

# Pandre The Hero

By Zalman Shne'ur

Play no. 142

Opening show: 03/12/1955

Directed by: Shimon Finkel

Settings by: Moshe Mokadi

Music: Marc Lavri

Choreography by: Ruth Harris

Conductor: Zvi Rozen

Settings Executed by: Baruch Kadari

Cast

Sender, head of Cart-driver's committee: Ch. Amitay

Sendait, his wife: T. Robins

Mary, their daughter: M. Zohar

Reb Chayim , "Nouveau-riche": D. Vardi

Chayma'lt, his wife": CH. Hendler

Reb Lebele, a Hassidic Rabbi: M. Benyamini

Noah Pandre, a young butcher, afterwards a cart-driver: N. Buchman

Kushke the red-head, a cart-driver: S. Rodenski

Zavel, his apprentice: Y. Bareket

ChaYe-Sorke, the town's mad-woman: N Shein

Votek, a veteran of Czar Nikolay's army: A. Kutai

Simchele Tureru, Pandre's partner in the butcher-shop: A. Aviram

Chief of Police: S. Bruk

Mikita, a gentile from a near-by village: Y. Rubinstein

Katerinushka, his daughter: S. Ravid

Chief of Judge: D. Ram

First Judge: A. Cohen

Second Judge: S. Atsmon

Tchurilo, a bull-like gentile, professional criminal: A. Zalmanovitch

Sheftele, a thief: S. Bar-Shavit

An ill prisoner: B. David

Snout-nose, Tchurilo's servant: Y. Banay

Young prisoner: S. Atsmon

Old prisoner: A. Cohen

Chatche, a political prisoner: S. Bertonov

Seftele's "Gang": D. Ram, S. Atsmon, A. Cohen, Y. Banay

First Policemen: B. David

Second Policemen : N. Tsemach

Recruits: S. Atsmon, Y. Banay D. Ram, A. Cohen

Fire-men: S. Bertonov, Y. Banay

Stretcher-bearers : B. David, N. Tsemach

The world of the small Jewish town was, and is no more. Yet it still lives within the hearts of a few survivors who remember and recall these beloved memories from the long forgotten past. The village market returns to life; each person begins his daily work. The butcher Simcha Tureru is waiting for his partner Pandre who is late in returning. The cart driver, red-headed Kushka is jealous of Pandre because of his strength and his success, and teases Simcha because Pandre's women chasing days are over. The State appointed Rabbi has hidden Pandre's birth-certificate therefore he will be taken to the Army before his time. Reb Chaim the town's "nouveau riche" also has complaints against Pandre which he presents to Reb Sender the head of the Cart-drivers' organization. The embittered Simcha returns to Reb Chaim measure for measure, he has an old score to settle with him, for Reb Chaim did not want to sell him his cow for slaughter and therefore Simcha threatens revenge.

The Chief of Police passes and questions Reb Chaim as to why he insured his property. After warning him, he continues on his way. Voytek excitedly enters and tells of a new act of heroism that Noah Pandre has executed. He reined in three wild horses which had run away with the coach of the local noble-woman. In spite of this heroic act Pandre is harassed by all upon entering. Even the Gentile Mikita complains: he demands that Pandre leave alone his daughter Catherine. Mary, Sender's daughter who is secretly in love with Pandre, comes to see if there is any truth on the story of Pandre's heroic deed. But her jealousy mounts when she hears about Noah's running around with Catherine and she leaves him in spite of his open declaration of love for her.

Noah goes to the Chassidic Rabb, Reb Lebele in order to seek his advice. He doesn't want to be taken to the Army because he is the sole supporter of his old father whom his any enemies torment. The Rabbi advises him to change his way of life: he is to marry – marry Sender's daughter – and, he must leave the butcher shop and become a cart-driver. For according to the Rabbi there is a great future in store for Noah: he is destined to destroy with his bravery the very foundations of Gentile cruelty.

The recruits who have just been inducted are singing and with care-free abandonment and are enjoying themselves. They tell of Reb Chaim who bought off his son. And with this abandonment they are not afraid to tease and ridicule Reb Chaim and his wife. Pandre appears in a state of exhilaration. The Rabbi's prayers helped: By the time they came to him the quota was filled and he was free from induction. Simcha is also among those who are happy for Pandre. But his happiness comes to an abrupt end when Pandre tells him that he is planning to leave the butcher-shop. Mary attempts to assume an attitude of indifference towards Pandre, but she doesn't succeed, and under the instigation of her father Reb Sender, she and Noah become man and wife. There is much happiness on the part of Noah's friends.

After a few months.

Simcha Tureru in a drunken fit and as revenge against Reb Chaim sets fire to Reb Chaim's barn.

Mary who is pregnant awaits her husband return from work. Sender and his wife are happy over their daughter and son-in-law who are so in love with each other. Noah returns after a hard day's work full of gaiety. But he doesn't get a chance to rest before the fire-alarm disturbs the town's quiet. There is a fire in Reb Chaim's barn. Noah who is a volunteer fire-man must go out to fight the fire. Mary tries to prevent him from doing this, but Noah cannot rest so long as a fellow Jew is in trouble. Mary senses that something terrible will happen.

