

Scene 1 - "Nights In White Satin"

The Young Syrian, The Page of Herodias, First Soldier, Second Soldier

THE YOUNG SYRIAN

How beautiful is the Princess Salome to-night!

THE PAGE OF HERODIAS

Look at the moon. How strange the moon seems! She is like a woman rising from a tomb. She is like a dead woman. One might fancy she was looking for dead things.

THE YOUNG SYRIAN

She has a strange look. She is like a little princess who wears a yellow veil, and whose feet are of silver. She is like a princess who has little white doves for feet. One might fancy she was dancing.

THE PAGE OF HERODIAS

She is like a woman who is dead. She moves very slowly.

[Noise in the banqueting-hall.]

FIRST SOLDIER

What an uproar! Who are those wild beasts howling?

SECOND SOLDIER

The Jews. They are always like that. They are disputing about their religion.

FIRST SOLDIER

Why do they dispute about their religion?

SECOND SOLDIER

I cannot tell. They are always doing it. The Pharisees, for instance, say that there are angels, and the Sadducees declare that angels do not exist.

FIRST SOLDIER

I think it is ridiculous to dispute about such things.

THE YOUNG SYRIAN

How beautiful is the Princess Salome to-night!

THE PAGE OF HERODIAS

You are always looking at her. You look at her too much. It is dangerous to look at people in such fashion. Something terrible may happen.

THE YOUNG SYRIAN

She is very beautiful to-night.

Scene 2 - "Livin' La Vida Loca"

First Soldier, Second Soldier, The Cappadocian, The Nubian, Iokanaan

SECOND SOLDIER

The Tetrarch is very fond of wine. He has wine of three sorts. One which is brought from the Island of Samothrace, and is purple like the cloak of Caesar.

THE CAPPADOCIAN

I have never seen Caesar.

SECOND SOLDIER

Another that comes from a town called Cyprus, and is as yellow as gold.

THE CAPPADOCIAN

I love gold.

SECOND SOLDIER

And the third is a wine of Sicily. That wine is as red as blood.

THE NUBIAN

The gods of my country are very fond of blood. Twice in the year we sacrifice to them young men and maidens: fifty young men and a hundred maidens. But I am afraid that we never give them quite enough, for they are very harsh to us.

THE CAPPADOCIAN

In my country there are no gods left. The Romans have driven them out. There are some who say that they have hidden themselves in the mountains, but I do not believe it. Three nights I have been on the mountains seeking them everywhere. I did not find them, and at last I called them by their names, and they did not come. I think they are dead.

FIRST SOLDIER

The Jews worship a God that one cannot see.

THE CAPPADOCIAN

I cannot understand that.

FIRST SOLDIER

In fact, they only believe in things that one cannot see.

THE CAPPADOCIAN

That seems to me altogether ridiculous.

THE VOICE OF IOKANAAN

After me shall come another mightier than I. I am not worthy so much as to unloose the latchet of his shoes. When he cometh the solitary places shall be

glad. They shall blossom like the rose. The eyes of the blind shall see the day, and the ears of the deaf shall be opened. The sucking child shall put his hand upon the dragon's lair, he shall lead the lions by their manes.

SECOND SOLDIER

Make him be silent. He is always saying ridiculous things.

FIRST SOLDIER

No, no. He is a holy man. He is very gentle, too. Every day when I give him to eat he thanks me.

THE CAPPADOCIAN

Who is he?

FIRST SOLDIER

A prophet.

THE CAPPADOCIAN

What is his name?

FIRST SOLDIER

Iokanaan.

THE CAPPADOCIAN

Whence comes he?

FIRST SOLDIER

From the desert, where he fed on locusts and wild honey. He was clothed in camel's hair, and round his loins he had a leathern belt. He was very terrible to look upon. A great multitude used to follow him. He even had disciples.

THE CAPPADOCIAN

What is he talking of?

FIRST SOLDIER

We can never tell. Sometimes he says things that affright one, but it is impossible to understand what he says.

THE CAPPADOCIAN

May one see him?

