



Host Packet

Your host packet contains the following to help you set up a fabulous game.

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Brief overview of To Kill a King: Herod Antipas

While many of the main characters are historical, names have been changed to make it easier to keep track of who is who and some characters have been added. The backstory of this particular game is as follows:

Herod Antipas reigned as tetrarch of Galilee from 4 B.C. until his death 39 A.D. His father, Herod the Great was a tyrant, killing several of his own family when he suspected them of plotting against him. His mother taught him to fly under the radar so he didn't wind up dead like his grandmother and three of his brothers, all of whom were executed by Herod the Great.

He managed to rise to power when his own father died and quickly made enemies – some political, some personal, many in his own family. Although he didn't resort to murdering members of his own family, he thought nothing of doing whatever he pleased, including stealing his own brother's wife.

Known for throwing extravagant parties, Herod wanted to outdo himself this time. He ordered exotic food and hired all kinds of entertainment; He even planned on having his step-daughter do one of her infamous dances.

For this evening's entertainment, Chuza, manager of Herod's palace arranged for some gladiator style fighting, dancers, a snake charmer from India and a storyteller from Egypt. Herod invited (never suspecting they would accept) his ex-wife Phadra and her father King Aretas and his half-brother Phillip (whose wife he stole).

The wine flowed freely, the food was exquisite. Herod signaled for the first entertainers to begin. Instead of the show, a scuffle seemed to break out and in the confusion no one saw the snake until it was too late. The cobra struck, hitting a major artery in Herod's leg. Within a minute, the ruler was gasping for breath and then collapsed, dead, his head in his uneaten fruit salad.

Suggestions for To Kill a King

The following characters are essential:

Herodias – Herod’s current wife

Salome – Herodias’ daughter, infamous dancer

Phadra – Herod’s ex-wife

King Aretas – Arabian king and father of Phadra

Barabbas – a rebel with a cause

Nicholas – snake charmer

Additional characters that may be added but need not be included

Phillip – half-brother to the king

Endora – a fig merchant

Joanna – wife of Herod’s household manager

Hezekiah – Roman gladiator

Manny –friend of Herod from Roman academy days

Jasmine – dancing girl

Other guests can be entertainers (story tellers, fire eaters, and lion tamers), nobility, servants, etc.

Dossiers may be handed out randomly by gender or as host you may cast your guests in the roles you choose for them. If you want to be surprised by the ending use just the WHO YOU ARE portion of the character descriptions to select roles. If you read the complete character descriptions you will know all the details of the murder including who did it.

You may choose to hand them out several days before the giving people more time to prepare their character, costume, props, etc. counting on everyone to be present. You may wish to hold them until the guests arrive in case you have cancellations or no shows. Last minute cancellations and no shows occasionally occur. It’s wise to line someone up in advance in case of a no show.

Props

A pair of earrings. One should be given to Phadra privately before starting. If Phadra has her own earrings and doesn't mind using them as a prop, take one of hers instead. It is necessary Phadra wears only one earring. Pencils or pens will be necessary to fill out the Whodunit forms.

Roman Banquet recipes

Romans valued expense and rarity over flavor and often ate things at feasts that did not taste good but were rare and exotic (peacock tongues for example.) Cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves and pepper were imported from the east and used to spice things up. Dill, thyme, oregano, basil, and mint were local spices. The following have some authenticity but will also be palatable for your guests.

Lamb (with mint sauce) and beef kabobs

Boiled eggs

Fruits such as apples, pears, nectarines, grapes, dates and plums (or the dried form - prunes)

Chicken or seafood

Wheat, barley or Pita bread, dipped in olive oil

Cucumbers in oil and vinegar or a yogurt and garlic sauce

Walnuts and roasted chestnuts

Apple tarts with honey

ISICIA OMENTATA (a kind of Roman Burger)

Ingredients:

500g minced meat/hamburger

1 French roll, soaked in white wine

1/2 tsp. freshly ground pepper

1/2 tsp. salt + a little white wine

Some stone-pine kernels and green peppercorns

Baking foil

Instructions:

Mix minced meat with the soaked French roll. Ground spices and mix into

the meat. Form small burgers and put pine kernels and peppercorns into them. Put them into baking foil and grill.

