

The Father

By August Strindberg

play no. 112

Opening show: 06/01/1952

Hebrew version: Menashe Levin

Directed by : Shimon Finkel

Designed by: Dr. P. Levi

The Cast

A cavalry captain: Shimon Finkel

Laura, his wife: Hanna Rovina

Bertha, their daughter: Lea Knout

Dr. Oestermark: Ari Kutai

The Pastor : Rephael Klatzkin

The Nurse : Shoshana Duer

Nojd, an orderly : Yehuda Efroni

As the curtain rises we find the Captain blaming his orderly for causing one of the maids to be pregnant. Nojd justified himself by saying that one can never be sure who's a child's real father. The Captain complains to his brother-in-law, the Pastor, of the domineering part women play in his daughter's upbringing. He accuses his wife, his mother in-law and the nurse of influencing Bertha's future and tells the Pastor that he has decided to send her to a collage in town as a mean of precaution. After a heated discussion between the parents about their daughter's future education the new doctor arrives. Laura hurries to bring him into the family's confidence. She tells him that her husband is mentally unbalanced. Trying to determine the nature of the Captain's illness the doctor only succeeds in causing more excitement. The nurse, trying to weaken thure tension between the parents in interrupted by the daughter, who rushes to her father and tells him that her grandmother insists on her contacting spirits every night. The Captain tells her not to worry for she is to leave soon for college. Laura enters, strongly opposing this plan and tells her husband he has no right to decide Bertha's future for it isn't clear whether she is his daughter at all. The Captain, aroused and doubt ridden goes out into the stormy night.

The whole household is tense with apprehension. Laura tells the Doctor that her husband had shown clear signs of similar madness six years ago. The Captain, back from his walk pleads with her to tell him the truth about their daughter. He breaks down. Laura wishes to reassure him that he is the father but he refuses to be reassured and tells her that in this conflict one of them will have to be eliminated. Her devilish nature moves her to pronounce him a madman basing her claim on a letter he had sent to a doctor six years ago in which he admitted his weakness. The Captain trapped, filings a burning lamp at his wife.

To avoid future violence Laura orders all weapons to be removed from the house and the doctor brings a straight-jacket for the Captain. The Captain beaks through from his barricaded room and says that he is going to prove th lack of evidence in every father's case. After an attempt to kill Bertha, the

nurse manages to fool him into the straight-jacket lulling him to sleep with stories of his childhood days. He awakens and in semi-consciousness continues to plead his case. His heart collapses in this delirium.