

**5** SECOND SOLDIER

The Tetrarch is very fond of wine. He has wine of three sorts. One which is brought from the Island of Samothrace, and is purple like the cloak of Caesar.

**4** THE CAPPADOCIAN

I have never seen Caesar.

**5** SECOND SOLDIER

Another that comes from a town called Cyprus, and is as yellow as gold.

**4** THE CAPPADOCIAN

I love gold.

**5** SECOND SOLDIER

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

**6** THE NUBIAN

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.

**4** THE CAPPADOCIAN

In my country there are no gods left. The Romans have driven them out. Three nights I have been on the mountains seeking them everywhere. I did not find them, and at last I called them by their names, and they did not come. I think my gods are dead.

Q3

**3** FIRST SOLDIER

The Jews worship a God that one cannot see.

**4** THE CAPPADOCIAN

I cannot understand that.

**3** FIRST SOLDIER

In fact, they only believe in things that one cannot see.

**4** THE CAPPADOCIAN

That seems to me altogether ridiculous.

**5** THE VOICE OF IOKANAAN

After me shall come another mightier than I. I am not worthy so much as to unloose the latchet of his shoes. When he cometh 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, and he shall lead the lions by their manes.

**2** **SECOND SOLDIER**

Make him be silent. He is always saying ridiculous things.

**3** **FIRST SOLDIER**

No, no. He is a holy man. He is very gentle, too. Every day when I give him to eat he thanks me.

**4** **THE CAPPADOCIAN**

Who is he?

**3** **FIRST SOLDIER**

A prophet.

**4** **THE CAPPADOCIAN**

What is his name?

**3** **FIRST SOLDIER**

Iokanaan.

**4** **THE CAPPADOCIAN**

Whence comes he?

**3** **FIRST SOLDIER**

From the desert, where he fed on locusts and wild honey. He was clothed in camel's hair, and round his loins he had a leathern belt. He was very terrible to look upon. A great multitude used to follow him. He even had disciples.

Q4

**4** **THE CAPPADOCIAN**

What is he talking of?

**3** **FIRST SOLDIER**

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

**4** **THE CAPPADOCIAN**

May one see him?

**3** **FIRST SOLDIER**

No. The Tetrarch has forbidden it.

**2** **THE YOUNG SYRIAN**

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.

**1** **THE PAGE OF HERODIAS**

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

**4** **THE CAPPADOCIAN**

What a strange prison!

**5** **SECOND SOLDIER**

It is an old cistern.

**4** **THE CAPPADOCIAN**

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

**5** **SECOND SOLDIER**

Oh no! For instance, the Tetrarch's brother, his elder brother, the first husband of Herodias the Queen, was imprisoned there for twelve years. It did not kill him. At the end of the twelve years he had to be strangled.

**4** **THE CAPPADOCIAN**

Who dared to do that?

**5** **SECOND SOLDIER**

That man yonder, Naaman.

**4** **THE CAPPADOCIAN**

He was not afraid?

**5** **SECOND SOLDIER**

Oh no! The Tetrarch sent him the ring.

**4** **THE CAPPADOCIAN**

What ring?

**5** **SECOND SOLDIER**

The death ring. So he was not afraid.

**4** **THE CAPPADOCIAN**

Yet it is a terrible thing to strangle a King.

3 **FIRST SOLDIER**  
Why? Kings have but one neck, like other folk.

4 **THE CAPPADOCIAN**  
Yet I think it terrible.

2 **THE YOUNG SYRIAN**  
The Princess is getting up! She is leaving the table! She looks very troubled. Ah, she is coming this way. Yes, she is coming towards us. How pale she is! Never have I seen her so pale.

Q5

1 **THE PAGE OF HERODIAS**  
Do not look at her. I pray you not to look at her.

2 **THE YOUNG SYRIAN**  
She is like a dove that has strayed. She is like a narcissus trembling in the wind. She is like a silver flower.

3 **SALOME**  
I will not stay. I cannot stay. Why does the Tetrarch look at me all the while with his mole's eyes under his shaking eyelids? It is strange that the husband of my mother looks at me like that. I know not what it means. In truth, I know it too well.

2 **THE YOUNG SYRIAN**  
You have left the feast, Princess?

3 **SALOME**  
How sweet is the air here! I can breathe here! Within there are Jews from Jerusalem; Greeks from Smyrna, with painted eyes and painted cheeks; 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.

2 **THE YOUNG SYRIAN**  
Will you be seated, Princess.

1 **THE PAGE OF HERODIAS**  
Why do you speak to her? Oh! something terrible will happen. Why do you look at her?

