

WHO IS THIS MAN?

By David Dunlap

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SET DESIGN

The main room in the home of Eli and Naomi. It is an upper class, Jewish home. There are two exits. USR is the door to the exterior of the home. The second door, SL, leads to the interior of the house. This exit is covered with a curtain. There is a window, SR.

The room is neat and well kept. It is lavishly decorated with tapestries, pictures, plants, etc. Under the window is a bench. There is also a table and chairs, CSL. The table has a fancy tablecloth on it.

PLACE/TIME

Jerusalem, holy city and center of the Jewish religion, several days before and after Jesus' death and resurrection.

PLAYING TIME: 30 to 40 minutes.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(In order of appearance)

NAOMI: Wife of Eli and prominent member of Jerusalem society.

SUSANNA: Young Hebrew servant of Eli and Naomi.

MARTHA: Former resident of Nazareth, living in Jerusalem. Wife of a member of the Sanhedrin.

DANIEL: Jewish man from Nazareth, early 20s.

AMOS: Daniel's father, middle-aged. Wealthy Nazarene merchant and Pharisee.

ELI: Pharisee and member of the Sanhedrin. Older brother of Amos.

SAMUEL: Friend of Daniel.

REBEKAH: Sister of Jesus and girl friend of Daniel; late teens or early 20s.

BERNICE: Unmarried daughter of Martha; late teens or early 20s.

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PROPS

Table, chairs, bench, tablecloth, flowers, vase, bowl of fruit, tray, plates, cups, plate of bread, pitcher of water, rag, broom, water jar, two baskets with grapes, fruit, bread, etc.

Scene 1

(AT RISE: The set is brightly lit. It is midday, Sunday, five days before Jesus' death. NAOMI is standing at the table. There is a large pile of flowers on the table which she is arranging in a vase. SUSANNA enters SL, carrying a bowl of fruit.)

SUSANNA: Ma'am, should I start preparing the noon meal?

(Places the bowl on the table.)

NAOMI: Yes, Susanna.

SUSANNA: Will Master Eli be coming home to eat?

NAOMI: I'm not sure. With his brother, Amos, in town this week for the passover, I'm never quite sure what they'll be doing.

SUSANNA: Why?

NAOMI: Eli's trying to gain an appointment for Amos to the Sanhedrin. They'll be meeting with many of the most powerful Pharisees this week.

SUSANNA: I guess I'll prepare enough for them, anyway. Even if they don't come for lunch, I'm sure your nephew will eat it.

NAOMI: *(Laughing.)* Yes, Daniel's not likely to miss any meals.

MARTHA: *(Knocking, off SR.)* Yoo-hoo. Naomi? Are you home?

SUSANNA: Oh no. It's old Martha!

NAOMI: *(Scowling at HER.)* Susanna! Just answer the door.

SUSANNA: Yes, ma'am. *(Crosses and opens door, SR.)*

MARTHA: *(Pushing the door open and walking past SUSANNA without acknowledging her.)* Naomi. How are you, my dear? *(Crosses to NAOMI, CS.)*

NAOMI: Fine. It's nice to see you, Martha.

SUSANNA: *(Shaking HER head and rolling her eyes behind MARTHA'S back.)* Humph!

NAOMI: *(Giving SUSANNA a dirty look. To MARTHA.)* What brings you to town today?

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MARTHA: I had so much marketing to do. We're entertaining some important people from back home in Nazareth this week. *(Sighs.)* The common people just don't understand how much responsibility we have as wives of Sanhedrin members. *(SUSANNA, still unnoticed by MARTHA, begins to laugh mockingly, stops herself abruptly, but continues to smirk.)*

NAOMI: *(Scowling at SUSANNA.)* Susanna. You can go get lunch started now. Master Eli should be home anytime.

SUSANNA: Yes, ma'am. *(Exits SL.)*

MARTHA: Rude girl, isn't she? I wouldn't tolerate such behavior in my servants. My Isaac will be home from the temple soon also, so I can't stay long. Oh, by the way, Naomi, I understand Eli's brother, Amos, is here from Nazareth.

NAOMI: Yes. He arrived two days ago.

MARTHA: I used to live next to Amos and his family back in Nazareth. Wonderful people. I heard his wife passed away.

NAOMI: Yes. Three years ago.

MARTHA: That's too bad. They had a number of children, didn't they?

NAOMI: Three sons.

MARTHA: That's very interesting. Are they here also?

NAOMI: Only his youngest son, Daniel. The others weren't able to come. They're running the family business.

MARTHA: Spice merchants, aren't they?

NAOMI: Yes.

MARTHA: I imagine they make a very good living, don't they?

NAOMI: They certainly seem to.

MARTHA: *(Thoughtfully.)* Daniel. Is he married?

NAOMI: *(Smiling.)* No, not yet. Why do you ask?

MARTHA: Oh, just interested.

NAOMI: *(Still amused.)* Still trying to find a husband for your daughter, huh?

End of Freeview

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