FIRST SOLDIER

No. The Tetrarch has forbidden it.

Scene 3 - "Under Pressure"

Salome, The Young Syrian, The Page of Herodias, Second Soldier, Iokanaan

SALOME

I will not stay. I cannot stay. Why does the Tetrarch look at me all the while with his mole's eyes under his shaking eyelids? It is strange that the husband of my mother looks at me like that; I know not what it means. Of a truth I know it too well.

THE YOUNG SYRIAN

You have left the feast, Princess?

SALOME

How sweet is the air here! I can breathe here!

THE YOUNG SYRIAN

Will you be seated, Princess?

THE PAGE OF HERODIAS

Why do you speak to her? Oh! something terrible will happen. Why do you look at her?

THE VOICE OF IOKANAAN

Behold! the Lord hath come. The Son of Man is at hand. The centaurs have hidden themselves in the rivers, and the nymphs have left the rivers, and are lying beneath the leaves in the forests.

SALOME

Who was that who cried out?

SECOND SOLDIER

The prophet, Princess.

SALOME

Ah, the prophet! He of whom the Tetrarch is afraid?

SECOND SOLDIER

We know nothing of that, Princess. It was the prophet Iokanaan who cried out.

THE YOUNG SYRIAN

Is it your pleasure that I bid them bring your litter, Princess? The night is fair in the garden.

SALOME

He says terrible things about my mother, does he not?

SECOND SOLDIER

We never understand what he says, Princess.

SALOME

Yes; he says terrible things about her. I will speak with him. Did you not hear me? Bring out the prophet. I would look on him.

SECOND SOLDIER

Princess, I beg you, do not require this of us.

SALOME

[Looking at the young Syrian.]

Ah!

THE PAGE OF HERODIAS

Oh! what is going to happen? I am sure that something terrible will happen.

SALOME

Thou wilt do this thing for me, wilt thou not, Narraboth? Thou wilt do this thing for me. I have ever been kind towards thee. Thou wilt do it for me. I would but look at him, this strange prophet. Men have talked so much of him. Often I have heard the Tetrarch talk of him. I think he is afraid of him, the Tetrarch. Art thou, even thou, also afraid of him, Narraboth?

THE YOUNG SYRIAN

I fear him not, Princess; there is no man I fear. But the Tetrarch has formally forbidden that any man should raise the cover of this well.

SALOME

Thou wilt do this thing for me, Narraboth, and to-morrow when I pass in my litter beneath the gateway of the idol-sellers I will let fall for thee a little flower, a little Green flower.

THE YOUNG SYRIAN

Princess, I cannot, I cannot.

SALOME

Thou wilt do this thing for me, Narraboth. Thou knowest that thou wilt do this thing for me. And on the morrow when I shall pass in my litter by the bridge of the idol-buyers, I will look at thee through the muslin veils, I will look at thee, Narraboth, it may be I will smile at thee. Look at me, Narraboth, look at me. Ah! thou knowest that thou wilt do what I ask of thee.

THE YOUNG SYRIAN

Let the prophet come forth The Princess Salome desires to see him.

Scene 4 - "U Can't Touch This"

Salome, The Young Syrian, Iokanaan

IOKANAAN

Who is this woman who is looking at me? I will not have her look at me. Wherefore doth she look at me, with her golden eyes, under her gilded eyelids? I know not who she is. I do not desire to know who she is. Bid her begone, it is not to her that I would speak.

SALOME

I am Salome, daughter of Herodias, Princess of Judaea.

IOKANAAN

Back! daughter of Babylon! Come not near the chosen of the Lord. Thy mother hath filled the earth with the wine of her iniquities, and the cry of her sinning hath come up even to the ears of God.

SALOME

Speak again, Iokanaan. Thy voice is as music to mine ear. Speak again, Iokanaan, and tell me what I must do.

IOKANAAN

Daughter of Sodom, come not near me! But cover thy face with a veil, and scatter ashes upon thine head, and get thee to the desert, and seek out the Son of Man.

