

FOUR WOMEN OF GALILEE

A Play In Seven Episodes

by

Delvyn C. Case, Jr.

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CHARACTERS

(In order of appearance)

Jesus

Salome, mother of James and John

Mary, mother of James the Younger and Joseph

Mary Magdalene

Joanna, Cuza's wife

A Woman

Mary, mother of Jesus

SYNOPSIS

("Four Women of Galilee")

Episode I. 30 A.D. Galilee. Mary brings her friend Mary Magdalene to Jesus who releases her from demons who are controlling her.

Episode II. 31 A.D. Galilee. Jesus tells the parable of the sower to the women. Joanna, the wife of Cuza, comes to thank Jesus for healing her son. She joins the other women to support Jesus' ministry.

Episode III. 32 A.D. Galilee. The women help the disciples fill baskets with food left over from the feeding of the 5000. Jesus tells the women he is the bread of life.

Episode IV. 32 A.D. Jerusalem. The women react to the Pharisees who bring a woman caught in adultery to Jesus.

Episode V. 33 A.D. Jerusalem. Days before Passover, the women are concerned of the dangers to Jesus in Jerusalem.

Episode VI. 33 A.D. Jerusalem. Good Friday. The four women are at Calvary. They reflect on the seven last statements of Jesus from the cross.

Episode VII. 33 A.D. Jerusalem. Easter. Mary Magdalene finds the tomb empty and sees the risen Christ. Salome, Joanna, and Mary join Mary Magdalene telling her that they, too, have seen Jesus. They all leave to tell all the good news.

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EPISODE I

Scene. Spring, 30 A.D. Galilee, a road outside Cana. There is a bench at center stage. Each character is dressed in traditional robes, girdles, head-pieces, and sandals. Jesus and Salome enter from stage right. They cross to the bench. Jesus sits on the bench and Salome sits at his feet.

Jesus: And Cuza from Capernaum...

(Salome nods.)

Jesus: ...His son will be well.

(Salome nods and smiles.)

(Mary and Mary Magdalene are walking down the center aisle with Mary holding Mary Magdalene's arm; Mary Magdalene is resisting. Mary Magdalene is disheveled. Her robe is wrinkled; her hair is messy. She has on one sandal. The other sandal is in Mary's hand. Jesus looks at Mary and Mary Magdalene. Salome turns around and looks.)

Mary Mag.: Leave me alone. I won't go!

Mary: You need help!

Mary Mag.: I don't need anybody.

(Mary leads her.)

Mary: Mary, please come. I'm your friend.

Mary Mag.: Mary, I've told you...

Salome: *(To Jesus)* Lord!...

(Jesus looks at her.)

Salome: ...*(She points toward Mary Mag. and Jesus looks)* That's the girl I spoke about, Mary from Magdala. Please help her.

(Jesus stands up and looks at Mary Mag.)

Jesus: *(To Mary)* Bring her to me.

(Salome stands up and crosses to the end of the stage and helps Mary bring Mary Mag. onto the stage.)

Salome: Come Mary, Jesus can help you.

(Mary Mag. resists.)

Salome: Lord, are there demons in her?

Jesus: *(Nods)* Seven, Salome.

Mary Mag.: (*Screams*) I don't need any help!

(*They hold her more tightly and lead her to Jesus. They stop in front of Jesus. Mary Mag. shakes her arms to be free of Mary and Salome.*)

Jesus: (*To Mary Mag. with compassion*) How can I help you?

Mary Mag.: (*In a tentative voice*) I don't need any help.

(*Jesus looks intently at her. Jesus concentrates and slowly raises his right arm.*)

Mary Mag.: (*In a lower voice*) What you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? We know who you are--the Holy One of God!

Jesus: (*Loudly and firmly*) Be still. Come out of her! (*He waves his arms over her*)

(*Mary Mag. appears stunned, then falls back. Mary and Salome help her gently to the ground. Mary Mag. is dazed.*)

(*Jesus comes over to Mary Mag., drops down close to her, and pats her on the shoulder. He reassures Mary and Salome.*)

Salome: (*To Jesus*) Thank you Jesus...

Mary: ...(To Jesus) She's our friend; but we haven't been able to talk with her since December.

Jesus: She'll be fine now. (*He stands up*) She'll need somewhere to stay.

Mary: We'll take care of her.

(*Salome nods.*)

Jesus: Good. I'll go ahead into town. Bring her with you to supper.

(*Jesus smiles. He exits stage left.*)

(*Salome exits stage left and returns with a jar of water.*)

(*Salome and Mary help Mary Mag. with some water.*)

Mary Mag.: (*Finishes drinking the water. She looks at Mary and Salome in a calm manner*) I'm OK...What happened?

