



# Salomé

A FILM BY SILVESTRE CORREIA  
WRITTEN BY GEORGE MURPHY

**S A L O M É**

by

George Murphy

based on the play

"Salomé"

by Oscar Wilde

the short story

"Herodias"

by Gustave Flaubert

**DRAMATIS PERSONAE:**

SALOMÉ, daughter of Herodias and Princess of Judea  
HERODIAS, wife of Herod and mother of Salomé  
HEROD, Tetrarch of Judea  
NARRABOTH, captain of the Royal Guard  
PHANUEL, court astrologer and advisor

JOKANAAN, a prophet

NAAMAN, an executioner  
THE PAGE OF HERODIAS, a eunuch  
MARIAMNE, a former queen enslaved by Herodias

**THE PARTY GUESTS:**

TIGELLINUS  
HECUBA  
MANASSEH  
ISSACHAR  
OZIAS  
VITELLIUS  
BERENICE

THE ROYAL GUARD  
THE PALACE SLAVES

**SETTING:**

MACHAERUS, the palace of Herod. A hilltop fortress looming over a waterless desert.

**NOTE:**

This film *must* be photographed in black and white.

BLACK.

The slow, exasperated whimpers of JOKANAAN. Calm. Quiet.

JOKANAAN (v.o.)  
The centaurs have hidden  
themselves in the rivers,  
and the nymphs have left  
the rivers . . . and are  
lying beneath the leaves in  
the forests.

WIDE: THE MOON, full and cold. Not a star in the sky.

JOKANAAN (v.o.)  
Woe to thee, O people . . .

Pause.

THE MOON CUTS TO: bird's-eye over an oubliette - an impossibly small and narrow dungeon. An old well, dry for centuries.

At the bottom of this prison, say twenty-feet down, is JOKANAAN.

We can barely make out his features.

His pallid body glows like irradiated marble.

JOKANAAN  
Woe to thee . . .

## 1. INT. JOKANAAN'S WELL - NIGHT

CLOSE ON: JOKANAAN (30s) at the bottom of his prison. He is pale and emaciated and willowy and HIS LONG WHITE HAIR obscures his face.

## 2. INT. HEROD'S CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

CLOSE ON: HEROD (early 70s) - the Tetrarch of Judea - sits with his chin resting in his hand.

His stony, leaden face is cradled by his rakish fingers.

On his third finger he wears a HUGE BLACK RING - THE DEATH RING - carved from a primeval gemstone.

His eyes are drawn downwards, he is watching something...

JOKANAAN (v.o.)  
. . . O traitors.

MEDIUM WIDE: WE REVEAL HEROD AND PHANUEL (60s/70s) sat against a small table in a darkened room.

Both men are old, venerable beasts. They wear fine robes and jewellery, evident of their statuses.

PHANUEL shuffles and lays out a number of mouldering cards before HEROD.

Both men carry a dour look. They both watch the cards intensely.

PHANUEL LAYS OUT the cards with great care and concision. He sets down the deck and passes his palm over the cards.

JOKANAAN (v.o.)  
Woe to thee, O tyrants of  
this land. O race of  
vipers, bursting with  
pride. Scourge thyself.  
Rotted scum.

PHANUEL TURNS OVER the first card...

HEROD'S eyes dart up at PHANUEL, as if insulted.

"THE FOOL" — HEROD is having his cards read. His fortune told.

JOKANAAN (v.o.)  
Hide thyself in the river  
and thy shame will follow  
thee. Thy disgrace shall be  
known to all men.

### 3. EXT. GARDEN COURTYARD — CONTINUOUS

A small walled garden courtyard. Unkempt, overflowing with mounds of bramble and dried or dying flowers.

A stone window is carved into one of the walls, high above the weeds.

At the centre of the garden, a HUGE BRONZE CISTERN LID rears up through the mangled vines.

### 4. INT. JOKANAAN'S WELL — CONTINUOUS

JOKANAAN breathes gently.

He takes in the rancid smell of his pit and SLOWLY looks UPWARDS.

JOKANAAN

I execrate the stench of  
thy crimes. May they be  
eaten of worms . . .

POV: JOKANAAN'S VIEW, AT THE BOTTOM OF THE WELL - we see the ROUND HATCH of the well's opening high above.

There is somebody there...

He has attracted an observer.

Over the rim of the well, veiled in the dark, stands THE PAGE OF HERODIAS.

JOKANAAN (CONT'D)

May they all be eaten of  
worms.

Pause.

Then, like a flash of lightening:

A SNAKE DARTS DOWN INTO JOKANAAN'S PIT.

JOKANAAN GASPS and the snake hisses.

BLACK.

AUDIO: MUSIC. Strings.

**TITLE: S A L O M É**

BLACK.

FADE IN: **TITLE: I. THE WOMAN IN THE MOON**

MUSIC STOPS.

5 . **INT. HEROD'S CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS**

MEDIUM WIDE: HEROD and PHANUEL sat, same as before.

PHANUEL turns over the cards. HEROD watches ponderously.

In a spread - from left to right - the cards:

1. THE FOOL
2. THE HIGH PRIESTESS
3. DEATH
4. THE TOWER
5. THE WHEEL OF FORTUNE (INVERTED)
6. THE MOON

BOTH MEN watch the cards and ponder their meaning. HEROD looks vexed.

His eyes still on the cards:

HEROD

The moon?

PHANUEL

The moon.

Pause.

PHANUEL (CONT'D)

*(gesturing to the cards)*

Here it would suggest  
delusion or . . . fear?

HEROD

I fear nothing.

PHANUEL

My lord, beneath the moon,  
nothing is as it seems.  
These are times of great  
uncertainty, are they not?  
The moon beckons us to look  
beyond what we are  
confronted with, lest our  
fears shape our future.

It's clear that HEROD is getting uncomfortable. Something about these cards are rubbing him the wrong way.

He releases a brief, disgruntled sigh:

HEROD

Then how might I proceed?

PHANUEL leans over the cards.

PHANUEL

With a clear mind, thou  
shall quell the unrest  
below.

HEROD

*(sneering)*

Unrest.

PHANUEL

My lord, day and night his  
followers clamour beneath  
the palace walls. Every  
morning I see that their  
number has grown.

HEROD

His supporters are of no  
threat to me.

PHANUEL

But they say that he is  
holy. A prophet . . . I  
fear that if thou oppress  
Jokanaan much longer, thou  
shalt be punished for it.

HEROD rubs his rugged cheeks in contemplation.

HEROD

But it is *he* who punishes  
*me*.

A change comes over HEROD. Defiant? Exasperated? His voice  
deepens, possessed by authority.

HEROD (CONT'D)

He reviles my wife and  
curses our marriage. Even  
now, in his pit, he sends  
men to spread dissent in my  
domain.

PHANUEL

Heed that no further. Thou  
must set him free.

HEROD

One does not let loose a  
wild animal.

PHANUEL

Have no fear of him, my  
lord, set him free and he  
will go with his followers.

**(MORE)**



PHANUEL (CONT'D)

Banish them to the  
uttermost ends of the  
earth.

HEROD appears lost in thought.

HEROD

His sway over men is . . .  
fascinating. In spite of  
myself, I admire him.

PHANUEL

Then set him free.

HEROD shakes his head. He looks deflated.

HEROD

No. No. I cannot. I will  
not. It is not my fault he  
remains in his dungeon. If  
I were to release him now  
he could rally his  
followers against me. If I  
were to release him now he  
would continue his assault  
upon the queen until his  
followers rallied against  
her. Do you not see? I  
would have it that he his  
forgotten. I would have it  
that he is forgotten  
entirely.

Pause. The two men stare at each other for a moment.

PHANUEL lowers his eyes. He has a grim look about him.

He speaks begrudgingly:

PHANUEL

My lord, from the beginning  
of the month I have been  
studying the stars before  
daybreak. When Perseus was  
at its zenith . . . the  
Demon Star, Algol, was not  
lit. From that and from  
these cards I . . . foresee  
the death of a man of some  
importance.

HEROD looks up, half-startled.

PHANUEL (CONT'D)  
To occur on this very  
night.

Pause.

PHANUEL sits in uncomfortable silence watching HEROD. He studies his face and his expressions. *What is he thinking?*

Then, finally:

HEROD  
None would kill Jokanaan.  
It could be that the King  
of Cappadocia . . .

Pause.

Steadily, HEROD rises from his chair. His eyes smoulder with a glint of despair.

HEROD (CONT'D)  
(alarmed)  
It is I!

PHANUEL  
None would dare make an  
attempt upon your life,  
Tetrarch.

FOCUS ON: HEROD, standing tall, brushes his bald head with the palm of his hand. Again, we see THE DEATH RING. He draws his hand across his head and brings it to his mouth in deep contemplation. *Delusion? Fear? Death? What does it all mean??*

PHANUEL, conscious of HEROD'S anxieties, speaks softly, as if to cushion his ominous foretelling:

PHANUEL (CONT'D)  
My lord, a great number of  
officers and officials are  
traveling here to Machaerus  
to feast in thy name.  
Hundreds of guests are said  
to be in attendance, it  
could be that —

HEROD RAISES HIS ARM and immediately PHANUEL is silent.

HEROD

*(stern)*

I'll have no more of this.  
Have Narraboth double the  
guard. A cautious approach.  
Check every guest for  
weapons. I want the guard  
on high alert.

Sheepishly, PHANUEL collects each of the cards and files them back into the deck. He DOES NOT look up at HEROD.

PHANUEL

Of course, sire.

HEROD

Good. I ought to prepare  
myself. As you say,  
*hundreds* are in attendance  
tonight. Herodias tells me  
that a number of  
ambassadors have sailed  
from Rome to celebrate this  
evening with us! I'll not  
have it blighted by killers  
nor zealots. Now leave,  
leave and give Narraboth my  
orders, go.

PHANUEL picks up his deck of cards, rises to his feet and turns to HEROD and bows reverentially.

PHANUEL

Yes, my lord.

FOCUS ON: PHANUEL walks from the table. As he moves out of the dim lighting and towards the darkness of the door, he stops and turns.

PHANUEL (CONT'D)

Sire, with your  
permission . . .

HEROD nods.

PHANUEL (CONT'D)

*(cautious)*

. . . a word regarding  
Queen Herodias.

HEROD

What?

PHANUEL turns his head for the door. THEN CREEPS towards HEROD, his feet light as a fox. He moves as though a frightened old man.

PHANUEL

(*low, shaky*)

My lord, the rumours are  
persisting

FOCUS ON: HEROD moves away.

PHANUEL (CONT'D)

if one of Rome's  
ambassadors were to —

With his back turned, he interrupts:

HEROD

Rumours are rumours. Naught  
but slander and gossip.  
I'll not have a word of it,  
I'll not heed a word of it.  
If you are so concerned,  
might I suggest raising the  
matter with the queen  
herself?

His final words sound like a threat, and PHANUEL receives them as such.

Pause.

PHANUEL sighs, then bows silently.

PHANUEL

(*quiet*)

My lord.

As the astrologer makes his leave, HEROD cranes his head and watches him exit.

A face of stone. He has too much to worry about tonight, and he would *rather not* think of his wife.

Pause.

## 6. INT. HERODIAS' CHAMBERS — NIGHT, LATER

EXTREME CLOSE UP: HERODIAS' FINGERS, RINGED with all manner of precious stones, COVER HER EYES. The fingers - up to the knuckle - are BLACK with charcoal? Soot? Decay??

Slowly her fingers draw downwards and we see LONG ROTTED FINGERNAILS that reveal a set of closed eyes. Thick with makeup, as though painted on with pitch.

She has NO EYEBROWS.

A low, wispy breathing begins to rise.

Slowly, her lashes shiver and her eyelids peel open to reveal a pair of lifeless eyes. Black as coal.

MEDIUM CLOSE: HERODIAS (40s? 30s??) appears emerging from the darkness. Her EYES seem to GLOW in the dark.

Her hair is huge, wiry and black. Serpentine. Layering necklaces of black pearl and onyx stones hang from her neck like a noose.

She breathes...

And stands there...

*Strange.*

There's something strange about this woman.

The SOUND of FOOTSTEPS approaching entice her eyes towards someone OFF SCREEN.

We HEAR someone PANTING. They came here in a hurry.

HERODIAS eyes them. Indignant. She waits for them to catch their breath. Then raises her chin.

With her permission:

THE PAGE OF HERODIAS (o.s.)  
Mistress.

Pause.

HERODIAS stares at them blankly.

THE PAGE OF HERODIAS (o.s.)  
I have completed thy task,  
mistress.

FOCUS ON: HERODIAS moves herself towards THE PAGE.