SALOME

Who is he, the Son of Man? Is he as beautiful as thou art, Iokanaan?

IOKANAAN

Get thee behind me! I hear in the palace the beating of the wings of the angel of death.

Angel of the Lord God, what dost thou here with thy sword? Whom seekest thou in this palace? The day of him who shall die in a robe of silver has not yet come.

SALOME

Iokanaan!

IOKANAAN

Who speaketh?

SALOME

I am amorous of thy body, Iokanaan! Thy body is white like the snows that lie on the mountains of Judaea, and come down into the valleys. The roses in the garden of the Queen of Arabia are not so white as thy body. Neither the roses, nor the

feet of the dawn when they light on the leaves, nor the breast of the moon when she lies on the breast of the sea There is nothing in the world so white as thy body. Suffer me to touch thy body.

IOKANAAN

Back! daughter of Babylon! By woman came evil into the world. Speak not to me. I will not listen to thee. I listen but to the voice of the Lord God.

SALOME

Thy body is hideous. It is like the body of a leper. It is like a plastered wall, where vipers have crawled; like a plastered wall where the scorpions have made their nest. It is like a whited sepulchre, full of loathsome things. It is horrible, thy body is horrible.

It is thy mouth that I desire, Iokanaan. Thy mouth is like a band of scarlet on a tower of ivory. It is like a pomegranate cut in twain with a knife of ivory. The pomegranate flowers that blossom in the gardens of Tyre, and are redder than roses, are not so red. The red blasts of trumpets that herald the approach of kings, and make afraid the enemy, are not so red. Thy mouth is redder than the feet of those who tread the wine in the wine-press. It is redder than the feet of the doves who inhabit the temples and are fed by the priests. It is redder than the feet of him who cometh from a forest where he hath slain a lion, and seen gilded tigers. Thy Mouth is like a branch of coral that fishers have found in the twilight of the sea, the coral that they keep for the kings! . . . It is like the vermilion that the Moahites find in the mines of Moab, the vermilion that the kings take from them. It is like the bow of the King of the Persians, that is painted with vermilion, and is tipped with coral. There is nothing in the world so red as thy mouth

Suffer me to kiss thy mouth.

IOKANAAN

Never! daughter of Babylon! Daughter of Sodom! never!

SALOME

I will kiss thy mouth, Iokanaan. I will kiss thy mouth.

THE YOUNG SYRIAN

Princess, Princess, thou who art like a garden of myrrh, thou who art the dove of all doves, look not at this man, look not at him! Do not speak such words to him. I cannot endure it. . . Princess, do not speak these things.

SALOME

I will kiss thy mouth, Iokanaan.

Scene 5 - "Killing Me Softly"

Herod, Herodias, First Soldier, Second Soldier, Tigellinus, The Page of Herodias

FIRST SOLDIER

We must bear away the body to another place. The Tetrarch does not care to see dead bodies, save the bodies of those whom he himself has slain.

THE PAGE OF HERODIAS

He was my brother, and nearer to me than a brother. I gave him a little box full of perfumes, and a ring of agate that he wore always on his hand. In the evening we were wont to walk by the river, and among the almond-trees, and he used to tell me of the things of his country. He spake ever very low. The sound of his voice was like the sound of the flute, of one who playeth upon the flute. Also he had much joy to gaze at himself in the river. I used to reproach him for that.

SECOND SOLDIER

You are right; we must hide the body. The Tetrarch must not see it.

FIRST SOLDIER

The Tetrarch will not come to this place.

[Enter HEROD with HERODIAS and TIGELLINUS.]

HEROD

Where is Salome? Where is the Princess? Why did she not return to the banquet as I commanded her?

HERODIAS

You must not look at her! You are always looking at her! Let us go within We have nothing to do here.

HEROD

I will stay here! I will drink more wine with my guests. We must show all honours to the ambassadors of Caesar. Come, Herodias, our guests await us. Ah! I have slipped! I have slipped in blood! It is an ill omen. It is a very ill omen. Wherefore is there blood here? . . . and this body, what does this body here? Think you I am like the King of Egypt, who gives no feast to his guests but that he shows them a corpse? Whose is it? I will not look on it.

