

JOSEPH
AND HIS BRETHREN



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JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

BY LOUIS N. PARKER

POMANDER WALK. Novelized from the Play. With illustrations by J. Scott Williams. Sq. 8vo.
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JOSEPH

From a Drawing by Dorothy Parker

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

A PAGEANT PLAY

BY

LOUIS N. PARKER

Author of "Pomander Walk," "Disraeli," "Drake," etc.

ILLUSTRATED

NEW YORK

JOHN LANE COMPANY

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J. J. Little & Ives Co., New York, U. S. A.

To HENRY ROWLAND BROWN
Guide, Philosopher, and Friend

NOTE

The term Pageant Play, which is new, may require a word of explanation. A Pageant Play, as I conceive it, is a play written on the same principles as my English Pageants. In those the towns in which they took place were the heroes. In my Pageant Plays the hero is some outstanding figure: Drake—Joseph. As in my pageants I told the entire history of the town, so in these plays I attempt to tell the entire history of the man. The so-called unities of time and place are therefore of no consideration; but are replaced by a much more important unity: the unity of idea. I should like to add that under no circumstances is what is commonly, but wrongly, understood as pageantry introduced for its own sake; nor scenery either. There is, for instance, no unnecessary display of scenery in "Joseph," any more than there is in "Drake." On the contrary, the scenery in both plays is of the simplest nature, or the play could not be represented. It happens, however, to be extraordinarily well painted. *Joseph and His Brethren* was first performed under the management of Messrs. Liebler & Co. at the Century Theatre, New York, on Saturday, January 11, 1913.

I reprint the programme of the first performance because I am very grateful to this large body of artists, and because I hope they will be glad to have a permanent record of what was, to us, a memorable occasion.

LOUIS N. PARKER.

CHARACTERS

CANAANITES

Jacob		JAMES O'NEILL
Reuben	} Sons of Leah	{ . . . HARVEY BRABAN . . . HOWARD KYLE . . . FRANK WOOLFE . . . EMMET KING
Simeon		
Levi		
Judah		
Dan . . .		
Naphtali		
Gad . . .	} Sons of Zilpah	{ LESLIE PALMER FRANKLYN PANGBORN
Asher . . .		
Issachar	} Later Sons of Leah	{ F. WILMOT EDWIN CUSHMAN
Zebulun . . .		
Joseph . . .	} Sons of Rachel	{ BRANDON TYNAN SIDNEY D. CARLYLE
Benjamin		

1st Slave	HARRY MELICK
2d Slave	HAROLD ROWE
3d Slave	MALCOLM MORLEY
First Camel Driver	ERNEST MILTON
Rachel	OLIVE OLIVER
Bilhah	MADELINE TRAVERSE
Zilpah	HARRIET ROSS
Serah, Daughter of Asher	IRMA LERNA
First Water Bearer	VIOLET ROMER

*Water Bearers, Attendants, Musicians, Camel Drivers,
Nubian Slaves, Children, etc., etc.*

CHARACTERS

EGYPTIANS

Pharaoh (Usertesén) . . .	JAMES O'NEILL	
Potiphar, Captain of Pharaoh's Army	FRANK LOSEE	
Imhotep, Chief Butler to Pharaoh raoh	FRANK WOOLFE	
Serseru, Chief Baker to Pharaoh raoh	HORACE JAMES	
Ranofer, Lord Treasurer . .	FRANKLYN PANGBORN	
Dedefre, a Noble	HARRY MELICK	
Heru	}	PEDRO DE CORDOBA
Ani		JAS. K. WHITMORE
Tehuti		W. T. CARLETON
Sebni		DOUGLAS ROSS
Atha		BENNET KILPACK
Menthu, High Priest of Neith	CHARLES MACDONALD	
Ansu, the Chief Magician .	JAMES O'NEILL, JR.	
Iri, the Chief Soothsayer . .	F. WILMOT	
First Physician	EDWIN CUSHMAN	
Second Physician	MALCOLM MORLEY	
Pesbes, the Court Dwarf . .	CHARLES ROGERS	
Enenkhet, Captain of the Prison, afterwards Steward to Joseph	CHARLES HERMAN	
An Officer	JAMES VORN	
A Soldier	HAROLD ROWE	
Zuleika	PAULINE FREDERICK	
Asenath, Daughter to Menthu	LILY CAHILL	
Wakara, Tiring-woman to Zuleika	JANE FERRELL	
Tamai, Chief Maid-in-waiting to Zuleika	DOROTHY PARKER	

CHARACTERS

Mehtu Anset Arilennu Taherer Nesta	}	Maids-in-waiting to Zuleika	{	EDITH CREEL SPOFFARD PATRICIA O'CONNOR IRMA LERNA MIRIAM COLLINS FRANCES WRIGHT
Shepset Khenen	}	Noble Ladies	{	MADELINE TRAVERSE HARRIET ROSS
A Dancer				VIOLET ROMER

*Nobles, Warriors, Priests, Soothsayers, Magicians,
Ladies, Dancers, Slaves, etc., etc.*

The Incidental Music Composed by Arthur Farwell.
The Scenery Designed by Gates and Morange.

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ACT I
THE TENTS OF SHECHEM
GENESIS XXXV; XXXVII

PERSONS

Jacob
Reuben
Simeon
Levi
Judah
Issachar
Zebulun
Dan
Naphtali

Gad
Asher
Joseph
1st Slave
2d Slave
3d Slave
Rachel
Bilhah
Zilpah

ACT I

SCENE 1—*The Tents of Shechem*

A pleasant grove in a wide valley, with snowcapped mountains in the distance.

The scene is on elevated ground, so that the whole expanse of the valley is disclosed between palm trees and other foliage.

Indications of a large tent on the right. In the valley, dimly seen, are groups of tents, from which, when the sun has risen, thin threads of smoke rise straight into the air.

It is the moment just before dawn. The snowy caps of the distant mountains glow with a rosy light which slowly creeps down their sides until the whole landscape is baking in the glare of the sun. The scene remains in cool shade.

Before the rise of the curtain a long, melodious horn-call has sounded. As the curtain rises a SLAVE standing near the tent L. is seen blowing on a ram's horn. Gradually the scene comes to life. SLAVES move hither and thither upon household duties, fetching water in skins from the well which is seen on the left. WOMEN pass, with water in jars balanced on their heads. Camels, very small asses and sheep are driven to pasturage at the back of the scene, etc., etc.

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2D SLAVE [LEVI'S SLAVE] [*To him who has just blown the signal*] Out on thee, slave of Simeon, wilt thou shatter the dawn?

1ST SLAVE [SIMEON'S SLAVE] Thinkest thou the dawn will wait for thee, wretched bondman of a starving lord?

2D SLAVE. My Lord Levi hath thrice more flocks than thy Simeon.

[2D SLAVE comes down]

3D SLAVE [DAN'S SLAVE] Who speaketh of Levi and Simeon? Dan is mightier than both.

1ST SLAVE [*Contemptuously*] The handmaid's son, forsooth!—Get thee to thy stinking camels.

[*Enter JUDAH and DAN. They are superb figures; their costume suggests at once the shepherd and warrior combined. Judah is the elder*]

JUDAH [*Sternly*] What is this wrangling, slaves?

1ST SLAVE [*With a deep obeisance*] We are but praising our lords——

2D SLAVE. And the hands that feed us.

JUDAH [*Haughtily*] Get ye to your labour and your toil. The sons of Jacob need no praise from lips of slaves.

[*Exeunt the SLAVES, but the movement of the SERVANTS and WOMEN continues throughout the scene*]

DAN [*Laughing*] The sun hath not risen in a happy hour for thee to-day!

[*Enter GAD. He is of lighter, more youthful build than his brothers. Each of the SONS OF JACOB,*

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*as he enters, is accompanied by his own RETINUE
of three or four MEN]*

GAD. Yet 'tis a day of rejoicing!

JUDAH. What day is it, Gad?

GAD [*Laughing*] Nay, if thou know not, I'll not tell thee.

JUDAH [*Angrily*] Wilt thou mock thine elders, boy?

GAD. Oh, my elders, my elders! What worth is thine elderhood? When thou art hidden in the grave I shall be in the flower of my days.

JUDAH [*Furious*] Accursed seed of a handmaid——

GAD [*Laughing*] Let not Dan hear thee.

JUDAH. The tents of Shechem are overrun with a base-born brood!

[Enter SIMEON. He is thin, wizened, with a crafty face and a furtive eye. His dress is not so rich as that of any of his brothers]

SIMEON. Whither lead ye your flocks to-day?

DAN. What matter to thee, Simeon?

SIMEON. Lest we all seek the same pasture.

DAN. Or to tell thee where the best is.

GAD. Whether we seek toward sunrise or sunset, Simeon's flocks have left no blade.

[Enter NAPHTALI]

NAPHTALI. To that I, Naphtali, bear witness. Simeon is as the grasshopper; who cometh after him starveth.

[Enter ISSACHAR]

ISSACHAR. He setteth spies among us—when we hear of new pasture, he is told, and stealeth it.

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

SIMEON. Issachar! Issachar! How much more of this insolence shall I suffer!

[*Enter LEVI*]

LEVI. These youths wax turbulent. Our father Jacob shall have a word for them!

GAD [*With a mock bow*] The solemn Levi! Brothers, doff your sandals!

[*Enter ZEBULUN*]

[*The sons of LEAH: SIMEON, LEVI and JUDAH are together on one side of the stage with their retinues, the other brothers face them*]

ZEBULUN. Why have our elders such frowning faces?

GAD. Hush, Zebulun! Oh, hush! Levi is about to speak!

LEVI. And a blow shall follow the word!

[*An angry roar from both sides. The Attendants on either side make ready their weapons; spears, slings and stones, bows and arrows*]

[*ASHER comes hurriedly down the centre*]

ASHER. Brothers! Great news!

[*The quarrel is arrested*]

LEVI. What news, son of Zilpah?

GAD. Whence runnest thou, Asher?

ASHER. I come from the fringe of the desert. Thither came a swarthy runner, seeking a well. For far in his wake, he said, followed a mighty train——

SIMEON [*Anxiously*] Thou showd'st him no well!

ASHER. Ay, but I did——

[*All give a cry of anger*]

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

SIMEON. Have we battled for pastures and wells, to give them to strangers?

ASHER. Wait till my tale be told. In this runner's wake, then, journeyed a great host; and nightly he was sent ahead to seek a resting-place for the next morn. When this was found he ran back as he came, and led the voyagers thither.

SIMEON. And they defile the water and trample the young grass.

LEVI. They kill our herds and seize our young maidens for a prey.

ASHER. I tell you, these come not in war or for rapine. They themselves are bearing a treasure of great price down to Egypt——

SIMEON [*Eagerly*] What treasure?

ASHER. Nought for thy claws to clutch. They come from Nineveh——

LEVI. From Nineveh——?

ASHER. And they journey to Egypt. They bring a wife for one of Pharaoh's officers.

JUDAH. Is she fair?

ASHER. Thinkest thou the runner had seen her? Now, hearken. They seek food and raiment, for the way is long. Also, wherever they pass they purchase gifts for their Lord and for Pharaoh—whatsoever is richest in the land——

SIMEON. When will they pass?

ASHER. When the runner left them, they were hard by Tirzah.

SIMEON [*Moving off*] I will go forth——

JUDAH. And I with thee, Simeon.

SIMEON [*Angrily*] I have no need of thee.

LEVI. Think you this is for one or for two? I have the finest woven stuffs, and cups of beaten gold——

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

DAN. Have I naught? Have I no gems in which the sun is imprisoned?

GAD. I, then——! Spices and sweet ointments——!

ISSACHAR [*Aggressively*] This is not for the sons of handmaids.

ASHER. Shall I bring you the news, and have no reward?

JUDAH. Is it battle between us? Have you forgotten how we slew the men of Shechem?

SIMEON. So will we deal with you also!

GAD. We fought, while ye prated!

LEVI. On your heads be it, then!

[*Uproar. The two factions are just coming to blows when REUBEN fights his way through them*]

REUBEN. Peace—peace, I say!—I, Reuben, the eldest-born, speak!

ALL [*Falling apart, and with respect*] Reuben!

REUBEN [*Sternly*] Are ye the brood of Cain, that each would have his brother's blood, on the day our Father Jacob hath set apart as a day of rejoicing?

JUDAH. Twice have I heard the day named as a day of rejoicing. What is the day?

REUBEN. Have ye forgotten? To-day Rachel's eldest-born cometh to manhood.

JUDAH. Joseph!

ALL. Joseph!—The dreamer—The upstart!

SIMEON. No day of rejoicing for us.

DAN. Rather a day of dust and ashes.

ASHER [*Eagerly*] Brothers! No word of my news to Joseph!

ISSACHAR. He would turn it to his own good.

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

REUBEN [*To ASHER, sternly*] Son of Zilpah, what is thy news?

SIMEON [*Obsequiously, to REUBEN*] I will tell thee, apart.

ASHER. Ay, him; but not Joseph.

LEVI [*To the Brothers generally*] We will share with you all, if we needs must; but the dreamer shall have no part.

ALL. Ay! Ay! No part for the dreamer!

REUBEN. I know not what new thing ye are banded in against Joseph; but I bid you beware. Our father loveth him as the apple of his eye. To-day, ere we go to our flocks, he is to endue him with the robe of manhood. To-night, when our labour is done, there is to be great feasting. Bring no sorrow into our father's house to-day. Moreover, Joseph hath dreamed a dream——

GAD [*With a mocking laugh*] That is no new thing!

REUBEN [*Sternly*] Bridle thy tongue—for when did Joseph's dreams not come true? And now he dreamed we were binding corn in the fields, and, lo, his sheaf arose and stood upright, and, behold, our sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to his sheaf.

SIMEON [*Surlily*] What is the interpretation thereof?

JUDAH [*Hotly*] Shall he reign over us?

DAN. Shall he, indeed, have authority over us?

GAD [*To brothers*] Why are ye affrighted by a dream?

REUBEN. And he dreamed again, and, behold, the sun and the moon, and the eleven stars made obeisance to him.

LEVI. Enough! Enough! How long shall we suffer him to prate of his dreams?

NAPHTALI. He hath stolen our father's love with his visions!

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REUBEN. Not so. Jacob rebuked him, and said, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?

[*Up to tent*]

ASHER. Ay, he rebuked him; but did he punish him?

ISSACHAR. Not so:—he observes Joseph's saying.

SIMEON. Ay—he feareth him. Wherefore we must humble the lad overselves.

REUBEN [*Sternly*] Silence!—Our father!

[*Enter SERVANTS bringing a seat; others with skins which they spread in front of the seat; then, supported by two young slaves, JACOB. He is eighty-six years old. A magnificent venerable figure. He is followed by RACHEL—Behind RACHEL comes BILHAH, and lastly ZILPAH. The Brothers all make deep obeisance to JACOB, who sits in the chair which has been placed for him. DAN and NAPHTALI go to BILHAH; similarly GAD and ASHER join ZILPAH*]

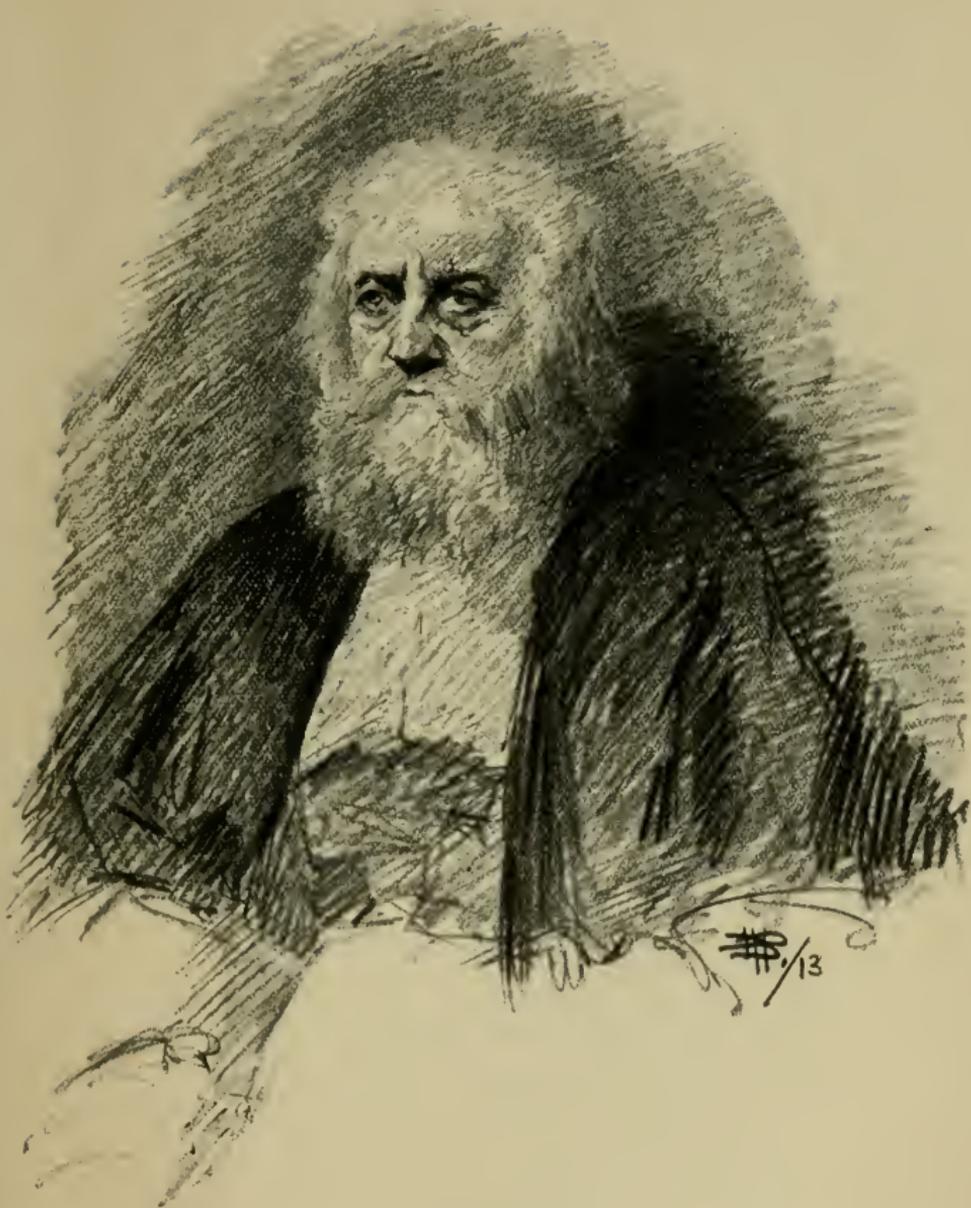
JACOB [*Standing*] God set His face towards you, O my sons, this day and all days.

BROTHERS [*Rise*] And towards thee, O father.

JACOB. God hath been very merciful towards me, and hath given me length of days; I have prospered in the land; I am at peace with Esau, my brother; all my sons are with me, and to-day, Joseph [*He takes RACHEL's hand*], Rachel's first-born, fruit of who knows what love and what prayer, hath come to man's estate——

SIMEON. It had been more fitting had Joseph stood here with us.

RACHEL. Simeon, Simeon, thy brother Joseph was with thy father long ere the sun rose.



JACOB

From a Drawing by Dorothy Parker

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

JACOB. Ay, for he was troubled with visions God had sent him in the morning watch.

ISSACHAR [*Hotly*] So are we, troubled with his visions!

JACOB. Know ye what he dreamed?

GAD. Ay. Reuben made haste to tell us.

LEVI. Is the boy to be set above us?

JUDAH [*Kneels*] My lord, we have toiled for thee, watching thy flocks by day and by night, warding off ravening beasts, and tending the young lambs. Moreover, when thy herds grew more in number than the sands of the sea, we fought for new pastures and would have laid down our lives for thee. The men of Shechem can tell of the weight of our blows. What hath Joseph done, that thou lovest him more than us?

SIMEON. We have bought and sold for thee, not thinking of our own gain, but ever to strengthen thy hands. What hath Joseph done?

GAD. Set thy face towards us, as it is towards Joseph.

DAN. We weary of Joseph's name!

RACHEL [*To JACOB*] My lord, shall the son of my handmaid speak scornfully of my first-born?

BILHAH. Dan is the elder, my lord!

RACHEL [*To her*] Out on thee!

JACOB [*To BENJAMIN*] Bid Joseph come. [*BENJAMIN runs out*] Woe upon you all, that ye speak evil of your brother in his absence. [*He sees JOSEPH*] My son, come hither.

[*Enter JOSEPH*]

JOSEPH [*Making obeisance—not kneeling—to JACOB*] Here I am, my lord.

RACHEL. Joseph! My beloved!

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

JOSEPH. Thy blessing, mother.

JACOB [*Brethren murmuring with backs turned*] There shall be peace in the house of Jacob. Ye murmur against Joseph, saying my heart goeth out to him more than to you. Ye are vain talkers. I love him, not better, but otherwise. Oh, hard of heart! can ye not see and understand what my love is towards the lad? It is the love I bore to his mother in the years past. It is the love-song I whispered into her ear as she stood by the well. It is the toil I gave to win her. It is the hope long deferred. It is the sunshine of youth, bursting through the shadow of age. You, sons of Leah, sons of Bilhah, sons of Zilpah, have been the joy of my life; but he—but Joseph—is a joy above joys:—the Added Joy!

SIMEON. Yet——

REUBEN [*Stepping forward*] O Father Jacob, great Israel, we know thy heart and thy mind, and we will cherish Joseph, even as thou dost.

JOSEPH [*Coming to REUBEN*] Reuben, my brother!

JACOB. In token thereof give him the kiss of love. Rachel, begin!

[*First RACHEL and then each of the BROTHERS comes forward, places both hands on JOSEPH'S shoulders, speaks his blessing and kisses JOSEPH on the cheek. Then they pass back to their groups*]

RACHEL. God shield thee, Joseph.

REUBEN. God strengthen thee.

LEVI. God keep thee.

JUDAH. God succour thee.

DAN. God enlighten thee.

NAPHTALI. God lengthen thy days.

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

GAD. God increase thee.

ASHER. God prosper thee.

ISSACHAR. God reward thee.

ZEBULUN. God uphold thee.

[SIMEON *has stood apart with folded arms and bent brows*]

REUBEN [*Reproachfully*] Simeon—

SIMEON [*Between his teeth*] I cannot; nor I will not.

REUBEN. Our father watcheth.

SIMEON [*Advancing against his will*] Joseph . . .

JACOB [*Who has been anxiously watching, sinks back with a sigh of relief*] All is well!

JOSEPH [*Smiling*] Ay, brother Simeon—?

SIMEON. Our brothers have left me no blessing to give thee.

JOSEPH. Yet bless me.

SIMEON [*Without unfolding his arms*] God—judge thee.

[*He turns away without kissing JOSEPH*]

JACOB [*To JOSEPH*] Come! [JACOB *rises*; JOSEPH *comes to him, and is about to kneel*] Nay, to-day I bow to thee. He that goeth down boweth to him that cometh up. [*Two handmaidens bring a cloak of camel's hair which they allow to fall open. JACOB takes it from them*] Now upon thy young shoulders I lay the Robe of Manhood and authority. Lo, here, the coat of many colours; and each colour shall be for a sign: azure for wisdom, scarlet for courage, green for prayer, and white for purity. I clasp thee to me, flesh of my flesh; thy young heart against my old heart, whose first-born thou art; I raise my hand towards the throne of God, and I cry: God bless thee!

[*Long embrace. The BROTHERS mutter together*]

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

SIMEON. What is this robe of manhood and authority?

ISSACHAR. Not one of us hath it.

NAPHTALI. Over whom hath he authority?

DAN. Not over me, for one.

LEVI. Our father will make him his heir.

ASHER [*To Reuben*] First-born of his heart——!
Reuben, did'st thou hear?

REUBEN [*Soothingly*] Peace! Peace!

JOSEPH. O father—mother—O my brothers! Ye have wrapped me about with love. Yea, and the blessing wherewith ye blessed me is already granted by God.

SIMEON. What now?

JOSEPH. For lo, the dream I told my father at dawn is fulfilled. Sun, moon, and stars—you, my beloved—have bowed to me.

SIMEON. Ha!

