

Guiltlessly Guilty

By A. N. Ostrovski

Play no. 60

Opening show: 26/04/1941

Hebrew by: Abraham Levinson

Staged by : Joshua Bertonov

Setting by: Genia Berger

The Cast

Lubov Ivanovna Otradina, daughter of a noble family: } H. Rovina

Elena Ivanova Krutchinina, a famous actress } }

Anushka, Otrad: N. Shein

Murov: R. Klatzkin

Taisa Llyinishna Shelabina: Bat-Ami

Irina Galachika, a nurse: Y. Yudelevitch

Nil Stratonitch Dudukin, A rich landowner: I. Bertonov

Ivan, hotel servant: David Vardi

Nina Pavlovna Karinkina: H. Hendler } members of a provincial

Grigori Nieznamov: A. Kutai } provincial

Shmaga: M. Benyamini } Theatrical

Petya Milovzorov: A. Baratz } company

Act 1

Anushka the maid is gossiping with her mistress Otradina, about Shelabina who is about to be married. Murov, Otradina's lover, comes in and she asks him to introduce her to his mother in the hope of being allowed to marry him properly. He however puts her off with various excuses. She tells him the latest bright remarks made by their little boy Grischa who is being brought up by old Galtchika, but even this fails to hold his attention. On the contrary he drops hints about abandoning the child. When the conversation turns to Shelabina Murov pretends not to know who she is. He later tells Otradina that he has to leave for Petersburg on urgent business. This sudden leave-taking without previous warning upsets Otradina, but she feels better after giving Murav money for his travelling expenses and a locket containing a lock of their son's hair. Just as Murav is about to leave, Shelabina arrives from the train. He is astonished at hearing her name and hides in another room. Shelabina has come to invite her friend to her wedding and when she brings out a picture of the bridegroom, Otradina finds that he is none other than Murav.

Otradina asks Murav to leave her house. In the meantime Galtchika arrives from the country and tells her that Grischa is seriously ill. Otradina hurries to the help of her son.

Act 2

The room of the actress Krutchinina (the Otradina of Act 1) in a country town. Dudukin, a provincial patron of the arts arrives with presents for Krutchinina but does not find her at home.

Korinkina, a member of the local theatrical company, tells Dudukin about the actor Nieznamov, who is always trying to trick people. In the goodness of his heart Dudukin defends Nieznamov, victim of the social system. As Korinkina leave, Krutchinina comes in and tells him about her efforts with the Governor on behalf of Nieznamov who is about to be expelled from the city on account of his trickery. Dudukin tells her about Nieznamov, brought up as a foundling in a stranger's house. He goes on to praise Krutchinina's fine acting, and she tells him, in the course of conversation, the story of her life now, after the death of her beloved son she took to the stage, never forgetting, however, the loss of her child. Two actors, Nieznamov and Shmaga now come in. They both blame Krutchinina for her efforts with the Governor; in a fit of bitterness and shame Nieznamov tells her of his tragic life, the story of a homeless and lonely outcast who does not know who his parents are and revenges himself on the public. Krutchinina succeeds in arousing some human feeling in Nieznamov's heart and restoring his faith in mankind. An old woman comes to Krutchinina's house and when she realizes that this is Galtichika she tries to get her to talk about her dead child. To her great amazement she is told that the child had not died but had been cured of his illness. Galtichika halting and confused words, however, do not sound very convincing.

Act 3

Korinkina, who is jealous of her fellow-actress, criticizes Krutchinina very adversely in a conversation with the actor Milovzorov, belittling her and hinting at accusations against her. In order to get rid of her rival Korinkina decides to invite Krutchinina to a party at Dudukin's house and to get Nieznamov to pick a quarrel with her. Milovzorov who is in love with Korinkina promises to help her in her plan.

When Dudukin comes in Korinkina persuades him to arrange a party in honour of Krutchinina. She asks Nieznamov to come to the party and he agrees, particularly when he hears that Krutchinina is to be present. Milovzorov tries to vilify Krutchinina to Nieznamov who defends her wholeheartedly but whose faith in her wavers when he hears that she had "forsaken her child and run off with some man or other".

Krutchinina comes in, followed by her former lover Murov. She asks him for news of their son: he gives her some false information and promises to let her have definite news. He ends up by apologizing for his behavior to her and tries to win her over, but she refuses to speak to him until he has found their son.

Act 4

At Dudukin's party. The actors meet in the garden. Korinkina persuades Milovzorov to drag Nieznamov into a scandal. In a tete-a-tete with Dudukin, Krutchinina tells him that her son is alive although she does not know his whereabouts. Murov appears on the scene and tells her that the child is dead. Since the search for his son is likely to reveal the truth about his fatherhood, Murov demands that she should either return to his house or leave the city. Krutchinina turns down his proposal. In order to create a scandal Korinkina tries all kinds of wiles and asks Nieznamov and Shmaga not to let Krutchinina express her views on children. Nieznamov bursts out laughing and promises to talk only about adult people. Krutchinina comes in and announces that she

is going home. Dudukin asks her to stay and drinks to her health. After Krutchinina has thanked him in speech, Nieznamov asks her to be allowed to speak and proposes the health of mothers who abandon their children. TO press his point he brings out and shows everyone the locket containing a child's curls.

Krutchinina recognizes him as her son and falls in a faint. Nieznamov kneels at his mother's feet. When Krutchinina revives, she embraces her son full of love and happiness.