FIRST SOLDIER

It is our captain, sire. It is the young Syrian whom you made captain of the guard but three days gone.

HEROD

I issued no order that he should be slain.

SECOND SOLDIER

He slew himself, sire.

HEROD

For what reason? I had made him captain of my guard!

SECOND SOLDIER

We do not know, sire. But with his own hand he slew himself.

HEROD

That seems strange to me. I had thought it was but the Roman philosophers who slew themselves. Is it not true, Tigellinus, that the philosophers at Rome slay themselves?

TIGELLINUS

There be some who slay themselves, sire. They are the Stoics. The Stoics are people of no cultivation. They are ridiculous people. I myself regard them as being perfectly ridiculous.

HEROD

I also. It is ridiculous to kill one's-self.

TIGELLINUS

Everybody at Rome laughs at them. The Emperor has written a satire against them. It is recited everywhere.

HEROD

Ah! he has written a satire against them? Caesar is wonderful. He can do everything. . . . It is strange that the young Syrian has slain himself. I am sorry he has slain himself. I am very sorry. For he was fair to look upon.

It is cold here. There is a wind blowing. Is there not a wind blowing?

HERODIAS

No; there is no wind.

HEROD

I tell you there is a wind that blows And I hear in the air something that is like the beating of wings, like the beating of vast wings. Do you not hear it?

HERODIAS

I hear nothing.

Scene 6 - "Sweet Child o' Mine"

Herod, Herodias, Salome

HEROD

Salome, come drink a little wine with me. I have here a wine that is exquisite. Caesar himself sent it me. Dip into it thy little red lips, that I may drain the cup.

SALOME

I am not thirsty, Tetrarch.

HEROD

You hear how she answers me, this daughter of yours?

HERODIAS

She does right. Why are you always gazing at her?

HEROD

Bring me ripe fruits.

Salome, come and eat fruits with me. I love to see in a fruit the mark of thy little teeth. Bite but a little of this fruit, that I may eat what is left.

SALOME

I am not hungry, Tetrarch.

HEROD

[To Herodias]

You see how you have brought up this daughter of yours.

HERODIAS

My daughter and I come of a royal race. As for thee, thy father was a camel driver! He was a thief and a robber to boot!

HEROD

Thou liest!

HERODIAS

Thou knowest well that it is true.

HEROD

Salome, come and sit next to me. I will give thee the throne of thy mother.

SALOME

I am not tired, Tetrarch.

HERODIAS

You see in what regard she holds you.

Scene 7 - "Everybody Wants to Rule the World"

Herod, Herodias, First Jew, Second Jew, Third Jew, A Nazarene

HEROD

I am not afraid of him. I am afraid of no man.

HERODIAS

I tell you you are afraid of him. If you are not afraid of him why do you not deliver him to the Jews who for these six months past have been clamouring for him?

FIRST JEW

Truly, my lord, it were better to deliver him into our hands.

HEROD

Enough on this subject. I have already given you my answer. I will not deliver him into your hands. He is a holy man. He is a man who has seen God.

FIRST JEW

That cannot be. There is no man who hath seen God since the prophet Elias. He is the last man who saw God face to face. In these days God doth not show Himself. God hideth Himself. Therefore great evils have come upon the land.

SECOND JEW

Verily, no man knoweth if Elias the prophet did indeed see God. Peradventure it was but the shadow of God that he saw.

THIRD JEW

God is at no time hidden. He showeth Himself at all times and in all places. God is in what is evil even as He is in what is good.

SECOND JEW

Thou shouldst not say that. It is a very dangerous doctrine. It is a doctrine that cometh from Alexandria, where men teach the philosophy of the Greeks. And the Greeks are Gentiles. They are not even circumcised.

THIRD JEW

No man can tell how God worketh. His ways are very dark. It may be that the things which we call evil are good, and that the things which we call good are evil. There is no knowledge of anything. We can but bow our heads to His will, for God is very strong. He breaketh in pieces the strong together with the weak, for He regardeth not any man.