THE CAMERA FOLLOWS: Her head and neck coil downwards like some great Attic monster to reveal THE PAGE OF HERODIAS.

THE PAGE'S face is covered by a veil. We can scarcely make out their features nor their gender nor their age. They BOW THEIR HEAD as HERODIAS speaks to them:

HERODIAS

You have?

THE PAGE OF HERODIAS

Yes, mistress.

Pause.

HERODIAS

And you are sure you were  
not seen?

THE PAGE OF HERODIAS

Yes, mistress.

Pause.

HERODIAS pulls away from THE PAGE, and THE PAGE LOOKS at the queen.

HERODIAS' demeanour shifts. She stops and her eyes probe THE PAGE.

HERODIAS (CONT'D)

What is this?

THE PAGE shudders, shakes like a nervous child. They do not speak. They do not take their eyes off HERODIAS.

HERODIAS (CONT'D)

You have a look . . .

THE PAGE seems terrified or awe struck, perhaps both.

HERODIAS holds a peacock feather fan against THE PAGE'S cheek.

HERODIAS (CONT'D)

You have a dreamers look.  
You must not dream. It is  
only sick people who dream.

She STRIKES THE PAGE with her fan. THE PAGE holds their face and bows.

THE PAGE OF HERODIAS

Apologies, mistress . . .  
Thank you, mistress.

HERODIAS begins to fan herself.

HERODIAS

How he wearies me.

THE PAGE OF HERODIAS

Worry not, mistress. I hear  
that this venom is  
especially disturbing.

THE PAGE'S words sound as though a promise:

THE PAGE OF HERODIAS  
(CONT'D)

The prophet shall suffer  
until his last breath.

HERODIAS closes her fan and puts it beneath THE PAGE'S chin and  
raises their head upwards, so as to look them in the eye.

HERODIAS

Hmm . . . I do not believe  
in prophets. Can a man tell  
what will come to pass?

They stare at each other solemnly.

HERODIAS (CONT'D)

No man knows it.

Pause.

HERODIAS (CONT'D)

I shall take measure of thy  
success in due time.

HERODIAS removes the fan from THE PAGE'S chin.

THE PAGE OF HERODIAS

Peace, mistress. He shall  
not know the light of day  
again.

BLACK.

7.

**INT. TOILETTE OF SALOMÉ — NIGHT, LATER**

Inside a bath, filled with black water? Blood?? is SALOMÉ (20s),  
Daughter of Herodias and Princess of Judea.

(NOTE: We do not see her face during this sequence, only  
the back of her head.)

She is attended to by various SLAVES who hold clothes and jugs and fans. Among them is MARIAMNE (80s), holding a large ampulla.

The old slave watches SALOMÉ with languid eyes.

All of them watch SALOMÉ, all of them voyeurs.

JOKANAAN (v.o.)  
From the seed of this  
serpent shall come . . .

## 8. INT. JOKANAAN'S WELL - NIGHT, LATER

JOKANAAN haunched in his pit. His white hair drapes his shoulders like a stole.

JOKANAAN  
. . . a basilisk, and that  
which is born of it shall  
devour the birds . . .

## 9. INT. HERODIAS' CHAMBER - NIGHT, LATER

CLOSE ON: HERODIAS breathes in deeply. She looks shocked. She knows something has occurred. She can *feel it*.

— LATER

POV: A silver charger is placed upon a surface and A FERRET is placed atop the charger. Without ceremony, HERODIAS SNAPS ITS NECK and TEARS HER FINGERNAILS INTO THE FERRET.

Ribbons of blood spit from the carcass. Still warm.

HERODIAS SPLITS OPEN the animal and PULLS OUT the heart, intestine and all manner of organs. Her fingers *SQUELCH* as she divines the entrails.

She removes the liver and feels it with thumb and forefinger. She studies the liver. She holds it like a piece of money. It's slightly shrunken.

She marvels at it...

She breathes out...

She drops the liver...



MEDIUM: HERODIAS stretches her bloody hands outright. Her fingers drip with the viscera of the ferret. THE PAGE takes her hands and WIPES them with a cloth.

HERODIAS eyes THE PAGE with contempt.

She has seen something in the liver...

10. INT. PALACE HALLWAY - NIGHT, LATER

HERODIAS storms through the palace hallways. A woman possessed.

JOKANAAN (v.o.)

Ah! Is it thou, Jezebel?  
Hast thou finally risen  
from the bed of thy  
abominations? The bed of  
thy incestuousness? Thou  
hast captured thy lord's  
heart by black rite . . .

11. INT. JOKANAAN'S WELL - CONTINUOUS

JOKANAAN stoops in his pit. His head angles to the slimy floor of his prison.

JOKANAAN

Thou didst hypnotise him as  
the siren lulls the sailor!

POV: From the bottom of JOKANAAN'S WELL we see HERODIAS gazing down at the prophet with parted lips and a face drawn of fear and hatred.

JOKANAAN (CONT'D)

Prostate thyself in the  
dust and repent thy  
inequities. Ye adulteress.  
Ye witch. The punishment of  
heaven shall visit itself  
upon thy incest. O, let  
there come up a multitude  
of men, let them take rocks  
and let them stone ye  
dead. Accursed one, take  
thy python

JOKANAAN HOLDS A DEAD SNAKE TOWARDS HERODIAS.

JOKANAAN (CONT'D)  
and die like a dog.

HERODIAS, white with rage, creeps away from the rim of the well like some creature banished into the dark.

12. INT. HEROD'S CHAMBERS — NIGHT, LATER

HEROD sits before a mirror. His expression is grim. He can't stop thinking about PHANUEL'S PROPHECY.

He removes THE DEATH RING and other jewellery.

He puts them into a JEWELLERY BOX.

FOCUS ON: The arm of HERODIAS moves through the chamber.

MEDIUM: Her rotted hand stretches out and touches HEROD on the shoulder. Yet we do not see her reflection in the mirror.

HEROD gives a double take and turns and turns again and WE SEE HERODIAS stood by the door...

...at the other end of the room...

HEROD  
Herodias? I didn't hear you  
come in.

HERODIAS stands still. Intimidating and silent.

HEROD (CONT'D)  
I was about to bathe . . .

Pause.

HERODIAS does not respond. She stands as a spectre, a vindictive banshee.

HEROD (CONT'D)  
Did I not bid thee to  
welcome the Roman  
ambassadors?

HERODIAS  
There were . . . other  
matters that demanded my  
attention.

HEROD rummages through his JEWELLERY BOX.

As he removes his eyes from HERODIAS, she moves - almost glides - into the chamber towards HEROD.

FOCUS ON: HERODIAS moves her hand over HEROD'S JEWELLERY BOX. Her hand bends around THE DEATH RING. She presses herself in close to HEROD.

HERODIAS (CONT'D)

Might I bend thine  
ear . . . my lord?

HEROD

Noble Herodias . . . we are  
not mindful of our guests.

HERODIAS PULLS BACK from HEROD slowly.

HERODIAS

You wish to pay our guests  
more mind than I? I am your  
wife, am I not?

HEROD

Of a truth, my dear noble  
Herodias, you are my wife,  
and before that you were  
the wife of my brother.

HERODIAS

And thou did snatch me from  
his arms.

HEROD turns and LOOKS at HERODIAS. A strange smugness is writ wide across his face.

HEROD

Of a truth, I was stronger  
he . . .

His smugness fades. He shakes it off.

HEROD (CONT'D)

But let us not talk of that  
matter. I do not desire to  
talk of it.

HERODIAS

You never wish to talk of  
anything.

HEROD is slightly disgruntled. *At this rate he'll be late to his own feast. What does she want this time?*

HEROD

*(begrudgingly)*

If it would please thee, my  
dear Herodias, then let us  
talk. Quickly.

HERODIAS

Something must be done  
about Jokanaan.

She coughs out his name as if it were cursed. As if it leaves a  
bad taste in her mouth.

HEROD

The prophet . . .

HERODIAS

The prophet. Thou ought to  
have him strangled, as thou  
did thine own brother!

HEROD

I will do no such thing.

HERODIAS

Then you allow him to  
continue to revile your  
wife??

HEROD

He does not speak your  
name.

HERODIAS

What does that matter? You  
know it is I whom he seeks  
to revile.

HEROD

I will not have him killed.  
They say that he is a holy  
man.

HERODIAS

That man is forever  
vomiting insults on me.

HEROD

They say that he is a very  
great prophet.

HERODIAS

I think you are afraid of  
him . . .

HERODIAS leers steadily towards HEROD.

HERODIAS (CONT'D)

I know well that you are  
afraid of him.

HEROD

(assertive)

I am not afraid of him. I  
am afraid of no man.

HERODIAS

I tell you that you are  
afraid of him . . . if you  
are not afraid of him, why  
do you not execute him?

HEROD

I will not execute him. He  
is a holy man.

HERODIAS

Thou hast hidden him away  
at least six months now. I  
say you are afraid.

HEROD

Enough. I will not kill  
him. He is a man who has  
seen God!

HERODIAS is still.

She's haunted at the thought of HEROD listening to the prophet. If  
he were to renounce her, *all would be lost*.

HERODIAS

AH! I found powerful  
support, indeed, when I  
entered thy family!

HEROD

It is at least the equal of  
thine.

HERODIAS

Equal? Thy grandfather was  
a servile attendant . . .

HEROD

(overlapping)  
LIES!!

HERODIAS

. . . thy forefathers were  
camel drivers and robbers!  
A horde of slaves offered  
to the old kings. I am of  
royal blood, my  
forefather's were the  
conquerers of thine.

HEROD

Thou liest.

HERODIAS

You know well that it is  
true . . .

They stare at each other.

HERODIAS breaks the brief silence, her voice hypnotic. Lucid.

HERODIAS (CONT'D)

Thou wilt have Jokanaan  
executed. Thou wilt parade  
his head upon a pike for  
his peoples to bear . . .  
and word shall spread far  
that *this* would be the fate  
of any who dare disgrace  
thy great and noble house  
of Herod.

HEROD contemplates her words. He sits and thinks. *Could she be  
right? Could this be the way?*

He ponders.

He takes in a breath.

He shakes his head.

She *almost* convinced him.

HEROD

No. No, I will not. I  
cannot,

HERODIAS grimaces ever so slightly.

HEROD (CONT'D)

I have heard that he is a holy man. I do not understand all that he saith, but it could be that he speaks the word of God.

HERODIAS

I cannot suffer the sound of his voice. I hate his voice. He speaks like a drunken man.

HEROD

It may be he is drunk with the wine of God.

HERODIAS

You are ridiculous with your wine of God.

HEROD RISES from his chair.

HEROD

It may be that God has put these terrible words into his mouth. If he dies, peradventure some evil may befall me. The prophet is to be unharmed.

HEROD moves slowly towards HERODIAS, who watches him all the while.

HEROD (CONT'D)

(*stern*)

Abandon these ideas, woman.

HEROD brushes past her and goes to leave the room.

HEROD (CONT'D, o.s.)

I must bathe.

FOCUS ON: HERODIAS pays him no mind as he leaves. Rather, her eyes are now FIXED upon HEROD'S JEWELLERY BOX.

WE HEAR: The door CLOSES behind HEROD.

**13. INT. TOILETTE OF SALOMÉ - CONTINUOUS**

SALOMÉ bathing, same as before, we DO NOT see her face.

The toilette is hot and murky and the SLAVES attending are dripping with sweat.

SALOMÉ brings her hand above the water and makes a gesture.

IMMEDIATELY, MARIAMNE approaches with her ampulla and POURS the contents of the jug into the bath and retreats back. More black liquid. Warm. Fragrant.

SALOMÉ sinks into the bath.

**14. INT. PALACE HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS**

AUDIO: MUSIC and other party-sounds, in the distance. Quiet. Low.

HERODIAS moves through the hallway.

She comes to a door, half-open. A pillar of light beams from the door and out into the darkened hallway.

HERODIAS CREEPS towards it. She GRIPS her fingers against the doorframe and LOOKS IN TO SEE...

...through the half-open door...

SALOMÉ in her bath.

She watches her daughter wash and her fingernails scratch the doorframe.

SOFTY, BARELY AUDIBLE, WE HEAR: HERODIAS exhales slowly.

**15. INT. TOILETTE OF SALOMÉ - CONTINUOUS**

Through the half-open door we see the white face of HERODIAS peeping through the gap. A ghoul.

Two SLAVES flank the doorway. They hold fans. They do not notice HERODIAS at the door. They are looking at SALOMÉ.

REVERSE: SALOMÉ rises an inch or two from her bath.