[*Angry movement among the BROTHERS*]

JACOB [*Gravely*] My son——

JOSEPH. Not as to a greater than yourselves. What am I, O Israel, in thy presence? Or who am I among these mighty sons of a mighty father?—Nay, but as the sun boweth to the earth to make her fruitful; as the moon boweth to shine on the young lambs; as the stars bow to gladden the waters; so have ye bowed to me with blessings and the gift of your love.

SIMEON. Cunningly twisted!

GAD. True son of his father!

SIMEON. But he shall not win my birthright for a mess of soft words.

JACOB. Now the day's labour summoneth us. What new thing is there, Reuben?

REUBEN. Asher telleth of a strange woman from

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Nineveh, journeying with a great following into Egypt. They will reach our wells in Dothan anon.

JACOB. Go thither. Take fruits and rich woven stuffs and whatsoever the wayfarers need, and barter with them.

GAD [*Laughing*] The strangers are hard to deal with: Simeon shall do the bartering.

JACOB [*With a smile*] That will be to our increase. And to-night we will have feasting and song and merry-making in Joseph's honour; and he shall come in among us to the sound of music; and I will place him in the high seat by my side, and show him to all my house, as my well-beloved son; and ye shall all bring your gifts.

REUBEN [*To SERVANTS*] Make ready!

[*SERVANTS lead on asses. Others bring bales and packages which they load on the backs of the asses. All this is done well at the back of the scene*]

SIMEON [*To the others*] Did you hear? We are to bring gifts!

DAN. Who feasted, or made merry for us?

ISSACHAR. Or who brought us gifts?

GAD. This Joseph is as a nettle against our skin.

NAPHTALI. As a viper in the young grass.

ZEBULUN. Let us take counsel against him.

ASHER. Ay; but let not Reuben hear us.

[*With an obeisance to JACOB they all go out. The beasts are led off. The SLAVES follow. The WOMEN and CHILDREN go up to watch them off. JACOB, RACHEL and JOSEPH are alone*]

JACOB. Joseph——

JOSEPH. Ay, father.

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

JACOB. Go, I pray thee. Follow thy brothers. See whether it be well with them and with the flocks, and bring me word again.

RACHEL [*Anxiously*] My lord, I am afraid for my son; for the faces of his brothers are not towards him.

JACOB. Reuben is with them; no harm will come to the lad. Let him go.

RACHEL [*Embracing JOSEPH*] Cling to Reuben. God be with thee, Joseph.

[*JOSEPH takes his shepherd's crook, which was leaning against a tree, and exit. RACHEL stands looking after him*]

THE SCENE CHANGES.

SCENE II
THE WELLS OF DOTHAN
PERSONS

Reuben	Asher
Simeon	Issachar
Levi	Zebulun
Judah	Joseph
Dan	Ani
Naphtali	Heru
Gad	Zuleika

*Slaves of the Israelites—Slaves of the Egyptians—
Egyptian Warriors, Camel Drivers, etc.*

SCENE 2—*The Wells of Dothan*

An oasis. It is a deliciously shaded grove in the heart of the desert. Between the stems of the trees and through one or two wider openings the desert is seen baking in the afternoon sun. Towards the right of the stage, but also towards the rear, is a shallow pool of

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

water, surrounded by aquatic plants. The vegetation on the stage is luxuriant, excepting near the centre, where there is, as it were, a blighted spot. There are indications of a deep hole, and the plants around it are dried up, withered and broken.

Tinkling of small bells such as are hung around the necks of beasts of burden is heard off R., and presently enter ASHER, in advance of DAN, NAPHTALI, GAD, ISSACHAR and ZEBULUN. Behind them are the asses, as we saw them start in the previous scene. But the SLAVES keep them half out of sight under the palms on the right. The SLAVES fetch water from the pool in shallow vessels, and give the animals to drink.

ASHER. These are the wells of Dothan; and hither I bade the runner lead his lords.

NAPHTALI. A fair garden in a waste land.

DAN. Where lag our elders?

GAD. With Reuben. The true sons of Jacob, they call themselves, and cling together.

NAPHTALI [*Examining the hole in the centre*] This well is dry.

ASHER [*Pointing to the pool*] But this is full of sweet water.

NAPHTALI [*With horror*] Look! look, how smooth the sides are! I scarce see the bottom. Yet—ay!—creeping things, with eyes gleaming, shine in the darkness.

GAD [*Who has joined him*] Poisonous serpents, lizards and toads—and the oozing walls—Ugh! Whoso slipped into that would never crawl out.

ASHER [*Looking off R.*] Here come the proud brothers.

ISSACHAR. Is Joseph with them?

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

NAPHTALI [*Bitterly*] Not he. Father Jacob is fondling him.

DAN. What gift hast thou ready for him, against to-night?

GAD. I?—A stone for his grave.

[*Enter REUBEN, SIMEON, LEVI and JUDAH*]

GAD. Have ye not brought our dear Joseph?

SIMEON. Now, may thy tongue rot! The name hath spoiled the joy of the day.

GAD [*Looking off R.*] Ho! What would'st thou say if he were here?

SIMEON [*Furious*] Say—! I would do!

GAD. Make ready to do, then; for hither he cometh.

SIMEON. The jester Gad! As if he dared come.

GAD. Look! Yonder the speck in the desert. Seest thou not the glorious coat? Azure for wisdom, green for prayer, white for purity, and scarlet for courage.

SIMEON. He needeth courage! 'Tis he indeed! He is sent to spy upon us. [*Calling*] Levi! Judah!—

GAD [*Quieting him*] Peace! What wilt thou do?

SIMEON. We shall know no peace till Joseph be at peace. We must take counsel—

GAD [*Slyly*] With Reuben?

SIMEON. Ah!—the marplot!—[*A sudden thought strikes him*] Which way are the strangers to come?

GAD [*Pointing off R. back*] From yonder.

SIMEON [*Calling*] Ho! Reuben!

REUBEN. Ay, brother?

SIMEON. 'Twere well to do the strangers honour.

REUBEN. How can we honour them ere they come?

SIMEON. Take the slaves — a great retinue — and go forth, thou, Jacob's eldest-born — to meet them.

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

REUBEN [*Gravelly*] Hast thou aught hidden in thy mind, Simeon—to Joseph's hurt?

SIMEON. Is Joseph here? Is he coming? Can I think of nought but Joseph? I spake for our advantage. Go, or stay. 'Tis all one to me.

REUBEN [*Calling the Slaves*] Ho! there! Come!— Yet my heart is heavy. Well—! Which way are these wanderers coming?

SIMEON [*Pointing off L.*] Yonder.

ASHER. Nay——

[*GAD plucks his gown and motions him to silence*]

REUBEN. I will go. Should the lad Joseph come——

SIMEON [*Leading him off L.*] Vex not thyself for the lad——

REUBEN. Yonder, you say? If I meet them not soon, I shall return in haste. Farewell.

[*Exit with all the Slaves*]

SIMEON [*Hurriedly*] Now! let us take counsel quickly.

LEVI. What is toward?

SIMEON [*Pointing R.*] Look, who cometh.

LEVI. Where? I see nought.

SIMEON. Look! Look well! Dost thou see him, Judah?

JUDAH. Ay—a moving speck on the sand——

ISSACHAR. Nay, by the swing of him, if I knew not 'twere impossible, I should say——

ASHER. By the grave of Isaac! 'Tis Joseph himself!

ALL [*With fury*] Joseph!

LEVI. But why should he come?

SIMEON. He is sent as a spy.

LEVI. Were I sure of that——!

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

ISSACHAR. To lord it over us; to carry tales of every word we speak is he sent.

SIMEON. Ay! and to take his share of the barter. Ours the heat and the toil, and his the reward!

ZEBULUN. Are we never to be rid of the dreamer?

SIMEON [*Darkly*] Never—unless——

ALL. Unless what? Speak!

SIMEON. What is not done for us, we must do for ourselves.

LEVI [*With horror*] Simeon!

SIMEON. What else? How long will ye suffer iniquity? Come, now, therefore, and let us slay him.

JUDAH. I will have no bloodshed. The curse of Cain would be upon us.

SIMEON. Why, look, now, look! [*Pointing to the dry well*] This pit is deep, and there are evil things within it. The sides are smooth, and we have no rope. If he fell in, by mischance—he could not crawl out, nor could we have him out; and ere we fetched help, the—things—in its depth would have made help of no avail.

JUDAH. Ay—thus we lay no hand upon him.

ISSACHAR. But what shall we say to Jacob, our father?

SIMEON. We will say, some evil beast hath devoured him.

GAD [*Laughing*] And we will see what becomes of his dreams!

ASHER. Yet—there is Reuben.

DAN. Reuben is far by this time.

SIMEON. Seest thou now why I sent him away?

JOSEPH'S VOICE [*Without, R. front*] Reuben, my brother!

SIMEON [*Mockingly*] Ay! Call upon Reuben!

JOSEPH'S VOICE. Reuben! Reuben!

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

GAD [*Answering*] Ho! Dreamer!

[*Enter JOSEPH R. front. In his right hand is the shepherd's crook; in his left arm he carries a young lamb*]

JOSEPH. Happy the hour wherein I find you. Give me to drink.

SIMEON. We have no water to spare.

JOSEPH. Nay, not for me, but [*Indicating the lamb*] for this poor orphan here.

JUDAH. Yonder are the shepherds, let it seek its mother.

JOSEPH [*Setting the lamb down L.*] Run, then, innocent.

ZEBULUN. Why art thou come?

JOSEPH. Our father sent me. I was to see whether all was well with you, and with the flocks.

GAD. All is well. Go thy ways, homeward.

JOSEPH [*Laughing*] Nay! I am anhungered and athirst!

SIMEON. We need thee not. As a spy art thou come hither.

JOSEPH. What has thou done, Simeon, that thou so darest a spy?

SIMEON. I have work to do. I'll have no boys watching me.

JOSEPH. I'll not watch thee. I am for food and sleep.

DAN. Ay; to dream dreams of our downthrow, and thine uplifting.

JOSEPH [*Whimsically*] If I wake I am guilty, and I am guilty if I sleep!—Heigh-ho! I would Reuben were here.

NAPHTALI. Reuben went to meet the wayfarers.

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

SIMEON. It is high time we spread out our wares.

JUDAH. Reuben having taken the slaves, we must unload the bales ourselves. To work!

[*The brothers fetch the bales, etc., from where they are lying and spread the goods under the trees.*

SIMEON places his half out of sight]

ASHER. Behold my rich woven-stuffs of camel-hair.

JUDAH. My honey from Lebanon, in the coolest shade.

NAPHTALI. My skins of lions and tigers; my own arrows laid them low.

DAN. Glittering gems! Ho! the lady's eyes shall glitter as brightly when she beholdeth them.

LEVI. Oil, fresh from the olives of Hermon.

ISSACHAR. Milk and cheeses from my ewes.

ZEBULUN. I have nought but melons [*Slices one in two*] But look at that and be athirst!

JOSEPH. Surely, you will give the weary strangers the milk and the melons without price. Our father, Jacob——

SIMEON [*Eagerly*] Said I not he came as a spy?

JUDAH. But thou, Simeon, wherefore layest thou thy store where the strangers may not see it?

SIMEON [*Laughing*] Ho! Wilt thou teach me to barter? I tell thee, these will be first seen. And when the strangers say, what are these? I shall answer, These be gifts for my sweet brother, Joseph.

JOSEPH [*Laughing*] Why, then, I'll take my gifts now; and thank thee!

SIMEON. Fool! Thinkest thou I mean what I say?

JOSEPH. Can a man say one thing, and mean another?

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

SIMEON [*To the others*] Then the stranger will bid and bid, until he hath bidden—what they are worth.

JOSEPH. Simeon, thou art jesting.

SIMEON. I seek not thy counsel, dreamer!

JOSEPH. Thou wilt not do this evil thing!

SIMEON. Will I not? Stand by, and watch.

JOSEPH [*Hotly*] I will not stand by silently.

SIMEON [*Edging him towards the pit*] What wilt thou do, dreamer, what will thou do?

JOSEPH. I will cry aloud: These wares he got for a drink of water!

SIMEON. Ay, and what else? What else?

JOSEPH. And if that will not serve, our father Jacob shall hear of it.

SIMEON. Ay? Wilt thou report of me?

THE OTHERS [*Closing in on JOSEPH, so that he is forced towards the well*] And of me? And of me?

JOSEPH. Reuben! Reuben!

[*Cries*] Out on the dreamer! Death! Death!

JOSEPH. Reuben!

SIMEON. Anon thou wast thirsty—go! seek water!

JOSEPH. Reu——!

[*He falls backward into the pit. A long pause of horror*]

JUDAH. Simeon—what hast thou done?

SIMEON. Sent him where he cannot tell tales.

LEVI. Is the boy—dead?

DAN. I dare not look!

ISSACHAR. Nor I.

SIMEON. I am not so faint-hearted. [*He gazes into the pit*] I cannot see him.

JUDAH [*Listening*] Hark—No sound.—Alas! the boy is dead!



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THE BROTHERS ATTACKING JOSEPH

Act I—Scene II

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

[*Now the sound of barbaric music is heard from the R. back. It increases rapidly. Presently a gorgeous caravan heaves in sight. First a runner on foot, showing the way; then slaves bearing heavy burdens, tents, etc. Then warriors mounted on horses or camels, and armed to the teeth. [Spears, swords, bows and arrows, etc.] Then camels with women closely veiled; then another camel magnificently caparisoned, with a curtained basourah on its back, in which the figure of a woman is dimly perceptible. Lastly, more mounted and unmounted warriors. The caravan halts, and all but the women dismount; but all except the captain of the caravan remain at the back of the stage. The camel bearing the basourah stands near the dried well*]

LEVI. Trumpets and shawms! It is the strange woman with her train.

GAD. If they see your woful countenances, they'll think the plague is amongst us.

JUDAH. I will not meet them with my heart so heavy.

LEVI. What is done is done. [*To the captain of the caravan—HERU—who has dismounted and advances*] O strangers, are ye come in peace?

HERU. We are come in peace. Do ye greet us peacefully?

LEVI. Peacefully we greet you.

HERU. Here will we abide, then, till the sun bend westward, and water our cattle.

SIMEON [*Stepping forward, cringingly*] Alas, the water faileth. Lo, there is barely enough for our own beasts.

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

HERU [*Angrily*] Are not the wells free to all wayfarers?

SIMEON [*Humbly*] My lord, we be sons of a poor man. We have won these wells with much toil and battle. The wells are not free.

HERU. Must we do battle for the wells?

[*The warriors in the caravan are at attention, and make ready their weapons*]

HERU [*Haughtily*] Let us drink, lest we slay you.

[*The brothers are furious. SIMEON appeases them with a movement of his hand. He continues, more humbly than ever, but with a veiled threat*]

HERU. I am Heru-Netch-Tef, the servant of Potiphar, the Egyptian.

SIMEON. Were my lord Pharaoh himself, and slew us, or stole our water, my lord should surely perish.

ANI [*An Egyptian, to HERU*] Better speak the rogue softly, my lord. These tribesmen are banded together. The wilderness hath many eyes, and what is done here is known yonder, the gods only wot how. Remember, we are the guardians of a priceless charge.

HERU [*To SIMEON*] Thou—what price dost thou set on the water?

SIMEON. My lord shall drink, and let drink, for the chain that hangs about his neck.

HERU. Take it, rogue [*To the slaves*] Ho! Water the camels.

[*The slaves busy themselves carrying water in shallow vessels to the beasts. The warriors dismount; wash in vessels brought by the slaves, and stretch themselves out in the shade. All at the back of the stage*]

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

SIMEON [*Seeing a slave going towards the dry well*]
[*Hastily*] Not this, my lord! This is dried up, and
venomous serpents swarm in it.

HERU. The rogue still hath shreds of honesty.
[*Pointing to the brothers*] Who are these?

SIMEON. We are brethren, my lord: sons of one
father. This morning we were eleven; but now one is
not, and our hearts are heavy.

HERU. All men are mortal—save Pharaoh.

LEVI. Will not my lord sit in the shade?

JUDAH. My lord's wife, and her handmaidens must
be weary——

HERU. Not my wife. We are bringing the lady
Zuleika to be wife to Pharaoh's general, the Lord
Potiphar.

JUDAH. The lady Zuleika—I have heard strange
tales of her beauty—and her wisdom.

HERU. As to her beauty, it is past telling. As to her
wisdom, it is past comprehension.

JUDAH. May we not set eyes on her?

HERU [*Threateningly*] On thy life!

DAN [*Pointing to the wares set out*] Yet she would
have liked to see these.

SIMEON [*Laughing*] Brother, thou speakest almost
as if these were for sale.

HERU. Why else are they here?

SIMEON. These are the gifts we meant for our
brother, Joseph—but Joseph is dead, and we rend our
garments.

HERU [*Examining the wares*] Rich gifts. Joseph
must have been very dear to you.

SIMEON. Alas! Who shall tell how we loved him?

ANI [*To HERU*] There be things here to gladden
Zuleika, my lord; and others fit for Pharaoh's treasury.

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

HERU [*To SIMEON*] Come now, shall we not barter?
Here is gold——

SIMEON. My lord is merry. Because we are very poor my lord would tempt us——

HERU. Here, then! Double.

LEVI [*Anxiously—to SIMEON*] Simeon——!

SIMEON [*Angrily*] Let me be!—Ho, brothers!
Cover these wares from my lord's sight, lest he do us a wrong.

[*The brothers reluctantly do so*]

HERU. Here, then. Thrice the first offer.

SIMEON. It is easy to see my lord is a stranger. [*He catches sight of ZULEIKA, who has moved the curtain of her basourah a very little and is peeping out*] These spices alone—[*He takes a handful and throws it into the air*] mark how they scent the air!—This cloth of gold—see how it glitters!—Nay, one of these gems—how many lives were lost to win it!—is worth twice what my lord offers for all. And I say nought of our dear brother's memory. Cover them! Cover them quickly.

HERU [*Furious*] Now, a plague be upon you all.
Keep your trumpery!

[*He turns away*]

LEVI. Lost! Lost!

SIMEON [*Watching the basourah*] Silence!

ZULEIKA'S VOICE. Heru-Netch-Tef!

HERU [*With hands uplifted; the attitude of worship*]
Thy slave hears.

ZULEIKA'S VOICE. Buy all their wares at their own price.

[*Applause*]

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

[HERU *turns to Simeon*]

HERU. Thou—come apart with me, and let us reason.

SIMEON. Alas! my lord will get the advantage. In my lord's hands I am but an innocent babe.

HERU. The gods shield me from many such!

[*They move out of sight, bargaining*]

[*Slaves pack up the wares*]

JOSEPH'S VOICE [*From the pit in a sort of chant*]

The Lord my God; the Almighty God,

He shall lift me out of the mire.

JUDAH [*Starting*] What is that?

DAN. It is Joseph! He is alive!

ISSACHAR. If the strangers hear him—!

JOSEPH'S VOICE—

They digged a pit for me and cast me in,

But I shall arise and confound them,

For my God is the only God,

The gods of the strangers are stocks and stones:

But my God is Almighty!

[*The curtains of the basourah are violently agitated*]

ZULEIKA'S VOICE [*Angrily*] Who mocketh at my gods? Who singeth of a God that is greater than mine?

ANI [*Who has come to the dried well and is peering into it*] There is one in the well—

ZULEIKA'S VOICE. Have him forth!

ANI. He standeth among serpents—

ZULEIKA'S VOICE [*As if fascinated*] He standeth among serpents?—Have him forth quickly!

[*Under the direction of ANI two slaves bring ropes which they lower into the well. Re-enter SIMEON and HERU*]

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

SIMEON [*Dolefully*] I said I was an innocent babe—!

HERU. Say thou hast made me a free gift!

SIMEON. 'Twere all but the truth. [*He sees the slaves at the well and hurries to the brethren*] What now?

DAN [*Indicating the well*] Look! Joseph is alive!

SIMEON [*Furious*] Hath he seven lives?

GAD. Watch, Simeon!

SIMEON [*To GAD and ASHER; handing them bags of money*] Ye—bear these to Shechem! Run swiftly! Away!

[*GAD and ASHER run off R. front with bags*]

HERU [*Who has been to the well, turns to SIMEON as JOSEPH is brought to the edge*] Thou, what is this?

SIMEON. Brethren, rejoice! This is our brother, whom we mourned as dead!—O Joseph, is all truly well with thee?

JOSEPH. Away, false Simeon, that would'st have slain me!

SIMEON [*To HERU*] Harken not unto him! He is a dreamer!

HERU. Silence! [*To JOSEPH*] Thou, tell thy tale.

JOSEPH. Nay! Shall I tell tales against the sons of my father?

ZULEIKA'S VOICE. Have ye drawn him forth?

HERU. Ay, lady.

ZULEIKA'S VOICE. He mocketh at my gods. Strip him and slay him!

HERU. Well said! At least we shall have sport for our money.

JUDAH [*Angrily*] Ye cannot slay the lad!

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHERN

[*At a sign from HERU, warriors form a line holding the BROTHERS back*]

HERU [*To JUDAH*] Hold thy peace! Ho, slaves, strip him!

[*Slaves tear off the coat of many colours. JOSEPH stands as we first saw him, clad in skins*]

JOSEPH [*Calmly*] Ye cannot slay me.

HERU. Can we not? [*To a slave*] Show him the knife.

JOSEPH. God will deliver me, for He is not a lying God as yours are——

ZULEIKA'S VOICE. Slay him!—I will wash my hands in his blood.

HERU [*To slave*] Make ready.

[*The slave sharpens the knife*]

JUDAH. See how he faces them!

LEVI [*Veiling his face*] I cannot look upon this.

ZULEIKA'S VOICE. Wait!—I would see!

[*She opens the curtains of the basourah and appears in all her loveliness*]

JUDAH [*Awed; pointing to her*] Look! Look!

ZULEIKA. Now! [*The slave raises the knife to plunge it into JOSEPH'S throat. JOSEPH'S eyes are turned on ZULEIKA. She cries*] Stop!

[*HERU catches the slave's arm just in time*]

ZULEIKA [*To JOSEPH*] What is thy name?

JOSEPH. Joseph.

ZULEIKA [*Very musically, drawing out the syllables*] Joh-seph. [*To HERU*] Lo! I sought a gift to bring to my lord Potiphar, and I found nought. Here is what

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

I sought. Thou, buy this lad of his brothers, and I will give him to my lord to be his slave.

JOSEPH. I will be no man's slave!

ZULEIKA [*Very tenderly*] Hush!—Thou shalt be my lord's slave—and mine.

[*She disappears behind the curtains, which close over her*]

JUDAH [*Hotly*] The lad is restored to life. It is God's Hand. We cannot sell him.

SIMEON. What! Shall he come home to tell Jacob?

LEVI. Simeon saith well!

ALL. Sell him! Sell him!

HERU. He is not yours to sell, since ye would have slain him. [*Contemptuously*] Yet here be twenty pieces of silver—[*He tosses a bag at Simeon's feet*] lest ye die of grief!

SIMEON [*Picking up the bag*] Twenty pieces!—a poor price for a beloved brother.

HERU. Hah! [*To slaves*] Put his coat upon him.

SIMEON [*Quickly putting his foot on the coat*] Nay, nay, my lord; leave us the coat for a reminder.

HERU [*To slaves*] Let the rag lie. Lead on!

[*All make ready to start*]

[*SIMEON hurriedly takes the coat and goes out L. with it*]

JOSEPH [*To his brothers*] Ye have sold me into bondage for twenty pieces of silver, but I tell you the day is at hand when ye shall come on your knees asking mercy.

LEVI [*Furious*] The dreamer! Away with him!

JOSEPH. Ye shall come on your knees asking mercy! and I shall deliver you and set you in high places.

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

[*A roar of fury from the brothers. JOSEPH is surrounded by the Egyptians and led off. The brothers are left alone*]

[*SIMEON re-enters with the coat, now bloodstained*]

JUDAH. Now, Simeon, what tale shall we tell our father?

SIMEON. None. Reuben shall tell the tale, and he shall tell what he thinks true. [*He displays JOSEPH's coat; it is rent, and dabbled in blood*] Lo, Joseph's coat! Let it lie here for Reuben to find. Shall he know I rent it, or that the blood is the blood of the lamb Joseph brought—which I have slain?

