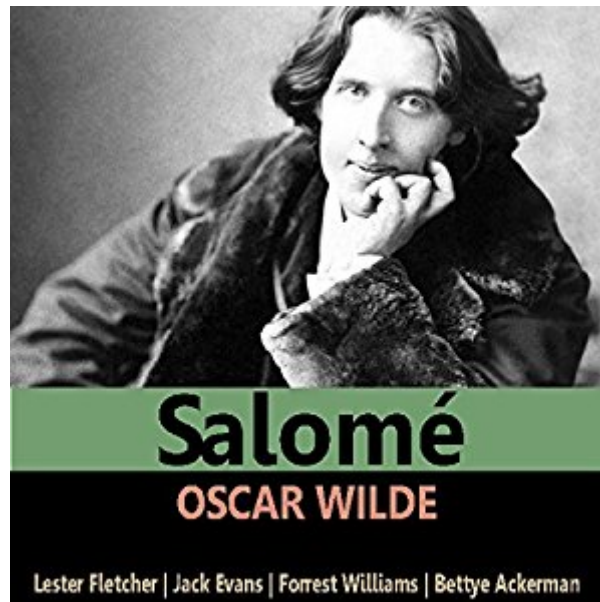


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Customer Reviews

The Salome legend has its beginnings in the Gospels of Matthew (14:3-11) and Mark (6:17-28), which tells of the beheading of John the Baptist at the instigation of Herodias, wife of Herod. The queen was angered by John's denunciation of her marriage as incestuous (she had been married to Herod's brother). In both accounts, Herodias uses her daughter (unnamed in scripture but known to tradition, through Josephus, as Salome) as the instrument of the prophet's destruction by having her dance for Herod. The story of Salome was prominent in both literature and the visual arts until the end of the Renaissance, and was revived in the nineteenth century by Heinrich Heine, and explored by such divergent authors as Gustave Flaubert, Stephane Mallarme, Joris-Karl Huysmans, and Oscar Wilde. Wilde wrote "Salome" in French in 1893 for the famous actress Sarah Bernhardt. The play was performed once in Paris in 1904, and today is much better known as the libretto for Richard Strauss' operetta. In large part Wilde ignores the idea that Herodias is the prime mover behind John's death, focusing instead on the eroticism of Salome's passions for the Baptist. In this

version of the story, John rejects the princess who then dances the infamous Dance of the Seven Veils for Herod to achieve her revenge. Of course, fans of Wilde, or at least those who know the highlights of his life's story, will recognize the name of Lord Alfred Douglass, the translator of the play into English. However, whatever the merits of the play, the chief attraction of this volume remains the illustrations. Aubrey Beardsley was an important artist in the Esoteric Art movement of the "fin du siècle" (end of the 19th-century). A close friend of Oscar Wilde, he did both the illustrations and stage designs for Wilde's play "Salome.

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