

**BEN ISRAEL: OR, FROM  
UNDER THE  
CURSE. A JEWISH  
PLAY, IN FIVE ACTS**

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Ben Israel: Or, From Under the Curse. A Jewish Play, In Five Acts by Edward W. Tullidge

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**EDWARD W. TULLIDGE**

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## CAST OF CHARACTERS:

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DAVID BEN ISRAEL, a Jewish Prince, descended from the "Princes of the Captivity."

SIR JUDAH, his nephew, agent of the Prince of Orange.

LEVI, a trusted servant of Ben Israel.

SIR WALTER TEMPLAR, lover of Rachel.

CHARLES II.

LORD HAWKLEY, a malignant plotter against the Jews.

GABRIEL, servant-companion of Sir Walter, who retains his rustic simplicities.

RACHEL, granddaughter of Ben Israel.

ANNETTI, her foster-sister.

MEG, godmother of Lord Hawley, and a hater of the Jews.

REBECCA, wife of Levi.

### AUXILIARIES.

Hebrew People, Templar Men, Bishops, Rabbis, Chief Justice, Governor of Prison, Chaplain, etc.

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TIME :—*Reign of Charles II.*      PLACE :—*London.*

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# BEN ISRAEL;

OR,

FROM UNDER THE CURSE.

## ACT I.

SCENE I.—*Magnificent gardens and mansion of Rachel, the singer, in the suburbs of London. Several tents pitched and groups of Jews in earnest conversation. The subject is the return of the Jews to England after a banishment of four hundred years. Levi, a trusted servant of David Ben Israel, and his wife, Rebecca, in conversation in the foreground.*

*Levi.* I would the remnant of our tribe were come. I am not trustful of the Christian's love.

*Rebecca.* Yet Levi, hath the King of England promised fair.

*Levi.* So did a Christian king give us good quit of this fair land. Bah!—a Christian's covenant, and to a Jew! When was it kept, Rebecca.

*Reb.* Alas, Levi, when was it kept. The curse hath followed us in every Christian land.

*Levi.* 'Tis now three hundred years since a Christian king did banish us from England's shores.

*Reb.* More than three hundred years, is it not, Levi?

*Levi.* Aye, so I think; may be three score; yet I am not certain that it be as much; but trouble me not with thy questions. Would the remnant of our tribe were come.

*Reb.* I hear voices in the distance.

*Levi.* Our people come. The God of Jacob be praised.

*Reb.* Nay, Levi; 'tis an alarm.

*Levi.* Out with our young men. The spoiler is upon us. (*The group seize their firelocks and rush off.*) Ho, Reuben! my son!  
(*Calling to one without.*) Ho, Reuben, where art thou?

(*A Voice without.*) What, ho, old man?

*Enter SIR JUDAH OF NASSAU.*

*Levi.* A Christian? (*In anger and disgust*)

*Sir Judah.* Ha, ha! At thy call, Levi. (*Sardonically*)

*Levi.* I called thee not. Thou hast no business in our camp.  
(*Sir Judah laughs sardonically again at Levi's mistaking him for a Christian.*) Get thee gone, lest our young men do thee harm. Thou art a Christian and hath no business with us, I say.

*Sir Judah.* Be not angered good Levi. I am not quite a Christian. But there I will not masquerade at home. (*Lifting his beaver*) Look in my face, Levi. Hath it a Christian mould?

*Levi.* Who art thou? I cannot recognize thee. Mine eyes are no longer sightful. I know thee not; who art thou?

*Reb.* (*who has seized a flambeau and thrown its gleam across the countenance of Sir Judah.*) 'Tis Sir Judah of Nassau, our master's nephew.

*Levi.* Yes, 'tis the boy. I had known thee Judah, at once, and thou hadst not given our people this untimely terror at thy coming but for thy Christian garb.

*Sir Judah.* Why, man, look not with such disgust upon my courtly suit; it hath no moth nor mildew.

*Levi.* I like not thy garb, Judah. Nay, by our ancient covenant, I like it not.

*Sir Judah.* Yet, Levi, hath it served our people well—aye well in England, where I most would have it well.

*Levi.* And yet, boy, I like it not.

*Sir Judah.* Thou art too exacting, Levi, in thine ancient ways.

*Levi.* Shame, Judah! Despise not our ancient ways; they have preserved our people.

*Sir Judah.* As friend and advocate of young Prince William's cause, I have been welcomed at the court of Charles of England, where had I been offensive as the Jew, the Turk had been a better servant for the house of Nassau.