PEPONES ET MELONES (Water and Honey Melons)

Ingredients:

1/2 honey melon \ both peeled, diced

1/2 water melon /

a little bit of honey

1 tbsp. minced parsley

1/2 tsp. freshly ground pepper

A dash of salt

Vinegar, if desired

Instructions:

Serve raw or cook diced melons in a pan together with spices and herbs until done.

More somewhat authentic recipes at:

<http://www.cs.cmu.edu/~mjw/recipes/ethnic/historical/ant-rom-coll.html>

Host Time Line for To Kill a King

For first time hosts we recommend you follow the time line more carefully than hosts with experience. It is however a suggested timeline not a cast- in- stone law.

To start:

Select a date, location, guests and refreshments

Decide if you will give characters sheets before the game or after guests arrive.

Decide on refreshments

Think about if you want the guest to come in costume

Two to three weeks before the game:

Modify invitations for your event and print one for each prospective guest.

Decide if you are going to have guests come in costume (Herod's banquets were more akin to Roman than Jewish events. However, Joanna and Endora would probably be dressed more like Jewish women of the era.)

Finalize your menu.

Have alternative guests in mind in case of an emergency cancellation.

Run off character dossiers for reference or to give to guests accepting the invitation to attend

The day of the game:

Set the scene with any music, additional props and the set up for refreshments that you have chosen.

Run off clue packet and one rules/Whodunit sheet per player.

When the guests have arrived:

If guests are bringing some of the refreshments indicate where they should be placed.

Distribute character dossiers if you did not give them out earlier. (Nametag if using them)

Take Phadra aside regarding the earring prop

Distribute a copy of the rules to each player.

Read aloud the opening statement.

Allow characters to introduce themselves and begin questioning each other.

(If you are serving a meal, now is the time to eat the main course)

**After 15-20 minutes:

Rad the Court Physician's report and the Roman Commander Report 1.

**After 10- 15 minutes more: (or just prior to dessert if it is a sit down meal) Read Roman Commander's report 2 and distribute "Second thoughts". Allow characters time to express their second thoughts.

**After another 10-60 minutes (use your judgment based on the guest's interactions or immediately following dessert)

**Assemble the group.

Allow each person one last opportunity to say what they know and what they guess.

Distribute a pen to each guest. Explain they are to decide and write down who they think did it, how and why. Explain if they are the murderer they should write a misleading guess. If they wish, they may nominate someone for an Academy Award for bringing their character and the game to life. When guests are finished collect the forms and read each aloud. (Optional to read who made the guess)

**Read the Arrest Warrant

Suggestions for Bible classes and youth groups

This party game can be used as a launching point or supplement to a study of life around the time of Jesus' death. Understanding by re-enacting a time period helps students of history or the Bible to make deeper and longer lasting connections and provides a context in which further study can take place.

- Have students use the following scriptures to get a background on Herod (Mt. 14, Mk. 6, Lk. 3, 9, 13:31-35; 22 and 23), Barabbas (Mt. 27, Mk. 15, Lk. 23 and John 18), Nicholas (Mt. 3,4,9,11; Mk. 1,2; Lk. 3/7; John 1,3,10) and Joanna (Lk. 8:3 and 24:10)
- Compare and contrast Herod's actual death in Acts 12 with this murder
- Who in history might have actually wanted Herod dead?
- Have students research the Zealots for background on Hezekiah and Barabbas
- Discuss: would a disciple of John the Baptist resort to murder? Defend your position.

Online games

Check out the following online games related to the suspects and time period.

Rulers of the Bible challenge board (plays like Jeopardy)

<http://www.quia.com/cb/366756.html>

King Herod/Jesus' birth <http://www.quia.com/rr/388201.html> (rags to riches - plays like Millionaire), <http://www.quia.com/ba/216918.html> (battleship)

Matthew 22-26 <http://www.quia.com/cb/805333.html> Mark 15-16

<http://www.quia.com/cb/656482.html>

Luke 19-21 <http://www.quia.com/hm/802216.html> (hangman)

<http://www.quia.com/jg/2404604.html> (matching) <http://www.quia.com/jw/461253.html> (word unscramble)

John 16-17 <http://www.quia.com/jw/458189.html>

Invitation

You are cordially invited (make that commanded) to attend a banquet at the palace of Herod Antipas. Be prepared for the finest of foods and entertainment!