LEVI. Are we to say nought, then?

SIMEON. We *know* nought. We never saw Joseph. Mark that well—we never saw him. Let Reuben tell his own tale.

ISSACHAR. How, then, did Joseph die?

SIMEON. Are there no lions in Dothan?

[*As they move off the scene changes*]

SCENE III
JACOB'S TENT
PERSONS

Jacob	Asher
Reuben	Issachar
Simeon	Zebulun
Levi	Benjamin
Judah	A Camel Driver
Dan	Rachel
Naphtali	Bilhah
Gad	Zilpah

A Water Bearer

Minstrels, Singers and Dancers, Slaves, etc.

SCENE 3—*The Interior of Jacob's Tent in the Valley of Shechem*

A vast vague space. At the back are curtains which can be drawn aside. In front a pile of rough cushions

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

forms a sort of throne. Boughs of palms decorate the tent. Oil lamps hang from the roof, and torches are fixed to the poles of the tent. Jars stand about, from which presently SLAVES will pour wine into shallow cups for the guests. Great heaps of fruit—melons, grapes, pomegranates—are piled here and there for the guests to help themselves to. RACHEL, BILHAH and ZILPAH are busy putting the final touches to the decorations with the help of other HANDMAIDENS.

RACHEL. Now the feast is ready.

BILHAH. My lord Jacob will be here anon.

ZILPAH. Also his sons will come back from their sheepfolds.

RACHEL. I have summoned the minstrels and dancers.

BILHAH. The sun set angrily.

ZILPAH. Ho! Bilhah always foreseeeth evil!

RACHEL. There shall be no evil to-night, but mirth and music.

[*Enter JACOB L., attended*]

JACOB. God's peace rest upon us.

THE WOMEN. And upon my lord.

JACOB. Is there news of the brothers?

RACHEL. Not yet, my lord.

JACOB. Hath not Joseph come back?

RACHEL. I have not seen him.

[*Enter NAPHTALI C., attended*]

NAPHTALI. Thy blessing, father.

JACOB. How fare thy brothers?

NAPHTALI. All is well with them.

JACOB. And Joseph?

NAPHTALI. Here is a gift I bring for him.

[*Enter JUDAH, LEVI and GAD, attended, C.*]

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

JUDAH. Father, thy blessing!

JACOB. Where is Joseph?

JUDAH. Where should he be, but safe in thy keeping?

JACOB. I sent him to see whether all was well with you.

JUDAH. All is well with us, and with the flocks.

LEVI. Simeon bringeth great treasure he won from the strangers.

JACOB. But Joseph? Where is Joseph?

GAD. We bring gifts for the lad.

[*Enter DAN, ISSACHAR and ZEBULUN, attended*]

DAN. Bless us, O father, at the day's end.

JACOB. Why came ye not with the others?

DAN. We stayed to see the flocks folded; for the heavens are overcast, and a storm cometh up from the north.

BILHAH. I saw the clouds rising, and I feared the storm.

JACOB. But why tarrieth Joseph?—And Reuben?—where is my first-born?

LEVI. Perchance they are together.

RACHEL. Ay! for I bade Joseph cling to Reuben.

JACOB. Ah! well-remembered! My heart grew heavy!

[*Enter SIMEON, alone, C.*]

SIMEON. Bless me, O Israel!

JACOB [*Rises*]. The wily Simeon! How fared the day?

SIMEON. Oh, well! Oh, marvellous well! Gad and Asher bent under the burden of riches I won for us.

JACOB. And Joseph? Where is he?

SIMEON. I was about to ask thee; for I bring a gift——

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

RACHEL [*Who has been watching him keenly*] Son of Leah, where is my child?

SIMEON. Thou gavest him into Reuben's charge; ask Reuben.

[*Meanwhile the stage has gradually filled with men and maidens, who stand shyly and awkwardly around the walls*]

LEVI. Behold, father, the maids and men grow impatient.

JACOB. Can we begin without Reuben and Joseph?

LEVI. They will be here anon.

JACOB. Begin, then; but I am troubled.

[*He takes his place on the throne. RACHEL sits by his side, on his right. BILHAH and ZILPAH stand behind him*]

[*The minstrels [harp, shawm, psaltery, flutes, drum] group themselves on JACOB'S right, near the footlights*]

ISSACHAR. Ho! I am the master of the revels! Maids and men! Israel, the Soldier of God, taketh the high-seat. Sound, shawms and timbrels! Sound, songs of rejoicing! The dance! The dance!

[*The centre of the stage is cleared. While the dance is in progress, SLAVES hand round food and drink to JACOB and his group, to the brothers, who stand together on the opposite side of the stage, and to the non-dancers. The non-dancers, not otherwise occupied, clap their hands rhythmically to the dance*]

[*First, men unwind from the crowd where they appear to have been standing in no particular*

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

*order, and dance down, forming graceful figures,
and singing as they dance]*

ISSACHAR. First come the camel drivers, with their
song.

MEN [*Singing and dancing*]

(Solo)

Wide and waste is the wilderness;
But God is great!—

(Chorus)

Ho! press on! press on!

(Solo)

The night falls; the moon ariseth;
Lo! the voices of the desert wake!

(Chorus)

Ho! press on! press on!

(Solo)

Under the palm-trees, by the well,
My love gazeth to greet me;
She hearkeneth for the bells of my camels—

(Chorus)

Ho! press on! press on!

ZEBULUN. I hear the moan of the wind—the storm
draweth near.

[*The men have danced up stage*]

ISSACHAR. Now the water bearers answer the
men.

[*Maidens, each balancing a water-jar on her head,
file out of the crowd and dance down*]

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

MAIDENS [*Singing and dancing*]-

(Solo)

I have braided my hair with threads of gold:
Red gold in my ebony tresses—
O wanderer in the wilderness,

(Chorus)

Hither to me! to me!

(Solo)

I have hung great gems about my throat:
Onyx and beryl on my brown throat—

(Chorus)

Oh! hither to me!

(Solo)

The eyes of my lover gleam through the night;
I hear the bells of his camels in haste

(Chorus)

Ah! hither! hither to me!

ZEBULUN. The moan of the wind groweth fiercer.

DAN. The palm-trees whistle in its rage.

ISSACHAR. Now the men and maidens meet in the
dance of betrothal.

[*The men and maidens face each other and as they
sing the dance illustrates the song*]

MEN. Thou art mine, beloved, I hold thee!

MAIDS. Hold me fast, lest I slip from thee!

MEN. My hands are about thy neck!

MAIDS. I bow my neck and am free!

MEN. I clasp thee about the waist!

MAIDS. I turn, and am as free as the air!

ACT II
THE TEMPTATION
GENESIS XXXIX

PERSONS

Potiphar	A Runner
Imhotep	Joseph
Serseru	Zuleika
Ranofer	Asenath
Menthu	Wakara
Heru	Mehtu
Ani	Anset
Tehuti	Arilennu
Sebni	Taherer
Atha	Nesta

Tamai

Ladies, Nobles, Officers, Slaves

ACT II

SCENE 1—*The Central Hall in Potiphar's House*

One-half of the back is the pillared entrance, beyond which there is a distant view of the Pyramids. In the other half of the back is a sliding door up three steps, leading to ZULEIKA'S room. There is a door R., and another L. In the centre is a throne-like chair without arms. The decorations of the walls, doors, pillars, etc., are all in very bright colours. There are several stands for incense. It is sunset.

Two OFFICERS of POTIPHAR'S household—SEBNI and TEHUTI—are discovered. SLAVES come and go, busy on household matters.

SEBNI [*To the slaves*] Hurry! Hurry! Our lord will be here!

TEHUTI. To judge by the time it takes, Sebni, my lord Potiphar and the lady Zuleika will be fast bound.

SEBNI. Ah, Tehuti, I would not wed so near the edge of war.

TEHUTI. Is war near?

SEBNI. They say the savages of the south grow restless.

TEHUTI. I'd wait for no savages, were Zuleika my bride.

SEBNI. Curb thy tongue, lest Joseph hear thee—

TEHUTI [*Pensively*] Ay—Joseph—! Slave, and overlord!—Some men are born fortunate—

SEBNI [*Alarmed*] Silence!—Silence!

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

TEHUTI. If my bride, being on a journey, bought so fair a slave, and set him over her household—

SEBNI. Joseph hath no eyes, save for the Lady Asenath.

TEHUTI. Ha! The high priest's daughter! The Canaanite will singe his wings.

SEBNI. Silence!—Joseph!

[*Enter JOSEPH at the back. He is clothed in the Egyptian manner. Several SLAVES accompany him*]

JOSEPH. My lord and his wife come from the temple. Is all ready here?

SEBNI. All is ready, my good lord.

JOSEPH. Friend, friend, call me by my name; for I am lord Potiphar's bondman, as thou art. [*To the slaves*] Throw incense upon the coals.

[*Sound of girls' voices singing off R.*]

TEHUTI. I hear girls' voices. [*He looks off R.*] The lady Zuleika's handmaidens draw near.

SEBNI. And with them the virgin Asenath.

JOSEPH [*With joy*] Asenath—!

TEHUTI. Joseph—hast thou also heard rumours of war?

JOSEPH [*Thinking of ASENATH*] I, friend—? [*Laughing*] Talk not of war! Hither cometh spring on tripping feet, and laughter, and peace, and love.

[*Enter ASENATH, a radiantly beautiful young girl, followed by six EGYPTIAN GIRLS, namely: MEHTU, ANSET, ARILENNU, TAHERER, NESTA and TAMAI. They are all laden with flowers. They come in laughing and chatting merrily. JOSEPH advances to meet them*]

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

JOSEPH. Joy to this house, whose threshold your feet have crossed.

ASENATH. We come to welcome the bride; we come to deck her bower with the lily and the lotus; with the red pomegranate, and with the purple passion flower.

[*The GIRLS divide. Some go to the inner chamber, L. Others hang their flowers round the pillars at the back, and over the door R. SEBNI and TEHUTI help the latter. TAMAI is one of these, and she constantly interrupts her work to gaze at JOSEPH*]

JOSEPH [*Gazing at ASENATH*] Happy the bride, with such flowers to greet her.

ASENATH [*Laughing roguishly*] Yet thou seest them not!

JOSEPH [*Eagerly*] I see the fairest.

ASENATH [*Demurely*] The Shepherd of Dothan is soft of speech.

JOSEPH [*Starting back*] The Shepherd of Dothan—! Alas! I had forgotten.

ASENATH [*Coming towards him anxiously*] What had Joseph forgotten?

JOSEPH. I had forgotten I am a bondman to Potiphar; a stranger in Egypt; a slave; a straw, blown by the wind; a leaf floating on the water. Mine eyes are the eyes of a slave, and must see nought; my tongue is a slave's tongue, and must utter no sound [*Passionately*] though here—here—a man's heart be beating.

ASENATH [*Trying to touch him with her hand—but he avoids her touch*] Poor heart! Is it beating for freedom?

JOSEPH. It is beating—[*With intense eagerness*] Asenath, Asenath, they whisper that war is at hand,

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

that Pharaoh will send Potiphar forth to strike down rebellion. I will throw myself at my lord's feet; he shall let me fight at his side; fighting I will win freedom, and then, when I come back, a free man, mine eyes shall gaze into thine; and my tongue shall tell thee why my heart beateth so wildly.

ASENATH. But in the battle thou may'st be slain.

JOSEPH. At least I shall be free!

ASENATH. And I forever bound.

JOSEPH. Asenath—! [*With agony*] Oh! I forget my bonds!

ASENATH. Rid thyself quickly of thy bonds, lest thou be too late.

JOSEPH. Too late?

ASENATH. My father is the priest of the great goddess Neith.

JOSEPH. Alas, I know not thy strange gods.

ASENATH. Thou shalt tell me of thine in happier days. My father is a stern man. There is one at court, a great officer in Pharaoh's household, who standeth next to him when he breaketh bread—

JOSEPH [*Laughing*] Of monstrous girth: I know him well—

ASENATH. He seeketh me to wife.

JOSEPH. He—! That ancient mountain—!

ASENATH. My father loveth him. [*Girls come down*] I plead I am too young; the Chief Baker pleadeth he waxeth too old. O Joseph, the day is near when I must choose—

JOSEPH. Choose—! There is choice, then?

ASENATH. Ay—'twixt wedding the old lord, or leaving the world forever, in the sisterhood of Neith.

JOSEPH [*Violently*] Neither one or the other! By the true God, I swear—!

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

ASENATH [*Frightened*] Hush!—The maidens—

JOSEPH [*Bitterly*] Ay—I had forgotten again. Ho! I am here but to stir the incense poisoning God's air!

[*He does so. The smoke goes up*]

ASENATH. Zuleika will ever have it so. I think God's air poisoneth her.

JOSEPH. Dost thou, too, feel the dread? Where she walketh I think the flowers wither. Look; these are failing already.

ASENATH [*Hushed*] They say she hath led many men to their deaths.

JOSEPH. Then that is the evil spell about her: the dead men walk at her side.

ASENATH. She is very fair.

JOSEPH. Her beauty blindeth and burneth: it is unspeakable.

ASENATH [*Hurt by his words*] Alas—!

JOSEPH. There is only one shield against it.

ASENATH. What is that?

JOSEPH. Love.

SEBNI [*At the door R.*] My lord Potiphar draweth nigh.

ASENATH. And the bride?

SEBNI. Later. The lord of the house must be here to receive her.

JOSEPH [*To ASENATH*] Come! We will meet them on the threshold.

[*He goes out with ASENATH. SEBNI and TEHUTI follow. The six girls come down in eager chatter*]

MEHTU. Asenath is gone with the Canaanite!

ANSET. I would go with him to the end of the world!

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

ARILENNU. Have ye seen Zuleika's eyes on him?

NESTA [*With a comic shudder*] Whooh! She will eat him up!

ANSET. And never leave us a bone!

TAHERER. But he keepeth his eyes on the ground.

ARILENNU. Save when Asenath is near.

ANSET. Then they flash fire.

MEHTU. I would give my youth to see them flash so for me.

ARILENNU [*To TAMAI, who has stood silent, watching the door*] Thou, what wouldst thou do?

TAMAI [*With utter devotion*] If he spake to me—if he called me—Nay! I will not say what I would do, or what I would give.

[*The girls break into gay laughter. A flourish of trumpets. Enter POTIPHAR, leaning on JOSEPH's shoulder, accompanied by MENTHU, the high priest, and by other nobles. When he has reached the centre of the room the six GIRLS hurry to the entrance, to await the bride with flowers*]

POTIPHAR. Friends all—I thank you. What happiness the gods had in store they have showered upon me; and, not least, your loves. Shield me henceforth with your love against the strokes of fate.

MENTHU. Peace dwell in the land forever, that nought may drag thee from Zuleika's arms.

POTIPHAR. Great priest of Neith, the lover giveth thee thanks, though the soldier must upbraid thee.

MEHTU [*At the door*] The bride! The bride!

[*Distant music coming nearer. All form up, to greet the BRIDE. POTIPHAR and JOSEPH are left alone*]

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

POTIPHAR [*To JOSEPH*] Thy shoulder, boy. Her beauty turneth my heart to water. I am afraid of too great joy.

JOSEPH. May the joy last forever, my lord.

POTIPHAR. Thou art too young—thou knowest not love.

JOSEPH. I knew it not till I was brought hither. But now—

POTIPHAR. What! Tell me her name—

JOSEPH. A bondman can breathe no names—

POTIPHAR [*Embracing him*] Ask what thou wilt—

JOSEPH [*Eagerly*] My lord—

POTIPHAR [*Seeing the bridal procession*] Nay!—Nay!—Away!—Zuleika!

[*Enter MINSTRELS, playing upon their instruments, then LADIES, and, lastly, preceded by the six GIRLS, who strew flowers before her, ZULEIKA, with ASENATH by her side, and with WAKARA following her. ZULEIKA is in a magnificent bridal dress. She comes forward towards POTIPHAR, but her eyes are fixed on JOSEPH, who is standing behind his master*]

POTIPHAR [*To the minstrels*] Cease your minstrelsy!

ZULEIKA. My lord—

[*She bows low*]

POTIPHAR [*To all present*] I bid you all a kind farewell.

MENTHU [*Leading forward ASENATH*] Farewell, great warrior.

JOSEPH [*Motioning to the SLAVES and MAIDENS to go. To POTIPHAR*] Farewell, my lord.

POTIPHAR. Ah! I am grown selfish in my joy. [*To ALL*] Stay, friends.

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

[ALL, *on the point of going, turn*]

MENTHU. What more, my lord?

POTIPHAR. When this marvel came hither, she brought me many gifts; but none more welcome than this lad, whom she had saved from death. And now, in the hour of love's triumph, Joseph hath told me he, too, is in love's thrall, but dare not speak, being a slave. What better gift can I give thee, Zuleika, than Joseph's freedom?

[ASENATH *gives a little cry of joy*]

ZULEIKA [*Hardly able to restrain a cry of rage*] My lord—!

JOSEPH [*Throwing himself at POTIPHAR'S feet*] O my good lord—

POTIPHAR. I will load thee with gifts, and thou shalt go back to thine own land.

ZULEIKA [*Hastily*] If Joseph love, perchance the woman he loveth is here, and, in sending him hence, thou art sending him from her.

POTIPHAR. Why, she shall go with him!

ZULEIKA. Perchance she is one who cannot go.

POTIPHAR. How might that be?—Speak, Joseph, who is she?

[JOSEPH and ASENATH *exchange glances*]

JOSEPH. Under favour, I cannot speak before all these.

ZULEIKA [*Amiable, but with suppressed fury*] Is it one of my maids?

JOSEPH. No, lady.

THE SIX MAIDS [*In the background, involuntarily*] Alas, no!

POTIPHAR [*Laughing*] Keep thy secret until we are

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

alone. If she be as Zuleika saith, I will importune Pharaoh himself, and no bar shall hinder thee. [*Leading his guests off*] Farewell! Farewell!—

[*ALL exeunt except ZULEIKA and WAKARA*]

ZULEIKA [*Darkly; looking after JOSEPH*] Snatched from me? So? [*To WAKARA*] Wakara—! Hither!— Knowest thou whom he loveth?

WAKARA. Who, lady?

ZULEIKA [*Impatiently*] The slave . . . Joseph.

WAKARA. Whom else can a man love when Zuleika is nigh?

ZULEIKA [*An exclamation of triumph*] Hah!—[*She sees POTIPHAR turning to come to her*] Peace—peace—fool!

POTIPHAR [*Eagerly*] Zuleika!—[*He sees WAKARA*] Still attended!

ZULEIKA. My tiring-woman.

POTIPHAR [*To WAKARA*] Perform thine office quickly.

ZULEIKA [*Raising her hands to her head*] This heavy coronet—

[*WAKARA lifts it off. ZULEIKA's hair streams loose*]

POTIPHAR [*Amazed*] Ha! Thy hair floweth out as the night floweth over the desert.

ZULEIKA. The cloak—it crusheth me.

[*WAKARA removes the cloak. ZULEIKA stands in a straight robe of gold*]

POTIPHAR. Bid the woman begone!

ZULEIKA. No such haste, my lord. [*She sits on the throne-like chair*] Now these jewelled sandals.

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

[WAKARA *removes the sandals. ZULEIKA's toes are covered with gems, and on her ankles are flashing anklets.*

POTIPHAR [To WAKARA] Begone, or perish!

ZULEIKA [With a low laugh] Go, Wakara.

[WAKARA *kisses ZULEIKA's feet, and slips out, R. ZULEIKA lies back on the couch and watches POTIPHAR, who stands gazing at her with rapture.*

ZULEIKA [With a touch of mockery] Well—? She is gone my lord.

POTIPHAR. Forty years have I faced strange deaths, yet never till now knew I fear.

ZULEIKA. Of what is my lord afeared?

POTIPHAR. Of thy beauty.

ZULEIKA. Gaze on my beauty, till fear be fled.

POTIPHAR. The longer I gaze, the more will fear grow. [He advances a step] This mine? All mine? Dare I come nearer? Dare I touch thee?

ZULEIKA. Come nearer. Give me thy hand.

POTIPHAR [Sinking on his knees and seizing her hand] Thine is like a burning coal.

ZULEIKA. It is hot with shame.

POTIPHAR. Shame!

ZULEIKA. My lord hath scorned my gift.

POTIPHAR. What gift have I scorned?

ZULEIKA [Watching him keenly] I gave my lord a slave. My lord hasteneth to be rid of him.

POTIPHAR. Joseph—? Ah! why speak of him now?

ZULEIKA. Why, truly? What is one slave more or less, even though I gave him?

POTIPHAR. I thought to please thee!

ZULEIKA. By scorning my gift? So thou wilt soon scorn all I give thee.

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

POTIPHAR. Zuleika!

ZULEIKA. If I give thee my love, to-morrow thou wilt scorn it!

POTIPHAR. Woman! Thou drivest fear out of my heart, and fillest it with madness!

[*He tries to embrace her*]

ZULEIKA. Withdraw thy word from the slave!

POTIPHAR. That I cannot.

ZULEIKA [*In tears*] Scorned!—I am scorned!

POTIPHAR [*Seizing her*] Scorned—! Thou art loved! Thou art mine—! Zuleika! Zuleika!

[*A trumpet call very near*]

POTIPHAR. What now? [*Heavy knocking at door, R.*] Ha!

[*Enter WAKARA with a torch*]

WAKARA. The Hebrew slave—

POTIPHAR [*Furious*] Joseph!—

[*He strides towards the door*]

ZULEIKA [*To herself*] Joseph—! [*With a low laugh*] He loveth me!

[*Enter JOSEPH in haste*]

JOSEPH. My lord! My lord!

POTIPHAR. Accursed slave! What is't?

JOSEPH. Alas, not my errand, my lord—

POTIPHAR. Who dares, then—?

JOSEPH [*With a salute*] Pharaoh.

POTIPHAR [*Startled*] Pharaoh—?

JOSEPH. Imhotep, the Lord Chief Butler, beareth a letter from Pharaoh—

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

POTIPHAR. Typho seize him!—Arouse the household. Have him hither with all homage.

[*Exit JOSEPH. WAKARA kindles hanging lamps*]

POTIPHAR [*To ZULEIKA, indicating the door at the back*] A plague on the marplot! Yet it were well if thou—

ZULEIKA. Oh, let me bide; I, too, would hear the news.

POTIPHAR. 'Tis nought. [*Anxiously*] The gods grant it be nought.

[*Meanwhile the hall has filled with POTIPHAR'S household. A trumpet sounds. Enter soldiers as guard of honour. JOSEPH appears at the door*]

JOSEPH. The Lord Imhotep, Lord Chief Butler of Pharaoh, the King of Kings!

[*Enter IMHOTEP: a magnificent apparition. Behind him follow several richly clad NOBLES and OFFICERS. All present bow their heads and raise their arms in obeisance. POTIPHAR advances in the same attitude*]

POTIPHAR. The presence of my lord sheddeth radiance through my halls.

IMHOTEP. Friend, I come not of mine own will—

POTIPHAR. Let thy servant hear—

[*IMHOTEP unwinds a piece of rich silk he is carrying, and out of it produces an earthenware case containing an inscribed clay tablet*]

IMHOTEP [*With great solemnity*] This from User-tesen, the Pharaoh, the King of the North and the South, the King of Kings.



ZULEIKA

From a Drawing by Dorothy Parker

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

[*All present salute the letter with great reverence. POTIPHAR receives it on his knees, in both hands, and devoutly kisses it.*

IMHOTEP. Read it.

POTIPHAR. I am a soldier and no scholar. Let Joseph read.

[*He hands the case to JOSEPH, who receives it with an obeisance. JOSEPH takes the tablet out of the case, and, holding it flat on the palms of both hands, reads:*

JOSEPH. To my trusted servant, the captain of my hosts, Potiphar, my majesty sendeth greeting. Certain rebellious tribes have arisen in the south, doing grievous hurt to the children of the sun. My majesty hath been very patient, but thereby the rebels have waxed proud, deeming us afraid. Now they are within two days' march. Wherefore my majesty biddeth thee take men and horses to-night and fall upon them swiftly and wipe them utterly from the face of the earth.

[*ZULEIKA'S face expresses delight. Commotion among the bystanders*]

POTIPHAR. The King's word shall be obeyed.