*Levi.* What! didst deny thy race and faith? Didst turn a Christian in the deed as in the seeming? Shame, Judah, shame! Thy apostacy, boy, for the sake of prince's smiles will break thy uncle David's heart. Would that our people had turned their face toward the East and not come hither.

*Sir Judah.* Nay, good Levi, I denied no race and confessed no faith.

*Levi.* Art thou not known at the court of this Christian king? Thy uncle, David, said 'twas Judah who had won us welcome here.

*Sir Judah.* Be satisfied with my uncle David's word that his nephew hath prepared in England a welcome resting place for the wandering race, which not even thyself, old man, loves better than does Judah.

*Rebecca.* Our people come! [*Enter a tribe of Jews c. with David Ben Israel among them in his concealed character. Rachel is leading them into camp upon her own grounds with a chorus of men and maidens.*]

We've hung our harps on the willows;  
By the rivers of Babylon wept;  
We wept when we thought of Zion,  
But the ways of our God we kept,—  
Our Father's God,  
Who lifts the curse.  
The curse is lifting—  
Lifting from our heads.

We take our harps from the willows  
And the songs of our gladness resume,  
Nor weep when we think of Zion  
But the praise of our God we'll tune,—  
Our Father's God,  
Who lifts the curse;  
The curse is lifting—  
Lifting from our heads.

*Rachel.* (*with a standard in her hand.*) These are my grounds. Here pitch ye all your tents, O, men of Judah, and plant this standard of our royal race. (*gives the standard to one of the tribe*) This land be our second Zion.

*David.* A leader! A leader!

*Levi.* A woman, yet with David's soul.

*Sir Judah.* A spirit of the past.

*Rachel.* Plant David's standard there. (*the tribe hesitate.*) What, men of Judah do ye fear to raise the standard of our race?

*David.* Perchance it may offend this Christian king.

*Rachel.* Wherefore offend? 'Twas David's horn that did anoint his head; and Judah's emblem over this proud land already waves.

*David.* Maiden, we are not now in our own land. Let thy intent suffice.

*Rachel.* Nay, O, Patriarch of Israel, let the standard this day wave above our people.



*David.* Daughter thou temptest me almost beyond the old man's prudence. Yet, child, were it thus in our own land, old as I am, I could not bid thee hold.

*Rachel.* All lands are ours! All lands are ours by the very curse which hath for ages followed us, and destiny hath led us to these shores.

*David.* The spirit of her race hath fallen upon her.

*Rachel.* The spirits of the mighty dead *are* moving me. Oft in the silence of the mystic night, I hear their voices speaking wondrous things of Israel's past and still more wondrous words prophetic of his coming destiny. This was my native land, O, men of Jacob. Orphaned at my very birth, a Christian mother reared the Jewess child as 'twere her own. Yet yearning for my race I found ye out, but still was England my dear native land. (*taking the standard back.*) Here had I seen great David's standard wave, as though he, himself, had sat on England's throne—and fancied in the ages long since gone one of our royal blood did plant it thus—as I do here again, O, England now—thy sign and ours! Bow to it men of Judah! (*Picture. Change.*)

SCENE 2.—*A road near the mansion of the Jewess. Enter LORD HAWKLEY and his foster-mother, MEG.*

*Hawkley.* Mother Meg, take this letter to Father Peters, of the Holy Order of the Jesuits. You will find him at the house of James, Duke of York.

*Meg.* Yes, my son; I know, I know.

*Hawkley.* My carriage is yonder in the road; and the coachman has instruction to drive you to the house of the Duke of York as fast as horse can bear you. Away mother Meg at once.

*Meg.* Ay, ay, my son.

*Hawk.* Be fleet as the wind, and it be possible, in your return to me with the answer from Father Peters.

*Meg.* As fleet my son as your rare blooded horses can speed me.

*Hawk.* Away, then, mother.