PS. You are actually invited to attend a murder mystery game being hosted by [fill in your name] at [fill in game location, time, and date and phone number].

This mystery takes place at the palace of Herod Antipas in 39 A.D. Each guest will have a dual role as one of the suspects and one of the investigators in this murder inquiry. All the guests will try to solve the mystery while protecting any secrets they might have. You do not need to be an actor or have knowledge of investigations or first century culture to have a great time.

When your host gives you your character dossier, please do not show it to anyone, before or during the game. The dossier will explain who you are, who and what you know and what happened just prior to the murder. It is for your eyes only. If you have questions prior to the game contact [fill in host name and phone number]

A few of the people you may meet

Herodias – Herod’s current wife

Salome – Herodias’ daughter, infamous dancer

Phadra – Herod’s ex-wife

King Aretas – Arabian king and father of Phadra

Barabbas – a rebel with a cause

Nicholas – snake charmer

Additional characters that may be added

Phillip – half-brother to the king

Endora – a fig merchant

Joanna – wife of Herod’s household manager

Hezekiah – Roman gladiator

Manny – friend of Herod from Roman academy days

Jasmine – dancing girl

As it is essential all characters be present, please inform the host if something arises preventing you from attending.

PLAYING RULES

1. No one may look at another person's character dossier.
2. Lying is not permitted
3. Fabrication to enhance one's character is not only allowed but encouraged.
4. If one does not want to answer truthfully one may do as in real life - evade the question, change the subject, tell partial truths or flat out refuse to answer.
5. It is possible to have more than one murderer
6. At the end of the game you will be asked who you think did it, how and why.
8. Have fun and see what you can learn about life in the first century.



Who dunit? (Your host will tell you when to fill this out)

Your name:

Who did it? _____

How? _____

Why? _____

The character I nominate to get the Academy Award of the evening:

Clues Packet for Herod Antipas

The clues packet contains the clues you will need to print before the party starts. You will read the opening statement at the start of the party.

Page 1 - Opening Statement

Page 2 - Reports

Page 3 & 4 - Second thoughts

Page 5 - Arrest Warrant (We strongly suggest this be placed unread in a sealed labeled envelope immediately after printing)

Herod Antipas Opening Statement

Someone in this room is responsible for the death of King Herod Antipas. Caesar is not going to be happy if he has to send a legion or two here to sort this entire mess out so I suggest we get to the bottom of this ourselves. Was it a careless accident or a cold blooded killing?

The snake, staff, food at the head table and broken jar have all been given to the court physicians and Roman Legion commander to inspect. They'll let us know what they find.

I suggest we each take a turn explain who we are and why we were here. After we do that, we better figure out who had motive to kill the king (probably allot of people) means and opportunity to kill him. Oh yes, we probably better figure out how he died as well.

In the meantime, it would be shame for all this food he paid for to go to waste, so eat drink and be merry for tomorrow, you might be dead too

HEROD ANTIPAS COURT PHYSICIAN'S REPORT

King Herod died of poisoning injected into his leg, not something he ate or drank.
However, a basket of figs on the head table did contain poison.

ROMAN COMMANDER REPORT 1

The staff found under the head table is more than a staff. When it was thrown, a piece chipped off revealing that it actually hides a sword blade. We are checking to see if it had poison on it or in it.

ROMAN COMMANDER REPORT 2

The sword blade had NOT been in contact with nor did it contain poison.

Herod Antipas Second Thoughts

(run off, cut apart and fold up and distribute 20-30 minutes after the opening statement is read. Instruct the guests to open so that they see only the “NOT FOR ____” portion at first. If they get one with their name in the “NOT FOR” portion, they should NOT look at the rest of it. They should return it and select a different second thought.

