



## Jerusalem's Queen: A Novel of Salome Alexandra

*Angela Elwell Hunt*

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Born in the small village of Modein, a town made famous by the warrior Maccabees, Salome Alexandra knows better than to harbor grand dreams for her future. She pales in comparison to her beautiful older sister, and though she learns to read at an early age, girls are not valued for their intellectual ability. But when her father and sister are killed, John Hyrcanus, a distant relative, invites Salome and her mother to live with his family in Jerusalem, where her thirst for knowledge is noticed and indulged.

When her guardian betroths her to a pagan prince, she questions HaShem's plan. When Hyrcanus finally marries her to a boy half her age, she questions her guardian's sanity. But though Salome spends much of her life as a pawn ordered about by powerful men, she learns that a woman committed to HaShem can change the world.

## **Jerusalem's Queen: A Novel of Salome Alexandra Details**

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### **Emily Yager says**

I was really drawn into this book. Having not heard of Salome Alexandra before, made this even more interesting. She was a strong biblical era woman that is unrated to be sure, and it's a shame more people don't know about her. It shows how Salome discovers and grows in her faith in God, it is very inspiring. Though this is a work of fiction, it is very well researched and well written. If you love Biblical era - type books, this is a must read.

I received an advanced copy from the publisher via Netgalley. A review was not required but appreciated.

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### **Rosevine Cottage Girls says**

This book was really amazing! It made me hunger and thirst for more of the story, but more importantly more of His word. I'd never heard of this strong godly woman before and I am a bible reader. She falls on the scene in the silent period between the old and new testament. She was in the Hasmonean family - that of the Maccabees.

I am drawn to her. She is strong in her faith and continues even when those around her that hold all the power don't, she continues to seek out God and his will and word. Her faith and devotion to her God and her people truly changed the world around her.

I highly recommend this book!

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### **Heather Gadd says**

#### **An Unconventional Christmas Story**

Before reading this book, I had never heard of Salome Alexandra and was grateful for my Kindle and its search features, Wikipedia aiding me in my historical deficiencies. Not that the book is lacking in information, it's teeming with detailed facts and a rich tapestry of images that place you in this early civilization. Growing up hearing the popular Bible stories, it's always intriguing to learn about the integral characters that didn't quite make the canon.

Anyone who thinks that females took a backseat role in the B.C. era should read this book. Salome was a dynamic force, learned in the Torah, fierce in her convictions but gracious and respectful. She nobly endured an arranged marriage to a cousin much younger than herself, a bloodthirsty man who entertained countless concubines until the day of his death. Upon his demise, she assumed the role of leader and attempted to repair a nation torn to shreds and prepare her sons for their eventual inheritance.

With her faithful slave by her side, whom she later freed, Salome survives starvation in the desert, escapes persecution from her in-laws, and despite these many trials, is fiercely loyal to God and the laws of the Torah. She challenges her rabbis and studies the scriptures in anticipation of the coming Messiah.

The prophecies that proclaim the coming of Jesus are a main theme throughout the book which makes this the perfect book for the holiday season, since the time of Salome's death was estimated to be only one generation removed from the birth of Christ.

While this is historical fiction, a believable saga has been created outside the bare bones the annals have provided, ensuring a pleasurable read that is comprised of faith, hope, and facts.

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### **Tanya Brown says**

My reflections:

Angela Hunt's third book from "The Silent Years" was everything I expected from an Angela Hunt novel and so much more. Packed with historically accurate details and a complex plot that keeps you guessing. This is the exact reason why I love Hunt's books so much. Written from the two main characters point of view we were given insight into the inner workings of the palace. While this was enlightening, this aspect of the book could be a little confusing in the first couple of chapters.

Shelamzion starts off as a young girl and as the book progresses she grows into adulthood gaining in both wisdom and grace. From a young age, she upholds truth and isn't afraid to speak out against things she knows is wrong. Shelamzion has a thirst for righteousness and even being a girl studies the Torah. Stuck in an unequally matched marriage Shelamzion struggles to stay true to God while leading her husband in the ways of the Torah.

Kissa is Shelamzions faithful servant who stands beside her throughout the whole book. Her level-headed view of the world and life experience shaped Kissa into the perfect mentor to guide Shelamzion into the spotlight. Kissa's role as a gentile allows her to ask key questions that shape Shelamzions beliefs. Her traumatic past helps her discern dangerous situations and warns her friend of impending danger.

Over-all I thoroughly enjoyed this novel devouring it in only two days. I would recommend this to anybody who loves historic biblical fiction. I feel this book is appropriate for early teens and up. The only suggestive scene is on their wedding night, and although it wasn't explicit the reader is aware of what's happening. If you are looking for a thoughtful well-written read then this may just be the book for you.

