

The Last Account A one act play

By **N. Sokolow**

Play no. 37

Opening show: 14/06/1936

Cast

Dr. Leopold, Lubelsky, a physician, ex-officer in Polish army: I. Bertonoff

Theophelia, his daughter, a widow: A. Govinska

Dr. Maximilian Rosenthal, head physician of Jewish hospital: R. Klatzkin

Sigmund Dr. Lubelsky's] A. Avital

Kazimirsz grandsons] A. Baratz

Antosh, the priest : A. Meskin

Dr. Leopold Lubelsky, as old physician of about ninety, an ex-officer in the Polish army and one who got his military training in the French army of Napoleon's day, feels the approach of his last hour. He recalls his almost Judaism and he fears that his converted grandsons would not bury him in the Jewish cemetery. He orders his daughter Theophelia to call in his friend, Dr. Rosenthal, a physician in a Jewish hospital, who is himself a good Jew, and whose family too adheres to Judaism. It is Dr. Lubelsky's desire to make his last account together with him.

The old physician girds his sword most ceremoniously and decorates his coat with his Napoleonic medal, but when Dr. Rosenthal greets him in Polish he asks him to speak Yiddish to him, the language which he hasn't spoken now for over forty years. Along side of long forgotten war memories the old man makes an effort to call up man reminiscences of his Judaism; he also brings up the memory of his old father, eh Shohet* of Lublin and speaks of him with no shame whatever.

At first Dr. Rosenthal thinks that he is not altogether sane. He his pulse, but Lubelsky confesses to him very seriously his sin of forgetting his Judaism; he also places his "Hevra Kadisha"*, but not given over to the Church, as his grandsons will undoubtedly wish to do. He finds an old prayer book and derives great joy from the few Hebrew words of a chapter in Psalms which Dr. Rosenthal, wrapped in Lubelsky's father's prayer-shawl, reads to him; this is his last joy. The last moments approach and his soul departs from his body with the Hebrew verse of Psalms.

The daughter enters and is startled at the sight of her dying father, and even more at the sight of Dr. Rosenthal who stands there wrapped in the prayer-shawl. The grandsons, Sigmund and Kazimirsz, cross their heart and get down on their knees before the dead body. They soon turn the telephone to call Father Antosh, but just then Dr. Rosenthal grasps the telephone receiver to call the "Hevra Kadisha". The priest and his assistants come, and sound their bells, while the Jewish undertakers come too. Dr. Rosenthal sows the priest the will and the latter admits that it is impossible to convert a dead man. The grandsons object to a Jewish funeral, claiming that it couldn't be made so pompously and ceremoniously. What would be done with the sword and medal?... But Dr. Rosenthal takes it upon to arrange the Jewish funeral as befits the deceased physician – and the Jewish soul is victorious in this last battle.

*) Ritual slaughterer.

**) Official bod of Jewish undertakers.