NOT FOR ARETAS	Aretas’ staff conceals a blade. Phillip was the last person to touch the staff before it went under the head table.
NOT FOR SALOME	Salome trash talks Herod thinking no one hears. Opportunity – who was in the room when Herod died?
NOT FOR PHADRA	PHADRA used to keep snakes including poisonous snakes as pets and knows how to handle them
NOT FOR Phadra	Phadra is wearing an earring that looks exactly like the one that was seen in the hall
NOT FOR Nicholas	Some of John the Baptist’s followers swore vengeance for his death
NOT FOR Herodias	Herodias resented the fact that Herod never offered her up to half his kingdom like he did Salome
NOT FOR Barabbas or Hezekiah	Someone was overheard paying off a gladiator to do something tonight. Someone (who looked allot like Eudora) placed figs next to Herod just before he died.
NOT FOR Barabbas or Hezekiah	Barabbas is not gladiator – he was the rebel freed on Passover instead of Jesus of Nazareth.

NOT FOR Herodias	Herodias gave a servant money, saying it was NOT to be accounted for in any of the books.
NOT FOR Joanna	Joanna was seen attending sermons by Jesus, with the Mary's at the cross of Jesus and giving the disciples money. She probably hates Herod for his involvement in Jesus' death.
NOT FOR Salome	When Salome learned Herod was dead she muttered "good riddance to King Piggy".
NOT FOR Nicholas	A snake charmer always works with a flute or some musical instrument. Why doesn't Nicholas have one? Did he want the snakes to go wild?
NOT FOR Endora	The figs were poisoned. Did anyone eat any?
NOT FOR Nicholas	Nicholas used to be a disciple of John the Baptist or the Baptizer.
NOT FOR Phillip	Phillip resented his brother for getting more of the kingdom even before Herodias left him. He also is angry at Salome for going with her mother rather than staying with him.
NOT FOR	SAMPLE to show guests before they open theirs

By the authority of Caesar Augustus Arrest Warrant

Regicide, or the homicide of a king, is a serious matter. Eliminating the head of state can cause chaos throughout a country, kingdom or even an entire region and must be dealt with quickly and seriously.

Several things instigated the chaos in the hallway – an earring worth a five years wages for a commoner, jostling, stomping, a broken jar, and poisonous snakes.

Most of the guests had reason to dislike Herod. Many had reason to hate or kill him. Many would gain by his death. Salome would be rid of a leering, sleazy step- father. But she had nothing to do with his death. In fact, she was a victim of her mother's treachery tonight. Her mother, jealous of her youth, dancing ability, and Herod's offer of up to half her kingdom, paid off a gladiator to make sure Salome could not perform. That was the extent of her plotting and planning. She had nothing to gain and much to lose if Herod died.

Jasmine had opportunity since she had access to the jar of snakes but no motive
Joanna also had opportunity but no motive.

Hezekiah and Barabbas infiltrated the party disguised as gladiators with a plot to kill Herod with Barabbas' sword and then have Hezekiah kill Barabbas and possibly position himself in the royal household. While the murder might have succeeded, having Hezekiah as a spy was a poorly thought out scheme. Hezekiah is all brawn and little brain. However, both Hezekiah and Barabbas should be arrested and detained for conspiracy to kill a king, insurrection and anything else the Romans care to charge them with.

King Aretas had motive but no opportunity since he was out of the room.
Manny, though smart enough to plan an assassination, had no motive.
Eudora brought poisoned figs but never had the chance to serve them. Arrest and detain her for plotting regicide.

This leaves us with Phadra, Phillip and Nicholas. All three had plenty of motive. Nicholas planned to kill Herod with the snakes over the death of his rabbi, John. But he never had the chance to put his plan in motion. The jar holding them broke prematurely. Arrest and detain Nicholas for attempted regicide.

Phillip and Phadra had huge motives but all Phillip did was throw the staff AKA sword in his panic to ward off any snakes. It was Phadra who seized the opportunity. She'd handled her pet snakes, some of which were poisonous, for years. Seeing the snake charmer and jar her agile mind seized the chance for revenge. She started things by tossing her earring into the waiting area, then used her father's staff to wrangle a snake and toss it at Herod, and sat back to watch her former husband die.

