

Who Is Who

By H. Leivick

Play no. 49

Opening show: 07/08/1939

Hebrew by: M. Z. Wolfovsky

Directed by : B. Chemerinsky

Setting by: E. Luftglass

The Cast

Professor Schelling: S. Finkel

Marle, his sister: I. Govinska

Elsa, his daughter: F. Libitz

Ludwing, his son: A. Kutai

Dr. Ziro, friend of the family: H. Amital

Schacht, a Jewish author: A. Warshaver

Ada Samuels: } students N. Shein

Leo Samuels }

Judge Evans: J. Bertonov

Emma, a nurse: S. Doar

The Judge's Clerk

A Newspaperman: D. Vardi

Act 1

Alexander Schelling, professor of mathematics, is a German refugee living in the United States. In this new country, too, he continues to bring up his children as non-Jews and to hide their Jewish origin from them. His son is a student at an aristocratic college in which anti-Semitic feeling is very strong. His daughter is constantly ailing – her legs are paralysed. Both children sense something wrong in their lives.

Marie, the Professor's sister, is friendly with a Jewish writer named Schacht whom the Professor dislikes. Marie and Dr. Ziro, a friend of the family's, both condemn the Professor's attitude to Judaism.

Ludwig, the Professor's son, comes from the railroad station with guests, a brother and sister named Samuels. Their name makes the Professor suspect that they are Jewish and he begins to ask them insulting questions. They leave the house without even saying good-bye.

Schacht is writing a biographical sketch of the Professor for "Who's Who", and brings the proof for the Professor to correct. Schelling demands that he omit all mention of his Jewish origin, particularly because he does not want Ludwig to learn the secret. Schacht refuses – both a Jew and a writer he cannot comply with the request. Schelling announces that he will bring him to court and have him forced to comply.

Act 2

Schelling and Schacht are in the home of Judge Evans. Schelling asks the Judge to forbid the publication of the biographical sketch. Schacht condemns

Schelling's self-estrangement from Judaism. Under the influence of Judge Evans the Professor makes a confession. Twenty years ago he was living in Ukrainia. One of the Petlura's bands burst into the house, attacked and killed his wife, and threw little Elsa, then a months old, on the floor, causing her paralysis. Before her death his wife made him promise that he would save the children from suffering the fate of Jews. Thus far he has lived up to his promise and he hopes to be able to do so in the future, particularly since anti-Semitism is now so strong in the whole world. He does not want his children to learn of their Jewish origin or of the shameful circumstances of their mother's death.

Marie and Dr. Ziro try to persuade Professor to change his mind. Marie tells him that she has already been compelled to reveal the truth to Ludwig. Finally Ludwig himself comes to the Judge's house. He is excited and fobfused and rebukes his father for attempting to give his children false and disgraceful happiness. Broken-hearted, Schelling leaves the Judge's house.

Act 3

It is night in the Professor's study. Elsa is in the house with her nurse. She has fever and is disturbed because everyone is gone. She feels instinctively that something has happened. When her father comes in, she asks him to explain, insisting that there is some secret in the air of the house. She tells him that she feels the paralysis disappearing – she must get up and walk away.

Judge Evans comes in, still disturbed by the events of morning. He wants to encourage the Professor and assure him that he will fight with the Jews against Fascism if it should come to America.

Ludwig comes to take his books. He is moving to the Samuel's house and wants to take Elsa with him. He is about to go to her room when his father orders him to leave the house. He goes, asserting that he is eager to meet the new life that awaits him among Jews.

Suddenly there is dreadful consternation in the house. Elsa has actually risen and is walking about like a sleep-walker. She says that she has understood from Ludwig's words that she is a Jewess and she wants to be with him. She falls down and is carried to her bed.

Terribly dejected, Schelling tries to commit suicide, but Judge Evans prevents him from doing so and comforts him.

Standing before his wife's picture, Schelling pours out his heart to Ziro, tells him that all his life till now has been one great blunder.