IMHOTEP [*Gravely*] Friend, I will see thee on thy way.

POTIPHAR. That shall be to my honour: to-morrow at dawn.

IMHOTEP. The King's word saith to-night.

POTIPHAR. To-night—!

ZULEIKA [*Quietly*] Thus thy slave read.

JOSEPH [*Looking at the tablet*] It is to-night.

POTIPHAR [*Beside himself*] Hath not the King heard—? Doth he not know—?

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

IMHOTEP [*With grave surprise and reproof*] Friend—the King's word is waiting—

POTIPHAR [*Helpless*] Ay—ay—I come. [*With an outburst of fury*] And when I come upon the rebels, the very gods of cruelty shall pity them!

[*Furiously he snatches at the weapons and armour his slaves hurriedly bring him. ZULEIKA watches him, demurely amused*]

JOSEPH. My lord, let me fight at thy side.

[*ZULEIKA is startled and anxious*]

POTIPHAR [*With a touch of contempt*] Thou, shepherd of Dothan? Nay, there shall be deeds no shepherd may look upon.

JOSEPH [*Hotly*] I fought with my brothers against Shechem!

POTIPHAR. I have other work for thee!—

JOSEPH [*With increasing heat*] My lord promised—

POTIPHAR. I promised thee freedom—[*Gently*] but now, Joseph, I crave a boon.

JOSEPH [*Abashed*] My lord—! Do with me as thou wilt.

POTIPHAR. Fighters I have as the sands of the desert, but no friend I love as I love thee. Ah! thou shalt lose nought by granting my request. Lo! I make thee lord of my household while I am at the war, and whatever is mine I put in thy charge. Maidens and men, ye hear?

HERU. We hear and obey.

POTIPHAR [*With his hand on Joseph's shoulder*] But, chiefest, I commit to thy keeping the lady Zuleika. Joseph—Joseph—watch over her as though thou wert myself.

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

JOSEPH [*Innocently*] As thou leavest her, my lord, so shalt thou find her.

POTIPHAR. As I leave her—! Zuleika, I dare scarce look on thee again, lest I forget Pharaoh's word.

ZULEIKA [*Putting her arm around his neck*] Forget his word, my lord.

POTIPHAR [*With a sort of suppressed roar*] Woman! Woman! [*Passionate embrace. He shakes himself loose. To IMHOTEP*] Lead on!

[*Trumpets sound. ALL go out R. POTIPHAR marches out with set face, without looking round. ZULEIKA stands rigid where POTIPHAR left her. JOSEPH waits at the door until all are gone; then closes it. WAKARA comes soothingly to ZULEIKA*]

WAKARA. Be comforted, sweet lady.

ZULEIKA [*With a note of mockery*] Comforted—! [*She breaks into a low, mocking laugh. Then, very tenderly*] Joseph—

JOSEPH [*Leaving the door*] Ay, lady?

ZULEIKA. Did Pharaoh truly write "to-night"?

JOSEPH [*Amused*] Of a surety!

ZULEIKA. Of a surety thou art very cunning.

JOSEPH. Lady, good-night.

ZULEIKA. Nay, come hither, and tell me of the old man, thy father, and of thy mother.

JOSEPH. I must keep watch and ward. Sleep soundly. I wake!

[*He goes through the curtains into the garden.*

ZULEIKA [*watches him off*]

ZULEIKA [*To WAKARA*] Open the curtains, girl. [*WAKARA does so. In the distance the tops of the Pyramids are touched with gold*] Ahah—! The blessed dawn!

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

WAKARA. So soon, after so weary a night—!

ZULEIKA. Fool! I am so much nearer the night to come!

WAKARA. Let me make fast the curtains. Sleep, lady, sleep.

ZULEIKA. Let the curtains be! I will not sleep while he waketh.

WAKARA. While he waketh—? The lord Potiphar—? The lord and lover?

ZULEIKA [*Watching JOSEPH, who is seen passing in the distance*] Ay—my lover and my lord!

[WAKARA *slips out, L.; leaving ZULEIKA watching*]

THE SCENE CHANGES

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

SEBNI. They are, my lord.

JOSEPH. Here I myself will keep watch.

[*He dismisses SEBNI with a gesture*]

SEBNI [*Mysteriously*] My lord,—I take my life in my hands to speak—

JOSEPH. Well?

SEBNI [*Nearer*] Let me whisper, my lord:—The lord Serseru—

JOSEPH. The Lord Chief Baker—? What of him?

SEBNI. He and another.

JOSEPH. What other?

SEBNI. Ranofer—the treasurer—

JOSEPH. What of them?

SEBNI. They are ever in close talk—my fellows have heard—and their talk means death—

JOSEPH. To me?

SEBNI. I dare scarce breathe the name:—to Usertesen, the Pharaoh.

JOSEPH [*Concealing his horror*] Thy fellows bring thee broken words—and thou weavest a tale—!

SEBNI. Let not my lord's wrath be kindled—!

JOSEPH. Get thee to thy watch.

[*As SEBNI is going, he meets a RUNNER*]

SEBNI [*To JOSEPH*] Lo!—a messenger.

JOSEPH. Whence art thou?

RUNNER [*Saluting*] From the lord Potiphar.

JOSEPH [*Eagerly*] Quickly, thy news!

RUNNER [*Producing the clay letter*] My first errand was to Pharaoh. This for thee.

JOSEPH. Ho! a torch!— [*He reads: "Potiphar, the servant of Pharaoh, by the hand of Neb, the scribe, to Joseph, the son of Jacob, greeting. The rebels are*

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

scattered; their treasure taken; their strongholds razed. I hasten homeward on the wings of love. If the runner reach thee at sundown give him gold and bid Zuleika rejoice, for I shall be with her at dawn." [To the RUNNER] Here is gold from Potiphar—and here from me: for this is the best news that ever man gat. Haste to the lady Zuleika! [Exit RUNNER; to SEBNI] To thy watch! [To the SLAVES] Make ready!

[All but JOSEPH exeunt]

JOSEPH [In deep thought] A plot against Pharaoh's life—! Oh, it is well my lord is coming!

ASENATH'S VOICE [Without, singing]—

In the scented garden I sought my love

When I was alone with the night:

The moon's face mocked me,

The stars twinkled with laughter;

But I heeded them not.

Moon, I cried, thou seekest after the sun,

Stars, ye seek after the moon,

And I seek after my love.

[She has appeared among the flowering shrubs]

JOSEPH. Asenath! .

ASENATH. Thou heard'st my song!

JOSEPH. The moon never reacheth the sun—

ASENATH. That is why her face is sometimes so dark.

JOSEPH. The stars never reach the moon—

ASENATH. And sometimes they drop out of heaven for grief.

JOSEPH. But Asenath hath found her love.

ASENATH. They say thy lord cometh to-morrow, and thou wilt be free, and I shall lose thee again.

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

JOSEPH. Never again, if I be thy love.

ASENATH. How might that be?

JOSEPH [*Playfully*] That I cannot tell thee, till I know whether I be thy love or no.

ASENATH [*Imitating him*] That I cannot tell thee, till I know whether I be thy love or no.

JOSEPH [*Drawing her to him*] Lie on my heart, and feel it beat against thine.

ASENATH [*Folding her arms about his neck*] Thou art my love and my life. [JOSEPH *draws her gently to the bower*]

JOSEPH. Radiant and white art thou, as the snows on Mount Carmel.

ASENATH. Radiant and strong art thou, as the sun-god.

JOSEPH. I am lost in thee; I am dazed by thy beauty; I am stricken with awe by thy youth and innocence. [*Very gently; taking her hands*] Beloved
—to-morrow—

ASENATH [*Surprised*] Thou holdest me afar off.

JOSEPH. Let me speak of serious things.

ASENATH. Is not love a serious thing?

JOSEPH. It is of love I speak.

ASENATH. I cannot hear thee so far away.

JOSEPH. I cannot speak when thou art nearer.

ASENATH. Oh, speak quickly, then.

JOSEPH. To-morrow at dawn my lord returneth, and I shall be free. My first errand will be to thy father.

ASENATH [*Chilled*] My father—! [*She moves away*]

JOSEPH. Nay, Asenath, not so far!

ASENATH. Thou hast brought broad day into our sheltering night.

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

JOSEPH. Nay, if thy father deny me, Potiphar will go up to Pharaoh himself, and Pharaoh shall do me justice.

ASENATH. Dreamer, dreamer, thou art in a vain dream. My father will have me wed Serseru, or for ever wait in living death on the goddess whose name I bear—

JOSEPH. Whose name thou bearest—?

ASENATH. What is Asenath, being interpreted, but one devoted to Neith?

JOSEPH. We will give Neith her fill of bullocks and goats, but, by the living God, not Asenath!

ASENATH. Hush, blasphemer! Even Pharaoh cannot help us against the gods. The priests would rise up and slay him.

JOSEPH. Asenath, art thou brave?

ASENATH. I know not.

JOSEPH. Wilt thou put thy hand in mine, and take flight with me?

ASENATH. Hark!

JOSEPH. Footsteps!

ASENATH [*Seeing the newcomer*] We are lost!

JOSEPH. Hither! Hither! [*He draws her into the bower and pulls some of the vine down over its entrance*]

[*Enter RANOFER and SERSERU. SERSERU is an enormously fat old man*]

RANOFER. I tell thee, Menthu is determined. Asenath shall be thy wife.

ASENATH. That is Ranofer, the lord treasurer.

JOSEPH [*To ASENATH*] He speaketh too hastily.

SERSERU. I saw no hindrance till now. She cast her eyes down when I spake, but at least there was no loathing in them. Now—

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

RANOFER. What knoweth the child of love or loathing?

ASENATH [*With her arms around JOSEPH, her face against his*] What knoweth she not?

RANOFER. This she knoweth: 'tis either wed thee, or leave the world and serve Neith.

JOSEPH [*Kissing ASENATH*] There is a third way.

[*Enter WAKARA at the back, looking for JOSEPH*]

SERSERU. The fear of losing her weareth me to a shadow—

JOSEPH. Say an eclipse.

RANOFER. Plague thyself no more.—Now, as concerning Pharaoh—

SERSERU [*Frightened*] Lower! Lower!

RANOFER. Who should be stirring so late?

SERSERU. The Hebrew—Joseph—is on guard.

RANOFER [*Producing a small box*] Here is what I promised thee.

SERSERU. I dare not. Imhotep, the Chief Butler, hath eyes like a hawk.

RANOFER. Listen. When Pharaoh drinketh, they pour wine first into Imhotep's cup for him to taste. While he is drinking, slip this into the vessel they have poured from. As it toucheth the wine it is melted, and Pharaoh's cup will be filled with death.

ASENATH [*Hiding her face on JOSEPH's shoulder*] Horrible!

SERSERU. How can I do that, unseen?

RANOFER. Stumble against the wine-bearer. Let thy long sleeve pass over the vessel.

RANOFER. Come away.

SERSERU [*As they move off*] When shall I do this thing?

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

RANOFER. To-morrow night, when Pharaoh is feasting Potiphar. Come.

[*Exeunt*]

ASENATH. A plot against Pharaoh! It is too horrible!

JOSEPH. Nay—the horrible thing shall not be done. We will outwit them.

ASENATH [*Passionately*] Swear I shall never be the murderer's wife!

JOSEPH. That will I readily swear! Get thee within! Gather courage for to-morrow.

ASENATH [*Mastering herself*] To-morrow—*Lover*, shall we ever meet again?

JOSEPH. Ay, shall we! I kiss sleep into thine eyes, and a smile into thy lips, and courage into thy heart. [*He sees WAKARA*] Away!

[*ASENATH slips out among the trees, but not before WAKARA has caught sight of her*]

WAKARA. Joseph—Joseph!

JOSEPH. Who calleth?

WAKARA. 'Tis I—Wakara.

JOSEPH. What is thine errand?

WAKARA. The lady Zuleika hath news of my lord's return.

JOSEPH. I sent her the news.

WAKARA. She biddeth thee come to her, to tell her more.

JOSEPH. There is no more to tell.

WAKARA. She *commandeth* thee to come.

JOSEPH. Tell thy mistress I am on guard. I may not come.

WAKARA. Thy mistress *commandeth* thee, her *slave*.

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

JOSEPH. Not hers, but her husband's. I *will* not come.

WAKARA. I cannot carry so rough an answer.

JOSEPH. Speak it gently: I have no other.

WAKARA. I will tell her. [*Going, turns*] And shall I tell thee my thought?

JOSEPH. If 'twill ease thy mind.

WAKARA. I think thou art a fool!

[*Exit*]

THE SCENE CHANGES.

SCENE III

ZULEIKA'S ROOM

PERSONS

Joseph	Mehtu
Zuleika	Anset
Wakara	Arilennu
Tamai	Taherer

Nesta

SCENE 3.—*Zuleika's Room.*

Doors R. and L. At the back an opening through which only the deep sky and the wonderful stars are seen. The walls are painted with strange semi-human figures in the Assyrian manner, only vaguely discernible. In the centre, outlined against the opening, there is a mysterious gigantic figure of a goddess. Under it stands a tripod, from which the smoke of incense rises and hangs in purple clouds about the painted ceiling. There is a low couch covered with rich tapestries. Lilies, lotus-flowers, and other heavily scented flowers stand in costly jars. Several low tables on which are curious implements of magic. The room is filled with dim light

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

from many-coloured and shaded lamps hanging from the ceiling. Heavy tapestries conceal the doors. The whole scene conveys the impression that it is seen through a thin mist, like a scene in a dream.

[ZULEIKA, robed in a rich surcoat of cloth of gold covered with embroidered emblems of magic, her loose hair crowned with a diadem of dark-green stones, is seated in a great throne-like chair, her hands resting on its arms. In front of her, on a tripod made of three bronze serpents intertwined, is a great globe of crystal in which weird changing lights and colours dimly come and go as she speaks. Into this she stares fixedly, with wide eyes. Her lips move silently for a while, but at last her words become distinguishable.]

ZULEIKA [*Without moving; speaking as if unconsciously*] Is love casting a veil over my soul's sight? What mist is this betwixt me and my beloved? I see him, but he is shrouded from me. Who was with him? There was one with him who set his soul in a storm, so that I saw his image blurred, as in troubled waters. Or is it the storm in my soul that sets the crystal a-quiver? Ay! I am taken in mine own springes! I have laughed at love, and watched, laughing, the death of lovers, and now a vulture is tearing at my heart. [*She sinks back in the chair*] To-morrow the rough warrior returneth, flushed with victory. Joseph is free, and I am a slave. To-night, then, or never! [*She leans forward again to gaze into the crystal*] Why doth Wakara tarry? Will he not come? Is he coming? Clouds and night! A curse upon the useless toy! [*She rises*] At least, when he cometh, his heart shall flame as mine flameth now! [*From a small cabinet she takes various ingredients. She crosses to the tripod under the goddess. From a hook on it she takes a small golden vessel which she*

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

places on the burning incense. From another vessel, also hanging on the tripod, she takes incense which she throws into the burner. The smoke rises thicker and green flames shoot through it. Then she stands with extended arms before the goddess] Astarte, protectress of hapless women who ache with unfulfilled love, hear me, be near me, guide my hand as I brew the draught— [*She throws the ingredients into the vessel; it hisses and sends up steam*] thus!—and thus! and thus! [*She spreads her hands, palm downwards, over the vessel*] Sear his eyes with my beauty—make his heart like potter's clay in my hands—set an unquenchable thirst upon his lips— [*With her thumbs touching, and palms outwards, she raises her hands towards the goddess*] Great Goddess of Love!—Goddess of the thousand names!—I call thee!—I summon thee! Fill the cup with thy poison. [*The brew in the vessel boils over with hissings and splutterings, while flames dance about it; she lifts the vessel off the tripod*] Ha! [*She pours the brew into a golden beaker standing on one of the little tables*] Drink *this* with me, lover, and let come what will! [*Fiercely to WAKARA, who enters L.*] Well?

WAKARA [*Throwing herself at ZULEIKA's feet*] Dread Mistress——

ZULEIKA [*Eagerly*] He is close at thy heels—?

WAKARA. Hear me, lady!

ZULEIKA. He is coming anon, when the night is deeper—!

WAKARA. He is not coming!

ZULEIKA. What! [*After a momentary pause she seizes WAKARA by the throat in a paroxysm of fury*] Thou liest! Thou liest! Thou hast not borne my message! Wretched slave, thou hast not seen him! [*Throws her off*] Well! Speak! Speak!

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

WAKARA. I bare the message faithfully; but he answered he must guard the house, and could not come.

ZULEIKA [*Darkly*] He must guard the house—!
[*With a wild laugh*] And the night flieth! O gods, how swiftly it flieth!— He must come! He must come!—Go again—

WAKARA. Alas! What more can I say?

ZULEIKA [*Haughtily*] Say I command my slave!

WAKARA. I said so, and he answered he was not thy slave, but Potiphar's.

ZULEIKA. He dared—! My lord shall hear of this! —Ha! ha! ha! What am I saying—? [*Suddenly, with ferocity*] Was he alone?

WAKARA. When I spake with him, ay—but—

ZULEIKA [*Eagerly*] But—?

WAKARA. I had seen the trail of a woman's robe—

ZULEIKA. Was it one of my women?

WAKARA. I know not.

ZULEIKA. Summon them all. Suddenly! Suddenly!

[WAKARA *hurries to the door R. and cries*]

WAKARA. Wake! Wake! Zuleika calls!

ZULEIKA. What else didst thou see?

WAKARA. I saw Ranofer and Serseru slip out of the garden.

ZULEIKA. Were they with Joseph?

WAKARA. No. They saw him not. They were deep in their plot. Where he stood he must have heard every word.

ZULEIKA. The plot against Pharaoh? Ha! Now I hold him!

[*Enter the six MAIDENS huddling through the doorway. They are half awake and frightened to death*]

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

MEHTU. Wakara! What is it?

ANSET. I am half clad!

ARILENNU. I am half-awake!

TAHERER. I am afeared!

NESTA. What ails thee?

TAMAI. Why are we summoned?

} [Together]

ZULEIKA [*Dazed*] You!—Did I summon you?—Ay! Wait! [*To WAKARA*] Thou, seek him again. Say I command him hither by his troth to Potiphar. Say I know of the plot against Pharaoh. [*Struck by a new idea*] Say Potiphar's life is in danger! Say that! Say that! Begone!

[*Exit WAKARA, R.*]

ZULEIKA [*To the maids*] The mirror!

[NESTA *takes the mirror from a table*]

MEHTU. The mirror, so late!

ZULEIKA. Is the night so old?

ARILENNU. 'Tis but an hour ere the dawn.

ZULEIKA. Sayest thou so? Swiftly, then!

[NESTA *gives her the mirror*]

TAHERER. But wherefore? Wherefore?

ZULEIKA. Is not my lord coming at sunrise?

ANSET. Oh! That is glad news!

ZULEIKA [*To TAMAI, whose left hand is bandaged*]
Loosen my hair. Why, what is thy wound?

[*All the girls laugh*]

TAMAI [*Trying to hide her hand*] 'Tis nought. This morning I was cutting a melon, and the knife slipped.

[*All laugh again*]

ZULEIKA. Why do you laugh at her hurt?

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

NESTA. She hath only told half the tale.

MEHTU. She never knew she had cut herself till we showed her the wound.

TAMAI [*In distress*] Forbear! Forbear!

[*All laugh*]

ZULEIKA. Come! What is the jest?

ANSET. She was wholly lost in gazing——

TAMAI. Mercy! Mercy!

ZULEIKA [*Angrily*] Gazing on whom? Must I grow angered?

TAHERER. On my Lord Joseph.

ZULEIKA [*Seizing TAMAI's wounded hand, with rage*] Thou!

TAMAI [*In agony*] My hand! My hand!

ZULEIKA [*Still holding her; fiercely*] Thou wast with him anon in the garden!

TAMAI [*With sincere sorrow*] I, lady—? Alas, no!

ZULEIKA [*With a bitter laugh*] That ringeth true. [*To the others*] Which of you was it, then?

[*The girls answer with comic pathos*]

NESTA. Not I.

TAHERER. Nor I.

ARILENNU. Was he there?

ANSET. Had I known he was there——

MEHTU. I should have forestalled thee!

[*WAKARA enters R.*]

ZULEIKA [*Eagerly*] Wakara!

WAKARA. He is here.

ZULEIKA. Ah—! Bid him wait!

[*Exit L. Enter JOSEPH, R. The girls are keenly interested*]

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

WAKARA [*To JOSEPH*] Thou art to wait.

[*She shuts the door behind him and stands in front of it*]

MEHTU [*Coming up to him caressingly*] Thou—here!

JOSEPH [*Courteously*] Where is the lady Zuleika?

ANSET [*Close to him*] What matter Zuleika?—My name is Anset.

ARILENNU [*Pushing her aside*] Little he heedeth thy name! [*She puts her head close to his*] Thou shalt not kiss my hair.

JOSEPH [*Simply*] God forbid!

[*ARILENNU turns away, pouting*]

TAHERER. Oh! oh! . . . Some evil thing hath flown into mine eye!— [*Putting her face up to his*] I prithee, gentle shepherd, pluck it out!

NESTA [*To her*] Here is the mirror. Pluck it out, thyself. [*To JOSEPH*] Heigho! I am glad I am not thy sister!

JOSEPH [*Simply*] So am I. [*To TAMAI, who has stood apart, in mute adoration*] Art thou hurt?

TAMAI [*Gasping with happiness at being spoken to*] Oh—! It is nothing—my lord!

JOSEPH. Give me thy hand. Let me see.

TAMAI [*In an agony of shyness*] Nay, it is nothing.

MEHTU. The cunning wretch!

[*All the girls are furious*]

JOSEPH [*Holding TAMAI's hand*] How came this cut?

TAHERER. Shall we tell him?

TAMAI [*Covering her face with her hands, in a paroxysm of sobs*] Cruel! Cruel!

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

[*The girls surround JOSEPH, as if to tell him.
Enter ZULEIKA, R.*]

ZULEIKA [*In the doorway*] Begone!

ALL THE GIRLS [*Starting away*] Alas!

[*At a signal from WAKARA they go out R. WAKARA follows them*]

TAMAI [*Kissing the hand JOSEPH touched*] He spake to me! He touched my hand! [*Exit*]

[*A pause. JOSEPH and ZULEIKA face each other. ZULEIKA has taken off her crown. Her hair falls almost to her feet. She has thrown off her surcoat and stands in a long, transparent gown of silver tissue. Around her waist is a golden belt heavily studded with great gems*]

ZULEIKA [*In a low, musical murmur*] What seekest thou, son of Jacob?

JOSEPH. Nay, lady; I come at thy bidding.

ZULEIKA. Three moons my lord hath been at the wars, and thou hast avoided my presence. Is that the deed of a dutiful servant?

JOSEPH. I hold it so.

ZULEIKA. I hold it not so. Why hast thou avoided me?

JOSEPH. My lord made me overseer of his house: I rest neither by day nor by night.

ZULEIKA [*Scornfully*] I know thy zeal for thy lord. I ask why thou scornest *me*?

JOSEPH. I hold my lord's wife in highest honour. Tell me now what thou hadst me hither to tell me.

ZULEIKA. Had I ought to tell thee?

JOSEPH. Why else was I summoned?

ZULEIKA. I know not. 'Twas nought.

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

JOSEPH. Ay——of the plot against Pharaoh.

ZULEIKA [*Contemptuously*] Oh, that!—What is their Pharaoh to us?

JOSEPH. He is a man: therefore his life must be saved.

ZULEIKA. Is a man's life so much worth?

JOSEPH. And Wakara said my lord Potiphar was in danger.

ZULEIKA. Wakara was dreaming.

JOSEPH. Is that not true? Then I take my leave.

ZULEIKA. Wait. There was another matter. But I cannot remember.

JOSEPH. My lord's return?

ZULEIKA [*Indifferently*] Ay, perchance.

JOSEPH. All is ready.

ZULEIKA. Ay—thou hast toiled by day and night. Take this ring for reward.

JOSEPH [*Refusing it*] I need no reward.

ZULEIKA. So proud and scornful—yet a slave?

JOSEPH. A slave only till to-morrow; and my lord hath made the slavery light.

