

The Trees Die Standing

(Los Arboles mueren de pie)
by **Alejandro Casona**

Play no. 165

Opening show: 23/05/59

Hebrew by: Aza Zvi

Directed by: Josef Shen

Design by: Arie Navon

Music : Fordhaus Ben Tzissi

Cast

Amelia: S. Kaplan

Helena: R. Shalk

Priest: B. David

Juggler: J. Rubentchik

Marhta-Isabel: D. Doronne

Mr. Balvaa: S. Finkel

Thief: S. Segal

Mauricio: R. Klatzkin

Genoveva: N. Shine

Felisa: T. Dar

The Grandmother: H. Rovina

The Stranger: J. Ephrony

The curtain rises on a strange sort of office where we find assembled a priest, a hunter, a conjurer and a pickpocket. It appears that this is the office of a company established by a millionaire, one Dr. Ariel, who has decided to place his capital at the service of suffering humanity. But this company does not proffer material first-aid but spiritual help.

An old spinster sitting alone on a bench in a park is suddenly approached by one of the workers who begins to court her. Norwegian sailors reaching a strange port are welcomed by a man who speaks their language and sings to them their native folk songs to assuage their loneliness. Hunters going out to the hills are met by an unknown man who leads them to the lairs of numberless rabbits, so that they will not return from the hunt empty-handed. People sitting in a dreary square in a city and yawning with boredom are suddenly started by the appearance of a ghost, which gives them abundant material to talk about for many days.

In a single day two incidents take place in the office. The first is the arrival of a despairing young girl who has offered employment in the office after an attempt to take her own life. The second is the case of an old professor who tells a strange story. It appears that he had lost his entire family many years before. All that was left to him and his wife was one grand-child who had turned out such a scoundrel that his grandfather had driven him out of the house after he had been caught housebreaking. But the grandmother has

been grieving all these years for her grandchild who has since become a criminal and blackmailer. To make her happy again the grandfather pretends that he is in contact with the grandson. He writes letters in the name of the grandson, who is supposed to be living in Canada, addressed to the grandmother, and he tells her that he has become an architect and also that he has married.

All goes well until one dark day a true cable arrives stating that the real grandson is coming on a visit. The shocked grandfather is somewhat relieved to hear that the ship on which he is travelling has sunk, but he has not the heart to disappoint his old wife who has been waiting for him twenty years.

In the "Good Deed Office" a plan is formed. The office manager will appear before the old woman in the guise of the lost grandson, and the new and unhappy office clerk will act the part of his wife.

For a time the plan works wonderfully. The supposed grandson and his pretended wife visit the grandfather and the grandmother and play their parts so convincingly that they even manage the trick being played on the grandmother. He seizes the opportunity to turn the matter to his to fall in love with one another but unfortunately the real grandson is alive and has learned about the trick being played on the grandmother. He seizes the opportunity to turn the matter to his advantage and to blackmail his grandfather who cannot bear that his wife should learn the truth lest the shock kill her.

The attempt at blackmail falls. It seems that the old grandmother was no quite so deaf and so blind as everyone thought. Secretly she herself drive the real grandson away to prevent the destruction of the sweet illusion of those who have tricked her with such loving intent. She resolves that death will come to her like the death of a tree, while she still stands erect and proud.