3 **SALOME**  
How good to see the moon! She is cold and chaste. I am sure she is a virgin.

Q6

She has the beauty of a virgin. Yes, she is a virgin. She has never defiled herself. She has never abandoned herself to other men, like the other goddesses.

**4** **THE VOICE OF IOKANAAN**

Behold! the Lord hath come. The Son of Man is at hand. The centaurs have hidden themselves in the rivers, and the nymphs have left the rivers, and are lying beneath the leaves in the forests.

**3** **SALOME**

Who was that who cried out?

**2** **SECOND SOLDIER**

The prophet, Princess.

**3** **SALOME**

Ah, the prophet! He of whom the Tetrarch is afraid?

**2** **SECOND SOLDIER**

It was the prophet Iokanaan who cried out.

**1** **THE YOUNG SYRIAN**

Is it your pleasure that I bid them bring your litter, Princess? The night is fair in the garden.

**3** **SALOME**

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

**2** **SECOND SOLDIER**

We never understand what he says, Princess.

**3** **SALOME**

Yes; he says terrible things about her.

**NM** **THE SLAVE**

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

**3** **SALOME**

I will not return.

**1** **THE YOUNG SYRIAN**

Pardon me, Princess, but if you return not some misfortune may happen. It were better to return. Suffer me to lead you in.

Q7

2



2 **SALOME**  
This prophet . . . is he an old man?

3 **FIRST SOLDIER**  
No, Princess, he is quite young.

4 **SECOND SOLDIER**  
One cannot be sure. There are those who say that he is Elias.

2 **SALOME**  
Who is Elias?

4 **SECOND SOLDIER**  
A prophet of this country in bygone days, Princess.

NM **THE SLAVE**  
What answer may I give the Tetrarch from the Princess?

5 **THE VOICE OF IOKANAAN**  
Rejoice not, O land of Palestine, because the rod of him who smote thee is broken. For from the seed of the serpent shall come a basilisk, and that which is born of it shall devour the birds.

2 **SALOME**  
What a strange voice! I would speak with him.

3 **FIRST SOLDIER**  
I fear it may not be, Princess. The Tetrarch does not suffer any one to speak with him. He has even forbidden the high priest to speak with him.

2 **SALOME**  
I desire to speak with him.

3 **FIRST SOLDIER**  
It is impossible, Princess.

2 **SALOME**  
I will speak with him.

1 **THE YOUNG SYRIAN**  
Would it not be better to return to the banquet?

2 **SALOME**  
Bring forth this prophet.

**3** FIRST SOLDIER  
We dare not, Princess.

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

**4** SECOND SOLDIER  
Princess, I beg you, do not require this of us.

**2** SALOME  
You are making me wait upon your pleasure.

**3** FIRST SOLDIER  
Princess, our lives belong to you, but we cannot do this thing you have asked of us.

**2** SALOME  
Ah! Thou wilt do this thing for me, wilt thou not, Narraboth?  
Thou wilt do this thing for me. I would but look at him, this strange prophet.  
Often I have heard the Tetrarch talk of him. I think he is afraid of him, the Tetrarch.  
Art thou also afraid of him, Narraboth?

**1** THE YOUNG SYRIAN  
I fear him not, Princess; there is no man I fear. But the Tetrarch has formally forbidden it.

**2** SALOME  
Thou wilt do this thing for me, Narraboth, and to-morrow when I pass in my litter beneath the gateway of the idol-sellers, I will let fall for thee a little green flower.

**1** THE YOUNG SYRIAN  
Princess, I cannot, I cannot.

**2** SALOME  
Thou wilt do this thing for me, Narraboth. Thou knowest that thou wilt do this thing for me. And on the morrow when I shall pass in my litter, I will look at thee, Narraboth. I know that thou wilt do this thing.

**3** THE YOUNG SYRIAN  
Let the prophet come forth. The Princess Salome desires to see him.

Q8

**3** →

2 **SALOME**

Ah!

1 **THE PAGE OF HERODIAS**

Oh! How strange the moon looks! Like the hand of a dead woman who is seeking to cover herself with a shroud.

3 **THE YOUNG SYRIAN**

She has a strange aspect! She is like a little princess whose eyes are all amber. Through the clouds of muslin she is smiling like a little princess.

4 **IOKANAAN**

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.

2 **SALOME**

Of whom is he speaking?

3 **THE YOUNG SYRIAN**

No one can tell, Princess.

4 **IOKANAAN**

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

2 **SALOME**

It is of my mother that he is speaking.