ZULEIKA. Oh, but I have pitied thee! For I am in the same case.

JOSEPH. Thou!—— A great lord's wife!

ZULEIKA. I am alone in a strange land; as thou art.

JOSEPH. My lord will be here at dawn.

ZULEIKA. I shall still be alone.

JOSEPH. What love can bring, he bringeth.

ZULEIKA. Ay—he! [*With intention*] But I?

JOSEPH. Why did'st thou come, if thou lovest him not?

ZULEIKA. Did I come of mine own will? Was I not sold hither by my kin—as thou wert? I tell thee, thou and I should cling together!

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

JOSEPH. Lord Potiphar is kind.

ZULEIKA. Kind—kind—! But is that love? Is that freedom?

JOSEPH. He hath promised me freedom to-morrow.

ZULEIKA. And so I lose the only friend—

JOSEPH. I should have remembered, and left that unsaid.

ZULEIKA [*Very tenderly*] Thou goest hence to thy father and thy mother; to Reuben whom thou lovest—to all the dear, familiar things of thy childhood. But I abide here; a loveless wife, rent from her gods and her kin; doomed to dwell among strange faces forever.

JOSEPH [*Earnestly*] I pity thee.

ZULEIKA. Ah! The word is music in mine ear! Come nearer—nearer—give me thy hand—sit beside me—say thou pitiest me again. Forget thy bondage. We are alone. The house is hushed. Say, Zuleika, I pity thee.

JOSEPH [*Moved*] From my heart I pity thee.

ZULEIKA. Nay, but speak as I bade thee.

JOSEPH. I pity thee, Zuleika.

ZULEIKA. Ah! My name on thy lips! When did I last hear such music?

JOSEPH. Now let me go. The lilies and incense stifle me.

ZULEIKA [*Takes the cup containing the philtre, and bends over him*] A cooling draught—drink to thy freedom and mine.

JOSEPH [*Putting it gently aside*] It is not fitting the slave should drink with his mistress.

ZULEIKA. Drink! Drink!

JOSEPH [*Gazing at her half in fear*] Thy body bent over me—! Where before have I seen such sinuous grace?

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

ZULEIKA. Touch the cup with thy lips——

JOSEPH. Away! My senses reel already!

[*The vessel is upset*]

ZULEIKA [*With involuntary violence*] Hapless wretch!
What hast thou done?

JOSEPH. Forgive me. Farewell.

ZULEIKA. Nay, I am not angered. Nay, thou shalt not go. Art thou not in some sort mine? I saved thee from horrible death.

JOSEPH. I have not forgotten.

ZULEIKA. I fear I saved thee to my sorrow, for thou art glad of thy freedom. Why art thou so glad?

JOSEPH. Is not every man glad of that?

ZULEIKA. But thine eyes blaze at the word!
[*Fiercely*] Is there a maid who waiteth for thee in Shechem? [*She clasps her hands about his throat*] Lo! I would lock my fingers about her throat as I lock them about thine, and press the life out of her!

JOSEPH. The clinging touch about my throat! Where have I felt it before?

ZULEIKA. The maid! The maid! Tell me her name, that I may send out a spell and wither her!

JOSEPH. There is no such maid in Shechem.

ZULEIKA. Why should I heed her? Why should I be glad there is none? Alas, can'st thou not guess why?—Nay, answer not, lest thou put me to shame!—Yet, if no maid await thee, thou knowest not love, and thou can'st not guess half my sorrow in bondage.

JOSEPH. Wert thou torn from one thou lovest?

ZULEIKA. Nay—but one I love is torn from me.

JOSEPH. That is a riddle——

ZULEIKA [*She is now in his arms on the couch*]
Can'st thou not read the riddle, foolish boy? Oh, see

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

how his cheek burns with anger, when I call him foolish! What? Is my hair hot on thy face? Sweep it back! Nay, boldly! Ho! Its weight bendeth my head.

[She twines her arms about his neck and lays her head on his breast]

JOSEPH. It gleams and glitters—where else have I seen that glittering gleam?

ZULEIKA. Look into mine eyes.

JOSEPH. Thine eyes! Thine eyes! Where else have I seen that lambent flame?

ZULEIKA. Thine eyes burn into mine. *[She puts both her hands over his eyes. He sinks back]* I veil them with my cool hands.

JOSEPH. That touch—! Where else have I felt it?

ZULEIKA. Thy lips are parched—

JOSEPH. I thirst!—I thirst!

ZULEIKA. Drink—beloved!

[She bends over him and kisses him long on the lips. Suddenly, with a cry of intense horror, he breaks away from her]

JOSEPH. The serpent's kiss! Hah! Now I remember! Thy sinuous limbs—I saw them in the well!—Thy shimmering hair—so the serpents shone as they writhed!—Thy flaming eyes—so theirs flamed in the darkness!—Thy fingers about my throat—so they coiled about me!

ZULEIKA *[Approaching him, amazed]* Beloved, thou art frenzied!

JOSEPH. Ay—and my frenzy hath dragged me to shame! How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?



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JOSEPH AND ZULEIKA

Act II—Scene III

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

ZULEIKA [*Violently, seizing him by the arm*] What is thy God to me? I cling to thee! I clutch thee!

JOSEPH. Farewell!

[*He dashes out. ZULEIKA is on her knees clutching the cloak he has left in her hand. After a moment's stupor she rises to her full height. She raises her hands, grasping the cloak in her left hand and her dagger in her right, to the goddess*]

ZULEIKA. Smite him, thou! Slay him! Art thou a goddess and can'st not blast him? [*With a sudden revulsion she clasps the cloak to her breast*] Nay! I love thee! I love thee! [*She sinks on the couch in a frenzy, and stabs and slashes the cloak with her dagger*] I would this were thy heart! I would I had let thee rot in thy well!— [*Another change*] Thy lips! Thy lips! [*She presses the cloak frantically to her lips*]

THE SCENE CHANGES

SCENE IV

THE SAME SETTING AS SCENE I

THE CENTRAL HALL IN POTIPHAR'S HOUSE

PERSONS

Joseph	Zuleika
Potiphar	Wakara
Heru	Tamai
Ani	Mehtu
Tehuti	Anset
Menthu	Arilennu
Imhotep	Taherer

Nesta

SCENE 4—*The same setting as Scene 1*

Dawn. Excited turmoil of SLAVES, etc. The speakers arrive by different entrances in joyful agitation; but the door at the back remains shut. Blare of trumpets. Confused murmur, as of a great crowd without.

HERU [*Entering*] The people rush hither to see him!

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

MEHTU [*Rushing in from the garden*] What mean the trumpets?

ANI. My lord returneth in triumph.

TEHUTI. Summon your mistress.

ANSET. What is't? What is't?

SEBNI. Pharaoh himself went forward to meet him.

ARILENNU. My lover is with him!

TAHERER. And mine! He will bring gifts.

SEBNI. Where is my lord Joseph?

NESTA [*To TAMAI, who comes in sadly*] Why art thou not merry?

ATHA. Joseph should be glad to-day. He winneth his freedom.

TAMAI [*To NESTA*] Those ye love come; he I love goeth.

HERU. Lo! My lord Joseph!

[*Enter JOSEPH, richly robed*]

JOSEPH. Hail your lord!

[*Frantic cries of joy without. Trumpets. The characters on the stage arrange themselves to greet POTIPHAR. But always the door at the back is left conspicuous*]

[*Enter POTIPHAR, in his war-dress. Behind him come NOBLES, SOLDIERS and LADIES. A great shout goes up from all on the stage; weapons are brandished; wild enthusiasm. JOSEPH prostrates himself before POTIPHAR*]

POTIPHAR. A fair greeting! [*He raises JOSEPH and presses him to his heart*] Rise, rise, dear youth. [*He looks round, amazed*] Zuleika?

JOSEPH. All is well with her, my lord.

POTIPHAR [*Impatiently*] But why not here?

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

JOSEPH. The night is scarce spent——

POTIPHAR [*Amazed*] She sleepeth—? [*To the maids*] Arouse her.

[*TAMAI goes to the door at the back; tries it; knocks; leans against it, listening. Meanwhile*]

POTIPHAR. Behold! Joseph, that was my bondman, is free. If he will abide with us, I will raise him to great honour! but if not, he shall go hence, burdened with gifts. [*He takes off his golden chain and puts it on JOSEPH'S neck*] And, for a beginning, wear this chain for my sake.

JOSEPH. My gracious lord—! Ha! the chain is a token of freedom!

POTIPHAR [*Turning to TAMAI, impatiently*] Well? Well?—Zuleika?

TAMAI. The door is fast, my lord. There is a noise of weeping within—

POTIPHAR. Of weeping?—Joseph—! Fear grippeth my heart! [*To TAMAI*] Knock loudly.

[*TAMAI beats against the door. Then listens. All are intently watching the door*]

TAMAI. I hear the rustle of her robes——

POTIPHAR [*Advancing one step towards the door*] Zuleika—!

[*The door slowly opens. ZULEIKA crouches in the embrasure. She has covered herself from head to foot in a black veil under which her silver dress gleams. Her hair falls disordered about her. Her face is very white. She brings JOSEPH'S cloak in her hand. Her arms are bare, she has stripped off all her jewels. A gasp of*

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

*amazement and foreboding goes up from the
CROWD]*

POTIPHAR [*Voiceless, staggering towards her*]
Zuleika!

ZULEIKA [*In dull, hollow tones*] Come no nearer—
touch me not—till thou hast avenged——

ALL [*Amazed, in a whisper*] Avenged—?

[*JOSEPH is as much amazed as the others*]

POTIPHAR [*Creeping towards her; in a whisper*]
What is't? [*Then, fiercely*] What is't?

ZULEIKA [*With her eyes fixed on JOSEPH*] The Hebrew servant——

POTIPHAR [*As if he had received a blow*] Joseph—!

[*JOSEPH starts, but at once masters himself*]

ZULEIKA [*Continuing*] Came in unto me to mock
me——

POTIPHAR [*Turns, leaps with a murderous face towards JOSEPH; some of the bystanders try to restrain him; in a horrible voice*] Hold me not! [*He stops short*] Nay—too swift—too gentle! [*He watches JOSEPH, who stands perfectly still, like a crouching tiger, and speaks without taking his eyes off him*] Speak, woman!—Tell all! Tell all!

ZULEIKA. I lifted up my voice and cried, and he fled and got him away—

POTIPHAR [*In a low growl*] He fled and got him away— [*Violently*] Is it true? Is it true?

ZULEIKA. He left his garment with me. Know now, whether it be his or no.

[*She has come down in front of POTIPHAR. She flings the cloak at his feet. With a cry of rage he crushes it under foot*]

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

POTIPHAR. Strip him!

[HERU and ANI tear off JOSEPH's robe. He is dressed in a long, white gown]

[POTIPHAR comes up to him, wrenches the chain from his neck, and, with the broken ends, lashes him across the face. Shudder among the CROWD. TAMAI gives a great cry, and sinks sobbing to her knees. JOSEPH stands quite passive. ZULEIKA watches with a smile]

POTIPHAR. Away with the cur! Lest I defile my hands!

[JOSEPH is hurried out; the men in the crowd spit on him as he passes]

POTIPHAR [To ZULEIKA, but without looking at her; in a voice of horrible anticipation] Thou—thou—is there more?

ZULEIKA [With a magnificent gesture, displaying the dagger in her hand] Should I be on life?

POTIPHAR [With a great cry of joy] Zuleika! [He falls at her feet, and kisses the hem of her gown]

CURTAIN

ACT III
THE DREAMS
GENESIS XXXIX; XL; XLI
SCENE I
IN THE PRISON

PERSONS

Enekheth, Captain of the Prison

Imhotep

Serseru

An Officer

A Soldier

Joseph

Zuleika

Asenath

Soldiers

ACT III

SCENE 1—*The Yard of the Prison*

It is an angular space, carved out of the face of a lofty sandstone cliff, the top of which is out of sight. The three cells are cut in the cliff itself and are closed by heavy bronze doors. On the right, where the cliff leaves off, the yard is protected by a lofty wall built of massive blocks of stone. In this is a lofty but very narrow door. Beyond the wall nothing but sky is visible. The whole face of the cliff has been carved with elaborate hieroglyphics. In the pavement of the yard there is a movable stone, the entrance to an underground dungeon.

It is toward sunset, and during the scene the light changes, creeping up the face of the cliff, through all the marvelous gradations of an Eastern afterglow, and merging ultimately into soft but brilliant moonlight.

At the rise of the curtain a soldier is leaning on his spear, crooning a love-song. The door in the wall opens and enter the CAPTAIN of the PRISON, ENENKHET—a stout, good-natured person. He leaves the door open.

ENENKHET. Is all well with the prisoners?

SOLDIER. Ay, captain. Though the Lord Serseru hath howled all day like a dog.

ENENKHET. Ha! The Lord Chief Baker hath a soured and discontented nature.

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

SOLDIER. The Lord Imhotep hath called on the names of his wife and children.

ENENKHET. Few men know when they're best off. How many there be who would gladly be shut away for a space from domestic plagues!—Well, and the Hebrew?

SOLDIER. He hath sung of the glory of his God.

ENENKHET. There's a man after my own heart. Get thee to the outer post: I will have speech with the prisoners.

[The soldier exit, R. ENENKHET unbolts the doors of the cells, stands in the centre of the stage facing the cliff and cries]

ENENKHET. Sons of mischance, come forth! The hour is toward sunset. Come forth and breathe the cool of the evening.

[The door of one of the cells slides back, and SERSERU emerges. He is a pitiable object. His flesh hangs loosely about him; his hair is long and tangled; his beard is wild; his clothes are in rags. He is heavily chained]

SERSERU. At last! At last!—Oh, the horror of that black hole!

ENENKHET. Thou art hard to please. Greater rogues than thou have lived in it—ay, and died in it.

SERSERU. That is why it is full of disquieting dreams.

ENENKHET. Well, now, I should have thought they would have helped to pass the time.

[The next cell has opened and IMHOTEP issues. He, too, is in rags, but preserves his personal dignity. He, too, wears chains]

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN.

IMHOTEP. Why will ye not let me die in peace?

ENENKHET. Here, my lord? Where none could be witness? Would you cheat the people of a holiday?

IMHOTEP. What have I done, that I should be torn from my wife and children and put away in this foul den?

ENENKHET. That is for the judge to say.

IMHOTEP. There was no poison in the cup I drank from.

ENENKHET. But when Pharaoh handed the cup to his physician—having been warned——

SERSERU. Who warned him? Who warned him?

ENENKHET. Then the cup was full of poison.

IMHOTEP [*Furiously, to SERSERU*] Thou had'st the cup after me!

SERSERU. Thou liest! I touched it not. My sleeve brushed against it.

IMHOTEP. Thy sleeve was poisoned!

SERSERU. Would I could crush thee with these chains!

ENENKHET. Sirs, sirs, this is unseemly. What! Great lords wrangling! Fie, sirs, ye shall back to your cells.

SERSERU [*With abject horror*] Not to those dreams!

IMHOTEP. Not to that darkness! It is peopled with visions.

ENENKHET [*Cheerily*] Folks do say men see visions when they are about to die.

[*The third cell opens, and JOSEPH appears on the threshold. He wears a tunic of camel's-hair, and is girdled with a rope. He is not chained*]

JOSEPH [*With uplifted arms*] I praise God for the light. I praise God for the sweet air. I praise God for His mercies!

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

ENENKHET. Now, that's talking! Why cannot ye be content as he is?

[SERSERU and IMHOTEP have sought remote parts of the yard and are sitting gloomily buried in thought]

JOSEPH. I thank thee, good Captain, for thy merciful dealing.

ENENKHET. Heh! I have a tender heart.

JOSEPH [To IMHOTEP] Friend, look how the cliff is transfigured in the sunset!

IMHOTEP. Let me be.

JOSEPH. How is it with thee, Lord Serseru?

SERSERU. Curse thee for asking.

JOSEPH [To ENENKHET] What aileth them?

ENENKHET. Nothing. Bad dreams at the most.

JOSEPH [To IMHOTEP, very gently] Wherefore look ye so sadly to-day?

IMHOTEP. I have dreamed a dream, and there is no interpreter of it.

JOSEPH. Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell me thy dream, I pray thee.

IMHOTEP. In my dream, behold, a vine was before me; and in the vine were three branches: and it was as though it budded, and her blossoms shot forth; and the clusters thereof brought forth ripe grapes: and Pharaoh's cup was in my hand; and I took the grapes, and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and I gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand.

ENENKHET [To JOSEPH] Make what thou can'st of that!

[JOSEPH stands a moment in the attitude of prayer. Then a shudder seems to shake him, and he speaks as one in a trance]

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

JOSEPH. This is the interpretation of it: The branches are three days: yet within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thine head, and restore thee unto thy place: and thou shalt deliver Pharaoh's cup into his hand after the former manner when thou wast his butler.

IMHOTEP [*Falling at JOSEPH's feet*] Oh, friend, thou hast filled my heart with joy!

JOSEPH. But think on me when it shall be well with thee, and show kindness, I pray thee, unto me, and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house: for indeed I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews; and here also I have done nothing that they should put me into the dungeon.

IMHOTEP. By thy God and my gods I swear, not a day shall pass, but I will have thee forth with great honour.

JOSEPH [*Gravely*] Remember that.

ENENKHET [*To JOSEPH*] I shall grieve for the loss of thee.

[*SERSERU has listened intently and has crept up to JOSEPH. He plucks JOSEPH's tunic, and speaks with unctuous humility*]

SERSERU. My lord—the interpretation was good—I also have dreamed—give me comfort.

JOSEPH [*Sternly*] Conscience alone can give comfort; but speak.

SERSERU. I also was in my dream, and, behold, I had three white baskets on my head; and in the uppermost basket there was all manner of bakemeats for Pharaoh; and the birds did eat them out of the basket upon my head.

[*ENENKHET is about to speak, but JOSEPH restrains him with a stern gesture*]

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

JOSEPH [*Gravely*] This is the interpretation thereof: The three baskets are three days. Yet within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thine head from off thee, and shall hang thee on a tree; and the birds shall eat thy flesh from off thee.

SERSERU [*Furious, foaming at the mouth, tries to strike JOSEPH with his manacles*] Base Hebrew, thou liest!

ENENKHET [*Seizing him*] Hold! Hold!

JOSEPH. Let be!—He knoweth well I speak truth.

SERSERU [*With a wild laugh*] Why should I heed his idle talk? What knoweth he, more than I know?

JOSEPH [*Sternly*] Is not that enough?

SERSERU. We shall see!—We shall see! [*With his fists close to JOSEPH's face*] And when I am restored to my place, it is thou shalt hang!

[*A trumpet sounds without, R.*]

ENENKHET. Hark—!

[*The door R. opens. Enter SOLDIERS, led by an OFFICER, who brings a clay letter which he hands to ENENKHET*]

OFFICER. From the King of Kings!

ENENKHET [*Saluting*] May the King live forever. [*He glances at the letter and points to IMHOTEP and SERSERU*] These be the twain.

IMHOTEP. Captain, what is't?

ENENKHET. Ye go to the King's palace for your trial.

IMHOTEP [*With joy*] At last! The truth shall shine forth!

SERSERU [*Wildly*] I will not go! I will die here!—I will die! [*He rushes into his cell and tries to close the door*]

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

ENENKHET. Drag him forth, and away with him!

JOSEPH [*To ENENKHET*] Is there no word for me?

ENENKHET. Nay, I thank the gods thou art left to me. [*To IMHOTEP, who is being led off*] Farewell. Good fortune attend thee.

JOSEPH [*At the door, to IMHOTEP*] Remember—!

IMHOTEP [*Embracing him*] If I forget, may the gods do so to me, and more also!

[*The soldiers take him out, R. The door is closed*]

JOSEPH [*Looking after them*] So they go—the one to freedom, and high honour; the other to a shameful death!—and I almost wish I were either of them!

ENENKHET. No thought of me, as usual. Do not I love thee? Have I not been a kind taskmaster? Yea! Beyond my duty. For I was bidden to throw thee into our nethermost dungeon—[*Stamps on the stone*] here! And daily the Lady Zuleika cometh to ask whether thou be dead. But I have kept thee warm, and dry, and fed thee, and loved thee, and all the thanks I get—

JOSEPH [*Putting his arm around ENENKHET's shoulder*] Forgive me, friend. What thou could'st thou hast done. And I will do so to thee and more also when I am freed. But thou can'st not give me freedom nor the sight of my love.

ENENKHET. Who knoweth? If thou wert not so ungrateful, who knoweth what I might do?

JOSEPH [*Eagerly*] Thou would'st let me see Ase-nath? Speak with her?

ENENKHET. I said not I would. I said, who knoweth—

JOSEPH [*Excitedly; coaxing ENENKHET*] Thou golden gaoler—! Thou—what shall I call thee?

ENENKHET. Call me friend—

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

JOSEPH. Friend! Friend!—when shall I see her?

ENENKHET [*Sulkily*] Thou art not thinking of me at all; but of this bit of a girl——

ASENATH'S VOICE [*Without, R., singing*]——

In the desert places I sought my love,

When I was alone with the night,

JOSEPH. Asenath!

ASENATH——

The frowning rocks cried, He seeth thee not——

The waste of sand sighed, He heareth thee not——

But I took no heed.

Rocks, I answered, He heareth my voice——

Desert, he knoweth I remember——

And that shall gladden his heart!

JOSEPH [*Through her song*] She hath come——! Ah! but the locked door!—Ah! but the cruel wall!

ENENKHET. I knew she was coming——

JOSEPH. She is within arm's length—and I cannot reach out my hand to touch her——! I can say no word to comfort her!

ENENKHET. Thou can'st not go forth to her—but what if she came to thee?

JOSEPH [*Taking him by the shoulder; wildly excited*] Would'st thou do this?

ENENKHET. I am a fool, but I love thee. I believe thee guiltless. And, then, I was young once and I know how I should have felt, had I been locked from the girl I loved. Well, we're married, and there are fourteen children—— [*During this speech he has unlocked the door, R. He peers out*] Hist!—into the shadow—here cometh the guard!

[*By this time night has fallen. The afterglow has crept to the summit of the cliff, the level of the*

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

stage is almost pitch dark. JOSEPH gets into the remotest corner. As ENENKHET opens the door, R., wide, the SOLDIER appears without]

SOLDIER. Is all well?

ENENKHET. All is well. Pass on. [*The soldier passes on. ENENKHET turns to JOSEPH*] Lie close! She cometh. I leave the door ajar. [*He slips out*]

ASENATH'S VOICE [*Singing*]

Beloved, what though I seek in vain,
Thou knowest——

[*The VOICE ceases abruptly. The figure of a WOMAN, covered from head to foot in a purple veil, appears in the doorway. The scene is flooded with soft moonlight, so that it is nearly as light as day*]

JOSEPH [*Coming slowly forward*] Thou—! Thou—! Asenath——! I dare scarce move, lest the vision vanish—! Is it thou?—Dare I think it?—Thou knowest me guiltless? Speak! Speak! [*She stretches her arms out towards him; he hurries to her and sinks at her feet. At the same moment another figure, swathed in a black veil, appears within the door*] I love thee! I worship thee! What other woman could have power over me? I clasp thy knees! I have longed for thee, day and night! Ah! touch me! Draw me up to thee! [*She does so*] Nearer to thy heart! Nearer to thy lips! The lips I have thirsted for!

THE FIGURE IN THE DOOR [*With a wailing cry*] Oh me—! [*She vanishes*]

JOSEPH [*Startled, holding the figure at arm's length*] Who spake?—Asenath's voice—not thine!—What double vision is this? [*With a horrible suspicion*] Who art

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

thou? Who art thou? [*He tears the purple veil away—*
ZULEIKA stands before him, menacing, terrible, clad in
scarlet silk from head to foot, a golden serpent crowning
her loose hair; he starts away with a cry of horror]
Zuleika!

ZULEIKA [*Begins very quietly, but very intensely*]
Fool! Did'st thou think a woman scorned was so easily
appeased? Did'st thou think thy freedom, or thy life,
was enough to atone? Thy life is nothing—thy free-
dom is nothing. Here thou shalt rot, knowing Asenath
thinks thee a traitor, and knowing her misery. Here
thou shalt eat thy heart out, knowing Asenath is the
plaything of my hate! And when I choose to free thee,
thou shalt come forth, a broken man, to find Asenath
dead!

