

The Day They Killed the Son of God

by

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This play can be performed in promenade if so desired, in which case the audience should be briefed in advance that they need to follow the group of women to keep up with the action. They should not move ahead of the women. They should join in with the shouts of 'Crucify him!' when Pilate makes his final appeal for Jesus to be set free instead of Barabbas and should jeer at Jesus as he walks to Golgotha.

Cast

Mary Magdalene

Chloe – a teenage follower of Jesus

Mary, the mother of Jesus

Joanna

Salome

Jesus

Caiaphas

Chief Priest 1

Chief Priest 2

Chief Priest 3

Other chief priests and elders

Pilate

Peter

John

Herod

Random Female Courtier 1

Random Female Courtier 2

Assorted other Courtiers

Scene 1

A group of five anxious women hurries on, looking around nervously. They are Mary Magdalene, Mary, the mother of Jesus, Salome, Chloe and Joanna.

Mary Magdalene (MM): No one here then. I might have known. You'd think at least Peter would have the decency to turn up – after all he's said!

Salome: Typical man – all talk and no action!

Chloe: With one big exception, of course.

MM: Don't, Chloe – just don't...

Chloe: I'm sorry, Mary. I wasn't thinking – I'm so tired...

Joanna: How must *he* be feeling? God knows what they've been doing to him all night!

MM: Hush, Joanna – his mother!

Mary: Don't worry about me – I'm past the point where it matters what anyone says. You think if you don't talk about it I won't know? I'm old but I'm not stupid –

and I've expected and dreaded this night since the day the angel spoke to me.
But I'm grieved that the men have not stood by him. I did not expect that.

Salome: Cowards – the lot of them! First sign of trouble and they run!

MM: It's easier for us, Salome. No one thinks of a woman as a dangerous revolutionary. But even so – I had thought better of Peter.

Joanna: Quiet! I can hear something!

MM: Get back! In here!

Enter the chief priests and council of the elders. When they are assembled, Jesus is led before them. They mutter for some while – Where is the evidence against him? What is he said to have done? Is there proof that he is a blasphemer? etc. Then Caiaphas takes command.

Caiaphas: Much has been said in your disfavour, Jesus of Nazareth. It is rumoured that you claim to be able to destroy the temple of God and raise it again in three days.

Jesus remains silent.

Caiaphas: Well? Aren't you going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you? What does it mean?

Jesus remains silent.

Caiaphas: I charge you, Jesus of Nazareth, under oath by the living God, to answer this question! Tell us – are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?

Jesus: If I tell you, you will not believe me, and if I asked you, you would not answer. But from now on, the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of God.

The other council members: He's saying he's the Son of God! He's admitted it! Blasphemy! That's it then etc

Caiaphas : *(calls for order)* Let us be quite clear about this. Are you saying that you *are* the Son of God?

Jesus: Yes, it is as you say. But I say to all of you: In the future you will see the Son of Man coming on clouds of glory.

Caiaphas: *(tearing his clothes or something similarly dramatic!)* Why do we need any more evidence? We have heard it from his own lips! He is a dangerous blasphemer! Take him to Pilate!

Jesus is led away towards the next venue and the women step forward again.

Chloe: Pilate! Why are they taking Jesus to him?

MM: Because Pilate is the Roman governor, of course! He's the one who has to give permission for execution – you didn't think the chief priests could do it themselves, did you?

Chloe: How should I know? I'm from Galilee! I don't know anything about politics!

Joanna: Did you say execution, Mary?

Salome: Surely it wouldn't come to that?

Chloe: Jesus hasn't done anything!

Mary: Jesus has been preaching against the teachers of the law for three years. As far as they're concerned he's a dangerous revolutionary, likely to turn the people against them.

Joanna: But he's a preacher of peace – a healer!

MM: Yes, and what other healer and preacher of peace has a band of women trailing devotedly round the country after him? Not to mention the men.

Salome: You're right! Jesus is far too dangerous for them to let him carry on unchecked.

MM: Perhaps it's just as well the men have left.

Chloe: Maybe they'll let Jesus go now?

Joanna: What harm can he do with a bunch of women?

Mary: They know that if they free Jesus, the men'll be back. And they know that Jesus won't be put off. Just as I know too – have always known. The Spirit of the Lord is upon him. The chief priests are scared witless and they can think of only one solution.

Chloe: What's that?

Salome: Oh, Chloe, isn't it obvious?

MM: Come on – maybe Pilate won't be fooled by their scaremongering!

The audience follows the women to the next venue where Pilate is seeing Jesus, together with representatives of the council, including Caiaphas.

