

THE SPARROW AND THE HAWK

By Alberta Hawse

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STORY OF THE PLAY

Have you ever wondered about some of the people who were responsible for crucifying Jesus? After all, what kind of people could kill our Lord? The pain and guilt felt by two women, the anger of the third, and the joy announcing the resurrection by the fourth, are dramatically brought to life in this play by famous Christian playwright Alberta Hawse. A play which shows human frailty and faith in the shadow of the most important event on earth.

SETTING

At CS is a chair covered with brilliant drapery or embroidered cover. Two hassocks or benches, one on either side of the chair in V formation with hassocks closer to DC. Balcony columns and post with banisters could be fashioned from Styrofoam bases and marble corrugated paper or contact paper. Balcony sections should be so placed as to not obstruct view of the action. There is a stand or small table beside the CS chair and a round silver platter with a basket of grapes on the stand. Behind the chair or to either side is another table or sideboard on which there is a pitcher or decanter and a folded napkin. These are the minimum props. Anything else can be used to give the balcony a look of richness. Salome will need a pair of well-worn men's sandals as her only prop.

Before the play begins it is advisable for a narrator or director to give the audience a short summary of the material from the historical notes at the end of the play.

Scriptural basis: Mark 6:17-28, Matthew 14:3-10, Luke 8:3, Luke 24:10, Luke 23:1-12.

PLAYING TIME: 20 minutes.

PLACE: An open balcony at the palace of King Herod in Jerusalem.

TIME: Early morning of the Resurrection day.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

HERODIAS: Wife of Herod Antipas, ambitious and arrogant.

SALOME: Her daughter, caught in the web of her mother's evil.

PROCULA: Wife of Pontius Pilate, a gentle, disturbed woman.

JOANNA: An excited believer. (Small part)

SCENE 1

(AT RISE: HERODIAS lounges in chair. She is eating grapes from the small basket in her lap.)

HERODIAS: *(Licks HER fingers and looks around for a basin.)* Cleo! Cleo! *(HER voice is imperious and hard.)*
Cleo! *(HER bad humor begins to show.)* I should sell that slave to the gladiators and let them use her for lion bait. *(Smacks hands together sharply.)* Cleo!

(SALOME enters lightly dancing. She is in unnaturally high spirits as she dances about her MOTHER swinging a pair of men's well-worn sandals over HERODIAS' head.)

SALOME: Good morning, Mother. I trust you did NOT have a restful night.

HERODIAS: I hate to disappoint you, Salome, but I slept quite soundly. *(Tries to move HER head away from the circling sandals.)* Put those dirty things down. I've told you to give them to the servants to burn. Where is Cleo? I need some water.

SALOME: I don't know. The whole household is upset since you chased Joanna away. *(Sets sandals on hassock and pours some water on the napkin and hands it to HERODIAS.)* You were foolish to get rid of a woman who has ruled this house well. Long before you came to Jerusalem.

HERODIAS: Well I hope her husband takes my advice and kicks her out if she tries to come back. *(SHE rises and places basket of grapes on table with water.)*

SALOME: Mother, you never cease to amaze me. You want Chuza to kick his wife out because she has been following a young rabbi about the countryside - but she has been with other woman all the time. While you ... *(Laughs with light scorn.)* ... left your husband and came here to live with another man.

HERODIAS: That's enough.

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SALOME: (*Ignores HER and talks to the sandals.*) Did you hear her? She thinks Chuza, our steward, should get rid of his lovely wife because she has been following your Master about the countryside. Tell me, O sandals, how many times has our lovely Joanna humbled herself to lace your latches?

HERODIAS: Salome, I said get rid of those things. They are ugly and -

SALOME: They are not ugly. They are beautiful.

HERODIAS: What satisfaction can you get out of -

SALOME: I talk to them. And they talk to me. The same as your silver platter talks to you. (*SHE drops the sandals again and picks up the platter.*) Tell me, what do you say to her, O silver moon? (*SHE holds the platter high above her head as she turns sideways and gazes up into it.*) Do you say as John said, "Thou sinful and adulterous woman." (*SHE speaks in a heavy condemning voice as John the Baptist would have spoken.*)

HERODIAS: Watch your tongue or I shall send you back to Rome to live with your father. I should have left you there.

SALOME: Why didn't you? You certainly left him quickly enough.

HERODIAS: And I have never regretted it. From the moment I saw Herod I knew I had to have him.

SALOME: Even though he had an wife and you had a husband?

HERODIAS: I saw what I wanted and I took it.

SALOME: (*With bitterness.*) Must you always capture what you want and kill whoever displeases you?

HERODIAS: I am not the granddaughter of the Great Herod for nothing.

SALOME: (*Has put the platter down and picked up the sandals again.*) Did you hear her, O shoes? (*SHE holds up the sandals.*) Herod the Great! Does the sound of his name make you tremble? (*SHE shakes the sandals slightly.*) Just think, if my great grandfather had succeeded, your master would never have lived to grow up. He would have died with all the other babies in Bethlehem.

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SALOME: *(Continued)* Yes, indeed, Mother and Grandfather knew what they wanted and he wasn't going to share his crown with anybody.

HERODIAS: You ought to be proud of your heritage.

SALOME: Oh, I am! *(Walks to balcony and flings out an arm.)* It's written all over Jerusalem ... in RED.

HERODIAS: *(Rises from chair and walks to balcony where SHE surveys the city spread before her.)* My grandfather made Jerusalem. *(Uses HER hands as though pointing out the various things.)* The theaters. The baths. The avenues of marble. Even the Temple. He turned footbaths into cobbled highways.

SALOME: *(With great bitterness.)* Indeed he did. And the bones of thousands of slaves can swear to it.

HERODIAS: Salome, when will you ever learn that you never get anything in this world if you are weak.

SALOME: *(To sandals.)* Did you hear that? Now you know what was wrong with the Man who walked in You. I have heard Joanna say that He said it is the meek who will inherit the earth. *(SHE lifts sandals to her nose and then shoves them toward her MOTHER.)* Mother do you smell pine shavings of a little carpenter shop or oil from the olive grove?

HERODIAS: *(Pushes sandals aside violently.)* Stop it!

SALOME: *(Takes seat on hassock left of the chair.)* Joanna told me they arrested Him in Gethsane by the olive press. *(Sadly.)* She was crying.

HERODIAS: She talked too much. I am glad she is gone.

SALOME: You grew tired of her telling us that we needed to be changed.

HERODIAS: I am a Herod and proud of it.

SALOME: She didn't say it, because she is gentle, but you knew what she was thinking. *(Laughs with irony.)* And you thought you were done with that kind of accusation when you rid yourself of John.

HERODIAS: *(Still at balcony.)* I swear, if you keep on I will insist on your marriage to your uncle Philip. He is old enough to put a bridle on you.

End of Freeview

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