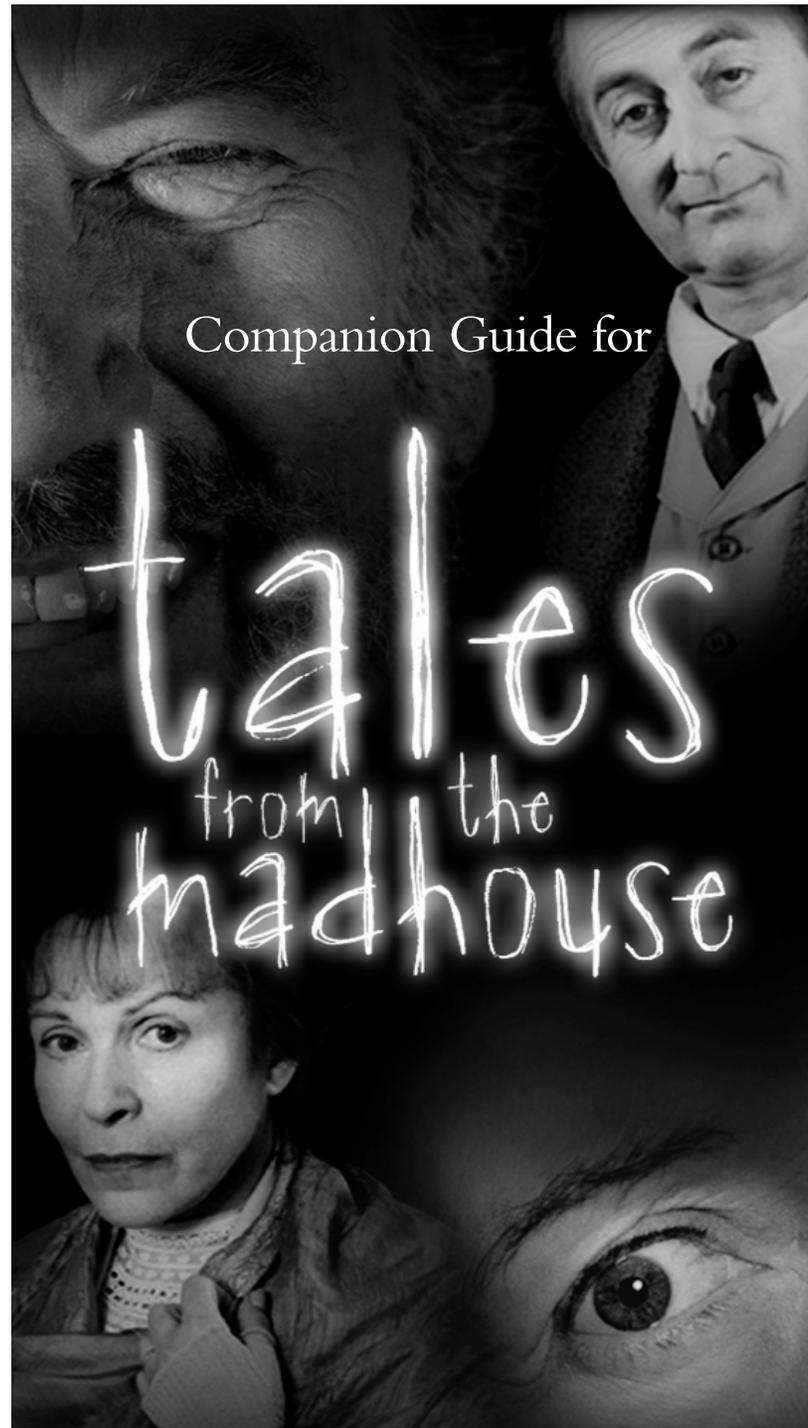


Pilate's Wife

The Rich Man

The Best Friend

The Mourner



The Servant Girl

Barabbas

The Centurion

The Thief

Tales from the Madhouse  
is a  
1-A, BBC and  
Gateway Films/Vision Video  
Co-Production

This guide prepared by  
Dr. Ken Curtis

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Video series  
distributed by

**Gateway Films**  
**VISION VIDEO**

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# Welcome to the Madhouse

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From Dr. Ken Curtis, Executive Producer for Gateway Films/Vision Video.