(*Salome takes the water jar.*)

Salome: Our Rabbi cast out the demons who were controlling you.

Mary Mag.: (*Surprised*) What ever it was, I feel like I'd lost my mind...for months...

Mary: ...since winter, yes. Here (*She hands her the sandal*).

Mary Mag.: (*She puts on the sandal*) Thanks. (*She looks at her robe*) I'm a mess (*She smooths her robe*). (*She holds her hair*) Oh! (*She tries to fix her hair*)

Mary: You're alright.

(They help her up.)

Mary Mag.: *(To Salome)* Some power he must have, your Rabbi.

Mary: He's Jesus of Nazareth.

Mary Mag.: *(Tentatively)* O...K...

Salome: He has great power--the power of the Most High!...

(Mary Mag. looks at Salome)

Salome: ...And before you came, he promised to heal the son of an official in Herod's household!

Mary Mag.: I want to hear more. Who is this one that can heal the sick and cast out demons?

Salome: *(She motions to the stage left exit).* Come with us for supper.

Mary: *(Energetically)* And you can stay with us tonight.

Mary Mag.: *(To Salome)* Sure, I'm starving. *(To Mary)* And thank you, I will. I'd never get home by dark.

Salome: This way *(Points to stage left exit).*

(They walk to the stage left exit. Salome carries the water jar. They exit.)

End of EPISODE I

EPISODE II

Scene. *There is a long bench center stage. Jesus, Salome, and Mary enter from stage left. Jesus sits down on the center bench. Salome and Mary sit in front of Jesus left of center. Mary Mag. comes in hurriedly from stage right and sits stage right of center. As Jesus begins to speak, Joanna enters from the back of the audience and walks hesitantly down stage extreme stage right aisle. She seems puzzled at the scene of Jesus and the women.)*

Jesus: The seed that fell among thorns stands for those that hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by life's worries, riches, and pleasures, and they do not mature. But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart...

(Joanna walks on stage and crosses to Mary Magdalene.)

Jesus: ...who hear the work, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop.

(Jesus stands up. Salome and Mary stand up and talk with Jesus.)

Joanna: *(To Mary Magdalene)* Shalom *(Hesitantly)* ? Excuse me.

Mary Mag.: *(Still concentrating on what Jesus said)* Oh, yes, shalom.

(Mary Magdalene stands up and speaks with Joanna.)

Joanna: My name is Joanna. I live in Capernaum. I've come to thank Jesus for helping my son.

Mary Mag.: Of course. My name is Mary from Magdala, that's near you.

(Joanna smiles.)

Joanna: *(She is really perplexed and puts her arms into the air).* Is this real?

Mary Mag.: What do you mean?

Joanna: To see women with a rabbi listening him teach.

Mary Mag.: I don't get it.

Joanna: No rabbi I know allows women to be followers or to listen to him teach--I mean this is a public place *(She sweeps the area with her arms).* Even in the synagogue at home, we have to set in the back, and you can't even hear over the fussing of the children.

Mary Mag.: That's never been the way with Jesus. I remember when I was brought to him..

Joanna: ...so that's Jesus?

Mary Mag.: Yes it is. Come *(She takes Joanna by the hand)*... you must speak with him.

Joanna: *(Hesitantly)* Are you sure? Now that I'm here, I'm afraid.

Mary Mag.: *(Smiles kindly)* It's OK. Come.

(Mary Mag. and Joanna take a few steps toward Jesus.)

Mary Mag.: Jesus?...

(Jesus turns from talking with Mary and Salome toward Mary Mag. and Joanna and smiles.)

Mary Mag.: ...Jesus, this is Joanna from Capernaum. *(Pointing toward Mary)* And this is Mary and Salome *(Pointing toward Salome)*.

(Mary and Salome smile at Joanna.)

(Joanna smiles at Mary and Salome.)

Jesus: *(Toward Joanna)* I'm so glad we could meet.

Joanna: Oh Rabbi *(Folds arms across her chest)*, thank you. I've come to thank you for healing my son. Do you remember Cuza?

Jesus: Of course.

Joanna: He's my husband. After you said our son would live, he rushed home. While he was gone, our son was burning with fever--I didn't know if he even recognized me at the time. I kept sponging him all over; but he kept getting worse. Then after lunch--it was just a week ago today--*(She looks around at the women who encourage her)* the fever was gone, just like that *(Snaps her finger)*. Then he sat up and said he was starved. At first I was afraid to feed him. So I gave him some fruit; but then I couldn't keep him out the kitchen!...

(The women smile and touch her. Joanna smiles back at them and at Jesus.)

Joanna: ...And when my husband arrived, he asked me when our little Samuel got better. I told him "one" and he said that was the exact time you *(He points to Jesus)* said he was healed. Thank you *(She embraces Jesus and releases.)*

Joanna: My husband said I should stay and assist your ministry with some of my time and finances.