## 16. INT. PALACE HALLWAY — CONTINUOUS

HERODIAS, almost drooling, peers into the toilette as though a glaring pervert.

Then...

AUDIO: FOOTSTEPS APPROACH from further down the hallway.

WE SEE BOTH HERODIAS AND SALOMÉ TURN THEIR HEADS towards the source of the noise.

HERODIAS WALKS towards the footsteps, dragging her fingernails across the doorway as she goes.

## 17. INT. TOILETTE OF SALOMÉ — CONTINUOUS

SLAVES GATHER around the bath and SALOMÉ RISES from its murky waters. She stands as though a marble statue gilded in silver.

## 18. INT. PALACE HALLWAY — CONTINUOUS

HERODIAS WALKS down the hallway and through the dim light, NARRABOTH (20s) — *the Young Syrian* — APPROACHES at a pace.

As soon as he notices HERODIAS, he STOPS and BOWS his head in reverence.

HERODIAS, as she moves past him, looks at NARRABOTH sombrely for just a moment. Then she passes, and fades into the dark of the hallway beyond.

NARRABOTH RAISES his head and continues on.

Until he comes to the toilette...

He moves towards the door. He's skittish. He looks back. *There's nobody there.* He moves in closer.

He places his hand upon the doorframe...

And slowly looks in...

## 19. INT. TOILETTE OF SALOMÉ — CONTINUOUS

SALOMÉ climbs out from the bath.

Some SLAVES ravish her towels.

FOCUS ON: SALOMÉ pulls back her head and glimpses INTO THE CAMERA for *just* a moment.

**20. INT. PALACE HALLWAY — CONTINUOUS**

NARRABOTH JOLTS BACK as if snakebitten. *She looked at me, she looked at me.*

*She has seen me.*

He breathes heavy. He scratches one of his hands and looks back. *Nobody there.* He creeps again towards the door, and takes a look inside:

**21. INT. TOILETTE OF SALOMÉ — CONTINUOUS**

SALOMÉ continues with her SLAVES undisturbed.

Did she see him? Does she know she is being watched?? We do not know.

WE HEAR: NARRABOTH'S HEAVY BREATHING, moving into a PANT, rises slowly over the noise of the party. It becomes ALL WE CAN HEAR.

**22. INT. PALACE HALLWAY — CONTINUOUS**

NARRABOTH SCRATCHES his bare arms as he looks upon SALOMÉ.

EXTREME CLOSE UP: NARRABOTH'S EYES BURN with the passion of Venus. The light of the toilette beams onto his face and he watches and he imagines.

HE SCRATCHES his arms harder.

HIS EYES turn furious. Confused. Aroused.

He is totally *consumed* by lust... he scratches...

and scratches...

and scratches and his arms begin to bleed.

He scratches *harder*. The things he would do to her...

HIS EYES are fit to burst. His panting rears as if on the cusp of ORGASM...

BLACK.

SILENCE.

FADE IN: **TITLE: II. THE FEAST OF HEROD**

**23. INT. BANQUET HALL — NIGHT, LATER**

AUDIO: MUSIC. LOUD. BOOMING.

EXTREME WIDE: A huge, stone hall, at one end, two grandiose THRONES stand atop a dais. One of the thrones is far more elaborate than the other — the throne of the Tetrarch and the queen consort, respectively.

At the very base of Herod's throne, stands NAAMAN, the executioner. He wears a white veil and brandishes an elaborate KOPIS — a heavy Greek knife. His GAZE pervades through the banquet hall.

Behind the thrones, at one end of the hall, is a stone window that overlooks the GARDEN COURTYARD, far below. At the other end of the hall is an open terrace, from which we can SEE THE MOON.

A HUGE TABLE extends throughout the hall, piled high with all matter of fine food and drink.

A number of rugs and pillows are scattered across the floor. And from the ceiling hang lush drapes and embroidered banners.

Flower petals and small fruits (cherries, grapes, mandarins etc.) are littered throughout the hall.

Braziers and torches light the room, as does THE MOON, which beams in through an open terrace at the other end of the hall.

Incense fills the air with scents of myrrh and cinnamon.

The hall is teeming with PARTY GUESTS chattering and drinking and laughing and some of them dancing. Most of the PARTY GUESTS WEAR MASKS.

SLAVES serve drinks upon silver chargers and mingle through the assortment of guests: delegates, generals and ambassadors, all here to celebrate HEROD'S birthday.

A number of the ROYAL GUARD keep watch against the walls.

The banquet is pulsing with all the cheer, festivity and debauchery that one would expect at a gathering of this magnitude.

HOLD.

HEROD sits on his throne. He wears his CROWN and an elaborate robe of silver. He holds his cup of wine full in one hand and in the other he holds a half-eaten piece of fruit. He bites at it.

HERODIAS sits beside him. She languishes in her chair and watches the room like a hawk. A drink also in hand.

Beneath them sit PARTY GUESTS at both sides of the long table.

Some of them laugh and slap their fellow on the shoulder.

Some of them gossip behind fans.

Some of them are fed grapes by SLAVES.

Some of them grope the SLAVES.

Some of them grope each other.

PHANUEL is among their number. WE SEE but DO NOT HEAR him speaking to NARRABOTH, whose arms are now covered.

FOCUS ON: HEROD LEANS towards HERODIAS and asks:

HEROD (inaudible)  
Where is she??

We do not hear his words over the raucous.

HERODIAS turns and looks back at him with a brow raised in disapproval.

CUT TO:

SALOMÉ ENTERS the banquet hall. She now wears a wig, diadem, makeup and a garment befitting of her opulence.

She has very thin penciled-on eyebrows.

She eyes the scene about her and SLOWLY makes her way through the hall. She moves like a fox.

CUT BACK TO:

EXTREME WIDE: HEROD taps HERODIAS. He has spotted SALOMÉ.

Both he and HERODIAS watch her approach (OFF-SCREEN) through the busy hall.

SALOMÉ ENTERS THE SHOT.

A number of PARTY GUESTS turn their heads as SALOMÉ sashays past them.

Some of them knock back their cups and gesture to the SLAVES for a refill.

SALOMÉ REFUSES a cup offered by one of the SLAVES, and perches at the END of the great table. Just beneath the throne. She does not acknowledge HEROD'S looming presence.

HEROD looks all the while at her...

Hold.

CUT TO:

MEDIUM: BLACKNESS rising into a starry night.

At the centre of it all sits HEROD. He has a sombre look. He looks at SALOMÉ, who is OFF-SCREEN.

Beside him sits HERODIAS.

THE CAMERA PANS SLOWLY TO THE RIGHT: HERODIAS catches HEROD looking at SALOMÉ. Her eyes narrow.

THE CAMERA PANS BEFORE WE CAN GAGUE HER FULL REACTION.

THE CAMERA PANS TO REVEAL: One half of the great table, as though cut in half.

At this side of the table sits:

TIGELLINUS

HECUBA

MANASSEH

A MALE SLAVE

PHANUEL

NARRABOTH

THE CAMERA COMES TO A STOP: TIGELLINUS, HECUBA and MANASSEH talk amongst themselves.

A young, MALE SLAVE, clad only in a loincloth, is sat on MANASSEH'S KNEE. He is not privy to their conversation.

PHANUEL and NARRABOTH sit beside them.

PHANUEL sips his wine.

NARRABOTH grips his cup with both hands. He STARES all the while at SALOMÉ (OFF-SCREEN).

NARRABOTH

How beautiful is the  
Princess Salomé tonight.

PHANUEL

Look at the moon. How  
strange the moon seems. She  
is like a woman rising from  
a tomb. She is like a dead  
woman. One would think she  
is looking for dead things.

NARRABOTH obliges the old man and looks towards THE MOON (OFF-SCREEN).

NARRABOTH

She has a strange look. She  
is like a princess who  
wears a yellow veil and  
whose feet are of silver.  
She is like a princess who  
has little white doves for  
feet.

(sighs)

You would fancy she was  
dancing.

PHANUEL

She is like a woman who is  
dead. She moves very  
slowly.

AUDIO: An UPROAR is heard from the OTHER SIDE OF THE TABLE.  
Shouting, inaudible.

TIGELLINUS and MANASSEH LOOK OVER and GRIMACE.

HECUBA EATS GRAPES.

MANASSEH RUBS the bare shoulder of the young SLAVE on his knee,  
and looks towards HEROD (OFF-SCREEN).

MANASSEH

The Tetrarch has a sombre  
aspect.

TIGELLINUS

Yes. He has a sombre  
aspect.

MANASSEH

He is looking at something.

TIGELLINUS

He is looking at some one.

HECUBA

At whom is he looking?

TIGELLINUS

I cannot tell.

NARRABOTH turns to look at SALOMÉ yet again.

NARRABOTH

How pale the Princess is.  
Never have I seen her so  
pale. She is like the  
shadow of a white rose in a  
mirror of silver.

PHANUEL

You must not look at her.  
You look too much at her.

THE CAMERA PANS SLOWLY TO THE LEFT: MANASSEH begins to KISS the  
SLAVE'S neck.

TIGELLINUS and HECUBA both drink. HECUBA prods him and draws his  
attention to MANASSEH. They both LAUGH.

THE CAMERA PANS TO REVEAL: HEROD looks towards SALOMÉ. He has not  
moved. He has barely blinked.

HERODIAS has hold of HEROD'S HAND. She grips it tightly.

HERODIAS

You must not look at her.  
You are always looking at  
her.

HEROD looks at HERODIAS.

THE CAMERA CONTINUES TO PAN LEFT, REVEALING: The other half of the  
table.

At this side sits:

SALOMÉ

OZIAS

**(MORE)**

VITELLIUS  
BERENICE

SALOMÉ FANS herself.

OZIAS STANDS BEHIND SALOMÉ. He watches her with a drink in his hand.

Further down the table, VITELLIUS and BERENICE look back-and-forth between each other and HEROD (OFF-SCREEN).

THE CAMERA COMES TO A STOP: BERENICE PATS VITELLIUS with her fan, drawing his attention.

BERENICE  
Hast thou seen the  
Tetrarch's hidden treasure?

VITELLIUS  
Herod's savage in the well?  
I hear that he is mad and  
that he speaks only  
madness.

BERENICE  
No, no. He is a holy man.  
He is very gentle too.

VITELLIUS  
Who is he?

BERENICE  
A prophet.

VITELLIUS  
What is his name?

BERENICE  
Jokanaan.

SALOMÉ'S EYES roll towards BERENICE and VITELLIUS. She SLOWS the pace at which she FANS herself.

VITELLIUS  
Whence comes he?

BERENICE  
From the desert. Where he  
fed on locusts and wild  
honey . . .

SALOMÉ'S EYES revert back and she FANS herself at pace again.



BERENICE (CONT'D)

He was clothed in camel's hair and round his loins he had a leathern belt. A great multitude used to follow him. He even had disciples.

VITELLIUS

(*laughs*)

What does he speak of?

BERENICE

You never can tell. Sometimes he says things that affright one, but it is impossible to understand what he says.

VITELLIUS

May one see him?

BERENICE

Oh no, the Tetrarch has forbidden it.

THE CAMERA PANS SLOWLY TO THE RIGHT:

VITELLIUS

Why is that?

THE CAMERA PANS BEFORE WE CAN HEAR BERENICE'S RESPONSE.

SALOMÉ continues to FAN herself.

THE CAMERA PANS TO REVEAL: HERODIAS fills HEROD'S cup with wine from an ornate jug.

She hands the JUG to a SLAVE.

HEROD TURNS HIS HEAD to the RIGHT and laughs - maybe TIGELLINUS said something funny.

As his head is turned, HERODIAS PUTS SOMETHING into HEROD'S DRINK. Subtle. Blink and you'll miss it.

THE CAMERA CONTINUES TO PAN RIGHT: TIGELLINUS LAUGHS heartily, the smile wares from his face quickly, though. He drinks.

HECUBA FEEDS GRAPES to the MALE SLAVE who's still sat on MANASSEH'S KNEE.

NARRABOTH GAZES still at SALOMÉ (OFF-SCREEN) and PHANUEL fills his cup and drinks.

THE CAMERA COMES TO A STOP:

MANASSEH

Herodias has filled the cup  
of the Tetrarch.

TIGELLINUS

Is that the Queen Herodias  
who wears ropes of black  
pearl, and whose hair is  
powdered with blue dust?

MANASSEH

Yes, that is her. The  
Tetrarch's wife . . . She  
is strange to look upon. It  
is more than twenty years  
since she married the  
Tetrarch . . . and she has  
not aged a single day . . .

