SALOMÈ, A TRAGEDY IN ONE ACT. DRAWINGS BY AUBREY BEARDSLEY

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Salomè, a Tragedy in One Act. Drawings by Aubrey Beardsley by Oscar Wilde

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OSCAR WILDE

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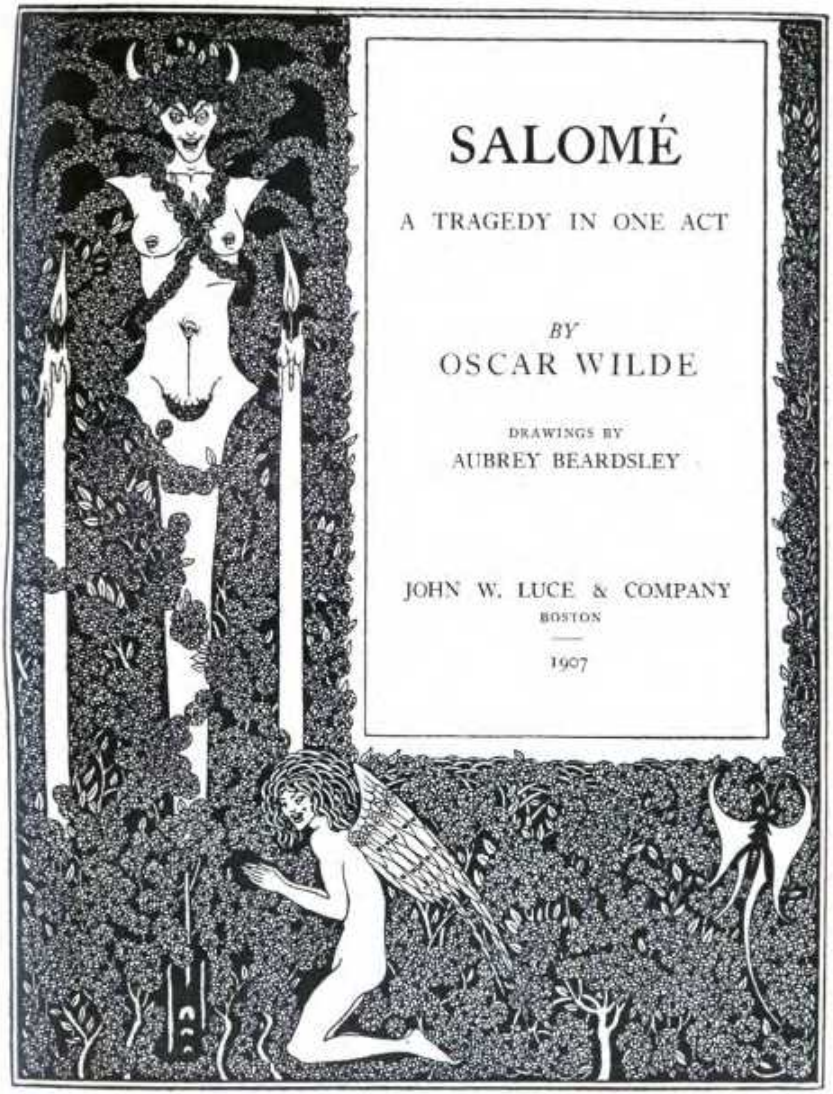