Arrest and detain Phadra for regicide.

WHO YOU ARE: Phadra, former queen and first wife of Herod Antipas. He kicked you to the curb for Herodias. Luckily, you heard of the plan ahead of time and managed to be visiting your father, King Aretas of Arabia, when it all went down. It saved your life but not the humiliation that followed.

WHO YOU KNOW: Your father, King Aretas.

WHAT YOU WANT TO SHARE: How Herod deserved to die for what he did to you. What a creep Herodias is, stealing your man.

SECRET YOU WANT TO KEEP: You used to keep poisonous snakes. Just a little harmless hobby.

ON THE NIGHT IN QUESTION: You made yourself gorgeous, hoping to send shivers of regret through your ex-husband. You were insulted to find yourself seated, not at the main table, but at a side table next to the corridor that led to the rooms where the servants were quartered. The noise and smell were a distraction.

Then you noticed a snake charmer from India. You were certain if opportunity presented, you could use a stick (maybe your father's staff) to wrangle one in the head table's direction. Whether it killed Herod, Herodias, anyone up there, was fine. After all, revenge is a dish, best served cold.

When Salome left the head table to prepare for her dance, she passed into the hallway holding the performers. You slide an earring down the hall after her to end up by what you assumed was the jar holding the snake. It had its intended effect. Everyone rushed to pick it up, the jar was knocked over, chaos ensued and you used your father's staff to fling the snake under the head table, and then dropped it back where it was before.

WHO YOU ARE: King Aretas, of Arabia. As a nomadic desert sheik, your territory covers a large expanse. Unfortunately, you have quantity over quality since most of it is wasteland. Nevertheless, you do well trading. Your family honor was forever tarnished when Herod divorced your daughter, Phadra, to marry Herodias.

WHO YOU KNOW:

Phadra, your disgraced daughter.

SECRET YOU WANT TO KEEP: Your staff actually hides a tapered dagger. (It comes in handy when weapons are forbidden)

ON THE NIGHT IN QUESTION: Instead of being seated at the head table as befits a King of your station, you were placed at a side table. Seething with rage at the insult, you carefully hid it behind a placid exterior. You were further insulted when a mere servant (you think it was Endora) refused to give you some figs, claiming they were reserved for the high table. You drank far too much and found yourself needing to leave to relieve yourself just before the entertainment was to start. When you returned, it was bedlam. Herod was in his death throes and your staff was under the head table.

WHO YOU ARE: Herodias, second wife of Herod. Cunning and dangerous you can flatter with the best of them while manipulating everyone around you. You hate aging. Once you were young, charming, beautiful, the center of attention. Now your teenage daughter gets more attention than you. You hate growing older but you have always thought that age and treachery would triumph over youth and innocence.

WHO YOU KNOW:

Salome – your daughter. She is young and beautiful, a graceful dancer while you just keep getting older and less attractive. You used her and her dancing last time to get rid of John the Baptist. You resent the fact that Herod never offered you up to half his kingdom like he did Salome.

Phillip, your ex-husband.

WHAT YOU WANT TO SHARE: How wonderful Herod is, how much you love him. (Hopefully all the flattery will go to his head and distract him from looking at other women)

SECRET YOU WANT TO KEEP: You secretly loathe your daughter. You hope to sabotage her dancing. You have bribed the gladiator to “accidentally” injure her when she goes to change into her dancing veils so she’ll be unable to dance and steal the attention rightfully yours. He gets double if she is permanently unable to dance.

ON THE NIGHT IN QUESTION: Things were not going well. Salome was whining about not wanting to dance again. Several of the servants were strangers and you were unable to eat, fearful of being poisoned by someone like Phadra who kept shooting daggers at you with her eyes. You sent Salome off to dance and noticed King Aretas leaving. That seemed odd, especially since he spent most of the evening talking to your ex-husband Phillip.

WHO YOU ARE: Princess Salome, daughter of Phillip and Herodias. You are an amazing dancer, exuding charm, grace and a certain sensuality that makes men want to give you anything you ask for. You have grown up quickly, realizing your mother used you to get rid of John the Baptist. You also realize men basically just want to use you as well. You hide all your resentment well.