Book has been provided courtesy of Baker Publishing Group and Graf-Martin Communications, Inc.

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### **Laura says**

Love biblical fiction? Love history? Love Angela Hunt?

With those three things, one will find excellent biblical fiction written by author Angela Hunt. Deeply researched and richly written, Jerusalem's Queen is excellent.

A poor girl from the village of Modein, rises to the Queen of Jerusalem. Following the death of her father and sister, a messenger arrives in Modein to inform Salome Alexandra and her mother that her uncle wishes for them to move into the palace with him and his family. Her uncle is the current high priest.

Moving from the small village to the opulence of the high priest's palace in Jerusalem results in a bit of culture shock. Suddenly, Salome and her mother have abundant food, clothing and even a soft bed to rest on.

As Salome grows her uncle provides a tutor for his niece, something rather unheard of because she is female. Further astonishing those in the palace, uncle eventually hires a Torah tutor. Imagine a young girl being tutored in the Torah so many years ago!

As Salome grows into young adulthood, her reputation of being smart and wise grows. Her nephews love her and she them. Her uncle and his wife, Alena seem to dote on her. Sadly, her mother never truly recovered from the death of her husband and daughter, becoming increasingly mentally unbalanced.

With her keen mind and intellect, Salome challenges her tutors and even her uncle. Her questions regarding living by the Torah present challenges that even divided the priests. Were the followers of Adonai expected to follow every jot and tittle of the law, thousands upon thousands of rules written to clarify God's given laws? How could any one person possibly keep all those rules? How could anyone be holy?

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### **Linda Walters says**

I wasn't quite sure to expect with this book but it out that it was really pretty good. Good Jewish history mixed with some fiction. I was amazed when I found out how much of it was actually true.

I was concerned that with all the history of the nation during that time and the Jewish customs that it would be dry or that I would get bored. Nope, it didn't happen. I think mainly because of my interest in the people. Salome is quite the character and easily kept my attention throughout. The things she went through and how deeply she loved HaShem (God), while at times not understanding what he was doing was powerful!

The people in the story were boldly written with many of them almost bigger than life. Salome's uncle John who became High Priest for many years was one of those. As time goes on, Salome also begins to see the uncle she loves she much is also flawed.

I enjoyed the developing friendship between the young slave handmaiden Kissa and Salome was precious. They knew each other from young childhood and developed a very close bond of friendship.

Salome also had some friendships that she kept for many years. She didn't have a huge group of friends or supporters at first. But one of them was a young man who became her tutor when she was young, was someone who remained a friend though-out her life. Another friendship that developed later in her life was a man who was a warrior leader that she was drawn to.

Brace yourself, there will be suffering, death plots, and murder in this book. Even some mass murder, thankfully those were not overly detailed. But the horror war and of all the loss of life can be almost felt.

At the end of this book there are Discussion Questions and References. I really liked that the references were included.

I voluntarily read an Advanced Copy of this book via Netgalley and these are my honest opinions of it.

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### **Lori says**

This is the first Angela Hunt novel I have read and I must say I am very impressed.

I have never heard of this Queen before. I love how the author has brought her to life.

I loved how the author portrayed Salome.

Salome in my book is a strong, courageous, and selfless queen.

It's a shame how her mother treats her. Kind of reminds me of my husband's family the way his mom treats him. She's put all of her lock, stock and barrel into the youngest son and look where that got her. Makes me sad. In a way, I'm glad I had only the one son even though I would've loved all my children the same.

I wanted to smack Shipporah just because of that.

There were places in the book that I thought the author concentrated on too long but otherwise I thought it was a fantastic book and I even learned some new things through the author's little research descriptions at the end of the book.

I did skip over the battle parts because I thought they were a little gory.

I strongly recommend this book to ppl who want to learn something new and who wants to follow the Messiah and yes He is mentioned in this story as well. I was happy to read about it!!!

I received a complimentary copy from Netgalley and in no way received no compensations. All opinions are my own

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### **Erin Laramore says**

Angela Hunt never fails to deliver a well-written, well-researched piece of work that makes you feel like you are IN the story. This book was no different. One thing that I love about historical fiction (and particularly biblical historical fiction) is that it brings that time-frame to life for me and allows me to learn more about a time and culture in a way that is also entertaining. I've really enjoyed this series so far, that takes place in the "silent years" between the old and new testaments. Though this is book 3 in the series, you really don't need to read the other 2 first. The first 2 books actually did not connect at all, and this book referenced both of them... however, the references were detailed enough that you still get the gist without the prior history.