It is a joy to welcome you to the madhouse. We hope it may prove to be one of the most lucid and healthy experiences you have had lately.

No, I am not being facetious. Do you doubt that we live in a madhouse world? Somewhat offensive? Then at least grant that Christian teaching has always beckoned us to admit that we live in a “badhouse” world and we are all implicated in the badness — through acts of commission, omission, and proxy — whereby others act on our behalf.

The inhabitants of our madhouse all struggle with the meaning of Jesus Christ for them and our world. We invite you to do the same. After all, does it not make sense to look at the one who exposed us and our madhouse-badhouse world as no other ever did before or since? And does not whatever sanity we possess prompt us to take a long look at the one who has done more than any other in history to give people life, meaning, health, hope, and love?

Thus, our hope in presenting these programs is to offer a stimulating opportunity for you to come to the Gospels and take a fresh look. But we must caution, please do not look to these programs to be something that they are not intended to be.

## Some Things to Keep in Mind in Approaching These Programs

1. These are not programs of Bible exposition or interpretive commentary on the text.
2. They all begin with a character recognizable from the Gospels exploring the life of that person as he/she might have lived within the context of the modern world.
3. To some degree, therefore, the scripts and the programs are fanciful, with a degree of artistic license, which, in the end, we hope proves helpful in assisting you in your own interaction with the Scriptures and the people who populate these stories.
4. Notice also that these programs are really in the end all about Jesus. But he never is seen directly in the story. He is not even mentioned by name — except perhaps in the Judas “Best Friend” story as a case file.

## How to Use These Programs

- Here is an excellent series for use in a small group.
- Use them as a different kind of Lenten series of services.
- They can also be used anytime and with any number of people. They can also be used for individual enjoyment. But we find the best use is in viewing with others so that they can be discussed — as they inevitably raise compelling questions.

## Some Suggestions

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- In testing out the programs thus far we have found that it is best to use them one at a time and not look at several at once.
- We hear from many that they wanted and needed two or three viewings of the individual programs. The programs run just a little under 15 minutes each, so you may prepare your time schedule to allow for more than one viewing.
- Note that the pages of the script have numbers in increments of five going down the side. This is for your convenience in following the references mentioned in this guide. In the discussion questions at the end of each script, we will sometimes refer to specifics in the script by page and line numbers. So, for example, a mention of 40/14 would mean to look at page 40 and line 14.
- Note that the guide contains some general questions on page 14 that can be used with the overall series and can be used for any given program. Then beginning on page 24 there are questions to use with the individual programs along with the program scripts.
- The observations and questions provided are suggestions and intended to prime the pump. You will have plenty of your own to add.
- The scripts are provided so that you can go back and remind yourself of the what was said at any particular point in the program. In some cases in the discussion sections we refer to parts of the original script that were cut in the final edit.

## Where Are You Coming From?

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For a non-believer in Christianity, consider that there is no one who has ever lived that has attracted more followers than Jesus Christ. Get to know more about Jesus. You will be surprised at how he dissolves whatever stereotyped impression you may have had of him. Each program script has a scripture at the beginning that refers to one of the main texts that inspired the story. We encourage you to go back to the Bible and read the larger context of that Scripture citation.

Those who are already followers of Christ will wonder why we have not spelled out more clearly the Easter joys of knowing him. The purpose of this series is to look at the lives of those who were stopped on their journey through life, and encountered Christ and then (in most cases) turned away to go another direction. Thus the programs provoke us to consider where that other direction may have led. It provides an opportunity for seekers to stop, to take some steps back, and perhaps take a new look

This is a series that could have been just as aptly titled "But That One." For here we meet one person after another whose life was touched. Here are — a politician's wife, military officer, a wealthy man, servant girl — all living their lives. "But That One" in a moment drastically changed everything. They went their way, lived their lives, tried to cope, but couldn't put away that one person for the rest of their lives, nor the thought of the opportunity they may have missed.