FIRST JEW

Thou speakest truly. Verily, God is terrible. He breaketh in pieces the strong and

the weak as men break corn in a mortar. But as for this man, he hath never seen God. No man hath seen God since the prophet Elias.

HERODIAS

Make them be silent. They weary me.

HEROD

But I have heard it said that lokanaan is in very truth your prophet Elias.

FIRST JEW

That cannot be. It is more than three hundred years since the days of the prophet Elias.

HEROD

There be some who say that this man is Elias the prophet.

A NAZARENE

I am sure that he is Elias the prophet.

FIRST JEW

Nay, but he is not Elias the prophet.

Scene 8 - "Losing My Religion"

Herod, Herodias, First Jew, Second Jew, A Nazarene, The Page of Herodias (silent)

A NAZARENE

This Man worketh true miracles. Thus, at a marriage which took place in a little town of Galilee, a town of some importance, He changed water into wine. Certain persons who were present related it to me. Also He healed two lepers that were seated before the Gate of Capernaum simply by touching them. He hath healed blind people also, and He was seen on a mountain talking with angels.

SECOND JEW

Angels do not exist.

THIRD JEW

Angels exist, but I do not believe that this Man has talked with them.

A NAZARENE

He was seen by a great multitude of people talking with angels.

HERODIAS

How these men weary me! They are ridiculous! They are altogether ridiculous!

[To the Page.]

Well! my fan?

[The Page gives her the fan.]

You have a dreamer's look. You must not dream. It is only sick people who dream.

[She strikes the Page with her fan.]

A NAZARENE

There is also the miracle of the daughter of Jairus, that is sure. No man can gainsay it.

HERODIAS

Those men are mad. They have looked too long on the moon. Command them to be silent.

HEROD

What is this miracle of the daughter of Jairus?

A NAZARENE

The daughter of Jairus was dead. This Man raised her from the dead.

HEROD

How! He raises people from the dead?

A NAZARENE

Yea, sire; He raiseth the dead.

HEROD

I do not wish Him to do that. I forbid Him to do that. I suffer no man to raise the dead. This Man must be found and told that I forbid Him to raise the dead. Where is this Man at present?

A NAZARENE

He is in every place, my lord, but it is hard to find Him. It is said that He is now in Samaria.

FIRST JEW

It is easy to see that this is not Messiah, if He is in Samaria. It is not to the Samaritans that Messiah shall come. The Samaritans are accursed. They bring no offerings to the Temple.

SECOND JEW

He left Samaria a few days since. I think that at the present moment He is in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem.

A NAZARENE

No; He is not there. I have just come from Jerusalem. For two months they have had no tidings of Him.

HEROD

No matter! But let them find Him, and tell Him, thus saith Herod the King, "I will not suffer Thee to raise the dead." To change water into wine, to heal the lepers and the blind He may do these things if He will. I say nothing against these things. In truth I hold it a kindly deed to heal a leper. But no man shall raise the dead It would be terrible if the dead came back.

Scene 9 - "All That She Wants"

Herod, Herodias, Salome

HEROD

Ah! wonderful! wonderful! You see that she has danced for me, your daughter. Come near, Salome, come near. I pay a royal price to those who dance for my pleasure. I will give thee whatsoever thy soul desireth. What wouldst thou have? Speak.

SALOME

I would that they presently bring me in a silver charger . .

HEROD

In a silver charger? Surely yes, in a silver charger. She is charming, is she not? O sweet and fair Salome. My treasures belong to thee. What is it that thou wouldst have?

SALOME

The head of Iokanaan.

HERODIAS

Ah! that is well said, my daughter.

HEROD

No, no!

HERODIAS

That is well said, my daughter.

HEROD

No, no, Salome. It is not that thou desirest. Do not listen to thy mother's voice. She is ever giving thee evil counsel. Do not heed her.

SALOME

It is not my mother's voice that I heed. It is for mine own pleasure that I ask the head of Iokanaan in a silver charger. You have sworn an oath, Herod. Forget not that you have sworn an oath.