3 **THE YOUNG SYRIAN**

Oh no, Princess.

2 **SALOME**

Yes: it is of my mother that he is speaking.

4 **IOKANAAN**

Where is she who gave herself unto the Captains of Assyria? Where is she who hath given herself to the young men of the Egyptians? Go, bid her rise up from the bed of her abominations, from the bed of her incestuousness, that she may hear the words of him who prepareth the way of the Lord. Bid her come, for the fan of the Lord is in His hand.



2 **SALOME**

Ah, but he is terrible, he is terrible!

3 **THE YOUNG SYRIAN**

Do not stay here, Princess, I beseech you.

2 **SALOME**

It is his eyes above all that are terrible. They are like black holes burned by torches in a 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?

3 **THE YOUNG SYRIAN**

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

2 **SALOME**

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

3 **THE YOUNG SYRIAN**

No, no, Princess!

2 **SALOME**

I must look at him closer.

3 **THE YOUNG SYRIAN**

Princess! Princess!

4 **IOKANAAN**

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. Bid her begone, it is not to her that I would speak.

2 **SALOME**

I am Salome, daughter of Herodias, Princess of Judaea.

4 **IOKANAAN**

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.

**2** **SALOME**  
 Speak again, Iokanaan. Thy voice is as wine to me. It is as music to mine ear.

**3** **THE YOUNG SYRIAN**  
 Princess! Princess! Princess!

**2** **SALOME**  
 Speak again! Speak again, Iokanaan, and tell me what I must do.

**4** **IOKANAAN**  
 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.

**2** **SALOME**  
 Who is he, the Son of Man? Is he as beautiful as thou art, Iokanaan?

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

**3** **THE YOUNG SYRIAN**  
 Princess, I beseech thee to go within.

**4** **IOKANAAN**  
 Angel of the Lord God, what dost thou here with thy sword? Whom seekest thou in this palace?

**2** **SALOME**  
 Iokanaan!

**4** **IOKANAAN**  
 Who speaketh?

**2** **SALOME**  
 I am amorous of thy body, Iokanaan! Thy body is white, like the lilies of a field that the mower hath never mowed. 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, 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. Suffer me to touch thy body.

**4** **IOKANAAN**

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

**2** **SALOME**

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 that I am enamoured, Iokanaan. Thy hair is like clusters of grapes, like the clusters of black grapes that hang from the vine-trees of Edom in the land of the Edomites.

Thy hair is like the cedars, the great cedars of Lebanon that give their shade to the lions and to the robbers who would hide them by day. The long black nights, when the moon hides her face, are not so black as thy hair. The silence that dwells in the forest is not so black. There is nothing in the world that is so black as thy hair. Suffer me to touch thy hair.

**4** **IOKANAAN**

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

**2** **SALOME**

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 round thy neck. I love not thy hair. It is thy mouth that I desire, Iokanaan. 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. Thy mouth is redder than the feet of those who tread the wine in the wine-press. It is redder than the feet of him who cometh from a forest where he hath slain a lion, and seen gilded tigers. It is like the bow of the King of the Persians, that is painted with vermillion and tipped with coral. There is nothing in the world so red as thy mouth. Suffer me to kiss thy mouth.

**4** **IOKANAAN**

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

**2** **SALOME**

I will kiss thy mouth, Iokanaan. I will kiss thy mouth.

**3** **THE YOUNG SYRIAN**

Princess, Princess, thou who art like a garden of myrrh, thou who art the dove of all doves, look not at this man, look not at him! Do not speak such

words to him. I cannot endure it. I cannot endure it. Princess, do not speak these things.

2 **SALOME**

I will kiss thy mouth, Iokanaan.

3 **THE YOUNG SYRIAN**

Ah!

1 **THE PAGE OF HERODIAS**

The young Syrian has slain himself! The young captain has slain himself! He has slain himself who was my friend! Ah, did he not say that some misfortune would happen? I, too, said it, and it has come to pass. I gave him a little box of perfumes and ear-rings wrought in silver, and now he has killed himself! 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.

Q9

2 **FIRST SOLDIER**

Princess, the young captain has just slain himself.

3 **SALOME**

Suffer me to kiss thy mouth, Iokanaan.

4 **IOKANAAN**

Art thou not afraid, daughter of Herodias? Did I not tell thee that I had heard in the palace the beating of the wings of the angel of death, and hath he not come?

3 **SALOME**

Suffer me to kiss thy mouth.

4 **IOKANAAN**

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

3 **SALOME**

Suffer me to kiss thy mouth.

4 **IOKANAAN**

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