

I Am The Captain

By yosh

Play no. 119

Opening show: 15/11/1952

Directed by : Israel Becker

Designed by: Shlomo Juranyi

The Cast

The Captain: Shmuel Rodensky

Yoram, Chief Officer: Mischa Asherov

Polonsky, Chief Engineer: Nahum Buchmann

Daphni, Second Officer: Shraga Fridman

Sparks, Wireless Operator: Zvi Ben-Haim

Zigi , Bos'n : Joseph Ben-Gal

Gerson } : Izhak Bruckmeir

} Enginebands

Gabbi } Eliezer Plotnik

Amos } : Shmuel Segal

Edi } **Deckbands Yehuda Ephroni**

Efra;yim } Amos Aricha

The Israeli cargo-boat "Snunit" (The Swallow) has just left New-York harbor and is on its way to Haifa, the homeport. The ship's crew consists of the Captain, three officers, a wireless-operator and six men. On deck she carries a cargo of essential housing supplies. There is no doubt about the importance of this cargo, and that is what brings about the first conflict, which we witness at the opening of the play.

The Captain, an old-timer at his job, reigns on boat as a dictator. He has spent his best years of board English, French and German boats, and only with the birth of the state did he pass over to the Israeli fleet. For him the "Snunit" is no different from any of the other boats he worked on during his forty years of service on the sea.

Together with him there are young Israeli officers, some of them pioneers, trying to form a new and original type of Israeli seaman, others shady and corrupt characters, who are good at flattery and hope in game by good relations with "the old man"...

This relationship between the Captain and his officers forms the background of the life on boat.

Polonsky, the chief engineer is caught in the web of doubtful operations, during their stay in New-York, having been filled with drinks by Dafni, the second officer – signs some documents certifying to essential repairs having been made on the ship's body. Actually – only some light repairs have been made, and the profit was divided among the workers and their overseers.

Yoram, the chief officer, is a young man with an original approach to his profession. He is trying to establish a friendly relationship with the men and he really succeeds in coming to a friendly understanding with them, while keeping the natural distance between officers and men. Yoram has passed Government examination and the results hint at his coming appointment as Captain on one of the boats.

The old Captain of the "Snunit" sees a serious rival in Yoram and looks on him as his opposite, who does not agree with his ideas, - while Yoram honours the Captain's rank and knowing as chief officer, shows a remarkable degree of obedience. Yoram is a young man of daring and good will, who wants to enlarge his experience on sea. The Captain is trying to break his character and his ideas. Polonsky, full of remorse at his light-headed behaviour in the scandal of the repairs, tries to get back to his natural honesty of "the old man's" intrigues and sees that not all is in order on board the "Snunit".

Although Yoram begs him to keep cool, Polonsky loses his balance, and his heavy accusations against the Captain undermine the life of the boat. The heavy hand of the Captain, who is afraid for his skin, descends on Polonsky.

The fourth anniversary of the "Snunit" in the Israeli fleet. It is considered a holiday on the ship. In the Commander's room there's a party for officers only. In the speeches of the Captain and the first Officer opposing world's are uncovered, and the abyss between these two outlooks shows up the troubles, which are not only typical for our way of life on the sea, but also of our "land" problems.

The strange thing is that the Captain after all is fascinated by the open-hearted young man and it seems as if some hidden feelings awake in his hard interior.

The friendly atmosphere is destroyed by the tumult which breaks out among the drunken sailors, after the Captain's "private" supply of Whisky is smuggled out.

A sudden storm breaks and the boat is hurled about by the waves. The rotten sides of the ship give in to the terrible pressure and water enters the boat.

The Captain orders to abandon ship. Yoram tries to save the ship by filling the gap with sacks of cement from the engine-room. The men work desperately against the waves in the ship's bottom and the fight for its life is on.

The hole has been mended. The boat continues on its way to Haifa. Yoram, the chief officer, has saved the "Snunit". For a minute it looks as if the Captain is getting the medal, after his show of helplessness, but, the crew turns from him. Through the mist, the "Snunit" is seen of her way...