*Meg.* Aye, my son; fleet as the wind will your old foster mother ride for you. (*Exit L.*)

*Hawk.* I discern some design on my own affairs in Ben Israel's schemes in settling his accursed tribe in England, as he has already done in Holland. His agents have pursued me, as though they loved me, with offers of heavy loans, at trifling interest, until I am involved beyond redeeming. (*Sir Judah appears R., recognizes Hawkley and withdraws.*) And these Jews from Holland, who have landed to-day, are those agents and my creditors. They seem, by their humble

manners and garbs, to be the poorest vagabonds of their hated tribe; but I discovered in them my creditors, and know them to be the moneyed princes of Europe. Yet this Ben Israel and his crafty nephew, Sir Judah of Nassau, have designs on me. I must consult the Duke of York and Father Peters on the matter; but be those designs on me what they may I am heart and hand with the Duke of York to have the accursed tribe again expelled from England. (*Exit L.*)

SIR JUDAH OF NASSAU *enters as HAWKLEY exits.*

*Sir Judah.* Yes, my Lord of Hawkley, David Ben Israel and his crafty nephew have some designs on thee, as thou sayest; and for the reason that thou, aiding the Duke of York and the Jesuits, hast some malicious designs against their people. How apt these Christians are—aye wise men too—who are fortified by favored fortune—how apt to talk as they were modern Solomons, risen to shame our great ancestor—with proverbs of the cunning of the Jews. My Lord of Hawkley, *cunning is Nature's protection of the weak against the strong.* So look well to thy feet, my Lord of Hawkley, for the cunning nephew of Ben Israel is on thy tracks. (*Change.*)

SCENE 3. *Gardens as before in the suburbs of London. Court gallants, goblets in hand, come from one of the bowers.*

*Charles.* Gad's death! 'Tis time we pledge  
The hours of this paradise. So to the Star of Judah!

*Gallants.* (*all excepting Hawkley*) The Star of Judah!

*Hawkley.* The Devil take the Jews!

*Sir Judah.* (*entering as mentor of the King and agent from Holland*)  
Amen, my lord. The Devil will take care of them.

*Chas.* Ah, sir mentor, just from Holland? Good. 'Tis not before we needed thee.

*Sir Jud.* From Holland, sire, envoy from the States General and servant of your majesty's rare nephew, William, Prince of Orange.

*Chas.* Ah! How is the young Dutch hero? Gad's death! There's that about the rogue we like, though he hath urged the States to war with England.

*Sir Jud.* That is because your Majesty, urged by your brother James, takes up the cause of France against your Protestant allies, the Dutch.

*Chas.* The boy is mad and stands in his own light.  
Why sides he not with Louis and with me,  
Who'll re-instate his house? We need the help  
Of France, but most the gold of Louis. (*is joined by Lord Hawkley*)  
What say you to that, my lord of Hawkley?

*Hawk.* To what, your Majesty?

*Chas.* Do not our ministers need Louis' gold?

*Hawk.* Not more than does their king.

*Sir Jud.* Then borrow of the Jews, your Majesty,  
And do not England's honor sell to France,  
Nor England pawn unto the Papal power.

*Hawk.* Keep guard upon thy tongue. 'Twas thou who didst  
Persuade his Majesty to hive the Jews  
In England after we were quit of them  
Four hundred years.

*Sir Jud.* The bees make honey for the land;  
I own I did advise his Majesty to hive them here.

*Hawk.* Now may the Devil take the Jews, say I.

*Sir Jud.* You said it but a while ago, my lord.  
Perhaps your lordship hath forgot  
The proverb, that the fiend cares for his own.

*Chas.* A truce to this banter. We are here to hail the queen of  
song at her own court. Join with your prince, gallants. Hail to the  
Star of Judah—Rachel, the enchantress! (*Exit into mansion.*)

*Courtiers acclaim with the king and follow him into the mansion of  
the Jewess, excepting HAWKLEY, who directs his curse at the house.*

*Hawk.* Curse thee, thou subtle agent of this Orange Prince,  
And curse the Jews, whom Rome hath more to fear  
Than from the heretics about the throne.  
And curse thee, too, thou royal fool! Would that  
Thy brother James now reigned in England.

*Enter MEG, cautiously looking around.*

*Meg.* Hist, my son. 'Tis thy old god-dame.

*Hawk.* Ha! Mother Meg! Returned? What say the Holy  
Fathers?

*Meg.* Of that anon. I choked with rage to hear the king drink  
to this Jewish witch, and then to hear the courtiers shout as if they  
were about to crown a queen.

*Hawk.* You heard the king, then, Meg?

*Meg.* Ay! That did I. A legion fiends possess  
The fool, I say, for harboring the Jews.

*Hawk.* Ben Israel has my castle and estates  
Under his bonds well nigh to their full worth.

*Meg.* Thou shouldst have borrowed of the devil first.

*Hawk.* Or taken subsidies from France.