TIGELLINUS and HECUBA GLARE at MANASSEH. They both know that he  
should not speak of the Queen like that... *She hears too much.*

HECUBA

The Tetrarch is very fond  
of wine!

HECUBA FEEDS a grape to the MALE SLAVE on MANASSEH'S LAP.

MANASSEH

Yes, he is . . . He has  
wine of three sorts. One  
which is bought from the  
Island of Samothrace, and  
is purple like the cloak of  
Caesar. Another  
that comes from a place  
called Cyprus, and is  
yellow like gold.

HECUBA

I love gold.

MANASSEH

And the third is a wine of  
Sicily. That wine is as red  
as blood.

## TIGELLINUS

The gods of my country are very fond of blood. Twice in the year we sacrifice to them young men and maidens: fifty young men and a hundred maidens. But I am afraid that we never give them quite enough, for they are very harsh to us.

## MANASSEH

In my country there are no gods left. The Romans have driven them out. There are some who say that they have hidden themselves in the mountains, but I do not believe it. Three nights I have been on the mountains seeking them everywhere. I did not find them.

MANASSEH begins to STROKE the SLAVE'S hair and shoulders.

The young SLAVE shudders.

## MANASSEH (CONT'D)

And at last I called them by their names, and they did not come. I think they are dead.

## HECUBA

There are some who worship gods they cannot see.

## MANASSEH

You know . . . I cannot understand that.

## NARRABOTH

The Princess has hidden her face behind her fan! Her little white hands are fluttering like doves that fly to their dove-cots. They are like white butterflies. They are just like white butterflies.

PHANUEL

What is that to you? Why do you look at her? You must not look at her . . . something terrible may happen.

NARRABOTH

She is very beautiful tonight.

THE CAMERA PANS SLOWLY TO THE LEFT, REVEALING: HERODIAS reprimands HEROD:

HERODIAS

I have told you not to look at her.

HEROD replies with a GRIMACE.

THE CAMERA CONTINUES TO PAN, REVEALING: SALOMÉ, VITELLIUS and BERENICE SAT at the table.

OZAIS stands behind them, same as before.

SALOMÉ HIDES HER FACE with her fan.

BERENICE FANS herself quickly. VITELLIUS drinks.

BERENICE

(to Vitellius)

The Tetrarch keeps him in a strange prison. An old cistern.

VITELLIUS

An old cistern! That must be a poisonous place in which to dwell.

BERENICE

Oh no! For instance, the Tetrarch's brother, his elder brother, the first husband of Queen Herodias, was imprisoned there for twelve years.

VITELLIUS looks at BERENICE in disbelief.

She nods affirmably.

BERENICE (CONT'D)

It did not kill him. At the end of the twelve years he had to be strangled.

VITELLIUS

Strangled? Who dared to do that?

BERENICE

(*pointing to the Executioner*)

That man yonder, Naaman.

VITELLIUS turns and steals a gaze from —

CUT TO:

FOCUS ON: NAAMAN, who stands sentinel at the base of Herod's throne. A shroud of incense smoke swirls around him.

CUT TO:

VITELLIUS turns back to BERENICE.

VITELLIUS

Was he not afraid?

BERENICE

Oh no. The Tetrarch sent him the ring.

VITELLIUS

What ring?

BERENICE

The Death Ring. So he was not afraid.

QUICK CUT TO:

## 24. INT. HEROD'S CHAMBER — EARLIER THAT NIGHT

AUDIO: A DOOR CLOSES.

HERODIAS stands alone within the darkened room.

Her eyes are FIXED ON HEROD'S JEWELLERY BOX.

She moves in towards it, as though mesmerised.

HERODIAS

*(quiet)*

I will not allow thee to  
heed the word of some  
desert savage.

HERODIAS' fingers stretch out, as they do, HEROD'S CHAMBER grows DARKER.

She snatches THE DEATH RING from its box.

FOCUS ON: THE DEATH RING is slung onto a SILVER CHARGER.

It rattles against the metal and then settles.

Silence.

HERODIAS lets out a long sigh.

She holds her hand over THE RING. Her fingers writhe in the air.  
We hear them CRACK.

She speaks low, and with intent. Emotion.

HERODIAS

Upon my name as  
Herodias . . . thou shalt  
not deny me what is  
mine . . . disgusting fool.  
Should ye bear ill upon  
mine bloodline let these  
words rend ye asunder. AH!

HERODIAS' EYES roll back in her head. She speaks with the passion  
of a martyr —

HERODIAS (CONT'D)

Thine fate shall unravel  
beneath the glow of the  
moon, and the majesty of  
mine dynasty shalt be known  
to all men.

FOCUS ON: THE DEATH RING seems to TWITCH.

BLACK.

25. INT. BANQUET HALL — NIGHT (BACK TO PRESENT)

FOCUS ON: BERENICE and VITELLIUS sit gossiping still, same as  
before.

BERENICE

The Tetrarch fancies that  
his ring gives him power  
over death.

VITELLIUS

I do not believe that . . .  
yet it is a terrible thing  
to strangle a king.

BERENICE

Why? Kings have but one  
neck, like other folk.

VITELLIUS

I think it is terrible.

SALOMÉ gets up and leaves the table and disappears into recesses  
of the banquet hall.

CUT TO:

NARRABOTH'S EYES are still drilling the Princess. He watches her  
every move.

NARRABOTH

The Princess rises! She is  
leaving the table. She  
looks very troubled . . .

PHANUEL

Do not look at her. I pray  
you do not look at her.

NARRABOTH

How pale she is . . . Never  
have I seen her so pale.

NARRABOTH stands and, as he does, PHANUEL takes him by the wrist.

He speaks as though a disapproving father:

PHANUEL

Why? Why do you look at  
her? Oh, something terrible  
will happen.

He doesn't even acknowledge the old man's touch...

NARRABOTH

She is like a dove that has  
strayed . . . she is like a  
narcissus trembling in the  
wind . . . she is like a  
silver flower . . .

No sooner does he speak these words, NARRABOTH moves away from the table. He follows SALOMÉ doe-eyed through the banquet hall.

PHANUEL watches him disappear into the party. *Stupid boy.*

## 26. INT. PALACE HALLWAY — NIGHT, CONTINUOUS

AUDIO: MUSIC. The party-sounds boom from the banquet hall yonder.

SALOMÉ glides through the darkened hallway. She tussles her hair and breathes deep.

NARRABOTH follows her at a distance.

The further Salomé and Narraboth venture down the hallway, the quieter the party-music becomes, fading gently into a dead silence...

She doesn't seem to notice that she's being followed...

## 27. EXT. GARDEN COURTYARD — CONTINUOUS

SALOMÉ MOVES through the overgrown garden as if a nymph. Lithe, gentle. She practically glows beneath THE MOON.

She STRETCHES and prances around the CISTERN LID, circling it once before she HALTS and looks up, half-shocked, to see NARRABOTH.

As soon as SALOMÉ'S eyes land upon him, he bows, and approaches the Princess.

NARRABOTH

You have left the feast,  
Princess?

SALOMÉ eyes him up and down. Takes his measure. Something of a smile runs across her lips, then fades away.

SALOMÉ

I will not stay. I cannot  
stay. Why does the Tetrarch  
look at me all the while  
with his mole's eyes under

(MORE)



SALOMÉ (CONT'D)

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.

NARRABOTH

Princess —

SALOMÉ

*(interrupting)*

How sweet the air is here!  
I can breathe here! Within they are tearing each other to pieces over their foolish ceremonies. Within, there are barbarians who drink and drink and spill their wine on the pavement, and Greeks from Smyrna with painted eyes and painted cheeks, and Egyptians silent and subtle, with long nails of jade and russet cloaks, and Romans brutal and coarse with their uncouth jargon. Ah! How I loathe the Romans! They are rough and common and they give themselves the airs of noble lords.

NARRABOTH

Are you not returning to the feast, Princess?

SALOMÉ cranes her head to the sky. Her eyes glitter like jewels under the moonlight.

SALOMÉ

How good it is to see 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 abandoned herself to

**(MORE)**

SALOMÉ (CONT'D)  
men, like the other  
goddesses.

SALOMÉ LEANS on the CISTERN LID.

JOKANAAN (o.s.)  
The Lord hath come. The son  
of man hath come. The  
solitary places shall be  
glad. They shall blossom  
like the rose. The eyes of  
the blind shall see the  
day, and the ears of the  
deaf shall be opened. The  
sucking child shall put his  
hand upon the dragon's  
lair, he shall lead the  
lions by their manes.

SALOMÉ MOVES AWAY from the CISTERN LID.

SALOMÉ  
Who was that who cried out?

NARRABOTH MOVES nearer to her. He stretches out his hands, as if  
he were about to comfort a frightened lover.

NARRABOTH  
The prophet, Princess.

SALOMÉ  
Ah, the prophet. He of whom  
the Tetrarch is afraid?

NARRABOTH  
I know nothing of that,  
Princess. It was the  
prophet Jokanaan who cried  
out.

SALOMÉ GLIMPSES into the well. She can't make anything out through  
the darkness.

SALOMÉ  
He says terrible things  
about my mother, does he  
not?

NARRABOTH  
We can never understand  
what he says, Princess.

SALOMÉ

Yes . . . He says terrible things about her.

NARRABOTH

Is it your pleasure that I escort you back to the feast, Princess?

SALOMÉ

I will not return.

NARRABOTH

Pardon me, Princess, but if you do not return some misfortune may happen.

SALOMÉ

Is he an old man, this prophet?

Anxiety wraps NARRABOTH. A mixture of arousal and fear. He SCRATCHES his fingers nervously.

NARRABOTH

Princess, it were better to return. Suffer me to lead you in?

SALOMÉ

This prophet . . . is he an old man.

NARRABOTH

No, Princess, he is quite young.

JOKANAAN (o.s.)

Hide thyself in the midst of the cypress, like the sparrow. In caverns, like the wild hare. The gates of this fortress shall be crushed more easily than nut-shells. The walls shall crumble. The halls shall burn, and the scourge of God shall never cease. He shall scatter the remains of your bones from the tops of the mountains.

SALOMÉ

What a strange voice . . .  
I would speak with him.

NARRABOTH

I fear it may not be,  
Princess. The Tetrarch does  
not suffer anyone to speak  
with him. He has even  
forbidden the high priest  
to speak with him.

SALOMÉ

I desire to speak with him.

NARRABOTH

It is impossible, Princess.

SALOMÉ

I will speak with him.

NARRABOTH

Would it not be better to  
return to the banquet?

SALOMÉ

Bring forth this prophet.

NARRABOTH

I dare not, Princess.

SALOMÉ PRESSES both her arms against the CISTERN LID and looks  
down into it. She ponders deep.

SALOMÉ

How black it is, down  
there! It must be terrible  
to be in so black a hole.  
It is like a tomb . . .

(to Narraboth)

Did you not hear me? Bring  
out the prophet. I would  
look on him.

NARRABOTH

Princess, I beg you, do not  
require this of me.

SALOMÉ

You are making me wait upon  
your pleasure.

NARRABOTH

Princess, my very life  
belongs to you. But I  
cannot do what you have  
asked of me.

SALOMÉ smiles. She smiles to herself. Doggedly, she STEPS towards  
NARRABOTH and paces around him.

SALOMÉ

You will do this thing for  
me, will you not,  
Narraboth? You will do this  
thing for me. I have ever  
been kind towards  
thee . . . You will do it  
for me. I would but look at  
him, this strange prophet.  
Men have talked so much of  
him. Often have I heard the  
Tetrarch talk of him. I  
think he is afraid him. Are  
you, even you, afraid of  
him, Narraboth?

NARRABOTH

I do not fear him,  
Princess. There is no man I  
fear. But the Tetrarch has  
formally forbidden that any  
man raise the cover of this  
well.

SALOMÉ

You will do this thing for  
me, Narraboth, and tomorrow  
when I pass in my litter  
beneath the gateway of the  
idol-sellers, I will let  
fall for you a little  
flower. A little green  
flower.

NARRABOTH

*(shaking his head)*

Princess, I cannot. I  
cannot.

SALOMÉ SMILES and moves in closer. She *almost* touches him.

## SALOMÉ

You will do this thing for me, Narraboth. You know that you will do this thing for me. And tomorrow when I pass my litter by the bridge of the idol-buyers, I will look at you through the muslin veils, I will look at you, Narraboth, it may be I will smile at you. Look at me, Narraboth, look at me. Ah! You know that you will do what I ask of you. You know it well . . . I know that you will do this thing.

## NARRABOTH

. . . Very well.

## SALOMÉ

Ah!