WHO YOU KNOW: Your mother Herodias who dragged you from your father's court when she married that pig, your Uncle Herod.

WHAT YOU WANT TO SHARE: Nothing unless it serves your purposes. You are in a mood to pout.

SECRET YOU WANT TO KEEP: You think Herod is the sleaziest thing this side of... Anywhere. Not only is your mother his sister-in-law, she's also his niece. Talk about the family tree having a single branch! You don't like how he looks at you.

ON THE NIGHT IN QUESTION: You were supposed to be the crowning entertainment of the evening, an encore performance of the dance that cost John the Baptist his head. As you went to change into your seven veils costume, a clumsy gladiator stumbled into you and smashed your foot. The next thing you knew, a jar holding a bunch of snakes tumbled over, breaking and releasing the vipers. You hate snakes, started screaming and hopping away as fast as you could on your good foot. You were so busy escaping; it was several minutes before you noticed Herod was dead, face down in his uneaten fruit salad. You muttered "good riddance to King Piggy".

WHO YOU ARE: Barabbas the Zealot. You are a born leader, charismatic and popular with your many followers. While your foes call you a murderer and thief (at least that is what was on your latest arrest warrant) you consider yourself and fellow Zealots as revolutionary heroes. Just because you were involved in an insurrection in Jerusalem and was caught and arrested as a rebel on charges of sedition, doesn't really make you an evil guy. Ever since the crowd chose you over Jesus of Nazareth and you were set free on Passover, you have felt like you had a mission in life – kill King Herod. Now is your opportunity. You will die a hero to the Zealot cause.

WHO YOU KNOW:

Hezekiah, another Zealot. Posing as the gladiators who will entertain the crowds at Herod's party, Hezekiah will superficially wound you in a number of places so you appear to be gravely wounded. As you feign weakness and agony, Hezekiah will drive you ever closer to the head banquet table and king Herod. Just as you are to die under the killing blow, you will spring over the table and slay the wimpy and worthless ruler. Hezekiah will then "defend the king" and slay you (actually to spare you death by torture).

WHAT YOU WANT TO SHARE: The Zealots were actually patriots for Judaea. They desired to rid their country of the Romans and the corrupt priests who were pro-Roman collaborators and mere puppets of state. The only good Roman is a dead Roman.

SECRET YOU WANT TO KEEP: You have been bribed (not exactly sure who – they used an agent to contact and pay half of the agreed upon sum) to injure Princess Salome. Knowing you'd be sacrificing your life for the cause anyway, you accepted so you could put the funds in the Zealot treasury to help the cause.

ON THE NIGHT IN QUESTION: You and Hezekiah donned your disguises as gladiators and waited for your cue to go on. Other entertainment including a snake charmer and some dancing girls waited as well. You were busy flirting with one of the girls and almost missed stomping on Salome's foot as she went by. Then all mayhem broke loose. Next thing you saw was a stick flinging a snake. When things calmed down, Herod was dead.

WHO YOU ARE: Nicholas, a follower of the murdered preacher, John, also called the Baptizer. Some call you narrow minded. You prefer the term focused. John said the axe was at the root of the trees. You have decided to pick up the axe and start chopping. John called hypocrites vipers so you thought it would be appropriate for some of them to die by snakebite.

WHO YOU KNOW: None one personally. But you despise Herod, Salome and Herodias

WHAT YOU WANT TO SHARE: Herod had John beheaded because John would not shut up about Herod's sin in taking his brother's wife. You take every opportunity to slam Herodias and her daughter Salome, who actually was the cause of John's death. When Salome's dance so pleased Herod that he offered her up to half his kingdom, she listened to her mother and asked for the head of John on a silver platter. That was plain wrong!

SECRET YOU WANT TO KEEP: Your true identity and connection with the martyr John the baptizer.

ON THE NIGHT IN QUESTION: You posed as a snake charmer dressed in camel's hair, a leather belt and clay pot filled with poisonous snakes to get into the palace for the big party. Your plan was to "accidentally" let the vipers go, sneak out and pray that one of them bit Herod, Herodias, Salome or all three.

