

Weissensee: That must not be taken into consideration. In the Constitutional State of Wurttemberg he allowed himself many departures from constitutional procedure He must now submit with a good grace to being made the subject of a departure from judicial procedure himself the Jew must hang. (Door opens—footsteps).

Attendant: Her Highness, Excellency, has agreed to see you in her boudoir. (Weissensee rises).

Weissensee: Excuse me, gentlemen. (Footsteps—murmur of voices—door opening and closing—black out).

Female Attendant: His Excellency, the Lord President of the Council, Madam.

Marie: Welcome, Excellency. But why so early afoot? It is not good taste, Weissensee, for a gentleman to call on a lady while she is still disrobing herself of the mantle of sleep.

Weissensee: It is afternoon, Highness, and an urgent matter of State brooks no delay.

Marie: Matters of State! Matters of State! You give me a headache, my Lord President, so early in the day I wish the Jew were here to advise me.

Weissensee: That, Highness, is quite impossible. The Council are awaiting your signature to the process for his death.

Marie: Awaiting my signature to the process for his death? That is impossible, I won't give it.

Weissensee: You must, Highness.

Marie: But am I not the mother of the reigning Duke?

Weissensee: Certainly, Highness, but when the reigning Duke is an infant in arms the Constitution lays down that the country shall be governed by a regent. And by the vote of the Council, I am appointed regent during your child's minority. You must obey the Constitution. And by the Constitution the Jew must die.

Marie: Helas! Helas! It's a shame. The Jew is so handsome, so gallant the most amusing man in this boring Stuttgart. Greta, you can't leave that veil hanging like that. It looks like a piece of string. Weissensee, I want the Jew here. Why shouldn't he work for me as he did for my husband?

Weissensee: Your Highness, there would be a revolution in the country within twenty-four hours.

Marie: Oh well, it's your affair—not mine. You're the regent. Oh Greta, you stuck that pin right into my head! All the same, it's a nuisance without him. (Sound of paper).

Weissensee: Sign here, Highness. (She signs).

Marie: I shall miss the Jew. He was such an amusing man and very loyal to poor Karl. . . . Is that all, my Lord President?

Weissensee: That's all, Highness.

Marie: Then leave me. . . . You are a most disturbing fellow with your affairs of State.

Weissensee: Yes, Highness. (Sound of door closing).

Marie: My poor Jew—Greta can't you be careful? That's the second time you stuck that pin into my head. (Black out—door opening—murmur of voices).

Weissensee: Gentlemen, Her Highness has graciously signed the death warrant. Roder, bring the Jew. (Increased murmur of voices).

Weissensee: Josef Suss Oppenheimer, Jew and erstwhile Finance Director,

on the findings of this special court appointed to enquire into your innumerable crimes, her Highness, Marie Auguste, Duchess of Wurttemberg and Teck, has signed the process of your death. Have you anything to say why the execution should not be carried out?

Suss: I confess to having been a loyal servant to my master, our late Duke, the head of the State according to the very Constitution to which you gentlemen are professing such an ardent loyalty. If that is treason, then, gentlemen, I am being tried by traitors.

Roder: Stop quibbling, Jew! You can't escape a ride to hell in the gallows cart. Better save your time and ours by giving us a good respectable confession.

Suss: You put it so charmingly, that you almost tempt me to confess to things I haven't done. But I am not guilty of treason, and after all, you can't hang me higher than the gallows, can you?

Weissensee: The charge is not treason. You have admitted carnal relations with Christian women.

Suss: I had no idea that I was facing a court of morals, and if the court requires a complete list of all my transgressions since I arrived at manhood, together with the ladies' names and their addresses, I can only refuse.

Weissensee: By Article 47 of the Penal Code you must suffer death.

Suss: Gentlemen, if you have condemned me to death on the score of my relations with Christian women, I admit you can do it. And the entire Holy Roman Empire will laugh but not at me. (Murmur of angry voices).

Weissensee: Josef Suss Oppenheimer, by the power of the Constitution vested in me I pronounce the sentence. At sunrise to-morrow you will be hanged till you are dead.

Suss: As my Lord President says, be it so.

SCENE III.

Suss: This cell is cold and damp, friend Landauer, but the time is not far off. The dawn is nearly spent—the sun will soon be rising (coughs) and it is snowing—the first snow.

Landauer: They say snow is good for next year's blooming.

Suss: It will be piling up over the tulip beds at Hirsau.

Rabbi: Some wine, Josef sweet wine from Palestine.

Suss: Merc! uncle. . . . I remember how it snowed when Leah died. I had never seen a grave before. I dreaded it. I always imagined it as an ugly gash in the greedy earth. But the snow had turned it into a glistening white hollow, so soft so kindly that all my fear left me I was at peace. And then when I came home, there was a little white bundle—the child . . . Naomi. (Footsteps approaching. Door opening).

Suss: They come.

Roder: Bring him along. (Hollow footsteps marching).

Rabbi: The Lord bless thee and keep thee. The Lord let the light of his face shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee. The Lord lift up His countenance upon thee and grant thee peace.

Landauer: Amen. Selah.

Rabbi: One and eternal is the God of Israel, Jehovah Adonai the Everlasting, the Infinite! Hear O Israel, One and Eternal is Jehovah, Adonai! (Sound of footsteps. Roar of crowd).

Voices: The Jew! The Jew!

Man: Let's hang the Jew.

Woman: He always wanted to be high up. Now he'll be high enough. Salbete. (Sound of footsteps mounting scaffold).

Suss: You have come, my Lord President, to see the execution carried out?

Weissensee: I have come, Jew, at my daughter's request, to offer you your pardon beneath the scaffold on one condition—that you become a Christian.

Suss: Once before in my life, Weissensee, I was faced with that problem. I went for guidance to the only person I thought could help me but that person was was not there. From that moment I knew that my problem had ceased to exist. To her I had always been a Jew, therefore a Jew I shall remain. Tell Magdalene Sybille, Jew Suss is deeply indebted to her Mille merci Excellency and now hangman, are you ready?

Hangman: Ready to hang you higher, Jew, than the gallows themselves.

Weissensee: Thou hast conquered, Oh Judean. Thou hast conquered. (Voice departing).

Rabbi: Shma Israel, Adonai Eloheim, Adonai Achod! Hear, Oh Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one.

Landauer: Shma Israel, Adonai Eloheim, Adonai Achod!

Suss: Shma Israel, Adonai Eloheim a-donai A-cod-d.

Women: There he goes! Up with him!

Man: Depart into hell, accursed Jew and villain!

Landauer: Shma Israel, Adonai Eloheim. Adonai achod! (Roar of crowd—music increases—music fades).

Voice: Perhaps one day the walls will crumble like the walls of Jericho and all the world will be one people. Till then the work of Jew Suss remains unfinished—while his story lives.

THE END.

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