NARRABOTH LIFTS UP THE CISTERN LID. He pauses, he knows he should not be doing this. He looks at the Princess...

He unfurls the worm-eaten rope ladder attached to the side CISTERN LID and throws it down the well.

WE HEAR: SHUFFLING reverberates from deep within the well. The fibres of the rope ladder tense up and the sounds of the prophet ascending are HEARD. He struggles. He pants.

## NARRABOTH

*(looking at the moon)*

Oh, how strange the moon looks. She is like a little princess whose eyes are of amber. Through the clouds of muslin she is smiling like a little princess.

FOCUS ON: JOKANAAN EMERGES from his well. He crawls from the CISTERN LID like a revenant crawling from the grave. He sits in a heap before the Princess. His HAIR COVERS his face.

SALOMÉ takes a step back...

JOKANAAN

Where is he whose cup of  
abominations is now full?  
Where is he who in a robe  
of silver shall one day die  
in the face of all the  
people? Bid him come forth,  
that he may hear the voice  
of him who hath cried in  
the waste places and in the  
houses of kings.

SALOMÉ

Of whom is he speaking?

NARRABOTH

No one can tell, Princess.

JOKANAAN

Where is she who saw the  
images of men painted on  
the walls and gave herself  
up unto the lust of her  
eyes?

SALOMÉ

It is my mother that he is  
speaking of.

NARRABOTH

Oh no, Princess.

SALOMÉ

Yes. It is my mother he is  
speaking of.

JOKANAAN

Where is she who gave  
herself unto the Captains  
of Assyria, who have  
baldrics on their loins,  
and crowns of many colours  
on their heads? Where is  
she who hath given herself  
to the young men of the  
Egyptians, who are clothed  
in fine linen and hyacinth.  
Go, bid her rise up from  
the bed of her abominations  
that she may hear the words  
of him who prepareth the

**(MORE)**

## JOKANAAN (CONT'D)

way of the Lord. Though she will not repent, but will stick fast in her abominations, go, bid her come, for the fan of the Lord is in His hand.

## SALOMÉ

Oh, but he is terrible, he is terrible!

## NARRABOTH

Do not stay here, Princess, I beseech you.

## SALOMÉ

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

## NARRABOTH

Do not stay here, Princess. I pray you do not stay here.

## SALOMÉ

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 moon-beam, like a shaft of silver. His flesh must be very cold, cold as ivory . . . I would look closer at him.

## NARRABOTH

No, no, Princess!

## SALOMÉ

I must look at him closer.



NARRABOTH  
Princess! Princess!

SALOMÉ MOVES IN very close to JOKANAAN. She studies him.

JOKANAAN inches his head upwards EVER SO SLIGHTLY. Through the matted tendrils of his long, white hair, WE SEE the prophet's lips moving.

JOKANAAN  
Who is this woman who is looking at me? I will not have her look at me. Wherefore doth she look at me with her golden eyes, under her gilded eyelids? I know not who she is. I do not desire to know who she is. Bid her begone. It is not to her that I would speak.

SALOMÉ  
I am Salomé, daughter of Herodias, Princess of Judaea.

JOKANAAN  
Back! daughter of Babylon! Come not near the chosen of the Lord. Thy mother hath filled the earth with the wine of her iniquities, and the cry of her sinning hath come up even to the ears of God.

SALOMÉ  
Speak again, Jokanaan. Thy voice is like wine.

NARRABOTH frets with genuine concern. He is frightened. He knows that something bad will come of this.

NARRABOTH  
Princess! Princess!!

SALOMÉ  
Speak again. Speak again, Jokanaan, and tell me what I must do.

JOKANAAN

Daughter of Sodom, come not  
near me! But cover thy face  
with a veil, and scatter  
ashes upon thine head, and  
get thee to the desert, and  
seek out the Son of Man.

SALOMÉ

Who is he, the Son of Man?  
Is he as beautiful as thou  
art, Jokanaan?

FOCUS ON: SALOMÉ begins to steadily DESCEND onto the floor before JOKANAAN. She sits before him daintily, and leans inwards, so as to catch the waft of his breath as he speaks.

JOKANAAN

Get thee behind me! I hear  
in the palace the beating  
of the wings of the angel  
of death.

NARRABOTH

Princess, I beseech thee to  
go within.

JOKANAAN tilts his head towards THE MOON:

JOKANAAN

Angel of the Lord God, what  
dost thou here with thy  
sword? Whom seekest thou in  
this palace? The day of him  
who shall die in a robe of  
silver has yet to come.

SALOMÉ

Jokanaan!

JOKANAAN

Who speaketh?

MEDIUM: The GARDEN grows dark around JOKANAAN and SALOMÉ - a sepulchre in which only they inhabit.

JOKANAAN sits facing SALOMÉ. The huge CISTERN LID of his slimy prison juts out aside them.

HOLD.

## SALOMÉ

I am amorous of thy body,  
Jokanaan. Thy body is white  
like the snows that lie on  
the mountains of Judaea,  
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.

SLOWLY, her HAND stretches out towards JOKANAAN...

## SALOMÉ (CONT'D)

Suffer me to touch thy  
body.

## JOKANAAN

BACK!! daughter of Babylon!

SALOMÉ'S HAND recedes back.

## JOKANAAN (CONT'D)

By woman came evil into  
this world. Speak not to  
me. I will not listen to  
thee. I listen but to the  
voice of the Lord God.

## SALOMÉ

Thy body is hideous. It is  
like the body of a leper.  
It is like a plastered  
wall, where vipers have  
crawled. Like a plastered  
wall where the scorpions  
have made their nest. It is  
like a whited sepulchre,  
full of loathsome things.  
It is horrible, thy body is  
horrible. It is of thy hair

**(MORE)**

SALOMÉ (CONT'D)

that I am enamoured,  
Jokanaan. Thy hair is like  
clusters of grapes, like  
the clusters of white  
grapes that hang from the  
vine-trees of Edom in the  
land of the Edomites. Thy  
hair is like the cherry  
blossoms of the Orient,  
like the great cherry  
blossoms of the Orient that  
lend their shade to the  
tigers and to the robbers  
who would hide them by  
day . . . suffer me to  
touch thy hair.

SALOMÉ'S hand REACHES for JOKANAAN again.

JOKANAAN

BACK!! daughter of Sodom!  
Touch me not. Profane not  
the temple of the Lord God.

She pulls her hand back.

SALOMÉ

Thy hair is horrible. It is  
covered with mire and dust.  
It is like a crown of  
thorns placed on thy head.  
It is like a knot of  
serpents coiled around thy  
neck. I love not thy hair.

She studies him carefully, as if she were appraising some  
Renaissance masterpiece.

SALOMÉ (CONT'D)

It is thy mouth that I  
desire, Jokanaan. 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

(MORE)

## SALOMÉ (CONT'D)

trumpets that herald the approach of kinds, 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. It is redder than the feet of the doves who inhabit the temples and are fed by the priests. It is redder than the feet of he who cometh from a forest where he hath slain a lion, and seen gilded tigers. Thy mouth is like a branch of coral that fishers have found in the twilight of the sea, the coral that they keep for the kings! . . . It is like the vermillion that the Moabites find in the mines of Moab. It is like the bow of the King of the Persians, that is painted with vermillion, and is tipped with coral. There is nothing in the world so red as thy mouth . . . suffer me to kiss thy mouth . . .

## JOKANAAN

Never. Daughter of Babylon, daughter of Sodom, never!

## SALOMÉ

I will kiss thy mouth, Jokanaan. I will kiss thy mouth.

Pause.

The darkness LIFTS with the sound of NARRABOTH'S VOICE.

## NARRABOTH (o.s.)

Princess! Princess!

FOCUS ON: NARRABOTH'S voice is like a wailing bell. His eyes are almost wet with tears. He stands close BEHIND SALOMÉ, though she does not acknowledge him.

NARRABOTH (CONT'D)

Thou art like a garden of  
myrrh, thou art like the  
dove of all doves, look not  
at this man, look not at  
him! Do not speak such  
words to him. I - I cannot  
endure it . . . Princess,  
do not speak these things.

He might as well be talking to himself...

SALOMÉ

I will kiss thy mouth,  
Jokanaan.

NARRABOTH

AH!

NARRABOTH is defeated. He draws a DAGGER FROM HIS BELT and holds  
it outright. He brandishes it before SALOMÉ, who does not look.

His breaths are staggered. He looks to SALOMÉ and then the DAGGER.

His soul is blighted.

HOLD.

HE PLUNGES THE DAGGER INTO HIS OWN NECK! Ribbons of blood spew  
from the wound. NARRABOTH gargles and chokes and without  
hesitation he HE STABS HIMSELF AGAIN!!

Blood, black as tar, bubbles from the lacerations in his THROAT  
and vomit onto the dry weeds of the garden.

He collapses to his knees behind the Princess, drops his dagger  
and falls dead.

JOKANAAN watches on with stoic reservation.

SALOMÉ does not react.

SALOMÉ

Suffer me to kiss thy  
mouth, Jokanaan.

JOKANAAN

Art thou not afraid,  
daughter of Herodias? Did I  
not tell thee that I had  
heard in the palace the

**(MORE)**

JOKANAAN (CONT'D)

beating of the wings of the  
angel of death, and hath he  
not come, the angel of  
death?

SALOMÉ

Suffer me to kiss thy mouth  
. . .

PHANUEL and ISSACHAR ENTER the GARDEN COURTYARD. Yet neither  
SALOMÉ nor the prophet react to their arrival.

PHANUEL'S eyes fall onto NARRABOTH, slumped dead beside the  
cistern and both men RUSH to the dead man.

Blood stains the wrinkled palms of PHANUEL'S hand. He holds  
NARRABOTH with tenderness.

PHANUEL

The young captain has slain  
himself! He has slain  
himself who was my friend!  
I gave him a little box of  
perfumes and earrings  
wrought in silver, and now  
he has killed himself! I  
said that some misfortune  
would happen and it has  
come to pass. Well I knew  
that the moon was seeking a  
dead thing, but I knew not  
that it was he whom she  
sought. Ah! Why did I not  
hide him from the moon? If  
I had hidden him in a  
cavern she would not have  
seen him.

JOKANAAN

Daughter of adultery, there  
is but one who can save  
thee. It is He of whom I  
spake. Go seek Him. Kneel  
down on the shore of the  
sea, and call unto Him by  
His name. When He cometh,  
bow thyself at His feet and  
ask of Him the remission of  
thy sins.

SALOMÉ

Suffer me to kiss thy  
mouth.

JOKANAAN

Cursed be thou! daughter of  
an incestuous mother, be  
thou accursed!

SALOMÉ

I will kiss thy mouth,  
Jokanaan.

JOKANAAN

I will not look at thee.

JOKANAAN CRAWLS BACK down into his prison.

JOKANAAN (CONT'D)

Thou art accursed, Salomé,  
thou art accused.

SALOMÉ

(*quiet*)

I will kiss thy mouth,  
Jokanaan. I will kiss thy  
mouth.

ISSACHAR

We must bear away the body  
to another place. The  
Tetrarch does not care to  
see dead bodies, save for  
those he has slain himself.

PHANUEL

He was like my son, and  
nearer to me than a son. I  
gave him a ring of agate  
that he wore always on his  
hand. In the evening we  
were wont to walk by the  
river, and among the almond  
trees, and he used to tell  
me of his country. He had  
much joy to gaze at himself  
in the river. I used to  
reproach him for that.



ISSACHAR

Phanuel, we must hide the body. The Tetrarch must not see it.

PHANUEL

The Tetrarch will not come to this place. He never comes to this garden. He is too much afraid of the prophet.

SALOMÉ RISES from the ground. She regards the scene behind her, yet her face bares no expression.

POV: FROM THE BOTTOM OF JOKANAAN'S WELL: SALOMÉ BOOMS DOWN over the rim of the cistern.

BLACK.

## 28. INT. BANQUET HALL — NIGHT, LATER

AUDIO: MUSIC. Party-sounds.

The feast of Herod continues. The wine flows.

Some of THE PARTY GUESTS dance. Most of them are drunk.

FOCUS ON: HEROD slouches on his throne, cup in hand. HERODIAS sits aside him and she COVERS part of her face with her hand.

*(NOTE: Herodias is to grow more and more physically uncomfortable as the scene draws on.)*

HEROD is HALF-DRUNK on fine wine. He LOOKS OUT beyond the banquet hall, out of its great stone windows, and into the night sky.

He watches THE MOON.

HEROD

The moon has a strange look tonight.

*(to Herodias)*

Has she not a strange look?

HERODIAS looks at HEROD.

