

RADIO PLAY FROM THE WORLD-FAMOUS NOVEL

Jew Suss

Adapted by Robert Waldron
from the famous novel by
Lion Feuchtwanger

RESUME PRECEDING ACTS

IN the Inn at Wildbad, Josef Suss Oppenheimer and his friend Landauer meet Karl Alexander, a cousin of the reigning Duke of Wurttemberg. Suss has a presentiment that the Prince is his stepping stone to power and ingratiate himself with Karl. His belief is confirmed by the prophecy of his uncle, Rabbi Gabriel. Karl Alexander will shortly be the Duke of Wurttemberg. The prediction is verified, Karl becomes the Duke of Wurttemberg with Suss as his Financial Counsellor.

Unknown to Karl, Suss has a fifteen-year-old daughter, Naomi. The Jew understanding his master's weakness for the opposite sex guards his motherless child by placing her in the custody of the Rabbi, who resides in the quiet forest of Hirsau. To the coronation ball Suss invites Magdalene Sybille, the daughter of the Lord President of the Council, Weissensee. He had fallen in love with her at their first meeting on the Wildbad Road. Karl, spying the Demoiselle Weissensee, orders Suss to arrange that the girl be conveyed to his bedroom. Suss objects. Karl insists, and the Jew, rather than endanger his power, sacrifices the girl he loves. Weissensee, notwithstanding Suss's offer of honour and promotion, is embittered at the outrage of his daughter and resolves to be revenged on the Jew. He has learned of the existence of Naomi.

Meanwhile Suss, having secured the release of Seligman, accused of the murder of a Christian girl, has become the greatest of the Jews. He is surprised at his uncle's insinuation that he is not a Jew. In answer to his questioning, the Rabbi tells him his mother, residing in the distant city of Frankfurt, has sent for him to explain everything. Arriving at Frankfurt, he learns from his mother that Josef Oppenheimer was not his father. From love letters handed to him by his mother, he discovers that he is the son of Field Marshal von Heyersdorf. Suss is furious at the deception practised upon him. He is at a loss to know what to do. Will he proclaim himself a Christian or will he remain a Jew? He resolves to leave the decision in the hands of his daughter. While Suss is absent from the capital, Weissensee seizes the opportunity for revenge. Conducting the Duke to the home of the Rabbi he reveals to him Suss's secret, the existence of his daughter. Karl's passions are aroused by the beauty of Naomi. He attempts to commit an outrage and the child driven to frenzy jumps from the window of her bedroom. Weissensee, finding the girl dead, urges the Duke to depart, but Karl is determined to wait the Jew's arrival. Suss is completely overcome by the tragedy. Notwithstanding his acceptance of the Duke's friendship, he swears revenge over the body of his dead child. Returning to Stuttgart he is appointed Finance Director.

Suss immediately uses his appointment to further his revenge and issues an edict, knowing full well its execution will arouse the people of Wurttemberg against the Duke. So the fourth act concludes.

ACT V.

Suss: His Highness, Karl Alexander, Duke of Wurttemberg and Teck, wishes to buy me off, to repay me for the death of my child. The fool! The seven-fold blinded fool! . . . wrong my Lord Duke! Wrong my most exalted Lord Murderer! Jew Suss is not so simple and dense; he is no serf or peasant or yokel, that an ordinary obvious revenge should content him . . . he plans his vengeance more subtly . . . he seethes and stews and cooks it with great care . . . revenge Naomi . . . revenge. . . . (music).

And now the curtain rises on a mob assembled in the market place of Stuttgart protesting against the edict and denouncing the Duke (angry murmur of mob).

Leader: Silence, fellow citizens, silence!

Leader: Our liberty and our riches are being torn from us . . . illegally, against the Constitution which is our only protection . . . there is no emergency in Wurttemberg . . . we are not surrounded by enemies. We have only ONE enemy . . . and who is he?

Cries of the Crowd: The Duke!

Leader: The Duke, yes, the Duke sets his seal to the new taxes, but does he get them?

Voices of Crowd: Down with the Duke and his Jew!

Leader: If we Wurttembergers are to hold up our heads, we must take a strong line (sound of prancing horses).

Cries of Crowd: Here's the Jew! Here's his Excellency, the Finance Director!

Suss: Go on—continue your speech. What is the strong line you are going to take? Ah . . . I am waiting.

Leader: Pardon Excellency, I didn't think. . . .

Suss: You rat! . . . you dare to insult your Duke and his ministers . . . back to your houses every one of you. And learn this lesson once and for all—your first duty under the Constitution is to respect and obey your Duke. (Cries of the crowd fade out, sound of prancing horses and swishing of whip).

SCENE II.

Suss: Your humble servant Highness . . . may I repeat Highness, your humble servant.

Karl: Jew, you've got me into a pretty mess. Why in hell's name have you tightened the screw just lately? Have you lost your cleverness? Before long you'll turn the whole country



Suss: Look at me . . . no man has ever been more vile to a woman than I have been to you. I deliberately destroyed what might have been . . . but I must still follow my star, . . . wherever it leads me.