

# The Catch A Thief

By: Joseph Lapid

**Play no. 280**

**Opening show: 06/01/1973**

**Directed by:** Nico Nitai

**Set and Costumes:** Lydia Pincus-Gani

**Lighting by:** Michael Lieberman

The Cast

**Max:** Nissim Azikri

**Danny Kimmel:** Shraga Harpaz

**Ruthie:** Ahuva Yovel

**Jaffa Kimmel:** Lia Konig

**Lonek Kimmel:** Shmuel Segal

**Gavriela Dotan:** Tami Spivak

The Play

Max, a schlemiel thief, comes through the window into the empty living-room of the Kimmel's flat in Tel Aviv. As he is collecting the teaspoons that he has found in a drawer. Ruthie Weiss, the secretary of the lady of the house Yaffa Kimmel, enters. At the same time the Kimmel's son, Danny, comes into the darkened room. He is a kibbutznik. The two young people who are in love bump into one another. And Max who is hiding behind the furniture, witnesses a love scene followed by a quarrel. It becomes clear from their conversation that at exactly the same time the secretariat of the party is about to elect Yaffa as their representative in the Knesset. Danny reveals to Ruthie (and, without knowing it, to Max) that the Kibbutz Yeshurunon the foundation of which the public careers of Yaffo and Lonek Kimmel have been build – in fact doesn't exist. Ruthie is shocked and runs from the flat ursued by Danny 'as Yaffa enters. She assumes that Max is a friend of Danny's and Danny thinks Max must have come with his mother, so the thief becomes a part of the family plot. Meantime, Yaffa's husband. Lonek arrives. Yaffa is very angry with him and her, and it was decided to send them home to make the decision between themselves. Danny tries to persuade both of them not to run for the Knesset because then their great secret – the lie about Yeshurun would be revealed and could destroy all of them. But his parents don't want to listen and he leaves in a temper. Max remains with the couple and each of them tries to win him over. They accuse one another of fantastic deeds years ago in Yeshurun not knowing that Max is fully aware of their inventions. Yaffa and Lonek get into a big row. The row stops when Gavriela Dotan, a journalis arrives to find out what Yaffa and Lonek have decided. She thinks that Max is the Kimmel's son. The couple pretend that they're not worried which one of them gets elected and that they are putting the decision in the hands of the Kibbutz. Meantime Ruthie comes back. She has been sent by the secretariat of the party to find out their decision and realizes that her future happiness with Danny depends on them not going to the Knesset. She gives the journalist details that will make the Kimmel's candidacy impossible. Yafa thie out and Gaviela goes after her. Max suggests to Yaffa and Lonek that they

toss a coin to decide. They agree and just as they are looking for the coin which has dropped on the floor, Danny and Ruthie come all now realize that Max is a thief and they want to hand him over to the police, but he suddenly announces that he is a member of the Yeshurun Kibbutz!

The plot thickens – the Kimmel family don't know what to do. It's all too much for Ruthie and she leaves. The Kimmels suggest a compromise to Max – they won't hand him over to the police if he won't reveal their secret. But Max, who is insulted by their behaviour towards him and who realizes that he has the upper hand asks for sum of money to keep quiet.

Yaffa and Lonek almost reach an agreement with him but Danny won't allow it because he doesn't want them to run for the Knesset. In the middle of the stormy family dispute Gavriela comes in. Danny escapes to another room so that Gavriela still believes that Max is their son. She even starts to flirt with him. Max decides to reveal to her that Yeshurun doesn't exist at all and that the Kimmels are in fact imposters. But because of some misunderstanding Gavriela gets the impression that Yaffa and Lonek have decided to step down from their position in favour of their son... Max! Yaffa and Lonek don't dare to explain the truth to her. Max is enjoying the situation and even gives Gavriela an interview. She runs off to announce to the party and to her newspaper the sudden turn of events. Danny comes back into the room and is very happy when his parents tell him that they are stepping down from their candidacy for the Knesset.

He thinks that Max's candidacy is a joke and doesn't realize that this joke has already gone to the party and the newspapers. He only understands that their giving up has banished the Yeshurun nightmare and when Ruthie arrives he tells her that now they can get married. Only now Ruthie tells them that she is pregnant. Of course Yaffa forgives her previous bad behaviour. Yaffa and Lonek find it their duty to tell Ruthie (and of course at the same time to Max) how they got caught up in the Yeshurun legend. Max learns Yaffa's speech of acceptance to the party secretariat and only now does it become evident to Ruthie and Danny that Max is a serious candidate for the Knesset. And as Danny tries to avoid the new disaster Gavriela arrives and tells them that she has already announced that the Kimmels have resigned in favour of their son. Max decides to give up the whole business and it is now Danny who tries to persuade him to accept the candidacy. A telephone call from the party secretariat tells Danny that they have no knowledge of Max at all and they are sure that Danny is the new candidate. Danny is horrified, but all of them (including Ruthie) persuade him to accept and, of course, Danny, the "first-born" of the Yeshurun Kibbutz, surrenders and he will run for the Knesset to carry on the family tradition of public service...