In this book, we follow the life of Salome Alexandra, who lived in Judea during these silent years. She was actually born in Modein, where the Maccabees had lived, but moved to Jerusalem while she was young. It was there that her thirst for learning was recognized and appreciated, and she grew up under the guardianship of the high priest. Since the exile, Judea had not had a king and so the high priest served a dual role. I loved Salome's way of analyzing the politics and religious practices from up close and how it trained her to eventually be queen. This book is a fictional account of her life - how she came to be in a position of power 1 generation before Christ was born, and how she managed to be a righteous leader in a time when there was bloodshed and chaos. While this is fiction, a lot of the story is rooted in fact, and I love that Ms. Hunt offers up what pieces are factual and which ones are fictional in her author's note at the end. Suffice it to say that in spite of the leaders before her and after, Salome Alexandra was known as a righteous ruler in Judea and her time in leadership was described as "Judea's Golden Age". As a student of the scripture who has not read the apocryphal books or other materials from this time-frame, I found this story utterly fascinating.

Special thanks to NetGalley and the publisher for my ecopy of this book. I was not under any obligation to write a review and the opinions contained herein are my own.

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### **Elizabeth says**

This entire series has been an enjoyable read and learning about this time period I admittedly know very little about was interesting. The story coming from the very different perspectives of Salome Alexandria and her Egyptian handmaid Kissa allowed for a more well rounded view of the events of this Queen's life. I would call this a slow burn as the majority of the story is spent during Salome's younger years in the house of her uncle John Hyrcanus, an interesting man himself. Hunt did a wonderful job researching this story and that really shines through. I'm so glad that the author and publisher decided there was one more story that needed to be told in this series and will be looking forward to reading about life in the court of King Herod! I would recommend this entire series for those looking for a good Biblical fiction read.

\*I received a copy of this book from netgalley. I was not required to leave a positive review. These opinions

are my own.

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## **Renn Shearin says**

Jerusalem's Queen by Angela Hunt is a phenomenal book that reveals an era of Israel's history that I was not at all familiar with. This novel is the third book in Angela Hunt's series, *The Silent Years*, which covers the time in between the biblical book of Malachi and Matthew when the prophets were silent. While this is the third book in the series, the books can be read in any order (though you will have more backstory if you read the second novel, *Judah's Wife*, prior to reading this one). This novel takes place a few decades after the Maccabees free Jerusalem and goes until just a generation prior to Jesus' birth (in fact, I love how the author connected Salome's tutor, Simeon, to the Simeon that gets to see Jesus in the tabernacle as an infant). I did not know much about this time in Israel's history, and it was really interesting to learn about the powerful female leaders that existed in the ancient world during this time. The interactions between Israel and the other powerful nations at the time was intriguing, and it was shocking at times to see the pure evil that spilled out between family members, rulers, and nations.

The plot of this novel was well crafted and alternated between the third person view of Salome and the third person point of view of her slave, Kiera. It was interesting to see their very different perspectives and also to see how they both grew to trust and to believe more fully in HaShem and His plan for their lives and for Israel. I loved seeing Salome Alexandra grow and change as she attempted to guide her wicked husband in order to keep Israel from being destroyed both externally and internally. I was pulled into the disputes, different beliefs, and the tragedies that occurred between the different Jewish religious sects and how these set up for much of what is seen in Jesus' interactions with the teachers of the law in the Bible. Overall, I really enjoyed this novel, and I highly recommend it to anyone who enjoys good historical fiction.

I received this novel from Bethany House Publishers through Netgalley in exchange for an honest review.

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## **Fiction Aficionado says**

I'm conflicted over this novel. On the one hand, as a history-lover, I felt it had a lot going for it. It was well researched, it brought to life a period of history that was hitherto unknown to me, and it gave me a protagonist who was anticipating the promised Messiah. I love fiction that explores how God's faithful viewed and interpreted Scripture prior to the New Testament period, and have found this "Silent Years" series all the more interesting for dealing with a period of time not covered in Scripture.

And yet, as a story-lover, I found it somewhat dissatisfying. I had a teacher at school who was known for the unsympathetic mantra "Life's tough, then you die," and that felt a little too true in Salome's case. In all fairness, Angela Hunt didn't have a lot to work with. Salome married a guy thirteen years younger than her who was nothing to write home about. (Well, maybe he was, but not in a good way!) In fact, with the exception of Salome's servant Kissa (who is an invention of the author, as far as I can make out), there was virtually no one in Salome's life who did not cause her grief. Not even her children were an exception, much as she loved them.

Even so, I think I could have endured all of that if there had felt like more of a payoff at the end. Instead, her actual reign as queen is summarised in the short epilogue, so it felt a little like I was cut off right at the moment when I was finally about to share in her achievements. And just when it seemed like she might find some personal joy in her life, she denied herself for reasons I didn't totally understand—apart from the fact

that it would have been altering history to have it happen.

So I guess my recommendation is to consider what you're looking for when you pick this book up. If it's a close-up of this period of history, go for it. As a story, however, you may find it less satisfying.

