

# Virgo

By: Arieh Chen

**Play no. 279**

**Opening show: 21/11/1972**

**Directed by:** Shmuel Atzmon

**Set by:** Eli Sinai

**Costumes by:** Ruth Dar

**Lighting by:** Nathan Panturin

The Cast

**Yael:** Miriam Zohar

**Amnon:** Nahum Buchman

**Shosh:** Yael Drouyanoff

The Play

Amnon Weinberg, a man in his late forties, comes home to his rented house in Herzelia-Pituach with Shosh who he has met at a party of old-times friends. He looks for his wife, Yael, who has also been at the party where she drank too much and criticized the belligerent atmosphere in the country. It is the Eve of the first Independence Day after the Six-Day-War. Amnon was ashamed of his wife's behaviour and got her out of the party, but she drove away alone. Now he has brought Shosh, and old mutual friend home to meet Yael who he supposes to be at home by now. But she isn't. They wait for her.

The elegant house is in fact an old Arabic building which has been renovated since it served twenty years ago as a base for a small Palmach group – Amnon, Yael, Shosh and Avi (today in the regular army). The group had to give security to the forces which helped to disembark the illegal immigrants from the ships in the time of the British Mandate.

Amnon is in very high spirits. He has been living with Yael in America for the last twenty years. He has become rich there. Now, after the war, he intends to come back and settle in Israel. Their daughter, Deby, is expected tonight from Paris where she is staying with a group of hippies. Shosh recognizes the house and wonders why they are renting it especially. Yael arrives like a whirlwind. The car is stuck in the sand on the beach. Amnon goes to move it. The two friends talk. We find out that Shosh was interested in Amnon at the time when the four of them stayed here together serving in the Palmach. Yael was at that time interested in Avi who was more suited to her stormy temperament. Because of this Shosh never understood why Amnon and Yael ever got married. Now is her opportunity to find out. She has never been married herself.

Amnon comes back and they want to go to Lod Airport to meet Deby, and go from there to Jerusalem to watch the Victory parade. But Yael is afraid of the confrontation with her daughter because of the bad feeling between them. So she delays their departure by telling Shosh about their life in America. She shows contempt for Amnon who fell in love with money instead of studying as intended and is now the prosperous owner of a brassiere factory. But time marches on. When they are about to drive to Lod the phone rings. They are told that their daughter will be ringing from Paris in an hours time. They are

bewildered because she should be on her way to Israel. They are afraid that she will not come at all. They start accusing one another. We hear that their daughter is addicted to drugs and is living with a negro who used to come to their house. In awkward situation that has been created Shosh decided to stay and watch developments.

Half an hour later we see Amnon trying to contact Deby's hotel in Paris. He is told that she has left for an unknown address. They have to wait for her call. Shosh tries to find out why Amnon chose Yael and not her. She senses the break between the couple and is convinced that Amnon made his decision on the night when at last the shipload of illegal immigrants arrived – a night when she wasn't present. Yael encourages her to question him for reasons not yet apparent. Amnon avoids talking about his past and brings the conversation round to Deby and the cause of her decline. He accuses Yael. Yael has occupied herself during the years in America with protest movements. She has associated with liberals of all sorts and spent many years working for the movement fighting for the rights of the blacks. And in fact it was through her that Deby met her negro lover. But in the days of the Six-Day-War the members of the movement turned late to save Deby who ran away from home to Europe. Yael answers Amnon's accusations – he is responsible for all this, it was he who wanted to go to America. And now everything comes out. When he was the commander of the Palmach group he had to carry out a mission which would endanger his life. He was afraid, and Avi substituted for him. Amnon's conscience troubled him and after the war he decided to leave the country.

If this is what happened, then Shosh cannot understand why Yael chose him. She has adored Avi (who wanted her very much) for his bravery, but chose Amnon for his cowardice because he wanted to live at all costs. She, a Holocaust child whose parents had been killed in Europe, wanted to break the circle of death. But now she realizes that her marriage has been a failure. She wants to come back home and begin again. She wants Avi, but only Amnon knows that he no longer wants her – an aging woman in conflict with herself and the world.

The telephone rings, Deby announces finally that she will not come "It's your country, not mine..." Amnon and Yael, who once helped illegal immigrants to enter Israel, become immigrants themselves trying to come back in the shadow of the darkness of night...