WHO YOU ARE: Endora – a Jewish woman who despises Romans and the royal ruling family. You used to live in a small village in the area near the city of Tiberius. When Herod decided to build this tribute to Rome, he forcibly moved what was left of your family.

WHO YOU KNOW: You recognize Barabbas. He is an insurrectionist against the Romans Joanna, wife of Chuza, Herod’s household manager. She hired you to help serve.

WHAT YOU WANT TO SHARE: Herod built the city of Tiberius, (to honor the Roman emperor, Tiberius, may God wipe his name from the earth) on top of an old Jewish graveyard. That’s sacrilege and Herod deserves to die.

SECRET YOU WANT TO KEEP: You poisoned some figs and “delivered” them for tonight’s feast.

ON THE NIGHT IN QUESTION: After delivering the figs, you realized you had failed to think things through. Anyone could wind up eating them and you might kill an innocent person, (like that King Aretas, who you refused to serve the figs to...) When Joanna offered you a job serving you jumped at the chance to get the figs to the right victims. You were getting ready to deliver them to the head table when all sorts of chaos broke out. Next thing you know, Barabbas is stomping deliberately, on Salome’s foot (too bad it wasn’t her head), jars broke, snakes slithered and you seized the opportunity to get the figs on the table right next to Herod. You had to jump out of the way when a snake, then a staff came flying toward you. Then Herod was grabbing his leg and yelling. Two minutes later, he was dead.

WHO YOU ARE: Philip, half-brother to Herod. You were educated in Rome, a kind of honorable detention to guarantee his father's loyalty to the Emperor. You are smarter and made of sterner stuff than Herod, yet your father gave him a larger part of the kingdom when he died.

WHO YOU KNOW:

Herodias – your faithless ex-wife who left you for Herod. She's looking a bit old and worn out (serves her right)

Salome – your daughter. By Herodias How could she have gone with her mother instead of staying with you?

WHAT YOU WANT TO SHARE: How Herodias' looks are fading, your displeasure at Salome's choice. Why did King Aretas sneak a blade into the party? How did it end up under the king's table? Was it a poisoned blade?

ON THE NIGHT IN QUESTION: You knew Herod never expected you to show up, despite the invitation. You decided to come anyway, spy out the place. You were seated next to King Aretas and encouraged him to drink, hoping he'd spill some secrets. You have long wanted to get rid of Herod and take over his kingdom, adding it to the measly portion you inherited. You discovered he hated Herod as well. You also noticed his staff actually had a blade hidden inside. That was against the rules – having a weapon in the king's palace. Unfortunately, to encourage King Aretas to drink, you drank too much and were pretty out of it when the chaos happened. (You actually hid under the table, afraid Herod was planning to kill you. Next thing you knew, Herod was dead.

WHO YOU ARE: Hezekiah, a big, brawny punk zealot and follower of Barabbas. Under his tutelage you've come to be a master swordsman, assassin and a rather effective thief. Unfortunately, he hasn't done anything to improve your rather feeble brain power. You've idolized Barabbas ever since he attacked Herod's palace in Galilee, seizing money and weapons which your group used to terrorize the area.

WHO YOU KNOW: Barabbas, your hero. It was a lucky break for all Zealots when Pilate released him at Passover instead of Jesus of Nazareth. Now you're planning an assassination together.

WHAT YOU WANT TO SHARE: What a great swordsman you are. What a great guy Barabbas is. The two of you are in cahoots to assassinate the king and will be famous someday. They'll sing songs in your honor. Wow! The fact that "loose lips sink ships". (That's a real tongue twister. You don't really know what it means. How can lips be loose? How can lips sink ships? It's not like a big rock or storm. You and hope someone can enlighten you on the meaning)

SECRETS YOU HAVE TO KEEP: What a great guy Barabbas is. (No one is supposed to know who he is. If only you can remember his alias ...) the plot to kill King Herod.