# Musings From the Maestro of the Madhouse

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Norman Stone



We interviewed Producer, Director, and series originator Norman Stone for this guide, asking him to provide some of his thinking that went into this series.

Norman said the idea grew out of a one-man TV drama he made a few years back starring Jeremy Irons. It was called *The Dream of a Verdictless Man*.

**QUESTION:** Why the one-person dramas?

**NORMAN STONE:** I was convinced we could actually do a story with one person on location and really hone everything down to story-telling power while giving it strong visual features. Today we reduce television to

everything from cotton candy to a news machine when, in fact, the essence of good television and film for me is storytelling. And if you reduce storytelling to its basic components, I think you have a person applying pictures in the mind of the listener. Now when you take that within a one-man-show context, and add the power of visuals and other extras, or whatever, you are hooked. If somebody looks in your eyes, and they are a good actor and they start telling you a story that is well written, you want to hear more.

**QUESTION:** So who was the intended audience?

**NORMAN STONE:** Basically a thinking audience. Certainly non-Christian or uncommitted would be my prime aim — to talk to them. To approach them in such a way that they get intrigued into the power of what is really there in the Good Book or at least to be made to think by the people we dealt with from the Biblical record. It seems to me that a full frontal attack on people's hearts and brains where you scream or lecture from a Christian and Biblical base is not always the best idea. Here we have a book crammed full of things that people should be thinking about. But they are traditionally resistant to thinking about them. So why not intrigue, tell a story, put them on, play a game, enthruse this person, make them want to find out more, and then hold up a mirror. And by that I mean if you lecture somebody, they can dodge, duck or put up their defenses. If you show somebody who missed a moment, and our characters missed a moment with the same person, Jesus of Nazareth, and if you show them missing that moment, and the viewer thinks and feels

it is so obviously wrong, and the viewer wants to shout to them “Please don’t miss that moment,” then we are holding up a mirror to them.

So it is a relaxed and slightly secondary way of getting people to think because the defenses aren’t up. Some people will empathize with the characters, see what they were missing and wish for them — “Don’t miss that!” Then hopefully they will think through a little bit more for themselves how they might have missed that moment, had they been in a similiar position. That was the theory and I am pleased with the way it has been received.

**QUESTION:** And what are we to make of the madhouse itself?

**NORMAN STONE:** If you take the madhouse as the world and each individual room within it as people’s little worlds, within which they have trapped themselves — then you have the analogy. It is people who have missed the moment — that was the whole point of exploring this particular area. And the fact that in some cases little is known about the Biblical characters that serve as sources isn’t a hindrance. It actually can be a help.

**QUESTION:** A team of top writers, actors, and directors was assembled for this modestly budgeted series. So what has our madhouse master learned from the experience?

**NORMAN STONE:** I have learned that quality actors and quality writers, whether or not they are Christians, can see the extraordinary value of something like this

and enjoy the challenge that goes with it. One of the writers, Arnold Wesker, is a byword in quality play and screen playwriting. His work is studied all over the world. He wrote the Barabbas one — and his first words when I proposed the subject and the idea to him were, “But I am not a Christian.” I asked, “Are you honest?” He said, “Yes.” So I said, “That will do, because we are not asking for false favors here; we are not asking for propaganda. We are asking for an honest look at the human situation through the lives and eyes of this character, whatever it would be.” So I have learned that top people like to do this kind of project. I’ve learned that masses of people like to watch it, and I have learned that the press respect it and accept it.

**QUESTION:** This is a different approach to Christian communication. Were you afraid it might be too downbeat?

**NORMAN STONE:** At the end of this series, we had one person who got out of the madhouse — The Redeemed Thief. But the whole concept of the program was about people that missed the moment and since the majority of the audience may have either missed their moment or not considered their moment, it seems fair to approach them in that way. I don’t think you should be afraid to point out negatives and what people have missed and then leave a gap for them to fill in the thinking of what they should be doing.