At Reb Chaim's' house all is in confusion, nobody knows what to do until Pandre comes on the scene. He organizes the fire fighting and manages to save Reb Chaim's cow from being burnt to death, and also puts out the fire. Suddenly the Chief of Police appears; he is certain that Reb Chaim himself started the fire in order to collect the insurance. When in anger the Police Chief attempts to strike Reb Chaim, Pandre grabs his arm, and a button from his uniform falls to the ground. In his anger the Police Chief orders his aides to arrest Pandre. And Reb Chaim instead of thanking Pandre lectures him as to why he interested in something which was no concern of his. Mikita, the Gentile, who is drunk is ready to testify the Court that Pandre attacked the Chief of Police.

The outcome of Pandre's trial depends upon the testimony of Reb Chaim. If he testifies that the Chief of Police wanted to strike him and Pandre merely protected him, then Pandre will go free. But out of flattery and fear of the Chief of Police, Reb Chaim denies this. And Mikita, under the influence of Kushka who hates Pandre, testifies that Pandre attacked the Chief of Police. On the basis of these testimonies Noah Pandre is sentenced to one and half years imprisonment, and Noah begins to sense "that something is not right in this world".

In prison Pandre meets Sheftele the thief and his spirits are raised when he meets his old friend Chatche, who has been arrested for his socialistic activities. From Chatche, Noah wants to learn what is wrong with the world and how he can go about fixing it. Meanwhile Noah finds out that the prisoners are living in perpetual fear because of the Gentile hangman Tshurilo; from every package which comes from the outside, the prisoners must give him his share. When Tshurilo comes in to visit, a fight breaks out between he and Pandre; they wrestle and Pandre strikes a winning blow. The happiness stops suddenly on the entrance of a new prisoner, Simcha Tureru who has begun to slowly change his ways, explains to Simcha that he, Simcha, cannot continue to live a wasteful life, and if he wants to become Noah's friend, he must "first of all learn how to become a human being"/

## **Part Two**

Mary sits alone rocking her son's cradle. Kushka and Zavel his apprentice stealthily approach the house. They both desire Mary. Kushka is afraid, but Zavel urges him on. Kushka enters Mary's house on the pretext that he is bringing food sent by her mother. During the conversation which ensues between them Kushka speaks against Noah, who left a young wife alone, so short a time after their marriage in order to mix into something which was not

his affair. Mary whose heart is filled with bitterness and hurt, almost succumbs to Kushka, but when he reveals to her that the food that he brought was not sent by her Mothe, but instead were for his wife, Mary recovers herself and chases him away from her. On the banks of the Dnieper, the old Voytek enjoys the scenery and the rapid flow of the river. Suddenly he sees Catherine approaching in tears. She is suffering because her father and future husband beat her because of her constant visits to Pandre's house. She knows that Pandre will return soon and therefore she is waiting for him here. Voytek tries to comfort her.

Pandre, Simcha, and Chatche have been released and are returning to their village. Catherine meets Noah with happiness and open love. But she also tells of the preparations of the Gentiles for a pogrom against the Jews. Noah begins to think of a way of defense.

At Sender's house all is in preparation for Pandre's return. All his friends have gathered to join in. Chaya-Sarah the village Mad-Woman hints about what happened between Mary and Kushka, and Noah begins to suspect something. His suspicions are justified when Zavel appears and is cased away by Mary and her mother. The guests leave and Mary pours out all of her bitterness before Noah and tells him what has happened during his absence. But they do not have a chance to remain alone for long. Sheftele the thief, disguised as a woman because he just broke out of prison, comes with Chatche and tells Noah that the hang-man Tshurilo has come to the town in order to start a program against the Jews. Noah is again ready to go out and take action.

The Chief of Police who has organized the program gives his orders to Tshurilo and his friends. The sounding of the church-bell will serve as the sign for the beginning of the program. In order to prevent this Noah and his friends attack Tshurilo and kill him.

Pandre collects the town-people and tries to organize them for their own self defense. But there are those who object to this. According to Reb Chaim they should seek protection from the Chief of Police and then everything will pass in peace. Also against Pandre are Kushka and Zavel. Those who object leave the meeting place, and upon the remainder there spreads a feeling of futility. But Pandre urges them on.

Catherine enters excitedly and tells that the ruffians are preparing to attack. Because the manpower which stood to Noah's use is not large he decides upon a plan. With the help of Sheftele and his friends he captures the police-station and the Chief-of-Police. Noah lets him free only after he promise not to ring the church which is the sign for the beginning of the program.

The next morning along the banks of the Dnieper Noah with his three friends await the arrival of the other defenders, who will fight against the ruffians. But they do not come. It is found out the Kushka and Zavel have turned traitors and gone over to the Gentiles. Noah who is impatient cannot wait any longer. He rips out the wagon's Yoke and runs off in order to fight the ruffians.

Although he is wounded, he still has managed to save the town. Suddenly Catherine enters and tells that the ruffians have beaten Zavel and Kushka; Zavel is dead and Kushka who is dying brought in on a stretcher. He confesses to his shame and regret as to how he has acted. Chaya-Sara enters frightened and says that the Chief of Police and his aides are approaching in order to arrest Noah. There is no choice. Noah must leave the country or else he will be exiled to Siberia. And in spite of Mary's objections he is forced to flee in the company of his friends. And Votek slowly closes the story.