JOSEPH. Thinkest thou the Living God hath given
such power into thine hands? Thou can'st torture me
to-day and to-morrow. Thou can'st torture Asenath to-
day and to-morrow. [*Terrible*] But what of the next
day? God is very patient; but when He moveth His
finger thou shalt be withered as a leaf in the drought!—
I scorn thee not; I fear thee not!—I—pity thee!

ZULEIKA. Ho! Guard——!

[*Enter ENENKHET and SOLDIERS*]

ENENKHET [*Amazed*] The lady Zuleika—! [*He
throws himself at her feet*]

ZULEIKA [*To the soldiers*] Lift the stone—!

[*Passing two spears through the ring of the stone
four SOLDIERS lift it with great difficulty*]

ZULEIKA [*To ENENKHET*] Who bade thee give the
slave his freedom?—Into the nethermost pit with him or
Pharaoh shall hear of it!

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

[Two soldiers seize JOSEPH and lead him towards the hole]

ZULEIKA. Hah! Joseph! Call upon thy God!

JOSEPH. He is with me!

THE SCENE CHANGES

SCENE II
IN THE PALACE
PERSONS

Pharaoh (Usertesen I.)	1st Physician
Imhotep	2d Physician
Tehuti	Pesbes, a Dwarf
Enenkhet	Joseph
Menthu	Zuleika
Dedefre, a Noble	Asenath
Atha	Shepset
Iri, a Soothsayer	Ansu, a Magician

Khenen

*Nobles, Warriors, Priests, Soothsayers, Magicians,
Ladies, Procession of Maidens, People, Slaves.*

SCENE 2—*The Great Hall in Pharaoh's Palace*

*A forest of huge columns, lotus-shaped, and towering
almost out of sight, supports the roof, which is made of*

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

mighty slabs of stone laid flat from column to column. The central aisle is open at the back, and beyond it is a long avenue of sphinxes facing each other, and ending in a great temple. The side aisles seem protracted endlessly, and the light under them gets dimmer as the distance increases, until it finally becomes a greenish mystery.

On the left, in front, Pharaoh's throne is raised upon a platform to which seven steps ascend.

The columns are covered with hieroglyphics in bright colours. The floor is hidden under rich carpets and rugs. There are incense-burners at the foot of every pillar.

The light at the back, outside the hall, is dazzling white. The central aisle is full of rich amber sunlight; the side aisles are in shadow. Outside the hall there is a constant passing to and fro of the traffic of a city. Now a noble rides up on a charger, followed by his slaves, who help him to dismount, and he enters the hall; then a richly clad LADY is led on in a chariot drawn by horses, and as she descends an admiring CROWD gathers round her. Presently a procession of PRIESTS moves by, chanting. A CHIEFTAIN from a distant province rides up on a camel, followed by his bodyguard of armed RETAINERS.

Within the hall NOBLES and LADIES are assembled. Some are moving about; some seated on low chairs; some are playing dice; some are obviously flirting.

There is a continuous sound of vague music throughout the act.

SHEPSET. How fareth great Usertesén, the Pharaoh, to-day?

DEDEFRE. His brow hangeth heavy.

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

SHEPSET. Shall we see him?

DEDEFRE. Ay, anon. He cometh to receive the interpretation of his dreams from the priests.

KHENEN. How fareth the King's little son?

DEDEFRE. I know not; but the Queen, they say, is nigh her hour.

ATHA. The gods have turned their faces from Egypt.

SHEPSET [*Seeing PRIESTS passing in procession at the back*] The priests—! Are they about to offer sacrifices for the Queen?

ATHA. Nay, lady Shepset; know ye not? To-day is solemn festival yonder [*Pointing to temple at the back*] in the temple of Neith.

SHEPSET. What festival?

ATHA. Asenath, the high-priest's daughter, enters the sisterhood of the goddess.

KHENEN. Ay—ay—I heard she had some disappointment in love.

DEDEFRE. She was to have wed Serseru.

ATHA. But he was hanged.

DEDEFRE. Ay, but that was not the disappointment.

KHENEN [*Striking him with her fan*] What then, thou malicious gossip?

ATHA. She was in love with some stranger—they do say he was a slave.

SHEPSET. Fie! Fie!

ATHA. But he died in prison.

KHENEN [*With a sneer*] Poor Asenath is not fortunate in her lovers.

SHEPSET. I suppose we get the lovers we deserve.

KHENEN. Is that brawny Ethiopian still of thy household?

SHEPSET. Ay. Would'st thou buy him?

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

[*Meanwhile the hall has gradually filled with PRIESTS, MAGICIANS, SOOTHSAYERS, NOBLES and LADIES*]

[*Enter TEHUTI, R., in robes of state, preceded by four TRUMPETERS*]

DEDEFRE. Lo! Tehuti! Pharaoh approacheth.

[*As the TRUMPETERS reach the inner aisle, they blow a long flourish. [In unison] The CROWD fall into a sort of rough order*]

TEHUTI. Behold, Usertesén, the Pharaoh, King of the South, King of the North, King of Kings, draweth near. On your faces all! Hail the King!

[*Meanwhile a band of SOLDIERS has marched across the stage in quick time and taken up a position behind the throne*]

[*Now PHARAOH enters; an imposing, awe-striking figure. NOBLES follow him; two with great palm-fans. He strides majestically up the steps of the throne, taking no notice of the CROWD. He sits on the throne. His hands rest on his knees; his face is set; he looks straight before him. Meanwhile the crowd murmurs with a sort of subdued awe*]

CROWD. Long life to Pharaoh! Hail, Pharaoh!—
May the King live forever!

[*As soon as PHARAOH is seated the CROWD rises, and quietly sorts itself out into its component parts, so that for a moment the stage is a bewildering kaleidoscope. Then the PRIESTS, the MAGICIANS, the SOOTHSAYERS, the SOLDIERS, the NOBLES, the LADIES, etc., are in separate groups.*]

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

PESBES, the DWARF, comes and sits on the lowest step of the throne. The NOBLES who came in with PHARAOH are in a small knot immediately on the left of the throne. Among these is IMHOTEP. Behind him are four young SLAVES, one with a basket of grapes, one with a golden cup, one with a golden dish, and one with a napkin]

[Great painted curtains are drawn at the back so that the hall is enclosed]

[When the CROWD is in order, there is a moment of solemn pause, while all eyes are turned on PHARAOH]

PHARAOH [*Without moving*] Tehuti.

[TEHUTI steps forward and prostrates himself]

PHARAOH. My soul is heavy. [*Movement among the CROWD*] Are the priests and sages here as I commanded?

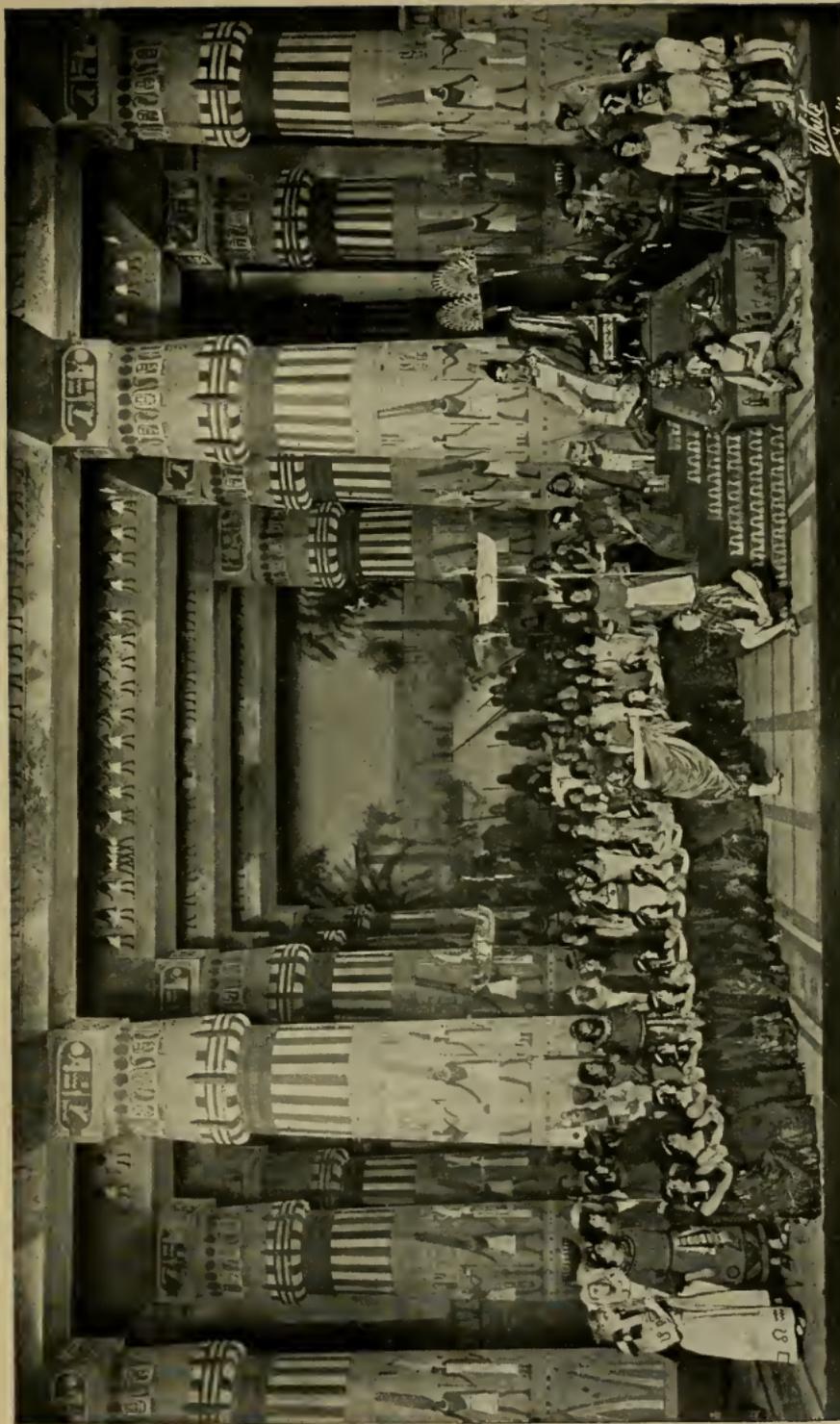
TEHUTI. O, King, they await thy word.

PHARAOH. Let the priests send their spokesman.

[TEHUTI crosses slowly to the group of PRIESTS]

PHARAOH. I thirst.

[IMHOTEP steps forward. The four young SLAVES follow him and kneel. Standing in front of the throne, IMHOTEP takes a large bunch of grapes in both hands and presses its juice into the golden cup, which the other slave holds aloft. IMHOTEP throws the skins into a golden dish brought by the third slave, and dries his hands on the napkin brought by the fourth slave. The SLAVES retire. IMHOTEP takes the cup in both hands, faces PHARAOH, and sets the cup to his



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IN THE COURT OF PHARAOH

Act III—Scene II

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

lips. Then he goes up the steps and places the cup in PHARAOH'S hands. PHARAOH drinks, hands the cup back to IMHOTEP, who retires, backward, to his place, where he returns the cup to the cup-bearer]

TEHUTI. Will it please the King to hear Menthu, the high-priest of Neith?

[PHARAOH makes a gesture of assent. MENTHU steps forward]

PHARAOH. Thou, too, art in sorrow to-day, for thou lovest thy daughter, Asenath.

MENTHU. The great goddess, Neith, will reward me tenfold.

PHARAOH [*With a touch of contempt*] Well—! Thou and the others, have ye besought the gods? Have ye searched your books? Have ye prayed and offered sacrifice?

MENTHU. All these things have we done.

PHARAOH. My dreams, then? What is the interpretation thereof? He who can interpret the meaning of them shall have his wishes granted as they issue from his lips. [*Movement in the Crowd*] But he who is able to read dreams and neglects my bidding shall surely die. [*Movement*] Speak, Priest of Neith.

[*The CROWD instinctively presses forward almost imperceptibly to hear*]

MENTHU. This is the interpretation. Seven Kings shall arise over Egypt, and seven princes shall destroy the seven Kings—

[*While he is speaking a murmur goes up from the MAGICIANS and SOOTHSAYERS, implying that MENTHU'S interpretation is hopelessly wrong*]

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

PHARAOH. Wherefore do ye murmur? Ansu, the magician, speak!

[ANSU comes forward. He carries a long wand]

MENTHU [*Furious*] Am I dismissed, O King?

PHARAOH. I think Pesbes, the dwarf, would have spoken better sense.

PESBES [*With a cackling laugh*] Or had the sense to hold my peace!

[MENTHU goes back among the PRIESTS, in a rage]

ANSU. The priest of Neith is wise; but in this matter his wisdom is clouded.

[*Angry murmur from the PRIESTS*]

PHARAOH. How dost thou read the dream?

ANSU [*Draws cabalistic signs on the floor with his wand; a circle, and, within it, two triangles*] O King, live forever. In the days to come thou shalt marry seven queens, and they shall die while thou livest. And thou shalt beget fourteen children——

[PHARAOH sinks back in disgust. The PRIESTS and SOOTHSAYERS break into subdued laughter]

PESBES. Thou must indeed live forever, O King!

[*The CROWD laughs—respectfully. IRI, the SOOTHSAYER, strides forward*]

IRI. Is it given to me to speak, O King?

PHARAOH. Speak, Iri, the Soothsayer.

IRI. The foolishness of Ansu is greater than the foolishness of Menthu.

[ANSU retires, with a gesture of disgust]

IRI. Behold! We only know the true answer.

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

PHARAOH. If it be no better than theirs, thou diest—
with them.

[*The PRIESTS and MAGICIANS are petrified with
fear: PESBES, delighted*]

IRI. We have consulted the stars. It is declared
that no man hath ever dreamed such dreams as thine.
Wherefore there is no interpretation of them, and to
seek it is blasphemy.

[*PHARAOH leaps upright. Movement of the CROWD*]

PHARAOH. Are ye here to mock me? By Sneffu and
Set, ye shall all to prison and death.

PRIESTS, MAGICIANS, SOOTHSAYERS [*Prostrating them-
selves*] Mercy, great King!

PHARAOH. What mercy do ye show me? Ye know
my soul is in heavy trouble. My little son is sick unto
death, and the Queen is belike on her death-bed. Per-
chance these dreams were sent for my comfort, and ye
turn them to folly——

MENTHU. Ours is the right interpretation!

ANSU [*Violently*] Nay, but ours!

IRI. The stars cannot lie!

[*Uproar*]

PHARAOH. Silence! [*Dead silence*] Is there in all
Egypt no reader of dreams? [*To IMHOTEP*] What
seekest thou?

[*IMHOTEP has suddenly come forward and thrown
himself on the steps of the throne*]

IMHOTEP. Live forever, O King! If it be the King's
pleasure, I can tell him a thing to his help.

PHARAOH [*Sinking back on the throne*] Speak, then;
but mock me not.

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

IMHOTEP. I do remember my faults this day. Pharaoh was wroth with his servants and put me in ward, both me and the Chief Baker. And we dreamed one night, I and he. And there was there with us a young man, an Hebrew, and he interpreted to us our dreams. And it came to pass, as he interpreted, so it was. Me thou hast restored to mine office, and the Chief Baker is hanged.

[*Movement in the CROWD. All attentive. PHARAOH leans forward*]

IMHOTEP. Behold, this slave is still in prison. I promised to remember him, but I forgot. Let him therefore be sent for, and he will interpret the King's dream aright.

PHARAOH. Have him hither swiftly!

[*TEHUTI and four SOLDIERS march out in quick time, at the back*]

MENTHU [*Stepping forward*] The King cannot hearken to this slave!

ANSU. He boweth not to our gods.

IRI. What knoweth he of the stars?

PHARAOH [*Leans down towards the dwarf*] Can'st thou silence these chatterers?

PESBES. I can drown their voices. [*He beckons*]

[*Enter MINSTRELS and SINGING-GIRLS, wildly breaking their way through the crowd. A dance*]

[*PHARAOH does not watch the dance; he is lost in gloomy thoughts. Re-enter TEHUTI, bringing on ENENKHET. The dancers disperse, but remain on the stage. TEHUTI and ENENKHET stand before PHARAOH*]

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

PHARAOH [*Standing up*] Is he come?

ENENKHET. He is without, great King, but I dare not bring him before thee.

PHARAOH. Why not?

ENENKHET. Two years he hath lain in his dungeon; the sight of him would offend the King's eyes.

PHARAOH. Bring him!

[*TEHUTI goes out*]

ENENKHET. He is very weak.

PHARAOH. Can he speak?

ENENKHET. Ay.

PHARAOH. Why was he thrown into prison?

ENENKHET. He was slave to Potiphar, great King; the lady Zuleika accused him——

[*Movement in the CROWD*]

PHARAOH. The lady Zuleika——?

ENENKHET. O King, he is a holy man! The lady Zuleika hath persecuted him. She bade me thrust him into the dungeon; and daily she cometh to listen for his groans. But he ever singeth praises to his God.

PHARAOH. If injustice have been done, the gods pity the doer.

[*The curtains at the back are opened. Enter the four SOLDIERS and TEHUTI, supporting JOSEPH. The CROWD make way for them, falling back among the pillars of the side aisles, and an "Oh!" of amazement and pity issues from it. JOSEPH is, indeed, a pitiable figure. His camel-hair garment is in rags; his hair is long and wild; his face is pinched and drawn; his eyes are sunken. His frame is wasted away to skin and bone and he is shaken with fever and ague, so that he can*

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

hardly stand. He looks around half fiercely and half frightened, like a captured beast. PHARAOH has risen at JOSEPH'S entrance]

TEHUTI [*To JOSEPH*] Fear nought; come!

[*JOSEPH sees PHARAOH*]

JOSEPH [*Scarcely articulate*] Pharaoh!

[*He stretches his skeleton of a hand towards PHARAOH in appeal, and advances, with his great, glowing eyes fixed on him*]

PHARAOH. Alas—! Nay, I will come down to thee!

[*The CROWD murmurs its wonder at this. PHARAOH comes down three steps. JOSEPH has reached the throne and makes as if to kneel*]

PHARAOH. Let him not kneel.

[*The SOLDIERS keep JOSEPH up*]

PHARAOH. Set meat before him—give him to drink.

[*SERVANTS are about to fulfil this order, but*]

JOSEPH [*With an effort*] Nay—nay! I lack nothing—God was with me in the prison.

PHARAOH [*Still standing*] Can'st thou hear me?

JOSEPH. Oh, very well, great King!

PHARAOH. What is thy name?

JOSEPH [*Radiantly carrying his memory back*] When I led my father's flocks to pasture, my name was Joseph.

PHARAOH. I have heard say of thee that thou can'st understand a dream to interpret it.

JOSEPH. It is not in *me*.—God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace.

[*The CROWD has closed in again, but the curtains*

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

at the back are left open. The light outside is much softer]

PHARAOH. Art thou strong enough?

JOSEPH. He will give me strength.

[PHARAOH goes up to the throne; JOSEPH is left, a single weird figure, in the centre of the stage]

PHARAOH *[Sitting, and speaking very solemnly, and as if he were now witnessing the visions he describes]* In my dream, behold, I stood upon the bank of the river; and there came out of the water seven kine, fat-fleshed and well-favoured; and they fed in a meadow; and, behold, seven other kine came up after them; poor and very ill-favoured and lean-fleshed, such as I never saw in all the land of Egypt for badness: and the lean and the ill-favoured kine did eat up the first seven fat kine; and when they had eaten them up it could not be known that they had eaten them; but they were still ill-favoured, as at the beginning. So I woke.

[Stir among the CROWD. Expression of varying emotions. The PRIESTS, MAGICIANS, SOOTHSAYERS, seem to repeat their interpretations to each other. JOSEPH stands perfectly still]

PHARAOH *[Rising and speaking with greater intensity]* And I saw in my dream; and, behold, seven ears came up in one stalk, full and good: and, behold, seven ears, withered, thin, and blasted with the east-wind, sprung up after them: and the thin ears devoured the seven good ears! *[He sinks back on the throne]* And I told this unto the magician: but there was none that could declare it unto me. *[He rests his chin on his hand and sinks into brooding thought]*

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

[*The CROWD stir. The idea among the PRIESTS, etc., is "What will JOSEPH make of that?"*]

[*JOSEPH stands with his hands tightly interlocked and pressed close against his breast, his face turned upward and his eyes wildly staring. Just as the murmur of the CROWD behind him begins to assert itself, his voice rings clear above it. He speaks in a sort of ecstasy and the words pour forth rapidly as if he had no control over them*]

JOSEPH. The dream of Pharaoh is one.

[*The CROWD is arrested, and listens eagerly*]

JOSEPH [*Quietly but rapidly*] God hath shewed Pharaoh what He is about to do. The seven good kine are seven years, and the seven good ears are seven years: the dream is one. And the seven thin and ill-favoured kine that came up after them are seven years; and the seven empty ears blasted with the wind shall be seven years of famine. [*Horror of the CROWD*] This is the thing which I have spoken unto Pharaoh: What God is about to do He sheweth unto Pharaoh. [*With increased dignity and intensity*] Behold, there come seven years of great plenty throughout the land of Egypt—[*The CROWD gives a silent "Ah!" of joy; JOSEPH continues, sternly*] And then shall arise after them seven years of famine; and all the plenty shall be forgotten in the land of Egypt; and the famine shall consume the land; and the plenty shall not be remembered in the land by reason of that famine following; for it shall be very grievous. [*CROWD in distress. JOSEPH proceeds with impressive and authoritative power*] And for that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice [*He turns and faces PHARAOH, who is leaning forward with breathless*

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

attention] it is because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass!

PHARAOH [*Sternly*] Is there more wisdom in thee than in all the wise men of Egypt?

JOSEPH [*With humble dignity*] It is not in *me*. It is God.

MENTHU [*Stepping forward*] O King, wilt thou believe him so lightly?

ANSU. Bid him show thee a sign and a token.

IRI. Thou shalt see his God is powerless!

PHARAOH [*Gravely*] Ay!—Joseph, how shall I know thy words are true?

[*CROWD eager*]

JOSEPH. While I speak, behold, a great sorrow falleth upon the King, and still while I speak, cometh a great joy.

[*The CROWD turn to each other in amazement*]

MENTHU [*Triumphant*] Behold, O King—!

[*Suddenly a great wail of mourning women is heard off R.*]

[*PHARAOH leaps to his feet. The CROWD, R., rush across to L. in fear. The PRIESTS, etc., come down to R. front. JOSEPH stands still*]

PHARAOH. What is that wailing of women?

[*Enter a physician, R., and throws himself at PHARAOH'S feet*]

PHARAOH. Speak! Speak!

PHYSICIAN. Great Pharaoh, thy little son is dead.

[*PHARAOH quivers, but stands firm. The CROWD gives a great cry of horror, which merges into a*

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

moan of sympathy. Hands are stretched out towards PHARAOH. Suddenly a joyful flourish of trumpets cuts through the sounds of mourning. PHARAOH shudders, and cries out]

PHARAOH. The trumpets! Silence the trumpets!

[*A second PHYSICIAN hurries in*]

2D PHYSICIAN [*Prostrating himself before PHARAOH*]
Rejoice, O King! A man-child is born unto thee!

PHARAOH [*Eagerly*] The Queen——?

2D PHYSICIAN. The Queen liveth and is well.

[*PHARAOH sinks back on the throne, covers his face with his hands, and is shaken with sobs of joy. The CROWD is bewildered; its murmurs increase, and it is just going to break into a shout of joy, when——*]

TEHUTI [*Advancing*] Break up the court! Leave the King to his mourning and to his joy.

PHARAOH [*Rising*] Not so!—Our joys and sorrows are private, but this matter of the dream is for the land! Joseph, what would'st thou have me do?

JOSEPH. Let Pharaoh look out a man discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt; and let him gather all the food of those good years that come, and let them keep food in the cities. And that shall be for a store against the seven years of famine; that the land perish not through the famine.

PHARAOH [*To the NOBLES and OFFICERS near his throne*] What say ye all? Is this wisdom?

TEHUTI. O King, it is good.

CROWD. It is good! It is good!