Not every story is fully rounded with a happy ending, and not every character in the Bible comes through with a great swoop of hallelujahs. We can do only what we can do obediently. We can be only a brick in the

wall, very rarely two bricks in the wall. We shouldn't worry all of the time about building a whole wall, if I can use that analogy.

So often Christians, in the early days of Christian film, would say we've got to put Billy Graham at the end of it or something so that we can guarantee to give the whole counsel of God — the whole gospel wall will be built, or we won't do it at all. I think that is wrong. We contribute to an argument, to an experience; we contribute to an audience's understanding of the world and always point in essence toward positives as the end of the series. But I am hopeful that people would get the message and see how they missed their experience and then empathize with the character and sit down to do some thinking. I do that and it is extremely positive.

Yes, it is heavy, except always entertaining. But I think I can get people thinking and that is enough within the limited scope of what we were aiming to do. It was important to me to get somebody at the end to break free of the madhouse and find solid food for thought — not always singing hallelujahs at the end of every message.

**QUESTION:** We didn't like the widow of Nain being treated as she was. Why did you do it that way?

**NORMAN STONE:** I think it was legitimate to theorize about the widow of Nain. She is a fairly happy if slight character in the Bible — when she gets her son back from the dead. We use that character to discuss, if you like, the dangers of worshipping "the magician god" because he gives you what you want, and we all

know reality isn't quite like that. So what happens if "the magician God" gives you what you want, then a year later takes it away again. The heart of the earlier project we worked on together, *Shadowlands*, is somewhat similar. C. S. Lewis, the master of the answers, has all the tough questions raised because he gets Joy back from that original bout with cancer but then loses her the second time. Big challenge. Big reality. Big time pain. So we use the poor old widow of Nain to discuss that area. I think the fact we knew so little about her, in fact, gave us a freedom to do that.

**And a word from your co-producers,  
Gateway Films/Vision Video  
and Christian History Institute**

Do you think we are crazy in setting these programs in the Madhouse and inviting you in to be our guest? If that troubles you, then let us just affirm with the Apostle Paul that "If we are out of our mind, it is for the sake of God. If we are in our right mind, it is for you." 2 Corinthians 5:13

## General Questions for the Overall Series

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These programs were meant for reflection, discussion, and further exploration. They are not intended to give a single final interpretation. Hopefully they open up the viewer to seek to enter the mind and thoughts of each particular character to see how one's own thinking and reaction to life and to Christ may follow a similar pattern. As director Stone points out in his comments (pages 8-13), the programs hopefully will begin as entertainment and end up as a mirror.

Each program is one person's drama, and the performer is in essence telling you his/her story. It is a kind of confession. You, the viewer, are the one confessed to. But as you hear the confession, the hope is that you will not just sit back smugly in judgement but will be prompted to reflect on how the timeless characteristics of the story might connect with your own experience.

The following are suggested for discussing any or all of the individual programs at the end of each script. In addition, there are specific topics for each story that you may find useful. These are at the end of each script.

1. Do you sense that the person is aware of you listening in?
2. If so, how do you feel he/she is relating to you?
3. Do you get the feeling they are telling you the truth?

4. How do you relate to each? Do you like him/her?
5. Is this a person you would like to get to know better? Perhaps to sit down for a dinner together?
6. What do you like about the person? What do you dislike?
7. What is the role, if any, of love in this story?
8. What was the central, or at least a key, issue in his/her life that was brought to the open in the encounter with Jesus?
9. Does this person remind you of someone that you have met?
10. Did this story bring to your mind any characteristics in your own life and outlook that you may not have been previously conscious of? Did you have the feeling at any point while viewing that the mirror was being held up to you?
11. Where would you rank this episode in terms of the overall series? In the top half or the bottom half?
12. Walker Percy once said that we are now living in the "dread latter days of the old violent beloved U.S.A. and of the Christ-forgetting, Christ-haunted, death-dealing Western world." What do you think he might have meant and does this resonate with anything you observed or felt watching the programs?

