see this and doesn't understand what favour he has found in the eyes of the king all of a sudden. David tells him to go into his house and give greetings to his wife before returning to the battlefield. Nos is also sent with him as a gift on the part of the king. She tells him of what the king has done to Bath-sheva. Uriah's heart is torn by pangs of despair. He refuses to obey the king and visit his home.

Act 3

David comes to visit Uriah and doesn't find him at home. Bath-sheva asks him to bring her back to his palace. But David makes her realize that he must cleanse himself of his sin. Nos comes in and announces that Uriah will not come home. David then leaves, stating that Uriah shall come.

Bath-sheva's heart is filled with despair and she sees no way out of her misfortune. She plans to commit suicide. But when she hears from Nos about the fate of Uriah her desire for self-sacrifice only grows in order to save her husband from the sword of Death.

Act 4

David is at war with himself. The terrors of his sin upset him. He calls Igal, his body-guard, and orders him to bring Uriah before him. Uriah comes. David cannot endure the horrors that are in Uriah's soul and is unable to reveal everything that presses upon him. David leaves him. Bath-sheva comes. She confesses her great sin to her husband and begs him to kill her. Uriah masters his courage and answers her plea with words of love. He convinces her that there is no escape from fate and that they both have to submit. Broken-hearted and greatly in love they part.

Uriah calls the king in order to avenge himself. He doesn't want to kill him, but to humiliate him. David confesses his sin to Uriah, promises to grant him whatever he asks for, all in order that his sin be forgiven and forgotten. Uriah asks David to take an oath, and David does. Then Uriah demands of David to write a letter to Joab, commanding him to set Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle that he may be killed. With a broken and pain-smitten heart David writes this letter as Uriah dictates it to him. Thus is Uriah's cup of vengeance filled.