HEROD (CONT'D)

She is like a mad woman, a mad woman who is seeking

**(MORE)**

HEROD (CONT'D)

everywhere for lovers. She is naked too. She is quite naked. The clouds are seeking to clothe her nakedness, but she will not let them. She reels through the clouds like a drunken woman. I am sure she is looking for lovers. Does she not reel like a drunken woman? She is like a mad woman, is she not?

HERODIAS

No. The moon is like the moon and that is all.

HEROD

Hm . . . Where is Salomé? Where is the Princess? Has she returned to the banquet?

HEROD EMPTIES his cup.

PHANUEL walks towards the throne and HEROD gestures for him to approach. He ascends the little steps and WHISPERS INTO the Tetrarch's ear.

HEROD (CONT'D)

But I did not send him the ring. I gave no order that he be slain.

PHANUEL

He slew himself, sire.

HEROD

For what reason? I had made him captain of my guard!

PHANUEL

I do not know, sire. But with his own hand, he slew himself.

HEROD

That seems strange to me. I had thought it was only Roman philosophers who slew

**(MORE)**

HEROD (CONT'D)

themselves. Is it not true, Tigellinus, that the philosophers of Rome slay themselves?

TIGELLINUS

There be some who slay themselves, sire. They are the Stoics. They are people of no cultivation. They are ridiculous people. I myself regard them as being perfectly ridiculous.

HEROD

I also. It is ridiculous to kill one's-self . . . It is strange that Narraboth has slain himself. I am sorry that he has slain himself. I am very sorry, for he was fair to look upon. He was very fair . . . he had very languorous eyes. I remember that he looked languorously at Salomé. Truly, I thought he looked too much at her.

HERODIAS

There are others who look too much at her.

HEROD

His father was a king and I drove him from his kingdom. His mother was a queen and you made her a slave, Herodias. So he was here as my guest, as it were, and for that reason I made him my captain. I am sorry that he is dead.

FOCUS ON: SALOMÉ ENTERS the banquet hall. She SITS upon the floor at the base of HEROD'S THRONE with her BACK TURNED AGAINST the Tetrarch.

HEROD (CONT'D)

It is cold here. There is a wind blowing. Is there not a wind blowing?

HERODIAS

No. There is no wind  
blowing.

HEROD

I tell you there is a wind  
that blows . . . And I hear  
in the air something that  
is like the beating of  
wings, like the beating of  
vast wings. Do you not hear  
it?

HERODIAS

I hear nothing.

HEROD

I hear it no longer. But I  
heard it. It was the  
blowing of the wind. It has  
passed away. But no, I hear  
it again. Do you not hear  
it?

HERODIAS

I tell you there is  
nothing. You are ill.

HEROD

I am not ill. It is your  
daughter who is sick to  
death. Never have I seen  
her so pale.

HERODIAS

I have told you not to look  
at her.

HEROD

Pour me forth wine.

THE SLAVES bring wine and FILL the Tetrarch's cup.

He takes a good gulp and eyes SALOMÉ, who watches the party.

His eyes NARROW as he SEES BLOTCHES OF BLOOD across SALOMÉ'S BACK.

HEROD stretches out to touch the blood on her back...

Just before his fingertips touch her lustrous skin, SALOMÉ TURNS  
and LOOKS at HEROD.

He recoils, then smiles at her.

SALOMÉ TURNS BACK towards the party.

HOLD.

HEROD (CONT'D)

Salomé. Salomé, come drink  
a little wine with me. This  
wine is exquisite, Caesar  
himself sent it to me. Dip  
into it thy little red  
lips, that I might drain  
the cup.

SALOMÉ

I am not thirsty, Tetrarch.

HEROD

(to Herodias)

You hear how she answers  
me, this daughter of yours?

HERODIAS

She does right. Why are you  
always gazing at her?

HEROD

Bring me ripe fruits.

THE SLAVES bring fruits on little silver chargers. HEROD takes up  
a pear and BITES into it. The juices run down his chin.

HEROD (CONT'D)

Salomé, come and eat fruits  
with me. I love to see in a  
fruit the mark thy little  
teeth.

HEROD STRETCHES his arm out and offers SALOMÉ the pear.

HEROD (CONT'D)

Bite but a little of this  
fruit and I shall eat what  
is left.

SALOMÉ

I am not hungry, Tetrarch.

HEROD

*(to Herodias)*

You see how you have  
brought up this daughter of  
yours.

HERODIAS pays him no mind.

HEROD (CONT'D)

Salomé, come and sit next  
to me. I will give thee the  
throne of thy mother.

SALOMÉ

I am not tired, Tetrarch.

HERODIAS

You see in what regard she  
holds you.

HEROD

Bring me — What is it that  
I desire? I forget. Ah! I  
remember.

THE PARTY GUESTS TURN and LOOK AROUND as they hear the VOICE OF  
JOKANAAN rise like the voice of malefic cacodemon.

JOKANAAN (o.s.)

Behold! The time is come!  
That which I foretold has  
come to pass. The day that  
I spoke of is at hand.

SALOMÉ CLOSES HER EYES as the prophet speaks. His words are like  
wine to her.

HERODIAS

Bid him be silent. I will  
not listen to his voice.  
That man is forever hurling  
insults against me.

HEROD

He said nothing against  
you. Besides he is a  
prophet. He is a man who  
has seen God.

HERODIAS scoffs.

OZIAS

That cannot be, sire. There is no man who hath seen God since the prophet Elias. These days, God doth not show Himself. Therefore great evils have come upon the land.

VITELLIUS

No man knows if Elias did see God. It may have been but the shadow of God he saw.

BERENICE

Oh, but God is terrible! He breaks the strong and the weak, as men break corn in a mortar.

HERODIAS

*(to Herod)*

Make them silent. They are mad, they have looked too long at the moon.

HEROD

But I have heard that Jokanaan is in truth the prophet Elias.

OZIAS

That cannot be. It is more than three hundred years since the days of the prophet Elias.

HEROD

There are some who say that this man is Elias the prophet.

Again, JOKANAAN'S VOICE fills the banquet hall:

JOKANAAN (o.s.)

Behold the day is at hand, the day of the Lord, and I hear upon the mountains the feet of Him who shall be the Saviour of the world.

HEROD

What is he saying? What does he mean? The Saviour of the world?

TIGELLINUS

It is a title that Caesar adopts.

HEROD

But Caesar is not coming to Judaea. Caesar cannot come. He is too gouty. They say that his feet are like the feet of an elephant. Also there are reasons of state. He who leaves Rome loses Rome.

ISSACHAR

He does not speaketh of Caesar, my lord. He speaketh of Messias, who hath come.

OZIAS

*(sneering)*

Messias has not come.

ISSACHAR

He hath come! He hath come and everywhere he worketh miracles.

HERODIAS

Miracles? I do not believe in miracles. I have seen too many.

ISSACHAR

But He worketh true miracles. He healed two lepers that were seated before the Gate of Capernaum simply by touching them. He was seen on a mountain talking with angels!

HERODIAS

Angels do not exist.



HECUBA

There is also the miracle  
of the daughter of Jairus.

HEROD

*(intrigued)*

What is the miracle of the  
daughter of Jairus?

HECUBA

The daughter of Jairus was  
dead. This Man raised her  
from the dead.

HEROD

How? He raises people from  
the dead??

HECUBA

Yes, sire.

HEROD SHAKES both his head and his finger.

HEROD

No . . . I do not wish Him  
to do that. I forbid Him to  
do that. I suffer no man to  
raise the dead. This Man  
must be found and told that  
I forbid Him to raise the  
dead. Where is this Man at  
present?

ISSACHAR

It is said that he is was  
in Samaria.

HECUBA

No, He is not there.

HEROD

No matter! Let them find  
Him and tell Him that Herod  
will not allow him to raise  
the dead! I hold it a  
kindly deed to heal a  
leper, but no man shall  
raise dead . . . it would  
be terrible if the dead  
came back . . .

HEROD knocks back his cup of wine and gestures for another.

A SLAVE fills his cup and he begins to sip at it.

JOKANAAN (o.s.)

Let the captains of the  
hosts pierce the witch with  
their swords, let them  
crush her beneath their  
shields. It is thus that I  
will wipe out all the  
wickedness from the earth,  
and that all women shall  
learn not to imitate her  
abominations.

HERODIAS

Do you hear what he says  
against me?

HEROD

Herodias, noble Herodias,  
fill thou my cup, my well-  
beloved. I will drink to  
Caesar. There are Romans  
here, we must drink to  
Caesar.

ALL PARTY GUESTS

Caesar! Caesar!

HEROD and the PARTY GUESTS RAISE their cups and glasses.

They ALL DRINK.

HEROD WIPES his MOUTH with the sleeve of his silver robe and  
begins to WATCH SALOMÉ.

Pause.

HEROD

Do you not see your  
daughter, how pale she is?

HERODIAS

What is it to you if she be  
pale or not?

HEROD

Never have I seen her so  
pale.

HERODIAS

You must not look at her.

JOKANAAN (o.s.)

In that day the sun shall  
become black and the moon  
shall become like blood,  
and the stars of the heaven  
shall fall upon the earth  
like unripe figs, and the  
kings of the earth shall be  
afraid.

HERODIAS

Ah! I should like to see  
that day! Command him to be  
silent.

HEROD

I will not. I cannot  
understand what he saith  
but it may be an omen.

HERODIAS

I do not believe in omens.  
He speaks like a drunken  
man.

HEROD IGNORES HERODIAS and SIPS at his wine.

(**NOTE:** *From this point on, he looks all the while at  
Salomé*)

HEROD

Tigellinus . . .

TIGELLINUS

Sire?

HEROD

When you were in Rome of  
late, did the Emperor speak  
with you on the subject  
of . . . ?

TIGELLINUS

On the subject of what,  
sire?

HEROD

On what subject? Ah! I asked you a question, did I not? I have forgotten what I would have asked you.

HERODIAS

You are looking again at *my* daughter. You must not look at her, I have already said so.

HEROD

You say nothing else.

HERODIAS

I say it again.

HEROD

(*to Tigellinus*)

And that restoration of the Temple . . . will anything be done? They say the veil of the Sanctuary has disappeared, do they not?

HERODIAS

It was thyself that didst steal it! Thou speakest at random and without wit. I will stay here no longer.

HERODIAS JOSTLES the ropes of black pearl around her neck. She goes to stand.

As she does, HEROD LEANS IN towards SALOMÉ and asks:

HEROD

Dance for me, Salomé.

HERODIAS STOPS. She does not get up from her chair.

HERODIAS

I will not have her dance.

SALOMÉ

I have no desire to dance, Tetrarch.

HEROD

Salomé, daughter of  
Herodias . . . dance for  
me.

HERODIAS

Peace. Let her alone.

SALOMÉ

I will not dance, Tetrarch.

HERODIAS

*(short laugh)*

You see how she obeys you.

HEROD PULLS AWAY from SALOMÉ.

HEROD

What is it to me whether  
she dance or not? It is  
nought to me. Tonight I am  
happy, I am exceedingly  
happy. Never have I been so  
happy.

MANASSEH

The Tetrarch has a sombre  
look. Has he not a sombre  
look?

HECUBA

Yes, he has a sombre look.

HEROD

Wherefore should I not be  
happy? Caesar, who is lord  
of the world, loves me  
well. He has sent me the  
most precious gifts. Also,  
he has promised me to  
summon to Rome the King of  
Cappadocia, who is mine  
enemy. It may be that at  
Rome he will crucify him!  
For he is able to do all  
things that he wishes!  
Verily, Caesar is lord.  
Thus, you see, I have a  
right to be happy. Indeed,  
I am happy. There is  
nothing in the world that  
can mar my happiness.

JOKANAAN (o.s.)

He shall be seated on his throne, he shall be clothed in scarlet and purple. In his hand he shall bear a golden cup full of his blasphemies. He shall be eaten of worms.

HERODIAS

Do you hear what he says about you? He says that you shall be eaten of worms.

HEROD SHAKES his head and lets out a mirthless laugh.

HEROD

No . . . It is not of me that he speaks. He speaks never against me.

(smug)

It is the King of Cappadocia that he speaks, the King of Cappadocia who is mine enemy. It is he who shall be eaten of worms. Not I. Never has he spoken a word against me, this prophet, save that I have sinned in taking to wife the wife of my brother. It may be that he is right.

HERODIAS TURNS WHITE with rage. She could scream. She could breathe fire. *The prophet has gotten to the Tetrarch . . .* She feels threatened . . .

HEROD (CONT'D)

For, of a truth, you are sterile.

