

Rahab

By H. Sackler

Play no.18

Opening show: 11/05/1933

Creative team

Staged: B. Tschemerinski

Decorations by: Rubin

Music by : A.D. Jacobson

Settings executed by: M. Rubinsten

Dances by: M. Orenstein

Cast;

Rahab: H. Robina

Seled, her father: I. Bertonov

Attai, king of Jericho: S. Finkel

Saraf: H. Amital

Jobab, a rich merchant: S. Bruk

Ishbak, an elder: M. Benyamini

Pinchas, spies of the B'nai Israel: A. Meskin

Caleb, spies of the B'nai Israel: A. Warchaver

A Young Man: I. Avital

A lady: T. Rubins

Zilpha, Rahab's maid: N. Shein

Hagar, Rahab's maid: S. Duer

A Dancer: M. Sorotzkin

First virgin: Bat Zion

Second virgin: N. Shein

Third virgin: S. Duer

The old warder: H. Amital

Giants, Slaves, Inhabitants of Jericho

Act 1

Jericho, in front of the temple of Ashtoreth (Asarte). Singing of the worshippers is heard. Seled, Tahab's father, reviles the goddess and Jericho for being sunk in lust and gross living. The merchant Johab appears bringing an offering and Seled derides him. The incensed merchant demands from the high priest, Saraf, to punish the offender, Ishbak, one of the elders, tries to shield Seled. But the infuriated mob insists that he be punished. Seled cries out to the "true god, whose name is unknown" to save him. His cry is heard by his daughter, Rahab, and, with drawn dagger, she saves her father from the mob. They revile her and call her harlot.

Rahab's house. Ishbak appears. Rahab refuses to see him. A young man, who saw her for the first time that day, comes offering his love. Rahab listens tremblingly to his impassioned words but sends him away so that his love dream may not be marred. Suddenly two strangers appear. It is evident that they are sons of the desert. Rahab suspects that they are of the B'nai Israel and that they came to spy out of land. They admit it, but they came to Rahab nevertheless, so that she may help them escape from Jericho. They were witnesses to the events in the temple that morning when her father was maltreated and she was called a harlot – and Rahab will no doubt revenge herself. Rahab hesitates. Her desire for revenge and her love for Jericho struggle in her breast, Just then, he messenger of the King, Radai, knocks at her door and at this crucial moment she decides to save the strangers. She hides them on the roof of her house.

Radai leaves and Rahab calls the strangers in order to send them away. They offer to save her and her family from destruction when the B'nai Israel shall have conquered Jericho. Rahab does not want to enter into a covenant with the enemies of Jericho. But her father, who sees in the destruction of Jericho he triumph of the true god, pleads with Rahab and she yields, with the sad feeling that she has betrayed her beloved city.

Act 2

In the palace of the king. Marchant, elder and priest come to complain about Rahab. She sheltered the spies of the B'nai Israel and she should be confined in the temple dungeon for the safety of Jericho. Attai, the king, sends for Rahab and she, instead of defending herself, raises a voice of warning about the impending danger of Jericho. Ashtoreth, the Great Mother, will not shield them any longer because she is dead, since the "spirit of a living god has risen over Jericho". King and counsellors are stunned. To save Rahab from the priest, the king (who has not completely forgotten his former love for Rahab) sends her under guard to the lower of the palace.

The tower Attai comes to plead with Rahab that she should make peace with Ashtoreth and come to the feast of the goddess. The feast is being celebrated to revive the spirit of Jericho and to show her neighbors how great is the bounty and affluence of Ashtoreth. Rahab suspects that the feast is arranged for the purpose of luring the B'nai Israel "with the bodies of virgins" to acknowledge the divinity of the Great Mother and to make peace with Jericho. She resists with all her might. She well remembers how Attai, her first love, had surrendered her to the aged and obnoxious King of the Ai, when the latter had threatened to make war on Jericho. But Attai pleads, and Rahab, whose love for him is still not wholly extinct, consents to go with him to the feast.

In front of the temple, worshippers, singing and dancing, carry in procession the image of the Great Mother. Attai and Rahab appear. The king enters the sanctuary. But Rahab hesitates on the entrance. Suddenly, a guest at the feast - a giant from Bashan - seizes one of the virgins. He asks that she yield her love to him - an offering to Ashtoreth. The girl, screaming, runs from him to Rahab for shelter. A tumult. Attai and Saraf emerge from the temple. Rahab demands that the "feast of lust" shall stop. Attai commands that it continue and Rahab hurls a torch into the temple, which is soon enveloped in flames.

Act 3

Near the gate of Jericho. The gate is locked and the inhabitants, threatened with starvation wait anxiously for the return of the emissaries - Jobab and Ishback - whom Attai had sent to the B'nai Israel to plead for peace. The emissaries return, their faces hidden in their cloaks. Joshua, the leader of the B'nai Israel, would not even listen to them when they had invited him and his people to the feast of Ashoreth. As a sign of contempt, he ordered one side of their beards shaved off. A great and mighty host is approaching and will soon be at the gate of Jericho. Rahab's house. Seled comes to tell Rahab that the walls are cracking. Rahab, in despair, cries out for Attai (He had run away, at midnight, from the palace and had come to her house). Jericho is falling and her king hides in the house of the woman he once loved. But when she sees him, the proud and mighty king humbled and dejected, her heart fills with compassion and love; young Attai had come to her once more. But he really came that Rahab may give him strength to die; alone and forsaken he was unable even to end his own life. She is willing to die with him but she drinks the poisoned cup alone. His death and the destruction of Jericho, will atone for Rahab and she will rise, free and rejuvenated, to new life. The walls of Jericho crumble and Rahab raises her voice in praise of Yahveh, the mighty god, who is leading his people to the conquest of Canaan.