I received a copy of this novel from the publisher. This has not influenced the content of my review, which is my honest and unbiased opinion.

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### Amy says

Jerusalem's Queen: A Novel of Salome Alexandra is book three from The Silent Years series. I thought Salome's story was fascinating. I enjoyed the author's ability to transport a reader back in time to Jerusalem. I found this to be intriguing and held my attention throughout.

I give Jerusalem's Queen: A Novel of Salome Alexandra three and a half stars. I would love to go back to read the other from The Silent Years series. I recommend this one.

I received this book from the publisher, but was not required to write a review. This review is 100% my own honest opinion.

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### Jeanie says

**In the Christian Bible, one turns the page after Malachi and finds Matthew as if only a few days fell between the activities of the prophet and the arrival of Jesus Christ. In reality, however, four hundred "silent years" lie between the Old Testament and New, a time when God did not speak to Israel through His prophets. Yet despite the prophets' silence, God continued to work in His people, other nations, and the supernatural realm. He led Israel through a time of testing and developed a sense of hope and yearning for the promised Messiah.**

Such a rich historical account of Jerusalem's Queen, Salome Alexandra. I knew nothing of her but in the end of my reading and the help of Angela Hunt, I felt a strong connection. Not that I am anything like this strong righteous woman but I desire what she had. Hunt takes actual accounts and weaves a compelling story of Salome and what drove her. God's glory and integrity.

With the death of her sister and father, Salome and her mother find redemption in her father's brother. Salome's mother grieves deeply for the loss of her other daughter and the expense of Salome. There is a troubling relationship, that only brings pain to Salome but a resolve to know her God.

Hunt takes two women's point of view from very different backgrounds. One a believer and one a slave. I found it interesting and compelling that young slave woman Kissa that was given to Salome when she entered her uncle's home who became her best friend and confidant. It is the relationship one a slave and one free that gives the plot contrast but also shows the gospel that we are slaved to sin and the affect of sin no matter what are status.

With the help of Salome's uncle and his confidence in her ability, she becomes betrothed to her uncle's youngest son. It is this relationship and her study of the scriptures where the reader is given a deeper understanding of the anticipation of Jesus and what is arrival means for Israel. Freedom and redemption. It is

for us as well. Totally loved this one.

*A Special Thank You to Bethany House Publishers and Netgalley for the ARC and the opportunity to post an honest review.*

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### **Jessica Higgins says**

As the silent years continue, an unlikely leader emerges to guide the Jewish nation.

Salome Alexandra has spent all of her six years of life in the small town of Modein. But when her father and sister are killed in an accident, she and her mother's lives are on the brink of change. A distant relative from Jerusalem has come to claim them to live in his house. He is the son of the high priest and they will have a good life. As the time draws near for them to come to Jerusalem, the high priest and two of his sons are murdered and the relative that claimed them has now become high priest. When they arrive in Jerusalem, Salome begins to get educated and is given a personal attendant. These two women, slave and free, begin to realize they are merely pawns in a man's game and neither are truly free. But God works in mysterious ways and Salome was always told that she had a purpose in life for which God had set her aside.

I think my favorite part of reading historical fiction by Angela Hunt is that she picks characters that I know nothing about and gives me a history lesson. She makes me go research the characters so that I can compare sources I can find against her work and I love it. I love the research she does to make these past figures come back to life and I love the research she makes me to do learn more about it. This book was no exception. I had not heard of Salome Alexandra before, but I know about her now. Told between viewpoints of Salome and her attendant Kissa, this story unfolds tragedy, growth, forgiveness, and purpose.

I recommend this book to historical fiction lovers, biblical fiction lovers, and people who enjoy Hunt's work!

I received a complimentary copy of this book from the publisher. The views and opinions expressed within are my own.

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### **Linda says**

I never miss a book by Angela Hunt, and this series set within the intertestamental period has fascinated and educated me. I had never heard of Salome Alexander prior to reading this novel, and Hunt's expert research brings her to life. Historical fact intertwines with compelling fiction resulting in a can't-put-down tale of the years prior to the birth of Christ. Hunt expertly portrays the harsh realities of this ancient time while simultaneously displaying the timeless struggles of human heart. The turmoil within families resulting from the quest for power is heart-wrenching, and Salome's dedication to God in the midst of opposing forces encouraged and inspired me. This novel reminds the reader that while God may not have spoken through his prophets during the so-called silent years, he was not absent, fulfilling his purpose. Don't miss this dynamic book and series.

Disclosure of Material Connection: I received a digital copy of this book free from Baker/Bethany House Publishing and NetGalley. I was not required to write a positive review. The opinions I have expressed are my own. I am disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255: "Guides Concerning the Use of Endorsements and Testimonials in Advertising."