HERODIAS

I am sterile? I? You say that, you are ever looking at *my* daughter, you that would have her dance for your please? You speak like a fool. You are absurd. I have borne a child. You have gotten no child, no,

(MORE)

## HERODIAS (CONT'D)

not even from one of your slaves. It is you who is sterile, not I.

## HEROD

Peace, woman! I say that you are sterile. You have borne me no child, and the prophet says that our marriage is not a true marriage. He says that it is an incestuous marriage, a marriage that will bring evils . . . I fear that he is right. I am sure that he is right . . . But it is not the hour to speak of these things. I would be happy at this moment. Of a truth, I am happy. There is nothing I lack.

## HERODIAS

I am glad you are of so fair a humour tonight. It is not your custom. But it is late. Do not forget that we hunt at sunrise. All honours must be shown to Caesar's ambassadors, must they not?

## BERENICE

What a sombre look the Tetrarch wears.

## VITELLIUS

Yes, he wears a sombre look.

HEROD LEANS IN towards SALOMÉ.

## HEROD

Salomé, Salomé, dance for me. I pray thee dance for me. I am sad tonight . . .

FOCUS ON: SALOMÉ'S expression is blank. *She doesn't care.*

HEROD (CONT'D)

I am sad, therefore you should dance for me, Salomé, I beseech you. If you dance for me, Salomé, you may ask me for anything, and I will give it to you, even unto the half of my kingdom.

SALOMÉ begins to TURN very gently towards HEROD. He smiles as the Princess looks at him.

SLOWLY, she CRAWLS up the dais towards Herod's throne.

He leans in closer and SMELLS her as he moves. *Jasmine? Roses?? He cannot make out her fragrance.*

SALOMÉ

Will you indeed give me whatsoever I shall ask of you, Tetrarch?

HERODIAS

Do not dance, my daughter.

HEROD

Anything. Even the half of my kingdom.

SALOMÉ

You swear it, Tetrarch?

HEROD

I swear it, Salomé.

HERODIAS

Do not dance, my daughter.

SALOMÉ

By what will you swear, Tetrarch?

HEROD

By my life, by my crown, by my gods, whatever you desire, I shall give it to you, even to the half of my kingdom, if you would but dance for me, O Salomé! Salomé, dance for me!



SALOMÉ RISES to her feet.

SALOMÉ

You have sworn an oath,  
Tetrarch.

HEROD

I have sworn an oath.

HERODIAS

My daughter, do not dance.

HEROD

Even to the half of my  
kingdom . . . thou wilt be  
passing fair as a queen,  
Salomé, if it would please  
thee to ask for the half of  
my kingdom.

*(to the Party Guests)*

Will she not be fair as a  
queen?

THE PARTY GUESTS CHEER in agreement.

HEROD (CONT'D)

Ah! It is cold here. There  
is an icy wind, and I  
hear . . . wherefore in the  
air do I hear the beating  
of wings? A black  
bird . . . ? The beat of  
its wings is terrible. The  
breath of the wind of its  
wings is terrible. It is a  
chill wind. Nay, but it is  
not cold, it is hot. I am  
choking. Loosen my mantle.  
Nay! But leave it. It is my  
crown that hurts me, my  
crown of gold. It burns  
like fire. It has burned my  
forehead.

HEROD TEARS the CROWN from his head and LAUNCHES it at the table.

It lands with a heavy, metallic *THUD!*

FOCUS ON: THE CROWN glitters in the moonlight atop the table.  
Around it are scattered FLOWER PETALS.

HEROD (CONT'D)

Ah! I can breathe now.

*(looking at his crown)*

How red those petals are.  
They are like stains of  
blood . . . That does not  
matter. It is not wise to  
find symbols in everything  
that one sees. It makes  
life too full of terror.

HEROD DRINKS his wine. He might have emptied his cup.

He gives a drunken half-smile to the hall.

HEROD (CONT'D)

But now I am happy. Have I  
not the right to be happy?  
Your daughter is going to  
dance for me. Wilt thou not  
dance for me, Salomé? Thou  
hast promised to dance for  
me.

SALOMÉ

I will dance for you,  
Tetrarch.

HEROD SMILES back at her like a giddy child.

HEROD

You hear what your daughter  
says. She is going to dance  
for me, you do well to  
dance for me, Salomé. And  
when you have danced,  
forget not to ask of me  
whatsoever you wish.  
Whatsoever you wish, even  
the half of my kingdom, I  
have sworn it, have I not?

SALOMÉ

You have sworn it,  
Tetrarch.

BLACK.

FADE IN: **TITLE: III. THE DANCE OF THE SEVEN VEILS**

**29. INT. TOILETTE OF SALOMÉ – NIGHT, LATER**

SALOMÉ sits at her vanity. She does not wear a wig.

A number of SLAVES attend her. They hold sheets and veils. They spray the Princess with perfumes.

MARIAMNE POWDERS SALOMÉ'S FACE.

IN THE REFLECTION of her VANITY MIRROR, HERODIAS emerges from the dark and stands terribly. She watches the SLAVES run about preparing the Princess for her dance.

She steps towards SALOMÉ, who watches her every move.

HERODIAS

Leave us.

THE SLAVES scatter out of the door, bowing their heads before HERODIAS as they pass.

MARIAMNE continues to powder SALOMÉ, moving onto her neckline and shoulders. Her old ears did not hear the Queen.

SALOMÉ looks up at the old slave. She pinches her EARRING and PULLS IT.

The wrinkled skin of the old slave's earlobe stretches and MARIAMNE lets out a harsh SCREAM.

SALOMÉ PULLS her ear towards her lips:

SALOMÉ

Did thou not hear my  
mother?

She YANKS harder on the earring. The skin looks as if it's about to TEAR at any second.

MARIAMNE cries and whimpers.

SALOMÉ (CONT'D)

(soft)

Leave us.

She lets go and MARIAMNE shambles away.

The old slave looks up at HERODIAS and the two women EYE each other for a moment.

HERODIAS goes towards SALOMÉ.

MARIAMNE leaves the toilette.

HERODIAS

My daughter . . .

She opens both hands and hunches over.

WE SEE: IN THE REFLECTION OF THE MIRROR: HERODIAS' long black fingers coil around SALOMÉ'S NECK.

HOLD.

Her hands SLIDE down the length of SALOMÉ'S NECK, onto her shoulders.

HERODIAS (CONT'D)

Why doth thou deliberately  
defy me?

SALOMÉ does not respond. She becomes slightly timid with her mother bearing down on her.

HERODIAS (CONT'D)

Answer me, Salomé . . .

SALOMÉ

The Tetrarch hath sworn an  
oath.

HERODIAS

The Tetrarch is a liar and  
a fool to boot. He looks at  
you far too much, you will  
not dance.

SALOMÉ

I will.

HERODIAS

You will not. What is it  
that entices thee, Salomé?  
Dost thou desire the half  
of his kingdom?

SALOMÉ does not respond. She adverts her eyes away from her mother.

HERODIAS (CONT'D)

Nay. There is something  
else . . . something other  
which you desire. I can see  
it in your eyes.

Tenderly, HERODIAS puts her hand around SALOMÉ'S CHEEK and pulls her face away from the mirror. She studies SALOMÉ'S face, her EYES dart from feature to feature.

HERODIAS' expression turns wan and frightening.

HERODIAS (CONT'D)  
You have a look in your  
eyes . . . a look  
of . . . ? What is that??

Her eyes blaze like hot embers.

SALOMÉ LOOKS BACK at her mother doleful and languid. Their eyes lock on.

HERODIAS (CONT'D)  
Ah!

HOLD.

FOCUS ON: SALOMÉ TURNS BACK towards the mirror and starts to apply make-up.

HERODIAS LOWERS herself to SALOMÉ'S level. There's a different look on her face now, slightly sardonic. She watches SALOMÉ'S reflection in the glass.

HERODIAS (CONT'D)  
I have seen. I have seen.  
There is a look of love in  
thine eyes, Salomé, yet  
love is as twin to madness.  
. . . Thou would abandon  
these fool ideas.

SALOMÉ  
I promised the Tetrarch  
that I will dance.

HERODIAS  
Hm . . . and what wilt thou  
ask for in return, I wonder  
. . . ?

SALOMÉ  
What would thou ask for,  
mother?

HERODIAS

I would not dance for the  
please of the Tetrarch.

SALOMÉ

If thou were promised up to  
half the Tetrarch's  
kingdom, what would thou  
ask for?

HERODIAS replies without a moments hesitation:

HERODIAS

I would prevail upon the  
Tetrarch to deliver me his  
"prophet" so that I might  
cut the blasphemous tongue  
from his mouth.

SALOMÉ

I would not ask for that.

HERODIAS

Pray, tell me, what wilt  
thou ask for, Salomé?

SALOMÉ

I am not yet decided.

A SLAVE enters the toilette, bows, and asks sheepishly:

A SLAVE

Princess, the Tetrarch  
prays that you return to  
the feast.

HERODIAS dishes a look to the SLAVE, then pulls her eyes back onto  
SALOMÉ. She speaks softly into SALOMÉ'S EAR.

HERODIAS

*(quiet)*

I would only ask that you  
consider thy mother,  
Salomé. All that I have  
sacrificed for the sake of  
thine heritage . . . I have  
done all of this for you.

She moves from SALOMÉ'S ear to look upon her face.

HERODIAS caresses SALOMÉ'S CHEEK with her black fingers. She leans  
in and very tenderly kisses her daughter on the mouth.

HERODIAS (CONT'D)  
Peace, child.

30.

INT. BANQUET HALL — NIGHT, LATER

MEDIUM WIDE: HEROD SITS on his throne. Around his throne stand PHANUEL and NAAMAN, the executioner.

HERODIAS and THE PAGE OF HERODIAS, as well as THE PARTY GUESTS and some SLAVES, stand at the base of the dais in a crowd.

Clouds of incense spiral upwards.

HOLD.

REVERSE: The banquet hall has been rearranged in preparation for the dance; the great table has been cleared to make space for the performance, yet the rugs, fruits and FLOWER PETALS are left scattered across the floor.

At the centre of the space stands SALOMÉ, wrapped in an assortment of veils and jewellery. She wears an elaborate wig and has REMOVED her penciled eyebrows — here she is the image of her mother.

AUDIO: MUSIC. Eerie.

SALOMÉ performs the Dance of the Seven Veils.

A bizarre dance, reminiscent of Butoh, beginning with a twitch in her fingertip that stimulates licentious movements throughout the rest of her body. She moves as if performing an ancient ritual. She moves like thunder.

FOCUS ON: HEROD slouches. He becomes decrepit, as if bewitched. ONE OF HIS EYES rolls to the back of his head.

Through the seven veils we can see SALOMÉ'S naked breasts, and as she sheds each of her veils, she becomes like a statue of Attic marble, a Bernini masterpiece in the moonlight.

HOLD.

Her dance complete, all that we hear are the exhausted breathes of SALOMÉ.

She receives no applause.

Silence.

FOCUS ON: HEROD looks as though he has aged a thousand years. He looks ill.

SALOMÉ SASHAYS towards him, something of a smile runs across her lips.

SALOMÉ

I have danced for you,  
Herod. I have danced for  
you, and you swore an oath  
to give me whatsoever I  
desire, up to half of your  
own kingdom. I would ask  
only . . .

SALOMÉ WALKS UP the dais and kneels at HEROD'S feet.

SALOMÉ

. . . that they presently  
bring me in a silver  
charger, the head of  
Jokanaan.

### 31. INT. JOKANAAN'S WELL — CONTINUOUS

JOKANAAN LOOKS UP in his pit. A shaft of moonbeam falls upon his face, yet we cannot make it out behind his long, tangled hair.

WE HEAR HERODIAS (o.s.) SCREECH with amusement.

### 32. INT. BANQUET HALL — CONTINUOUS

HERODIAS

AH!! That is well said, my  
daughter!

HEROD sits shaking in his throne. He has a strange look. He could well be mumbling something — but we cannot tell.

PHANUEL LOOKS UPON HEROD and is himself startled.

PHANUEL

No! No!

HERODIAS

Well said, my daughter.



PHANUEL

*(to Salomé, stern)*

That cannot be what thou  
desirest, do not listen to  
thy mother's voice. She is  
ever giving thee evil  
counsel. Do not heed her.

SALOMÉ

It is not the voice of my  
mother's that I heed. It is  
for mine own pleasure that  
I ask for the head of  
Jokanaan in a silver  
charger.

PHANUEL

Princess Salomé, I pray  
thee, ask of something  
else.

SALOMÉ

I ask for the head of  
Jokanaan.

PHANUEL

Thou shalt not receive it.