ON THE NIGHT IN QUESTION: Posing as gladiators who will entertain the crowds at Herod's party, you'll superficially wound Barabbas in a number of places so he appears to be gravely wounded... As he feigns weakness and agony, you are to drive him ever closer to the head banquet table and king Herod. Just as you are to deliver the killing blow, Barabbas will spring over the table and slay the wimpy and worthless ruler. You will then kill Barabbas (to spare him a torture death) and appear to be a hero. Hopefully you can then infiltrate the ranks of the royal guard and learn secrets that will help overthrow the hated Romans.

WHO YOU ARE: Joanna, the wife of Chuza, the manager of Herod's household. Your husband is a capable manager but also relies upon your wonderful skills of organization to help supervise some of the staff.

WHO YOU KNOW:

Herodias – wicked queen and hard to please woman of the house. Picky, picky, picky and very vain.

Salome – Herod's step-daughter. She trash talks Herod thinking the servants don't hear her.

WHAT YOU WANT TO SHARE: Nothing. You like to keep a low profile.

SECRET YOU WANT TO KEEP: You are a Christian, and also financially supported Jesus out of your own money. If it were public knowledge, your husband could lose his position or worse.

ON THE NIGHT IN QUESTION: You were helping organize the food when you realized several of your servants had come down with some sickness. In desperation you hired some of the vendors bringing food on the spot to fill in, including Eudora, the fig seller. Things were going ok then suddenly you heard a big uproar from the dining hall. By the time you got there, Herod was dead, face first in his fruit salad... Your husband could lose his job or even life if this whole mess isn't figured out and soon.

WHO YOU ARE: Manny, a "foster-brother" or "companion" of Herod's when you went to school in Rome together. You are smart and always did better in classes and swordplay than Herod which is probably why he pulled jokes on you. Herod always did stuff like towel snapping in the public baths, loosening your horse's saddle so you'd fall off when you mounted, and greasing the hilt of your sword in practice. Consequently, you're a bit paranoid when you are around him.

WHO YOU KNOW:

King Aretas – he has it in for Herod for divorcing his daughter

Princess Phadra – Herod's ex-wife and Aretas' daughter. You'd like to get to know her better.

Phillip – Herod picked on him too, but more so when they became adults. You feel sorry for Phillip.

Phillip,

WHAT YOU WANT TO SHARE: How smart you are. That you have no hard feelings towards Herod (that's a lie) for all the tricks he played on you when you were growing up in Rome.

SECRET YOU WANT TO KEEP: Exactly how Herod picked on you.

ON THE NIGHT IN QUESTION: You arrived and were extremely surprised to be seated at the head table (especially since some visiting royalty had been seated at a lesser table. You wondered if this was a trick of some sort and Herod would embarrass you. Everything was going fine until that snake came flying your way. Realizing it was a poisonous cobra and seeing the staff that somehow got under the table, you grabbed it up to defend yourself if the cobra came your way. Turns out, it was a staff that concealed a blade. Blades are illegal in the presence of the king so someone is trying to set you up and get you arrested at the least and maybe even killed. Who is behind all this?

WHO YOU ARE: Jasmine, dancing girl. You are talented and beautiful and feel you deserve better in life. Better as in, married to royalty or at least nobility. With your pretty face and dancing ability, you are confident you can marry well. You just need the right break.

WHO YOU KNOW:

Salome – Herod’s step-daughter. She trash talks Herod thinking the servants don’t hear her. You hate. You dislike her as your competition. Once the little snoot head danced so well, Herod promised to give her up to half of his kingdom (how you wish he’d asked you that question). Salome was so stupid; all she asked for was some guy’s head on a platter.

WHAT YOU WANT TO SHARE: How wonderful you are. Things you have overheard.

SECRET YOU WANT TO KEEP: You really out to catch a man – the wealthier, the better.

ON THE NIGHT IN QUESTION: Waiting for your turn to go on stage, you avoided the guy with the jar of snakes (Nicholas) and the stupid gladiator that kept asking everyone “How can loose lips sink ships?” When the cute gladiator started talking you up, you flirted right back. But once he caught sight of Salome, he ignored you completely and in his haste to catch her attention, stepped on her foot. Then Nicholas dropped his jar loosening the snakes, someone started flinging them about with a staff. You ducked for cover. Next thing you knew, Herod was dead.