PHARAOH. Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the spirit of God is?

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

IMHOTEP. Set him over us, O King!

CROWD. Joseph! Joseph!

PHARAOH. Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art: Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled; only in the throne will I be greater than thou. [*He rises*] Joseph art thou no more, but I will call thee Zaphenath Paneah, the prince of the days to be. [*He comes down from the throne to JOSEPH, who is standing dazed. He draws off his signet-ring and places it on JOSEPH's finger*] See! I have set thee over all the land of Egypt. [*To the CROWD*] Bow the knee!

ALL. Hail, prince of life!

[*JOSEPH suddenly sinks into ENENKHET's arms. PHARAOH has turned away. The CROWD gasps*]

ENENKHET. The glory is too great—he swooneth.

1ST PHYSICIAN [*Who has hurried up*] O King, the man is dying—

PHARAOH. Now the gods forbid!

[*The CROWD has closed in*]

ENENKHET. His heart is breaking—

PHARAOH. Make way! Give air!

[*The CROWD opens. At the back, outside the hall, music sounds and the voices of MAIDENS chanting. A procession of young MAIDENS passes slowly from L. to R. and, in their midst, ASENATH, in white, crowned with white flowers*]

JOSEPH [*Faintly*] What—is—that—music?

PHYSICIAN. He speaketh!

JOSEPH [*Rising eagerly*] What—is—that—singing?

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

MENTHU. It is my daughter, on her way to the temple of Neith—

JOSEPH [*Vaguely*] Thy daughter—? How is she called?

MENTHU. Asenath.

JOSEPH [*Transfigured*] Asenath!—Ah! Let me see her!

1ST PHYSICIAN. My lord is very weak.

PHARAOH [*To JOSEPH*] Dost thou love her?

JOSEPH. Ah, God—

PHARAOH [*He mounts the throne*] Bring her hither!

[TEHUTI, *who has gone up to the entrance, turns the procession into the hall. The MAIDENS who were in front of ASENATH come down, L.; those behind her, R. She walks alone down the centre, half-dazed and half-frightened. JOSEPH is kneeling, R. front, with arms outstretched yearningly. She only sees a woful creature, as it were, appealing for pity. A look of wonder comes into her face, a puzzled look of struggling remembrance, a look of dawning hope*]

JOSEPH. Asenath!

[*She stops short, with a little gasp of amazement, then she timidly and falteringly comes towards him. At this moment ZULEIKA enters from R., followed by WAKARA and her LADIES. ZULEIKA and ASENATH face each other for an instant. The joy dies out of ASENATH's face. She utters a moan, draws the veil she is wearing over her face, and totters, gropingly, to her father, who catches her to his breast and hurriedly leads her off, L. JOSEPH has risen. ZULEIKA, with a little mocking laugh at him, and a deep obeisance to*

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

PHARAOH, *sweeps out magnificently. Confusion among the CROWD*]

PHARAOH [*Angrily*] Summon the maiden back!

JOSEPH. Oh, King, I pray thee let the maiden go in peace, for she is in the power of the liar. And as for me, I will do thy bidding, and I will serve Egypt, and save it. [*Drawing himself up to his full height*] And I will live till the liar be put to confusion!

ALL. Hail, Prince of Life!

CURTAIN

ACT IV

THE DELIVERER

GENESIS XLII; XLIII; XLIV; XLIX

SCENE I

THE TENTS OF SHECHEM

PERSONS

Jacob

Gad

Reuben

Asher

Levi

Zebulun

Judah

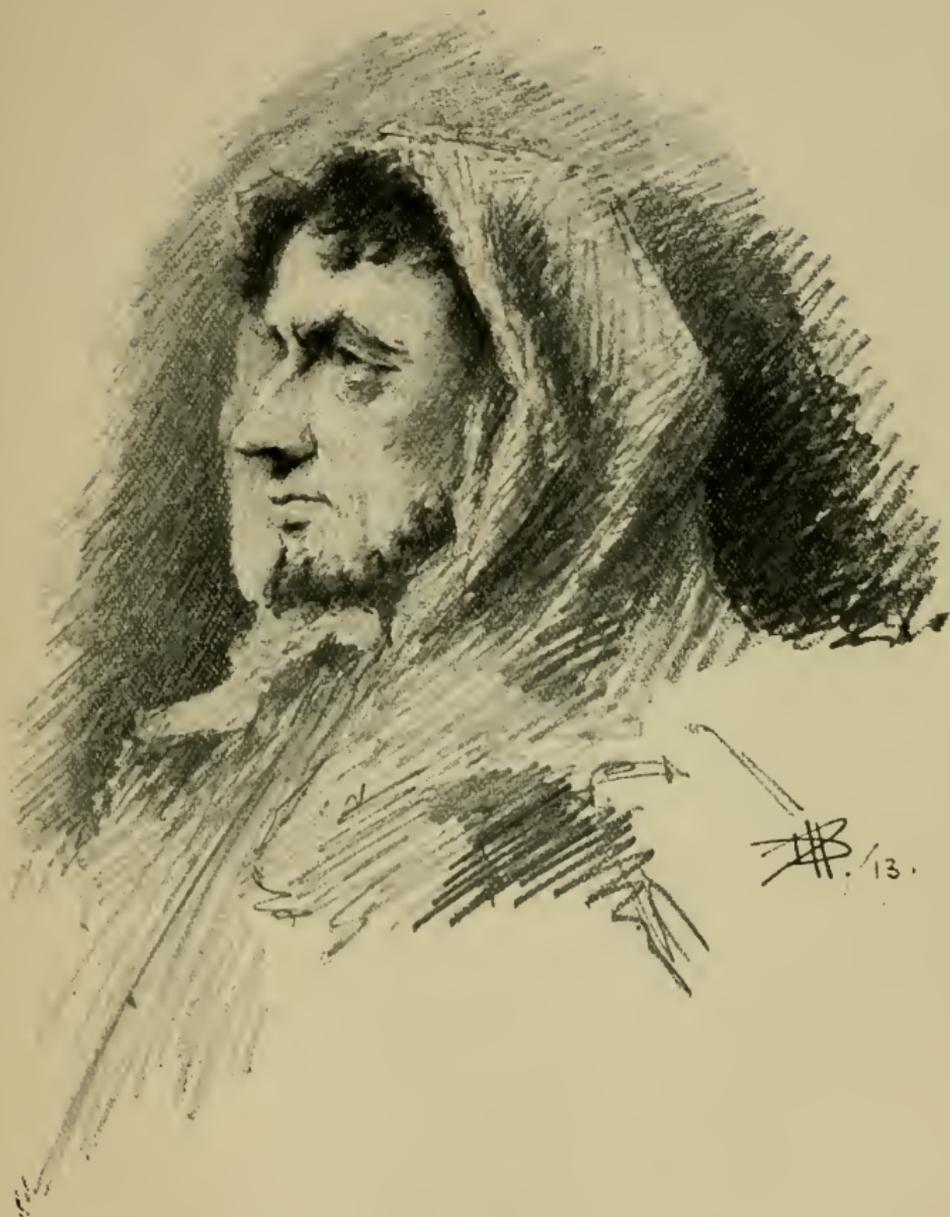
Benjamin

Dan

Issachar

Naphtali

Serah



SIMEON

From a Drawing by Dorothy Parker

ACT IV

SCENE 1—*The Interior of Jacob's Tent as in the Last Scene of Act I*

R. C. there is a seat, formed of cushions, in which JACOB, now 106 years old, is reclining. He gazes straight before him with unseeing eyes. JUDAH is bent humbly before him, but JACOB takes no notice of him. The other BROTHERS are in a group, L. front. JUDAH rises and comes to them.

JUDAH. Father Jacob!—He will not hear. He will not speak. [*Down R.*]

LEVI. Woe! Woe!

REUBEN. The food we brought out of Egypt is all spent.

ASHER [*Enters*] My children, and my children's children clamour for bread.

REUBEN. It is the curse of God for the evil we did unto Joseph.

LEVI. Now we must go down to Egypt a second time.

REUBEN [*Bitterly*] Ay, we, princes in Israel, on our knees, begging for food!

GAD. Needs must, when hunger drives.

DAN. Not hunger only; we must redeem Simeon.

ZEBULUN. Simeon, that was hottest for selling Joseph a slave, is now a slave himself——

ASHER. And we are starving——

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

JUDAH. God is righteous.

DAN. I dread the man—the governor—him they call the Revealer of Secrets.

LEVI. Nay, he is our friend. Did he not restore to each man his money in his sack?

NAPHTALI [*To REUBEN'S SLAVE*] I dread a trick. What if he say we stole the money, and slay Simeon?

REUBEN. Yet to him we must go. In all the world there is no corn, but only in Egypt.

ISSACHAR. Our father will not let us go.

REUBEN. We must persuade him.

ISSACHAR. Remember the man's words—Except ye bring Benjamin, ye shall not see my face.

ZEBULUN [*Pointing off L.*] Lo! Benjamin.

[*Enter BENJAMIN, a lad*]

LEVI. Oh, latest-born of Rachel, Benjamin, whom our father loveth, plead for us.

BENJAMIN. What would'st thou, son of Leah?

LEVI. Plead with Jacob for us, that we may go down into Egypt once more.

BENJAMIN. That will I, gladly.

[*Enter SERAH, in wild distress. She hurries to ASHER, and throws herself in his arms*]

SERAH. Father, my child crieth for food! Father! Father! My first-born!

ALL [*Veiling their faces*] Woe upon us all!

ASHER. Child, our father's heart is turned to stone.

SERAH. I will entreat him——

ASHER [*Pointing to JACOB*] Lo! he looketh neither to the left nor to the right; his eyeballs have grown white with weeping. Yet, Serah, take thy harp; sing to him—sing our grief—sing the death of our children——

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

SERAH. Alas! How shall I sing, with a breaking heart?

ASHER. Put the heart-break into thy song.

SERAH. Give me my harp—I will sing.

[She takes her harp; goes up to JACOB, and, kneeling on one knee, sings. The BROTHERS cover their faces with their cloaks, and stand and sit, impressive figures of sorrow]

SERAH [*Sings*—

I sit alone in the wilderness,
My children are perishing around me
Mother, mother, they cry,
We hunger, we are a-thirst.
Cry not to me, O children,
Cry to the Captain of Israel!
As for me, I am dried up;
My heart-strings are rent asunder,
Even as I rend the strings of my harp!

[With a wild chord, she tears the strings out of her harp. JACOB awakes out of his dream]

JACOB. Who singeth? Is it thou, Serah, daughter of Asher?

SERAH. Father, it is I! My child is dying!

JACOB. Joseph, my beloved, is dead; and Simeon is a captive in a strange land.

SERAH. But we, the living, are an-hungered.

REUBEN. All the seed of Israel will surely perish.

JACOB. Go again; buy us a little food.

JUDAH. The man did solemnly protest unto us, saying, Ye shall not see my face, except your brother, Benjamin, be with you.

JACOB. Me have ye bereaved of my children; Joseph

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take away Benjamin, whom his mother died in bearing: all these things are against me.

REUBEN. Slay my two sons, if I bring him not to thee.

JACOB. Wherefore dealt ye so ill with me, as to tell the man whether ye had yet a brother?

LEVI. The man asked us straitly of our state, and of our kindred, saying, Is your father yet alive? Have ye another brother?

ISSACHAR. Could we certainly know that he would say, Bring your brother down?

GAD. The man knew all things: for though the city hath ten gates; and we went in, each of us by a separate gate, yet he knew all our going and coming.

ZEBULUN. He is called the Revealer of Secrets.

JUDAH. Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go; that we may live, and not die, both we and thou, and our little ones.

SERAH. Israel! Israel!

JUDAH. I will be surety for him; of my hand shalt thou require him. If I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame forever. For except we had lingered, surely now we had returned this second time.

BENJAMIN. Father, let me go. I have no fear of the man.

JACOB. Can'st thou leave me, Benjamin?

BENJAMIN. For my brothers' sakes, and for the sake of their children.

[Pause]

JACOB [To JUDAH] If evil befall him, thou shalt bring down my grey hairs with sorrow to the grave.

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

Yet, if it must be so—[*Movement of joy amongst the BROTHERS; ZEBULUN slips out at back*] now do this: Take of the best fruits of the land in your vessels, and carry down the man a present, a little balm, a little honey, spices and myrrh, nuts and almonds: and take double money in your hand; and the money that was brought again in the mouths of your sacks, carry it again in your hand; peradventure it was an oversight: take also your brother, and arise, go again unto the man. [*He clasps BENJAMIN in his arms*]

JUDAH. Now, God be praised, who hath moved thy heart! We will make all speed, and it shall not be many days ere we return with food.

REUBEN. Thy blessing, O Israel!

[*ALL kneel where they happen to be standing. JACOB rises*]

JACOB. God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may send away your brother, and Benjamin. If I be bereaved, I am bereaved.

[*ZEBULUN flings open the great curtains at the back. Outside the asses are seen laden for the journey, with SLAVES, etc. The BROTHERS break up amid subdued excitement. BENJAMIN leaves JACOB, and, sheltering under JUDAH'S arm, goes out. JACOB follows him to the door, where he sinks to the ground, and, picking up handfuls of dust, scatters it on his white hair*]

THE SCENE CHANGES

SCENE II

JOSEPH'S HOUSE

PERSONS

Joseph	Dedefre
Simeon	Enenkhet
Tehuti	Zuleika
Sebni	Asenath
Atha	Wakara

Tamai

Slaves

SCENE 2—*An Open Space outside Joseph's House*

Trees on the right, and in the background. Through a break in the latter there is a view of the Nile, with, on the opposite shore, the Pyramids and the temples attached to them. The entrance to the house is L.

Enter JOSEPH and ASENATH, R., attended by SLAVES, leading EPHRAIM and MANASSEH (children), who, at a signal from JOSEPH, pass on into the house.

ASENATH. Is my lord happy?

JOSEPH. Ah! Am I happy!

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

ASENATH. Are the sheep-folds in Dothan forgotten?

JOSEPH. Nay, for then I were less happy.

ASENATH. Rede me that riddle.

JOSEPH. I am of a race which never forgets. With us the ties of blood are stronger than death.

ASENATH. Stronger than love?

JOSEPH [*Smiling*] Is there no such tie between us? Art thou not the mother of my children? Art *thou* happy, Asenath?

ASENATH. Ay—save when I remember Zuleika.

JOSEPH. What is Zuleika to us?

ASENATH. I fear her. They say she fareth every night yonder [*Pointing to the Pyramids*] to Cheops' tomb; and there she weaveth spells and breweth philtres. They say many men have come to a miserable end by her craft. Oh, remember how she hateth thee, and beware!

JOSEPH. Be comforted. She shall hurt neither thee nor me. [*To ENENKHET, who enters L.*] What now?

ENENKHET. Great lord, here be certain nobles of the land, humbly crave speech of thee.

JOSEPH [*To ASENATH, leading her towards the entrance of the house*] Go in, beloved, and be of good cheer. Drink courage in the eyes of our sons, Manasseh and Ephraim.

ASENATH. I have drunk courage in thine. But beware——!

[*Exit into the house*]

JOSEPH [*To the STEWARD*] Well—have the nobles hither. Wait. How fareth our guest: Simeon, the son of Jacob?

ENENKHET. He hath his freedom, to go and come, as my lord bade.

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

JOSEPH. How doth he use that freedom?

ENENKHET. Seeking his brother.

JOSEPH [*Smiling*] Joseph?

ENENKHET [*With a twinkle*] I think that is the name, my lord.

JOSEPH. Bid him attend me.

[*Exit ENENKHET L. Enter L., TEHUTI, SEBNI, ATHA and DEDEFRE*]

TEHUTI. Revealer of Secrets, O Prince of Life, live forever!

JOSEPH. What is it ye seek?

TEHUTI. Behold, there is no bread in all the land; for the famine is very sore, so that the land of Egypt fainteth by reason of the famine.

[*SIMEON enters, and stands watching the scene*]

JOSEPH. I warned you of this: it is according to Pharaoh's dream.

SEBNI. But thou, lord, hast gathered up all the money that was found in the land of Egypt for the corn which we bought.

JOSEPH [*Gravely*] I have brought the money into Pharaoh's house.

DEDEFRE. And when money failed, and we said, Give us bread, for why should we die in thy presence——

JOSEPH [*Blandly*] Then said I, Give your cattle; and I gave you bread in return for your cattle.

ATHA. And now we come again entreating thy help.

DEDEFRE. We will not hide from my lord that our money is spent——

ATHA. My lord hath also our herds of cattle.

TEHUTI [*Bitterly*] There is not aught left in the sight of my lord but our bodies and our lands.

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

ATHA [*With increasing violence*] Wherefore shall we die before thine eyes, both we and our land!

DEDEFRE. Buy us and our land for bread, and we and our land will be servants unto Pharaoh!

SEBNI. Give us seed, that we may live and not die!

ATHA. That the land be not desolate!

TEHUTI. Lo! We will sell our ancient freedom for food, that our little ones may live.

JOSEPH [*Gravely*] It shall be as you say. Yourselves and your lands ye shall bind to Pharaoh, and food shall be given you, and seed to sow your land. Go within. Let each man write out his account.

TEHUTI. My lord is very merciful!

[*They pass into the house with every token of despair. One veils his face, weeping*]

SEBNI. He holdeth us in the hollow of his hand!

ATHA. What care I? Shall I see my children starve?

[*Exeunt*]

[*JOSEPH turns with a grave smile to SIMEON*]

JOSEPH. Well, Simeon, my—guest—what thinkest thou of what thou seest in Egypt?

SIMEON [*With sincere admiration*] I thought I was a hard man at bartering, but in thy presence——!

JOSEPH. I grieve to hear thy search for thy brother hath been fruitless.

SIMEON [*Startled*] How knewest thou——?

JOSEPH [*Smiling*] Am I not the Revealer of Secrets?
[*Blandly*] How was thy brother lost?

SIMEON [*Sullenly*] If my lord knoweth all things, he knoweth that also.

[*TEHUTI appears, L.*]

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

TEHUTI. My lord, the deeds are written. Will it please thee to sign?

JOSEPH. I come.

[TEHUTI goes in]

JOSEPH [To SIMEON] I would willingly have heard thee tell the tale. But the lords wait. [*As he goes in, with a slight tinge of mockery*] Seek again, Simeon!

[*As he turns to go into the house, ZULEIKA is brought in in a litter, R., attended by WAKARA and TAMAI*]

SIMEON [*Looking after JOSEPH*] Was the man mocking me? Doth he know I sold Joseph into slavery? Since he knoweth all things—was he mocking me?

ZULEIKA. Who was mocking thee, Hebrew?

SIMEON. Lady—— [*He is about to pass her, when he recognizes her and starts back in amazement*]

ZULEIKA. Why does thou marvel so?

SIMEON. Where have I seen thee—? Where? Where?

ZULEIKA [*Recognizing him*] Thou—! Ay—! the years have not taken the greed out of thine eyes! Thou art one of those who would have slain Joseph!

SIMEON. And thou art she who bought him! Ah! Thank God! Now I shall find my brother again!

ZULEIKA. Art thou mad?

SIMEON. Nay, deny me not. Thou art she! Time hath not touched thy beauty! Joseph, my brother, is he alive? Where is he——?

WAKARA [*In amazement, indicating the house*] Why——

ZULEIKA [*Sharply*] Silence! [*To SIMEON, watching him closely*] Knowest thou in whose house thou art?

SIMEON. In the house of the Overlord of Egypt. I

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

came with my brethren to buy food; and the man called us spies and held me for hostage till my brethren bring our youngest brother, Benjamin——

ZULEIKA [*Insistently*] Nay, but the man; knowest thou who the man is?

SIMEON. I know nought, save that from him proceedeth life and death. If thou knowest aught of my brother, tell me. For the curse is upon me for his sake.

[ZULEIKA, *seeing JOSEPH and the EGYPTIANS coming out of the house, gives a signal and is carried on. SIMEON follows her a little way*]

ZULEIKA. Thy brother liveth.

SIMEON [*With a cry*] What! Where? Where?

[*JOSEPH and the LORDS come out*]

JOSEPH [*At the entrance*] And so, farewell, my lords.

TEHUTI. Farewell, dispenser of mercies.

[*They go out, L., back. JOSEPH watches them*]

ZULEIKA [*To SIMEON*] Come at midnight [*Pointing to the Pyramids*] to Cheops' tomb.

[*She is carried out, with WAKARA and TAMAI following her. SIMEON looks after her in amazement, and exit, R., back*]

JOSEPH [*Calling*] Simeon!

[*SIMEON turns, alarmed, towards JOSEPH*]

THE SCENE CHANGES

SCENE III
THE PYRAMIDS
PERSONS

Potiphar	Ani
Simeon	Zuleika
Heru	Wakara
Tamai	
<i>Slaves</i>	

SCENE 3—*At the Foot of an Angle of the Pyramid.*

The Pyramid projects diagonally from L. front to R. C. and soars out of sight, giving the impression that the small portion seen of it is life-size. On the R. are a few palms. In the distance the solemn bulk of another Pyramid looms against the sky. It is night; the moon has not yet risen. The sky is of a deep purple, studded with countless stars. None of the details of the Pyramid can be seen—it is merely an overwhelming black angle.

Enter, R., POTIPHAR, HERU, ANI and TAMAI, followed by a few ETHIOPIAN SLAVES, one of whom carries burning coals in a cage-like vessel, while another bears iron pincers.

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

TAMAI. This is the place.

POTIPHAR. It is sacred.

HERU. My lord Potiphar, bid us not abide here; here the gods move.

ANI. The girl led us hither to a trap.

POTIPHAR [*To TAMAI*] What is thy reward if thou liest?

TAMAI. Death.

POTIPHAR. Lingering and terrible.

TAMAI. I lie not.

POTIPHAR. Get ye behind the tomb. Heat the blinding-irons; red-hot—red-hot. I will lie among the palms. When I come forth, come forth also. Begone.

[*HERU, ANI and the SLAVES go behind the Pyramid*]

POTIPHAR [*Strides agitatedly to and fro. Stops before TAMAI*] I know thou liest. Why should she seek the lord Joseph's death?

TAMAI. Because she loveth him——

POTIPHAR. Thou liest! Thou liest! He sought her love and she——

TAMAI. He sought not her love. She sought his love, and he scorned her. Therefore she seeketh his death.

POTIPHAR [*Violently*] Girl! I could put my hand about thy throat and press the life out of thee, for thou speakest my fear——! Ha! I thank the gods I shall know the truth to-night.

TAMAI [*At his feet*] Oh, my lord, use her mercifully! I know how love has made her suffer. Save my lord Joseph, but use Zuleika mercifully.

POTIPHAR. Fool! do I not suffer? Have I not loved her? She hath made a mock of me—unless thou lie!

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

Woe to thee if thou lie! Woe to her and to me if thou speak truth!

TAMAI. Come what may, for me there is nothing but woe!

POTIPHAR [*Suddenly*] With me! Into the darkness!

[*He drags TAMAI among the palms. Enter, L., WAKARA, leading SLAVES, who bear a closed litter in which is ZULEIKA*]

ZULEIKA. Set me down. [*She emerges from the litter. She is dressed in white, over which she wears a black veil*]

ZULEIKA. When the moon is straight above the tomb, come and bear me away. Begone.

[*The SLAVES hurry out, R., bearing the litter with them*]

ZULEIKA. Thou, go spy whether Simeon cometh.

WAKARA. Hast thou no dread? The ghosts of dead men are all about us.

ZULEIKA. I fear not the dead. Begone.

[*Exit WAKARA, L. The moon rises. ZULEIKA stands rigid. Enter SIMEON, L.*]

ZULEIKA. Art thou come, Simeon?

SIMEON. At thy bidding.

ZULEIKA. Stand more in the dark.

SIMEON. Who should see me here?

ZULEIKA. The Revealer watcheth. What seekest thou?

SIMEON. Where is my brother hidden?

ZULEIKA. The Revealer hath him in hiding.

SIMEON. Zaphenath Paneah!



Courtesy of Liebler and Company, N. Y.

JOSEPH IS SOLD INTO BONDAGE

Act I—Scene II

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

ZULEIKA. Joseph is in his house.

SIMEON. But he knoweth I seek him!

