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SALOMÉ

OSCAR WILDE

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Salomé, the haunting one-act tragedy that marks Wilde's first great success in the theatre, retells the Biblical story in which the stepdaughter of the tetrarch Herod Antipas demands the head of John the Baptist on a silver platter as a reward for her dancing for her stepfather's amusement. Written in 1891, and prepared for its first run in 1892, rehearsals of *Salomé* had to be cancelled when the play was banned by the Lord Chamberlain due to its depiction of religious characters.

Undaunted, Wilde moved on to the drawing-room and society comedies he is today best known for, wowing London audiences with *Lady Windermere's Fan* and *A Woman of No Importance*, and it was only in 1894 that *Salomé* saw the light of day in an English translation, with a series of specially commissioned illustrations by the up-and-coming Aubrey Beardsley.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Oscar Fingal O'Flahertie Wills Wilde (1854–1900) was an author, poet and one of the best-known playwrights in the English canon. His private life is widely discussed, since his sexuality and relationship with Lord Alfred Douglas led him to a conviction for 'gross indecency'. He is best remembered for his short-story collections, his poetry, his novel *Dorian Gray* and his plays – particularly *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

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