SALOMÉ

I am to be given whatsoever  
I desire. The Tetrarch  
swore it.

HERODIAS

Yes, he swore an oath.  
Everybody heard him.

PHANUEL

Peace, woman!

PHANUEL knows there's no coming back from this. Nobody speaks to the Queen like that.

HERODIAS gestures to THE PAGE and THE PAGE gives the Queen her peacock-feather fan. She takes to fanning herself as she moves towards Herod's throne, looking all the while at PHANUEL. *If looks could kill.*

HERODIAS

My daughter has done well to ask the head of Jokanaan. He has covered me with insults. He has said unspeakable things against me. One can see that she loves her mother well. Do not yield, my daughter.

PHANUEL

But this is a terrible thing, an awful thing to ask of.

HERODIAS

It is not of you that she asks, old man.

PHANUEL

What pleasure couldst thou have in it? There is no pleasure that thou couldst have in it. Princess, this is not what thou desirest.

SALOMÉ

I demand the head of Jokanaan.

PHANUEL

Thou art not listening. Suffer me to speak, Salomé.

SALOMÉ

The head of Jokanaan.

PHANUEL

No, thou wouldst not have that . . . there are dire consequences if thou had that.

HERODIAS

What matter are consequences to you? You are but a court astrologer, a stargazer who spent too long looking into the moon. It is to the Tetrarch that my daughter speaks, not to you.

PHANEUL

The Tetrarch is unwell! Did you not saith yourself that he looks ill? There is something the matter. I fear there is something the matter.

SALOMÉ

Give me the head of Jokanaan!

HERODIAS

He has filled himself too full of wine, like a glutton. He is drunk.

PHANUEL

He is not drunk. He is blighted. Perchance he is bewitched.

HERODIAS

*(short laugh)*  
Bewitched?

PHANUEL

Aye! Bewitched by thee. The prophet spoke true, thou art an abomination, Herodias.

HERODIAS

*(to the Page)*  
You hear this, how he calls me an abomination?

FOCUS ON: THE PAGE OF HERODIAS looks to the Queen mirthfully.

HERODIAS breathes out a silent cackle.

HERODIAS (CONT'D)

Stand aside, old man, give my daughter what she desires.

PHANUEL

I will not! I cannot! This cannot be the way.

SALOMÉ closes in on HEROD and speaks directly, mere inches from his face:

SALOMÉ  
Give me the head of  
JOKANAAN!!!

SALOMÉ'S scream silences the room.

THE PARTY GUESTS look on in astonishment.

HEROD, almost drooling in his throne, shivers slightly, and then, very frail, wails out:

HEROD  
Yes.

PHANUEL looks at him aghast.

HEROD (CONT'D)  
Yes.

SALOMÉ RISES to her feet with smug satisfaction.

HERODIAS can barely contain her smile.

HERODIAS  
You have done well, my  
daughter.

PHANUEL bows towards HEROD'S ear.

PHANUEL  
(*quiet*)  
My lord, art thou truly  
giving in to this evil?

HEROD  
(*still mesmerised*)  
Yes.

PHANUEL recoils. He's horrified. His eyes dart from SALOMÉ to HERODIAS and back to SALOMÉ.

PHANUEL  
(*to Salomé, stern*)  
You truly are your mother's  
child, Salomé.

THE PAGE OF HERODIAS approaches Herod's throne. HERODIAS draws THE DEATH RING from the hand of the Tetrarch and gives it to THE PAGE who, straight away, bears it to NAAMAN, the executioner.

POV: HEROD tilts his shaking eyes downwards and looks upon his hand. He looks confused. He is confused. *Who has taken my ring?*

NAAMAN looks scared to behold THE RING. Nonetheless, he takes it and leaves the banquet hall with his huge Greek blade in hand.

ALL EYES are on the executioner as he makes his way for the prophet.

HERODIAS SITS down in her throne, fanning herself.

HERODIAS

(*smug*)

Hereafter let no king swear  
an oath.

BLACK.

FADE IN: SALOMÉ sits at the centre of the banquet hall. Nothing lies in her wake, save for a few scattered flower petals.

SALOMÉ

There is no sound. I hear nothing. Why does he not cry out, this man? Ah! If any man sought to kill me, I would cry out, I would struggle, I would not suffer . . . Strike. Strike Naaman, strike, I tell you . . . No, I hear nothing. There is a silence, a terrible silence. Ah! Something has fallen upon the ground. I heard something fall. It was the sword of the executioner. He is afraid, this slave. He has dropped his sword. He dares not kill him. He is a coward, this slave. Let soldiers be sent!

SALOMÉ LOOKS UP towards PHANUEL and addresses him:

## SALOMÉ (CONT'D)

Come hither. Thou wert the friend of him who is dead, wert thou not? Well, I tell thee, there are not dead men enough. Go to the soldiers and bid them go down and bring me the thing I ask, the thing the Tetrarch has promised me, the thing that is mine.

PHANUEL recoils. He's repulsed by all of this.

She turns to one of the ROYAL GUARD.

## SALOMÉ (CONT'D)

Hither, ye soldiers. Get down into his cistern and bring me the head of this man. Tetrarch, command your soldiers that they bring me the head of Jokanaan.

**33, INT. JOKANAAN'S WELL — CONTINUOUS**

JOKANAAN KNEELS at the bottom of his well. His head angled towards the floor of his prison.

NAAMAN gathers up his white hair and looks upon the prophet's face, which is turned AWAY from view.

He regards JOKANAAN with a serenity, ill-fitting for an executioner.

But an executioner he is.

He draws the blade to JOKANAAN'S throat and begins SLICING INTO HIS NECK!!

The wound opens up like a zip-lock and a great flood of blood spews forth.

The prophet does not scream, yet we hear him CHOKE and GARGLE on his own blood.

As NAAMAN reaches the spine, he begins to HACK at JOKANAAN'S NECK until his skin peels from the blade and his headless shoulders slump to the ground.

**34 · INT. BANQUET HALL — CONTINUOUS**

SALOMÉ, still sat in the centre of the hall, looks up to see:

FOCUS ON: THE HUGE ARM of NAAMAN emerges from the dark. He holds the HEAD OF JOKANAAN by the tuft of his hair, as though a lantern to guide him through the darkness.

Immediately, a SLAVE rushes forth with a SILVER CHARGER in hand. NAAMAN places the head on the tray, and the SLAVE brings it to SALOMÉ.

HERODIAS smiles and fans herself.

THE PAGE OF HERODIAS takes the ring from NAAMAN and puts it back onto the Tetrarch's finger.

HEROD is still incapacitated.

ISSACHAR and other PARTY GUESTS, and some SLAVES, fall to their knees in prayer.

SALOMÉ seizes the tray and lays it down before her.

It goes to the ground with a loud *THUD*.

SALOMÉ

Ah! Thou wouldst not suffer  
me to kiss thy mouth,  
Jokanaan. Well, I will kiss  
it now. I will bite it with  
my teeth as one bites a  
ripe fruit. Yes, I will  
kiss thy mouth, Jokanaan. I  
said it, did I not say it?  
I said it. Ah. I will kiss  
it now . . . but wherefore  
dost thou not look at me,  
Jokanaan? Thine eyes that  
were so terrible, so full  
of rage and scorn, are shut  
now. Wherefore are they  
shut? Open thine eyes! Lift  
up thine eyelids, Jokanaan.  
Wherefore dost thou not  
look at me? Art thou afraid  
of me, Jokanaan, that thou  
will not look at me? . . .  
And thy tongue that was  
like a red snake darting  
poison, it moves no more,

**(MORE)**

## SALOMÉ (CONT'D)

it speaks no words,  
Jokanaan, that scarlet  
viper that spat its venom  
upon me. It is strange, is  
it not? How is it that the  
red viper stirs no  
longer? . . . Thou wouldst  
have none of me, Jokanaan.  
Thou rejected me. Thou  
didst speak evil words  
against me. Thou didst bear  
thyself towards me as to a  
harlot, me, Salomé,  
daughter of Herodias,  
Princess of Judaea. 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 the birds  
of the air. That which the  
dogs leave, the birds of  
the air shall devour . . .  
Ah, Jokanaan, Jokanaan,  
thou wert the man that I  
loved alone among men! All  
other men were hateful to  
me. But thou wert  
beautiful. Thy body was a  
column of ivory set upon  
feet of silver. It was a  
tower of silver decked with  
shields of ivory. There was  
nothing in the world so  
white as thy body. There  
was nothing in the world so  
white as thy hair. In the  
whole world there was  
nothing so red as thy  
mouth. Thy voice was a  
censer that scattered  
strange perfumes, and when  
I looked on thee I heard  
strange music. Wherefore  
didst thou not look at me,  
Jokanaan. With the cloak of  
thine hands, and with the  
cloak of thy blasphemies  
thou didst hide thy face.  
Thou didst put upon thine

(MORE)



## SALOMÉ (CONT'D)

eyes the covering of him  
who would see his God.  
Well, thou hast seen thy  
God, Jokanaan, but me, me,  
thou didst never see . . .  
If thou hadst seen me, thou  
hadst loved me. I saw thee,  
and I loved thee. Oh, how I  
loved thee. I love thee  
yet, Jokanaan. I love only  
thee . . . I am athirst for  
thy beauty. I am hungry for  
thy body, and neither wine  
nor apples can appease my  
desire. What shall I do  
now, Jokanaan? Neither the  
floods nor the great waters  
can quench my passion . . .  
I was a princess, and thou  
didst scorn me. I was a  
virgin, and thou didst take  
my virginity from me. I was  
chaste, and thou didst fill  
my veins with fire . . .  
Ah! Ah! Wherefore didst  
thou not look at me? If  
thou hadst looked at me  
thou hadst loved me. Well I  
know that thou wouldst have  
loved me, and the mystery  
of Love is greater than the  
mystery of Death.

SALOMÉ KISSES THE HEAD OF JOKANAAN.

She kisses it with an ardor and passion worthy of the old  
Romantics.

## SALOMÉ (CONT'D)

I have kissed thy mouth,  
Jokanaan. I have kissed thy  
mouth. There was a bitter  
taste on thy lips. Was it  
the taste of blood . . . ?  
Nay. But perchance it was  
the taste of love . . .  
they say that love hath a  
bitter taste . . . but what  
matter? What matter? I have  
kissed thy mouth,

**(MORE)**

## SALOMÉ (CONT'D)

Jokanaan . . . I have  
*kissed thy mouth.*

A ray of moonlight falls on Salomé and illuminates her.

She KISSES THE HEAD OF JOKANAAN once more.

THE PARTY GUESTS recoil in terror. Some of them watch her with their mouths ajar. Some of them cry. Others pray.

HEROD WRIGGLES IN HIS CHAIR. He is weak. Infirm. Bewitches. With all the strength that his frail old body can muster, he raises his finger towards SALOMÉ, who continues to kiss JOKANAAN.

FOCUS ON: THE DEATH RING sparkles in the moonlight as HEROD holds his dithering finger outright.

He chokes his slurred words:

HEROD

Kill — that — wo-w-woma—

CUT TO:

HERODIAS GAZES at HEROD with dagger in her eyes. She looks at THE DEATH RING on the Tetrarch's finger. It seems to vibrate.

Suddenly, HEROD ARCHES BACK in his throne. He winces in pain.

HE STARTS TO VOMIT BLOOD!!

HERODIAS smiles darkly.

THE PARTY GUESTS SCREAM and dither and many of them pray aloud and plead with God.

PHANUEL and some of the ROYAL GUARD rush to his side.

ALL

Tetrarch! Tetrarch!

HEROD cries out. He spews GALLONS OF BLOOD. He cannot stop. His insides are turning to liquids, and the pain . . .

His bloody vomit forms a pool of BLOOD that flows down the dais and swells onto the floor of the banquet hall.

FOCUS ON: THE POOL OF BLOOD SPREADS towards SALOMÉ.

SALOMÉ

I have kissed thy mouth,  
Jokanaan.

SALOMÉ gazes at THE HEAD OF JOKANAAN. She holds his head upright and holds his mouth to her ear. She pulls back and looks at the head strangely. *Did it just speak to her?*

HERODIAS watches HEROD'S suffering. She almost pities him.

FOCUS ON: Just as the POOL OF BLOOD reaches SALOMÉ, she KISSES THE HEAD OF JOKANAAN and begins to FLOAT OFF THE GROUND.

JOKANAAN'S HEAD still BLEEDS.

The blood runs over the silver charger on the floor.

SALOMÉ rises through the air, higher and higher. As she ascends, she BITES JOKANAAN'S lips and pulls at it with her teeth . . .

BLACK.

FIN.