ZULEIKA. He mocketh thee. He cannot disclose Joseph, for whatever he hath, he hath from Joseph. His wisdom is Joseph's; his reading of dreams is Joseph's. Yea, he hath even wedded the woman Joseph loved. How can he disclose him?

SIMEON. He knoweth me for Joseph's brother—why hath he not slain me? Why did he not slay us all when we were here?

ZULEIKA. Were ye all here?

SIMEON. All, save Benjamin.

ZULEIKA. Why art thou a hostage?

SIMEON. That Benjamin may be brought.

ZULEIKA. When Benjamin is brought, then shall ye all be slain, for then——

SIMEON. Then what——?

ZULEIKA. Then no avenger can arise—unless——

SIMEON. Unless——?

ZULEIKA. Wilt thou suffer the slayer to live?

SIMEON. Woman!——

ZULEIKA. Wilt thou not free thy brother?

SIMEON. Egypt loveth the man—worshipeth him as a god—the Nobles—Pharaoh himself——

ZULEIKA [*Laughing*] Thinkest thou Pharaoh loveth him? Who is king in Egypt? Not Pharaoh, but this upstart. Do the Nobles love him, whose gold, whose cattle, whose lands and whose bodies he hath taken for a peck of corn? Strike! and Egypt shall call *thee* the Deliverer! [*She throws off her veil*]

SIMEON. Woman! Thine eyes blaze through the night!

ZULEIKA. Strike! and thou shalt see them blaze with another flame!

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

SIMEON. Woman! woman! thou pourest poison into my veins!

ZULEIKA. Set Pharaoh free; redeem thy brother! Deliver Egypt; slay the man I hate——

SIMEON [*Quickly*] Why hatest thou him?

ZULEIKA [*In a wild outburst of passion*] Because I love him! Because he spurned me! Ah, gods! Shall I ever forget! Twice I destroyed him, and twice he sprang up refreshed! Ah! Slay him! Slay him! And ask what reward thou wilt!

SIMEON. They have stripped me of my weapons.

ZULEIKA [*Handing him a dagger*] Here!—here! Hide this under thy cloak. Beware! A scratch is death—'tis poisoned!

SIMEON. I am alone—if I make to touch him, his servants will fall upon me——

ZULEIKA. Oh, faint heart! Wait till thy brethren be at thy side——

SIMEON [*Eagerly*] And then—Zuleika?

ZULEIKA. Begone—swiftly! My bearers come.

[SIMEON hurries out, L. She watches him off. With a triumphant gesture, she turns, to find herself face to face with POTIPHAR, who has come out of the shadow. TAMAI has slipped out, R.]

ZULEIKA [*Quite calm*] Eavesdropping, my lord?

POTIPHAR [*Cold and stern*] Thy name shall be a by-word of shame.

ZULEIKA. And thine a by-word of mockery.

POTIPHAR. No word of repentance?

ZULEIKA. Ay, I repent me that I have failed.

POTIPHAR [*More sternly*] But—to me!

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

[*The ETHIOPIAN SLAVES have entered unperceived and stand behind ZULEIKA*]

ZULEIKA [*Mockingly*] Oh, my lord, were I to speak to thee, in a moment I should win thy love again: which the gods forbid. I heed neither thy love nor thy hate. Farewell.

[*At a movement from POTIPHAR, the SLAVES step forward. ZULEIKA for a moment sways with terror, then draws herself up and speaks contemptuously*]

ZULEIKA. Death? A poor triumph, my lord. It is so easy to slay.

POTIPHAR. Not death. [*To the SLAVES*] Take her.

[*She walks proudly amid the SLAVES to the rear of the Pyramid, where a fitful red glow rises and falls as if fire were being fanned. They disappear round the angle. POTIPHAR stands rigid, listening*]

[*Suddenly there is a ghastly cry*]

[*POTIPHAR rends his garment from head to foot, and sinks on the ground*]

POTIPHAR. The eyes that offended have atoned.

THE SCENE CHANGES

SCENE IV
IN JOSEPH'S HOUSE
PERSONS

Joseph	Jacob
Benjamin	Reuben
Manasseh	Simeon
Ephraim	Levi
Tehuti	Judah
Sebni	Dan
Atha	Naphtali
Dedefre	Gad
Enenkhet	Asher
Asenath	Issachar
Tamai	Zebulun

Nobles, Ladies, Minstrels, Dancing Girls, Slaves, People

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

SCENE 4—*The Hall in Joseph's House*

It is of light and graceful architecture. On the left is a raised platform running along the entire wall, on which, presently, JOSEPH's table will be set. Two doors, L., opening on to this platform. Through the one near the footlights JOSEPH and ASENATH enter. Through the further one, the SERVITORS. The back is practically entirely open to the garden, but all the openings can be closed by rolling mats. They are closed at the rise of the curtain. The right wall also has two doors. Beyond the hall and garden there is a view of Memphis, with huge temples and still more enormous storehouses and granaries.

At the rise of the curtain a female SLAVE brings on TAMAI, leaves her in the centre of the hall, and with an obeisance goes off, L. Immediately enter ASENATH.

ASENATH. What would'st thou with me, maiden?

TAMAI. Bid thy lord beware of Simeon the hostage.

ASENATH [*Frightened*] What of him?

TAMAI. He hath sworn to slay thy lord.

ASENATH. He is unarmed.

TAMAI. Zuleika hath given him a poisoned knife.

ASENATH. Alas! is her hatred so ruthless!

[*Enter JOSEPH, L.*]

TAMAI [*Sadly*] She can never do any hurt again.

ASENATH. What! Is she dead?

TAMAI. She is—blind.

ASENATH. Oh, unhappy wretch! [*To JOSEPH, who enters*] My lord, hear what this maiden saith concerning Simeon.

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

JOSEPH. All she can say I know.

ASENATH. The knife——?

JOSEPH. I know; I know. Go in—make ready for the banquet.

ASENATH. With a heavy heart. Come with me, maiden.

TAMAI. Nay, lady; I must follow another road.

ASENATH. What is that?

TAMAI. To wait upon the blind Zuleika——

ASENATH [*To JOSEPH*] My lord—— [*She whispers to him*]

JOSEPH [*Coming to TAMAI*] Go in peace, sister; and fulfil thine errand of mercy. [*He takes her head in his hand, and kisses her. She goes out, C., shaken with sobs*]

[*ASENATH has gone out. Enter ENENKHET*]

JOSEPH. Well——?

ENENKHET. The ten brethren have entered the gates, my lord.

JOSEPH [*Eagerly*] Ten—! Art thou sure?

ENENKHET. Ay, my good lord.

JOSEPH [*With a cry of joy*] Then Benjamin, whom I have never seen, is here!—Almighty God, I thank Thee! [*He goes to the door and turns to speak from the platform to ENENKHET, who is in the centre of the hall*] Bring these men hither and slay and make ready; for these men shall dine with me at noon. [*Exit*]

[*ENENKHET claps his hands. Enter SERVANTS. They draw the blinds of the central entrance at the back. ENENKHET goes to the opening and beckons off R. Enter the BRETHREN. They are full of suspicion*]

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

[*Meanwhile the SERVANTS set the tables and cushions, and dress the hall with flowers. One table is set with four seats on the platform, L. Another for the Egyptians below the platform, at right angles with it, near the back, and a third for the BRETHREN, extreme R., leaving an open space, C.*]

ENENKHET [*At the entrance*] Come hither, friends! Nay, but come within boldly.

REUBEN [*Entering suspiciously, with LEVI*] Because of the money that was returned in our sacks at the first time are we brought in.

LEVI. Ay—that he may seek occasion against us, and fall upon us, and take us for bondmen.

JUDAH [*With BENJAMIN, outside*] Go not within, till we know my lord's mind.

REUBEN [*To the STEWARD*] O sir, we came indeed down at the first time to buy food, and when we opened our sacks, behold, every man's money in full weight! And we have brought it again in our hand.

LEVI. And other money have we brought to buy food.

JUDAH [*Who has entered with BENJAMIN—eagerly*] We cannot tell who put the money in our sacks.

ENENKHET. Peace be to you, fear not; your God, and the God of your fathers hath given you treasure in your sacks; I had your money.

[*All the BRETHREN enter. They talk together in wonderment*]

ENENKHET [*To SERVANTS*] Bring forth their brother that is an hostage. [*To the BRETHREN*] Ye are to dine with my lord.

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

[*Two SERVANTS go out, R. I. ENENKHET leaves the BRETHREN and attends to the preparations for the banquet. The BRETHREN huddle together*]

ISSACHAR. The man doth us too much honour.

DAN. I fear him.

ZEBULUN. Ay—we will move warily——

JUDAH [*To BENJAMIN, who is wandering off, admiring the hall*] Thou, bide at my side!

BENJAMIN [*Laughing*] Fear not me, brother!

[*The two SERVANTS re-enter, R. I., with SIMEON. He is gloomy, distraught, and scarcely greets his brethren*]

REUBEN. Lo! Simeon!

ALL [*Subdued*] Simeon—!

GAD. How is it with thee? Art thou whole?

SIMEON. It is well with me.

ASHER. Behold: our brother has taken no hurt; the man is an honourable man.

[*The BRETHREN are a little easier in their minds. ENENKHET goes to the central entrance, where he meets TEHUTI, SEBNI, ATHA and DEDEFRE, all in their richest robes*]

ENENKHET [*To them*] Hither, my lords! [*He ushers them in with great ceremony. They eye the BRETHREN askance*]

SIMEON [*In a quick whisper—to REUBEN*] Be silent! Be watchful!

REUBEN [*Startled into speaking out loud*] Is there danger?

SIMEON [*Viciously*] I said, Be silent!

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

TEHUTI [*Condescendingly; to JUDAH*] Are ye here also to sell your bodies for food?

JUDAH [*Haughtily*] Not so! Our God is good, and we have money.

[*The door on the left is thrown open*]

STEWARD. Behold! Zaphenath Paneah, the Revealer of Secrets, the lord of life, the Deliverer, draweth nigh.

[*Enter JOSEPH, ASENATH, MANASSEH and EPHRAIM, in robes of state. The two latter very young boys. All prostrate themselves. ASENATH and the two BOYS go behind the tables prepared for them. JOSEPH comes to the front of the platform*]

JOSEPH [*Gently*] Rise, friends. [*A pause*] Welcome, ye Hebrew Brethren! Is all well with you?

REUBEN [*Standing forward*] All is well with us, my lord. [*He crosses and kneels at the foot of the platform*] Lo, we have brought an humble gift for my lord. Honey and spices, myrrh, nuts and almonds. It is not worth my lord's notice.

JOSEPH. The spirit of the gift is all. Is your father well? The old man of whom ye spake? Is he yet alive?

REUBEN. Thy servant, our father, is in good health; he is yet alive.

JOSEPH [*Sees BENJAMIN; speaks with an effort*] Is this your younger brother of whom ye spake unto me?

[*REUBEN retires. JUDAH brings BENJAMIN forward*]

JUDAH. This is he, my lord; Benjamin, the son of Rachel.

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

JOSEPH [*Instinctively makes to step down and embrace BENJAMIN, but restrains himself. He stretches out his arms over the youth*] God be gracious unto thee, my son. [*To ENENKHET*] Set on bread. [*He turns away, covering his face with his cloak, and gets to his seat beside ASENATH*]

[*Under ENENKHET's direction, SERVANTS bring in the banquet, which they set on the tables. The GUESTS are still standing*]

ASENATH [*To JOSEPH*] Why is my lord so deeply stirred?

JOSEPH. My bowels yearn for Benjamin!

ASENATH. Who are the men, my lord?

JOSEPH. Wait a little while. [*To ENENKHET*] Come hither. [*He whispers to him, indicating the BRETHREN, and pointing to his silver cup. ENENKHET shows surprise; then laughs; finally bows in assent*]

ENENKHET. Thy guests are waiting, my lord.

JOSEPH. Sit, I pray you. [*The EGYPTIANS sit at once. The BRETHREN are in some confusion*] Reuben, the first-born, according to his birthright, and Simeon, Levi and Judah, the sons of Leah, together; the sons of Bilhah, Dan and Naphtali; Gad and Asher, the sons of Zilpah; the later-born sons of Leah, Issachar and Zebulun—and the youngest according to his youth; Benjamin, the son of Rachel. Set their messes before them, but let Benjamin's mess be five times so much as theirs.

REUBEN [*Amazed*] He knoweth our names and our degrees, and the names of our mothers!

SIMEON. It is black wizardry.

JOSEPH. Ye marvel one to another whence cometh my knowledge! [*He holds his silver cup on high*] Is not this my cup in which I drink and [*With intention*]

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

whereby indeed I divine? Now, drink with me, friends, and be merry.

[*All fall to with merry talk. Only the EGYPTIANS are silent and gloomy. In the gardens at the back are MINSTRELS and DANCING GIRLS. The MINSTRELS play very softly, and the DANCING GIRLS dance silently*]

[*The Hebrews are keenly interested. The EGYPTIANS take no notice of the dancers. Presently ENENKHET takes the cup JOSEPH has drunk from, goes out at door, L. 2, and is seen carrying the cup outside across the garden from L. to R. Then he returns. Meanwhile, the dialogue continues*]

JOSEPH [*To the EGYPTIANS*] Nay, but ye, the lords of the land, ye drink not, and your faces are dark.

TEHUTI. Our souls are heavy, my lord, for we are bondmen.

SEBNI [*Violently*] Lo! We have given our money, our cattle, our lands, and our bodies to Pharaoh.

ATHA. There is nothing left but death!

DEDEFRE. How, then, can we be merry?

SEBNI. Shall a man laugh by his own graveside?

[*Angry murmur and gestures among the EGYPTIANS. The HEBREWS are interested. ASENATH anxious*]

JOSEPH. Ye mourn too soon. Behold, I have bought you and your land for Pharaoh——

[*The EGYPTIANS leap to their feet with an angry roar*]

TEHUTI. Wilt thou make a boast of it?

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

[*Confusion. JOSEPH stands calm*]

JOSEPH. Now, hearken—! It shall come to pass in the good years, that ye shall give the fifth part only unto Pharaoh.

[*The EGYPTIANS are attentive*]

SEBNI. What doth he say?

DEDEFRE. We are redeemed!

[*The EGYPTIANS interrupt him with wild shouts*]

ATHA. Thou hast saved our lives!

DEDEFRE. Hail, prince of life!

SEBNI. Thou hast delivered us from bondage!

TEHUTI. Hail, Deliverer!

[*All the EGYPTIANS rush to the platform with extended arms. The HEBREWS also have risen, and join in the shout*]

[*ENENKHET has recrossed the garden, and re-entered*]

ALL. Deliverer!

STEWARD [*To JOSEPH*] It is done.

REUBEN. He is a righteous man.

LEVI. His God is with him.

JUDAH. He will do us no harm.

JOSEPH [*To the HEBREWS*] Behold, your asses are laden with food. Journey home and bring your little ones comfort.

REUBEN [*Advancing, and handing a leathern bag to the STEWARD*] My lord, here is the money.

[*All the HEBREWS advance*]

JUDAH. Farewell, great prince!

[*ALL make obeisance*]

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

JOSEPH. I drink to your safe journey. My cup——?

ENENKHET. The cup is lost, my lord!

ALL [*With horror*] Lost——!

[*Instinctively the HEBREWS gather in a knot*]

ENENKHET [*To them*] Wherefore have ye rewarded evil for good? Ye have stolen the cup!

[*With an exclamation of horror the HEBREWS surge down to R. front*]

EGYPTIANS [*Furious*] Ha! Dogs!

ASENATH [*Frightened*] Husband——!

JOSEPH [*Calmly*] Let be.

REUBEN [*Stepping forward*] Wherefore saith my lord these words? God forbid thy servants should do this thing!

EGYPTIANS. Strike them down!

LEVI. The money which we found in our sacks' mouths we brought again unto thee; how then should we steal out of thine house silver or gold?

GAD. Moreover, we have not moved.

[*Cries of assent from the HEBREWS*]

ENENKHET [*Indicating the EGYPTIANS*] Ay! in the turmoil these lords made?

EGYPTIANS. Slay them! Slay them!

JUDAH [*Hotly*] With whomsoever of thy servants it be found, both let him die, and we also will be my lord's bondmen!

[*Assent from the BRETHREN. Laughter from the EGYPTIANS. The asses of the HEBREWS stand in the garden, laden, and with SLAVES attending them*]

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

JOSEPH [*Gravely*] Let it be according unto your words. [*To ENENKHET, who is at the entrance*] Search.

[*ENENKHET and the SERVANTS open the sacks*]

JOSEPH. Begin with the eldest. He with whom it is found shall be my servant; and ye shall be blameless.

SIMEON [*Caressing his knife*] She was right! It is the plot! Oh! that I could reach him!

[*A silence. All watch the search. The BRETHREN lean forward in intense excitement*]

[*ENENKHET suddenly holds up the cup*]

ALL. The cup!

ENENKHET. In the sack of the youngest.

BRETHREN [*With a cry of agony*] Benjamin! [*They cover their faces*]

LEVI. It is Joseph's blood crying for atonement.

ISSACHAR. Therefore is this distress come upon us! } [*Almost together*]

EGYPTIANS. Slay them! Slay them!

JOSEPH [*Very gravely*] What deed is this that ye have done? [*Sternly*] Wot ye not that such a man as I am can certainly divine?

REUBEN [*His voice broken with sobs*] What shall we say unto my lord? What shall we speak? Or how shall we clear ourselves? God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants: [*Very humbly*] behold, we are my lord's servants, both we, and he also with whom the cup is found.

JOSEPH. God forbid that I should do so; but the man in whose hand the cup is found, *he* shall be my servant——

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

BRETHREN [*In a horrified whisper among themselves*]
Benjamin——!

JOSEPH. And as for you—get ye up in peace unto your father——

BRETHREN [*As above*] To Jacob—without Benjamin——!

EGYPTIANS. Too merciful! Slay them all!

[*At a sign from JOSEPH the EGYPTIANS leave the hall and the curtains are closed*]

[*JUDAH brings BENJAMIN forward. He begins very quietly, very humbly; but as he goes on, he is carried away by the pathos of his own words. Towards the middle of his speech, JOSEPH veils his face. ASENATH weeps silently*]

JUDAH. Oh, my lord, let thy servant, I pray thee, speak a word in my lord's ears, and let not thine anger burn against thy servant, for thou art even as Pharaoh. —My lord asked his servant saying, Have ye a father, or a brother? And we said unto my lord, We have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, and his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother, and his father loveth him. And thou said'st unto thy servants, Bring him down unto me, that I may set mine eyes upon him. And we said, The lad cannot leave his father; for if he should leave his father his father would die. And thou said'st unto thy servant, Except thy younger brother come down with you, ye shall see my face no more. Also thou heldest Simeon as hostage. And when we came up unto thy servant my father, we told him the words of my lord. And our father said, Go again, and buy a little food. And we said, We cannot go down; if our younger brother be with us, then will we go down; for we may not see the

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

man's face except our youngest brother be with us. And thy servant my father said, Ye know that my wife bare me two sons: and the one went out from me, and I said, Surely he is torn in pieces; and I saw him not since. And if ye take this also from me, and mischief befall him, ye shall bring down my grey hairs with sorrow to the grave. Now, therefore, when I come to my father, and the lad be not with us; seeing that his life is bound up in the lad's life; it shall come to pass, when he seeth that the lad is not with us, that he will die: and thy servant shall bring down the grey hairs of thy servant my father with sorrow to the grave. For thy servant became surety for the lad unto my father, saying, If I bring him not unto thee, then shall I bear the blame to my father forever. Now, therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide instead of the lad a bondman to my lord: and let the lad go up with his brethren. [*With extreme agony*] For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me? lest peradventure I see the evil that shall come to my father.

[*JUDAH falls prone, with outstretched arms before JOSEPH. The BRETHREN also are prostrate, all but SIMEON, who remains standing, fingering his knife. ASENATH makes a gesture of appeal*]

[*SIMEON suddenly bursts through the knot of BRETHREN, brandishing his knife*]

SIMEON. Vengeance! Vengeance!

BRETHREN [*With horror*] Simeon!

[*They hold him. Uproar*]

JOSEPH [*On the step, removing his cloak from his face, which is now radiant, and speaking with the utmost simplicity*] Peace!—I am Joseph!

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

BRETHREN [*Starting back and huddling together, amazed*] Joseph!

JOSEPH [*As above*] Doth my father yet live?

[*The BRETHREN are stricken with terror. They can utter no sound*]

JOSEPH. Fear not. Shall I judge you? Am I in the place of God? [*He throws open his robe. He is clad in a shepherd's dress similar to the one he wore in Acts I and II. The BRETHREN begin to recognize him, but are all the more panic-stricken*]

JOSEPH [*Holding out his arms, affectionately*] Come near unto me. [*They do not stir; he speaks with extreme yearning*] I pray you!—I am Joseph, your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt.

SIMEON [*With a cry of agony*] Joseph! Joseph! [*He throws himself at JOSEPH's feet*]

[*The BRETHREN burst into wild cries, sobs, hysterical laughter, as they surge towards JOSEPH and hurl themselves in a confused mass before him*]

JOSEPH [*Coming down amongst them, while they embrace his knees, kiss his garments and his feet, reach up to him and touch him*] Be not grieved or angry with yourselves that ye sold me hither; for God did send me before you to preserve life, and to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God. [*He lifts BENJAMIN to his heart*] O Benjamin! My brother! My brother!

[*With cries of "JOSEPH!"—"Brother!" all the BRETHREN crowd round to embrace him. But SIMEON stands apart in despair—he is thinking of slaying himself with his own knife*]

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

JOSEPH [*Crossing to him*] Simeon——

SIMEON [*Breaking into sobs*] Thou knowest not!—
Thou knowest not——

JOSEPH [*Putting his arm round his shoulder*] I know.
[*Laughing*] Did she not speak truth? Was I not holding Joseph in hiding?

SIMEON [*Falling into JOSEPH's arms*] Oh! my brother!

JOSEPH. Summon all the people! Let them rejoice with me.

[*ASENATH opens door, L. 2. Immediately all the doors and the curtains are opened; the EGYPTIAN NOBLES and all JOSEPH's household stream in, excitedly. ASENATH meanwhile comes down with the two boys, and JOSEPH shows them to his BRETHREN, who make obeisance to ASENATH, embrace the boys, etc.*]

JOSEPH [*To the CROWD*] Behold! These are my brethren from the Land of Canaan. Shew them like honour as ye shew unto me!

[*Exchange of greetings*]

REUBEN. Now must we hasten to Canaan to tell our father the great news.

JOSEPH. Nay, but ye shall abide here, and send for your wives and your little ones; for the good of all the land of Egypt is yours.

JUDAH. Our father yearneth for Benjamin—and for thee also he hath grieved all the years that thou wast lost.

[*A great shout goes up outside*]

JOSEPH. Throw wide the gates!

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

[*All the enclosure at the back is removed. The gardens are full of an excited throng. Through the crowd comes a procession of CANAANITES, MEN, WOMEN and CHILDREN, with, in their midst, JACOB, borne on a litter high on the shoulders of eight bearers*]

[*JOSEPH awaits the entrance of the litter, with MANASSEH on his left hand and EPHRAIM on his right. ASENATH stands a little behind, all with their backs to the audience*]

[*The BRETHREN, at the sight of JACOB, have cried: "Jacob! Our father! Israel!" and have made room for JOSEPH and his group to stand alone*]

[*The litter is set down, and is so built that when it is on the ground JACOB is very nearly upright*]

[*The CROWD form a great semi-circle round the central group*]

JOSEPH. Great Israel! Behold thy son! [*He rushes to his father's arms*]

JACOB. Now let me die, since I have seen thy face! [*He rises, with outstretched arms, inspired*] Joseph is a fruitful bough by a well, whose branches run over the wall; the archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and persecuted him; but his bough abode in strength and the arms of his hands were made strong, by the Hands of the Mighty One of Jacob, even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee, and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that coucheth beneath, blessings of the breast and of the womb. The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

hills; they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren.

[*ALL stretch their arms out to him in the soft after-glow of the sunset*]

JOSEPH. He raiseth the poor from the dust; from the depths He lifteth up the needy. Oh, Lord of Hosts, happy is the man who trusteth in Thee!

CURTAIN

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