

# WHAT A RIOT!

By Rod

*Based on Acts 19 vv 23-41. Broadly this is a simple retelling of the story using parts from the Good news Bible version.*

## CAST

Narrator 1

Narrator 2

Crowd A

Crowd B

Demetrius      *Leader of the silversmiths*

Gaius            *One of Paul's companions*

Aristarchus    *Another of Paul's companions*

Alexander      *A Jewish leader*

City Clerk

*The parts could be shared around among a general crowd. To augment the crowd the congregation should be encouraged to join in with the chanting.*

Narrator 1      It was at this time that there was serious trouble in Ephesus because of the Way of the Lord.

Narrator 2      A certain silversmith named Demetrius made silver models of the temple of the goddess Artemis, and his business brought a great deal of profit to the workers. So he called them all together.

Demetrius      You can see and hear for yourselves what this fellow Paul is doing. He says that gods made by men are not gods at all. *[He laughs in ridicule]*

Crowd A        Well he has got a point. They are only bits of metal.

Crowd B        Or lumps of wood.

Demetrius      *[Irritated]* And he has succeeded in convincing many people, both here in Ephesus and in the whole province of Asia.

Crowd A        I didn't need much convincing. The one I've got hasn't done me any good. Life's been just as bad as ever.

Crowd B        Yeah, only worse because now you have to dust and polish the thing every day. *[They mutter in agreement]*

Demetrius      *[Still irritated]* There is a danger that this business of ours will get a bad name.

Crowd A It couldn't be much worse than the one we've got.

Crowd B Yeah, 'F Is Us'. What sort of a name is that. The person who thought of that one must be a complete idiot. *[Crowd A grabs his shoulder and points to Demetrius to indicate that it was he who had thought up the name.]*

Demetrius *[Now extremely irritated]* Not only that but there is also a danger that the temple of the great goddess Artemis will come to mean nothing.

Crowd A I thought it meant 'hunter'. It could never mean 'nothing'. "The temple of the great goddess Nothing." That would be silly.

Crowd B I think Demetrius has lost the plot. *[They mutter]*

Demetrius If her greatness were destroyed – then our prosperity would be gone.

Crowd A *[Suddenly alert]* What did he say?

Demetrius *[Triumphantly, realising he has now got through]* We'd all be out of work.

Crowd B Out of work! I've got a wife, six children and three slaves to support.

Crowd A And I haven't finished paying for my new two horsepower chariot. Its got alloy wheels and a sunroof.

Crowd B This sounds serious. Demetrius is right. We must protest.

Crowd A Yes. *[Shouting]* Great is nothing of the Ephesians!

Crowd B No, no. *[Shouting]* Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!

All Crowd Great is Artemis of the Ephesians.

Narrator 1 The uproar spread throughout the whole city. *[Crowd go into congregation getting them to join in]*

Narrator 2 The mob became ugly.

Narrator 1 *[Looking at congregation]* Or, in some cases, remained ugly.

Narrator 2 They grabbed Gaius and Aristarchus, two Macedonians who were travelling with Paul. *[These two are dragged on to stage]*

Narrator 1 They forced them to go with them to the theatre against their will.

Gaius            I don't want to go to the theatre. I saw the show last week. It was rubbish.

Narrator 2     Said Gaius.

Aristarchus    And I haven't got a thing to wear.

Narrator 1     Said Harry Starkers.

Narrator 2     Paul wanted to go before the crowd but his friends dissuaded him.

Narrator 1     Meanwhile the whole meeting was in an uproar.

Narrator 2     I thought it was in a theatre.

Narrator 1     Some people were shouting one thing.

Crowd A        *[Shouting]* One thing!

Narrator 2     Others were shouting something else.

Crowd B        *[Shouting]* Something else!

Narrator 1     For most of them did not even know why they had come together.

Crowd A        I thought it was a sale of cheap togas.

Crowd B        I'd heard that the famous gladiator, Russellus Crowticus was in town.

Narrator 2     Then Alexander motioned with his hand to make a speech of defence before the people. *[Alexander motions with his hand]*

Alexander      Friends, Ephesians, countrymen...

Narrator 1     But when they recognised that he was a Jew they shouted him down.

Narrator 2     How did they know he was a Jew?

Narrator 1     I don't know. Maybe it was something he said.

Alexander      My name is Alexander Cohen ....

All Crowd      Boo.

Narrator 2     They all shouted together the same thing for two hours.

All Crowd     *[Shouting]* The same thing for two hours.

Narrator 2    *[continuing]* They all shouted together the same thing for two hours, which was ‘Great is Artemis of the Ephesians’.

All Crowd     Sorry. *[Shouting]* Great is Artemis of the Ephesians! *[They now get the congregation to join in]*

Narrator 1    *[Shouting to quieten the noise]* At last the city clerk was able to calm the crowd.

Clerk          Men of Ephesus. The whole world knows that the city of Ephesus is the keeper of the temple of the great Artemis ....

Crowd A        What, everyone? Do they know it in Rome?

Clerk          Certainly.

Crowd B        What about Spain?

Clerk          Yes.

Crowd A        How about America?

Clerk          *[Confused]* I’m sorry?

Crowd A        The reason I ask is that America hasn’t been discovered yet. So I’d be surprised if the Americans know about it.

Clerk          *[Firmly]* Nobody can deny these things. So you must calm down and not do anything reckless. If Demetrius and his workers have an accusation against someone they should take their case to court or to a legal meeting. There is a danger that we will be accused of a riot.

Crowd B        *[Defiantly]* Accuse us! We’re not afraid of anyone.

Clerk          We would not be able to give a good reason for this uproar. We risk losing our special status as a Roman city.

Crowd A        We don’t care. We’re not afraid of the Romans.

Clerk          Caesar will be displeased.

Crowd B        We’re not afraid of Caesar.

Clerk          He may send a delegation to investigate.

Crowd A      We're not afraid of any delegation from Caesar or anyone else.

Clerk         The delegation may be accompanied by Roman soldiers.

Crowd B      We're not afraid of Roman soldiers.

Clerk         Roman soldiers with sharp spears.

Crowd A      He's got a point there.

Crowd B      Several in fact.

Crowd A      Perhaps we were a bit hasty. [*Crowd begin to disperse*]

Crowd B      We could always make silver models of the synagogue instead.

Crowd A      Alexander Cohen would be bound to buy one...

Narrator 2    After saying this the city clerk dismissed the meeting. [*By this time all of the Crowd have left stage*]

Clerk         Meeting dismissed. [*Looking around*] Oh – they've already gone.

*THE END*