

## *Herod's Eyes*

### Excerpt 4

The lucky day came with an afternoon blare of ram's horn trumpets. Yoel ben Kesed, dressed in fine robes, came blowing a long, twisted *shofar* with a handful of friends, who likewise raised a howling din with shorter versions of the horns. They brought the hullabaloo into the courtyard of my domus, where Yedyidah, dressed in her finest, awaited with as many of our friends and extended family as could possibly pack in. Eran was there. As I predicted, he was welcomed back with overwhelming emotion. Yedyidah had been overjoyed to see her brother, alive and home. My father seemed to lose twenty years in his delight at the homecoming and wedding, and insisted on participating fully.

There were toasts and jokes as more of the groom's party showed up at the gate, carrying the chair on its platform. I helped Yedyidah onto the litter. How she glowed, as she was seated on the finest throne a woman can have. After I handed her a white lily, I stepped back as four of Yoel's strapping worthies hoisted the chair, the ten bridesmaids gathered around it, and with all the *shofarot* bellowing, a procession made its way into the quarter. The streets in the Roman district of the upper city were wide and straight, and the procession took on the air of a Triumph as Gentiles joined with the parade of Jews accompanying my daughter.

After winding through the side streets, the mob arrived at the traditional-style home of Yoel's family, and the bride and groom filed into the courtyard where his father and family awaited. Our family entered, with as many of the others who were able. The *shofarot* ceased their blasts, but there were shouts and music and jokes and, well, it was a noisy neighborhood party. It continued until dusk was near, and it became time for the finalization.

The friends of the bridegroom now acted like ushers and shushers, getting everybody sorted out and quieted down. When the hubbub was minimal, Kesed gave the *brochot*, the wedding blessings. This done, the couple were let through a side gate into Yoel's new residence, where they entered the *chuppah* chamber to, well, do what brides and grooms do on their wedding day. The maidens giggled and smiled, the ushers laughed and japed. I was nervous, even worried, I don't know why. Reena took my hand and said one word: "Remember."

I smiled at her. "I do," I said. "Thank you. For everything."