HEROD

I know it. I have sworn an oath by my gods. I know it well. But. I pray thee, Salome, ask of me something else. Ask of me the half of my kingdom, and I will give it thee. But ask not of me what thy lips have asked.

SALOME

I ask of you the head of Iokanaan.

HEROD

No, no, I will not give it thee.

SALOME

You have sworn an oath, Herod.

HERODIAS

Yes, you have sworn an oath. Everybody heard you. You swore it before everybody.

HEROD

Peace, woman! It is not to you I speak.

HERODIAS

My daughter has done well to ask the head of Iokanaan. He has covered me with insults. He has said unspeakable things against me. One can see that she loves her mother well. Do not yield, my daughter. He has sworn an oath, he has sworn an oath.

HEROD

Peace! Speak not to me! . . . Salome, I pray thee be not stubborn. I have ever been kind toward thee. I have ever loved thee. . . It may be that I have loved thee too much. Therefore ask not this thing of me. This is a terrible thing, an awful thing to ask of me. The head of a man that is cut from his body is ill to look upon, is it not? What pleasure couldst thou have in it?

I have an emerald, a great emerald and round, that the minion of Caesar has sent unto me. It is the largest emerald in the whole world. Thou wilt take that, wilt thou not? Ask it of me and I will give it thee.

SALOME

I demand the head of Iokanaan.

HEROD

Thou art not listening. Thou art not listening. Suffer me to speak, Salome.

SALOME

The head of Iokanaan!

Monologue 1 - Salome

SALOME

Wherefore didst thou not look at me, lokanaan?

With the cloak of thine hands, and with the cloak of thy blasphemies thou didst hide thy face. Thou didst put upon thine eyes the covering of him who would see his God. Well, thou hast seen thy God, lokanaan, but me, me, thou didst never see. If thou hadst seen me thou hadst loved me. I saw thee, and I loved thee. Oh, how I loved thee! I love thee yet, lokanaan. I love only thee

I am athirst for thy beauty; I am hungry for thy body; and neither wine nor apples can appease my desire. What shall I do now, lokanaan? Neither the floods nor the great waters can quench my passion. I was a princess, and thou didst scorn me. I was a virgin, and thou didst take my virginity from me. I was chaste, and thou didst fill my veins with fire

Ah! ah! wherefore didst thou not look at me? If thou hadst looked at me thou hadst loved me. Well I know that thou wouldst have loved me, and the mystery of Love is greater than the mystery of Death.

I have kissed thy mouth, lokanaan, I have kissed thy mouth. There was a bitter taste on thy lips. Was it the taste of blood? . . . Nay; but perchance it was the taste of love. . They say that love hath a bitter taste. But what matter? what matter? I have kissed thy mouth, lokanaan, I have kissed thy mouth.

Monologue 2 - Herod

HEROD

Ah! thou art not listening to me. Be calm. As for me, am I not calm? I am altogether calm. Listen.

I have jewels hidden in this place -- jewels that thy mother even has never seen; jewels that are marvellous to look at. I have a collar of pearls, set in four rows.

I have amethysts of two kinds; one that is black like wine, and one that is red like wine that one has coloured with water. I have topazes yellow as are the eyes of tigers, and topazes that are pink as the eyes of a wood-pigeon, and green topazes that are as the eyes of cats. I have opals that burn always, with a flame that is cold as ice, opals that make sad men's minds, and are afraid of the shadows. I have onyxes like the eyeballs of a dead woman. I have moonstones that change when the moon changes, and are wan when they see the sun. I have sapphires big like eggs, and as blue as blue flowers. The sea wanders within them, and the moon comes never to trouble the blue of their waves. I have chrysolites and beryls, and chrysoprases and rubies; I have sardonyx and hyacinth stones, and stones of chalcedony, and I will give them all unto thee, all.

What desirest thou more than this, Salome? Tell me the thing that thou desirest, and I will give it thee. All that thou askest I will give thee, save one thing only. I will give thee all that is mine, save only the life of one man.