Jesus: We're glad to have you. The women will help you with your personal needs.

Joanna: Thank you, Jesus *(She nods.)*

(Jesus smiles toward Joanna, nods to Mary, Salome, and Mary Mag. and exits stage left.)

Joanna: *(To the other women)* You don't know how my husband felt after leaving Jesus. He thought Jesus would return home with him so our son would be healed. How, how could he heal my son from so far away?

Mary Mag.: Distance is not a issue, not with Jesus. Not for the Messiah, God's anointed one.

Joanna: I've been in his presence today?

(Mary Mag. nods "yes". Joanna turns to Salome and Mary who also nod "yes". Joanna puts her hands to her face in amazement.)

Joanna: Our people have been waiting so long.

Mary Mag.: The Kingdom of God has come.

Mary: It's here. *(Together)*

Salome: It really is.

Joanna: Praise God.

Mary Mag.: Come. The day's getting late. We need to set up for the night. There are others we want you to meet.

(The women cross to stage left exit.)

Salome: *(To Joanna)* I'm also from Capernaum. My husband has a fishing company--Zebedee's. We have a number of boats--you've might have seen them--we're out fishing everyday.

Joanna: I'm sorry. I'm actually not from Capernaum. My husband's Herod's Chief Stewart and we move around a lot. We've only been around the Sea of Galilee for the last six months.

(Salome nods understandingly.)

(The women exit stage left.)

END OF EPISODE II

EPISODE III

Scene: There are several whole and partially eaten loaves of bread scattered around the stage along with a number of fish. Joanna and Mary enter from the extreme left door and advance briskly to the stage from extreme stage left aisle. They hold loaves of bread. They reach the stage and start picking up the fish and bread. They are joyful and are laughing. Mary Mag. and Salome enter from the back and walk down aisle stage left of center. They are carrying bread and fish.

Salome: There's Mary and Joanna. Look at all they've picked up already.

(Mary Mag. and Salome reach the stage.)

Mary Mag.: Shalom.

Mary: Shalom, Mary and Salome.

Salome: (To Mary) What's happening!

Mary: I can't believe this! I could use such a miracle around my house once in awhile. There's another one *(She picks up another fish)*. All these leftovers from just a few fish and several loaves of bread *(Sweeps the bread and fish with her right hand)* !

Mary Mag.: *(Surveys the audience)* There must be 5000 men plus the women and children. Maybe nine or ten thousand people all together.

(They nod.)

Joanna: Do you realize how much this would have cost? We'd have been way over budget if we'd *(Emphasis)* tried to supply this crowd. All we've contributed to Jesus and the disciples is like nothing compared with today. It's awesome *(She looks at the audience)*.

Salome: My sons have never had a catch like this in one day--it's incredible. The look on James' and John's faces! Then Jesus found some baskets for them and the rest of the disciples and said "fill them". They couldn't believe it--there was more left over than what they started with at the beginning. And now those baskets are almost filled!

(Jesus walks down the stage left aisle.)

Salome: Here's Jesus.

(Jesus walks up the stage left stairs onto the stage.)

Salome: *(To Jesus)* Jesus, the crowd *(Points to the audience)* wants you to be king!

Mary Mag.: They just want to be fed!

Jesus: Yes, Mary. But for some it's the only full meal they've had in a long time.

Mary Mag.: *(Nods)* I'm sorry. Are you staying here tomorrow?

Jesus: No. I'm going to cross over to Capernaum in the morning. Peter and James have arranged a couple of boats.

Salome: The people will probably be there waiting for you...

Jesus: ...likely...

Mary: ...for more food...

Jesus: ...I'm sure.

Joanna: (*Cynically*) Many want manna everyday, like Moses provided out of the sky (*She points upward*).

Jesus: It's not Moses who has given the bread from Heaven, but it is my Father who gives the true bread from Heaven. For the bread of God is he who comes down from Heaven and gives life to the world.

Mary Mag.: We all need that bread.

(*They all look at each other and nod.*)

Jesus: I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never go thirsty. For it is my Father's will that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.

Mary Mag.: Master, you have the words of eternal life.

Salome: You do. (*Together*)

Joanna: We believe it.

Mary: Yes.

(*Jesus smiles at them.*)

Jesus: (*Sighs*) Mary (*To Mary Mag.*) I'm going up the mountain side (*Points to stage right*).

(*Mary Mag. looks stage right where Jesus is pointing, then back at Jesus.*)

Mary Mag.: Shall we bring something for you to eat tonight?

Jesus: (*Holds right hand up*) That won't be necessary.

