



The party...I love beautiful clothes! I have lots and lots of them. The beads that decorate my gauzy dance outfit for the birthday party are exquisite. The shine and the sparkle are dazzling. Not much of my body was covered, but I kind of like knowing my undulating movements have sway over the power-hungry people that leer at me while I'm dancing. Does that make me like my mother? Am I manipulative like her?

I almost can't believe what happened next. Herod was so pleased. He was so very pleased, he offered me "up to half of his kingdom" because I impressed his guests.

And then like a child that couldn't think for myself, I turned and asked Mother what I should do. UGH! But even worse was what she suggested I request. She said I should ask for the head of John the Baptist. I not only looked like I couldn't think for myself, I looked like her puppet because I did precisely what she wanted me to do. Oh! I hate her! I could have still asked for what I wanted after she told me what to do, ignoring her, but NO! I did exactly what she wanted. What did I get for all my obedience—A wooden meat platter with a man's head on it? The results still make me gag!

When I think that I could have had anything I wanted, and I let my mother take that away from me, I get really furious. But even the anger doesn't drive the pictures out of my mind. It was so awful, so repulsive, so sickening! When mother told me to ask for John the Baptist's head, I never thought about how it would look. I think the blood is what made me realize Mother used me to kill a man. I didn't even touch the blood and yet I feel so foul. Can I ever be clean again?

Oh! That's why I'm writing. I need someone to forgive me! I need to escape my dread of the punishment I deserve for being Mother's puppet! Can you do it? Will you do it? How will I know if I've really been forgiven?

O! What's the point? I'm done talking...maybe this is a waste of time. My question is still, are you real?

*Salome*— sometimes known as Herodias' daughter.