SCENE 1

SALOME

I will not stay. I cannot stay. Why does the Tetrarch look at me all the while with his mole's eyes under his shaking eyelids? It is strange that the husband of my mother looks at me like that. I know not what it means. Of a truth I know it too well.

SALOME

The moon- She is like a little piece of money, a little silver flower. She is cold and chaste. I am sure she is a virgin. She has the beauty of a virgin. Yes, she is a virgin. She has never defiled herself. She has never abandoned herself to men, like the other goddesses.

SALOME

Who was that who cried out?

SALOME

Ah, the prophet!

SALOME

What a strange voice! I would speak with him.

SALOME

I desire to speak with him.

SALOME

Bring forth this prophet.

SALOME

[Approaching the cistern and looking down into it.]

How black it is, down there! It must be terrible to be in so black a hole! It is like a tomb . . . . [To the soldiers.]
Did you not hear me? Bring out the prophet. I would look on him.
Men have talked so much of him. Often I have heard the Tetrarch talk of him. I think he is afraid of him.

SALOME

Of whom is he speaking?

SALOME

Yes: it is of my mother that he is speaking.

SCENE 2

SALOME

It is his eyes above all that are terrible. They are like black holes burned by torches in a tapestry of Tyre. They are like the black caverns where the dragons live, the black caverns of Egypt in which the dragons make their lairs. They are like black lakes troubled by fantastic moons . . . . Do you think he will speak again?

SALOME

How wasted he is! He is like a thin ivory statue. He is like an image of silver. I am sure he is chaste, as the moon is. He is like a moonbeam, like a shaft of silver. His flesh must be very cold, cold as ivory

SALOME

I am Salome, daughter of Herodias, Princess of Judæa.

SALOME

Speak again, Iokanaan. Thy voice is as music to mine ear.

SALOME

I am amorous of thy body, Iokanaan! Thy body is white, like the lilies of a field that the mower hath never mowed. Thy body is white like the snows

that lie on the mountains of Judæa, and come down into the valleys. The roses in the garden of the Queen of Arabia are not so white as thy body. Neither the roses of the garden of the Queen of Arabia, the garden of spices of the Queen of Arabia, nor the feet of the dawn when they light on the leaves, nor the breast of the moon when she lies on the breast of the sea . . . . There is nothing in the world so white as thy body. Suffer me to touch thy body.

SALOME

It is thy mouth that I desire, Iokanaan. Thy mouth is like a band of scarlet on a tower of ivory. It is like a pomegranate cut in twain with a knife of ivory. The pomegranate flowers that blossom in the gardens of Tyre, and are redder than roses, are not so red. The red blasts of trumpets that herald the approach of kings, and make afraid the enemy, are not so red. Thy mouth is redder than the feet of those who tread the wine in the wine-press. There is nothing in the world so red as thy mouth . . . . Suffer me to kiss thy mouth.

SALOME

I will kiss thy mouth, Iokanaan. I will kiss thy mouth.

(TRANSITION)

SCENE 3

SALOME

I am not thirsty, I am not tired.

I have no desire to dance, Tetrarch.

SALOME

But I will dance for you if you will indeed give whatsoever I ask of you.
(15 seconds of dance)

SALOME

[Kneeling.]

I would that they presently bring me in a silver charger . .

SALOME

[Rising.]

The head of Iokanaan.

SALOME

You have sworn an oath, Herod. Forget not that you have sworn an oath.

Scene 4

SALOME

[She leans over the cistern and listens.]
Strike, strike, Naaman, strike, I tell you. . . . No, I hear nothing. There is a silence, a terrible silence. The executioner, he is afraid, this slave. He has dropped his sword. He dares not kill him. He is a coward. Let soldiers be sent.

Scene 5

Ah! thou wouldst not suffer me to kiss thy mouth, Iokanaan. Well! I will kiss it now. I will bite it with my teeth as one bites a ripe fruit. Thine eyes that were so terrible, so full of rage and scorn, are shut now. Open thine eyes! Lift up thine eyelids, Iokanaan! Art thou afraid of me, that thou wilt not look at me? . . . Thou wouldst have none of me, Iokanaan. Thou rejectedst me. Thou didst bear thyself toward me as to a harlot, as to a woman that is a wanton, to me, Salome, daughter of Herodias, Princess of Judæa! Well, I still live, but thou art dead, and thy head belongs to me. I can do with it what I will. I can throw it to the dogs and to the birds of the air. That which the dogs leave, the birds of the air shall devour . . . . Ah, Iokanaan, Iokanaan, thou wert the man that I loved alone among men! Thy voice was a censer that scattered strange perfumes, and when I looked on thee I heard a strange music. Why didst thou not look at me, Iokanaan? Thou didst put upon thine eyes the covering of him who would see his God. Well, thou hast seen thy God, Iokanaan, but me, me, thou didst never see. Oh, how I loved thee! I love thee yet, Iokanaan. I love only thee. I'm hungry for thee body and neither wine nor apples will appease my desire. What shall I do now, Iokanann? The mystery of Love is greater than the mystery of Death.
I have kissed thy mouth, Iokanaan, I have kissed thy mouth.