

## *Herod's Eyes*

### Excerpt 5

The lucky day came with an afternoon blare of ram's horn trumpets. Yoel ben I sat alone in my room, reading the papers before me. I saw in my mind's ~~eye~~ the Baptist in his confinement, looking at me with utmost concern. Yet something else was in his gaze, something I had seen before in other men. He had seen through me, but I had also seen through him. He knew there would be no mercy.

I thought of my family, and the Romans looming over us. I thought of how men had died by my actions, and how many had sought the mercy I could not give them. John was a destructive force, I was sure. But the fact remained that he himself was no political revolutionary stirring up rebellion. He was a puritan, but a revolutionary thinker in his piety. He was on a search of his own. Whether or not he had baptized the messiah was something beyond my understanding, despite all I had seen and heard that day.

John, you are a light, but you are also a danger. Your fate is probably sealed, no matter what I bring back to Herod to lay at his feet. I wish it could be otherwise. You asked me what I knew about destiny. I do not know, for sure.

I am coming to the point where I might see my own. But John, I know one thing about yours, and perhaps it may be my undoing. I will only present what I know to Herod Antipas. Whether you live or die, John the Baptist, I will not interfere with your fate.