SALOMÉ

A TRAGEDY IN ONE ACT

BY

OSCAR WILDE

DRAWINGS BY

AUBREY BEARDSLEY

JOHN W. LUCE & COMPANY

BOSTON

1907

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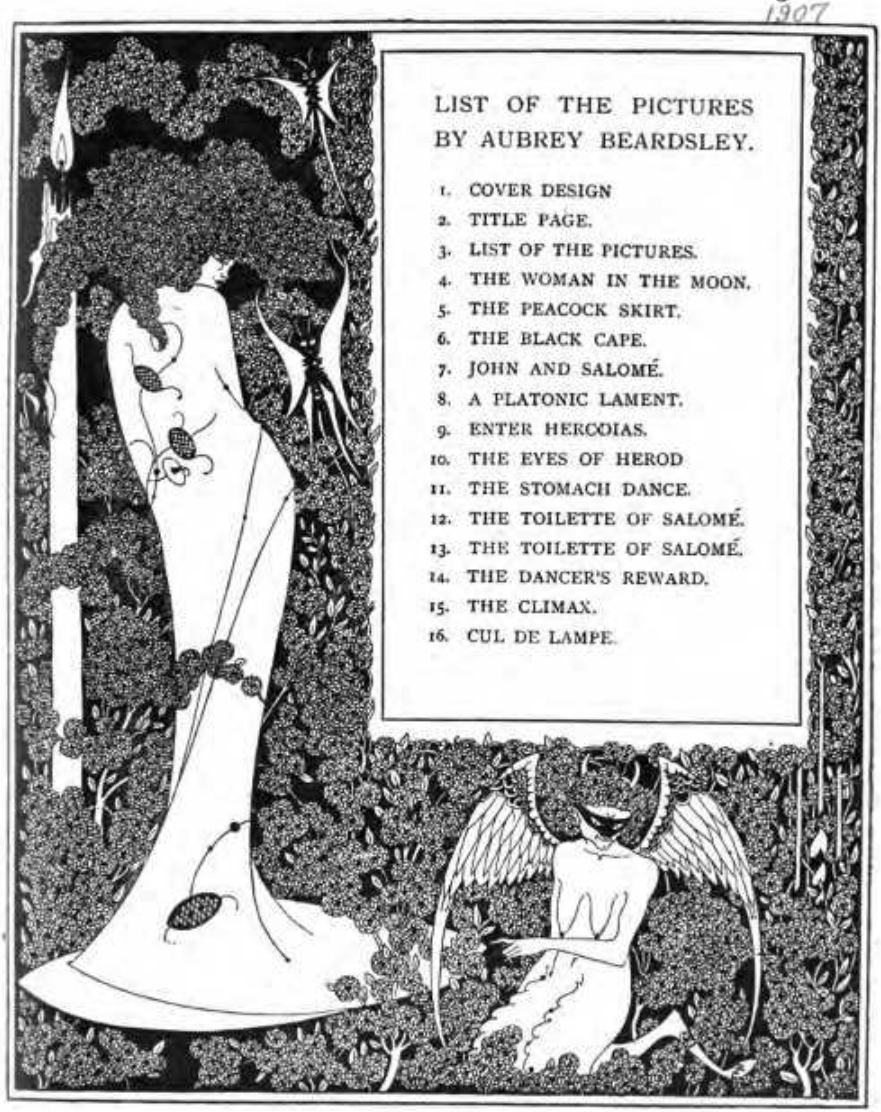

LIST OF THE PICTURES BY AUBREY BEARDSLEY.

1. COVER DESIGN
2. TITLE PAGE.
3. LIST OF THE PICTURES.
4. THE WOMAN IN THE MOON.
5. THE PEACOCK SKIRT.
6. THE BLACK CAPE.
7. JOHN AND SALOMÉ.
8. A PLATONIC LAMENT.
9. ENTER HERCOIAS.
10. THE EYES OF HEROD
11. THE STOMACH DANCE.
12. THE TOILETTE OF SALOMÉ.
13. THE TOILETTE OF SALOMÉ.
14. THE DANCER'S REWARD.
15. THE CLIMAX.
16. CUL DE LAMPE.

SALOMÉ

The Persons of the Play

HEROD ANTIPAS (Tetrarch of Judæa).
JOKANAAN (the Prophet).
THE YOUNG SYRIAN (Captain of the Guard).
TIGELLINUS (a Young Roman).
A CAPPADOCIAN.
A NUBIAN.
FIRST SOLDIER.
SECOND SOLDIER.
THE PAGE OF HERODIAS.
JEWS, NAZARENES, ETC.
A SLAVE.
NAAMAN (the Executioner).
HERODIAS (Wife of the Tetrarch).
SALOMÉ (Daughter of Herodias).
THE SLAVES OF SALOMÉ.

SALOMÉ

SCENE — *A great terrace in the Palace of* HEROD, *set above the banqueting-hall. Some soldiers are leaning over the balcony. To the right there is a gigantic staircase, to the left, at the back, an old cistern surrounded by a wall of green bronze. The moon is shining very brightly.*

THE YOUNG SYRIAN. How beautiful is the Princess Salomé 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 Salomé 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.

FIRST SOLDIER. The Tetrarch has a sombre aspect.

SECOND SOLDIER. Yes; he has a sombre aspect.

FIRST SOLDIER. He is looking at something.

SECOND SOLDIER. He is looking at some one.

FIRST SOLDIER. At whom is he looking?

SECOND SOLDIER. I cannot tell.

THE YOUNG SYRIAN. How pale the Princess is! Never have I seen her so pale. She is like the shadow of a white rose in a mirror of silver.

THE PAGE OF HERODIAS. You must not look at her. You look too much at her.

FIRST SOLDIER. Herodias has filled the cup of the Tetrarch.

THE CAPPADOCIAN. Is that the Queen Herodias, she who wears a black mitre sewed with pearls, and whose hair is powdered with blue dust?

FIRST SOLDIER. Yes; that is Herodias, the Tetrarch's wife.

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 Cæsar.

THE CAPPADOCIAN. I have never seen Cæsar.

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. 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 JOKANAAN. 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 suckling 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?