(*Jesus looks at each of them, smiles, and exits wearily stage right.*)

Mary: (*To Mary Mag.*) He looked real tired.

Joanna: He probably wants to be alone to pray.

Mary Mag.: We'd better bring him supper. In all the excitement of this "picnic", I don't think he even ate.

(*The other women look and nod knowingly. They step off the stage and walk up the extreme stage left aisle.*)

Joanna: Salome, some multiplication, huh?

Salome: (*On her fingers*) Five loaves and two fishes equaling 10,000 meals. That's big math. for a fisherman.

(*They smile and exit.*) End of EPISODE III

EPISODE IV

Scene. There is a bench stage left of center. Jesus and the Woman enter from stage left. Jesus sits on the bench. The Woman is sitting on the floor downstage to Jesus. Her head is downward. The Woman's hair is disheveled. Her robe is wrinkled. She is barefoot. Her face is dirty. There are several stones on the ground surrounding them. Salome and Mary are standing at the top of the stage right stairs looking intently at Jesus and the Woman. Mary Mag. and Joanna walk briskly toward the stage right stairs.

Mary Mag.: Jerusalem's streets are so windy.

Joanna: My husband and I've lived here every time Herod's come for the Holy days; but I still get lost.

Mary Mag.: *(Points toward Salome and Mary as they reach the stairs)* There they are.

(Mary Mag. and Joanna walk up the stage right stairs.)

Salome: *(Finger to mouth toward Mary Mag. and Joanna)* Shhhh.

Joanna: *(Whispering)* We're sorry we're late. What's happening?

Salome: *(Whispering)* The Master *(Points toward Jesus)*...

(The Women look at Jesus then back at Salome.)

Salome: ...was starting to teach--we were standing right next to him--when a group of Pharisees pushed us aside *(Makes pushing movements with arms)* and literally flung ...*(Pushing ahead with arms)* that woman...

(The Women look at the Woman then back at Salome.)

Salome: ...at the feet of Jesus. And they said that she'd been caught in the act of adultery.

(The Women look shocked.)

Mary Mag.: *(Loudly)* Really!...

(The Women motion to Mary Mag. to talk quieter.)

Mary Mag.: ...*(Quieter)* Really?

Mary: *(Whispering)* In the very act.

Joanna: *(Arms folded to protest)* Hello! Where's the man then?

(The Women look at each other in quizzical way.)

Mary: *(Shrugs shoulders)* She's the only one they brought.

Mary Mag.: It was a trap. *(Louder)* It was a trap!

(The Women look concerned.)

Salome: They asked Jesus what should be done since the Law commanded them to stone her. *(Hands up)* What was he supposed to say?

Joanna: What'd he say, then?

Salome: *(To Mary)* Go ahead...

Mary: ...He said,"If anyone of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone".

Mary Mag.: OK, where are they? There's just a bunch of stones there.

Mary: *(Motions toward the ground in front of Jesus)* Jesus wrote something on the ground...

(The Women look at each in quizzical way.)

Mary: ...and the Pharisees looked at it. Then each dropped his stone... and left. *(In summary fashion)* Just like that.

Joanna: When?

Salome: Just now.

(Jesus helps the Woman to her feet.)

Mary: *(Noticing Jesus helping the Woman)* *(Pointing to Jesus and the Woman)* Look!

(The Women look in rapt attention at Jesus and the Woman.)

Jesus: *(To the woman)* Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?

Woman: No one, sir.

Jesus: Then neither do I condemn you. Go now and leave your life of sin.

Mary Mag.: *(To the other women)* He's the only one who could condemn her.

(The women nod understandingly.)

(Jesus exits stage left.)

(The women look at each and cross to the woman. Salome puts her arm around her.)

Woman: I don't know *(With tears)*...I don't...

Salome: ...It's OK *(She pats her on the shoulder)*...

Woman: I deserve it *(She points to the stones)*. I'm guilty.

Mary Mag.: We all deserve it. We'll all guilty...of something.

Woman: What?

(The woman looks at the other women. They look at her with compassion. She bows her head with the knowledge of what Mary Mag. means.)

Salome: *(Still arm around the Woman)* Let's go.

(Mary and Salome help the woman; they exit stage left. Mary Mag. and Joanna start to follow the others.)

Mary Mag.: *(Stops and holds Joanna's arm)* What do you think he wrote?

(Joanna shrugs her shoulders. Mary Mag. leads Joanna by the arm to where Jesus was writing. They stop. Mary Mag. takes her hand away. They look intently at the ground as reading several lines.)

Joanna: *(She puts her hand to her mouth in amazement)* Huh! *(She points to the ground)*

(Joanna and Mary Mag. look at each other and shake their heads sharply. They walk briskly and exit stage left.)

End of EPISODE IV

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