# Pilate's Wife

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*Played by*  
Claire Bloom

*Written by*  
Nigel Forde

*Directed by*  
Morag Fullerton

*While Pilate was sitting on the judge's seat, his wife sent him this message: "Don't have anything to do with that innocent man, for I have suffered a great deal today in a dream because of him."*

Matthew 27:19

## The Story

She's the wife of a politician who rules an occupied territory. The subjects have no affection for her husband. He is the representative of the oppressor, and so, of course, they have no affection for her. But she has all the perks and comforts of his office. She has a soft life. She knows it and she likes it. She knows the game. She plays by the rules. She lives as one of the pampered and privileged elite.

But her ordered, safe, and isolated world is invaded by a dream that will give her no rest. Jesus is going on trial; she has seen it in a dream that she cannot get out of her mind. What should she do? She knows the man is innocent. She knows his fate is in her husband's hands. But she also knows that her husband is in a bind where political considerations take precedence over justice.

She must at least get word to him. Should she do more? How will whatever she does be perceived? She has a name, place, and reputation to maintain. How much of it is worth risking for the sake of a dream? For the sake of one of the subjects, who is not even a Roman citizen? But this dream is different. It just won't go away. Years later it haunts her and controls her life.

## Script 1: Pilate's Wife

Spiders come out of these corners. They aren't frightening, but they're unexpected. They shoot along their invisible tightrope like a moving frown. That's what happened then. I suddenly felt spiders all over my body. My skin rippled on me. Noises loomed in my ears. I couldn't move, but I was lifted and carried back into the night and the drowning whirlpool of a dream. What had happened? My husband had stepped out into the courtyard, and a young man had been pushed forward. That's all. Nothing in that to give the universe a shrug? I couldn't even see his face, but something in me had fastened him to my dream. You think that's too mystic? Well, a few minutes later, my breakfast came back. There wasn't much mysticism in that. Just a lot of fruit.

All night long the pond creaks in its winter coat.

You! Can you hear it? No, of course not. It won't do it when you want it to. Then they say it's all my imagination. But who's to say your imagination can't tell the truth? Who's to say?

And this... I didn't ask for this. The servants behave oddly. I don't like it. My grandfather, Augustus — ah! Augustus — he was very strict on the servant question. At the very first hint of slackness or disobedience, you act; if you don't, you suffer for it in the end. Especially abroad. Politics is dangerous enough without untrustworthy servants. But here — they ask questions, questions; they gaze at you; oh, they seem to listen, but nothing ever gets done. I've dismissed three already, but they all come back. I'm sure they come back.

You see? You think there's nobody there. But you

can't be sure. Cold. Out there it was always too hot; I complained about it. Now I can never get warm enough. I'll break the ice on the pond, then I'll be able to sleep.

Walking along the colonnade, early in the morning. Have you noticed how, as you walk along beside the arches, your shadow suddenly snaps up from the pillar and then flings itself flat on the paving again? Up, away, up, away. Even when you run, it keeps up with you — it never does the wrong thing. I don't think I noticed until that morning. I must have done. But every normal thing that happened that day looks abnormal from here. It's so hard to unweave the threads, to work out what was significant from what was simply things being what they are. Everything was out of joint. Skewed. Just by one degree, but skewed. I remember the day holding its breath as it does when there is going to be an earthquake, or when some semi-domesticated volcano is going to suffer a bout of cosmic indigestion. It was the dream I'd had, I'm sure of that; I was half in and half out of it, rocking between dream and reality. But, even allowing for that, there was something terribly abnormal, something terribly . . . wrong that happened. And I knew it was going to happen, and I had no reason for knowing, no logic on my side. A dream, that's all. And now I live in an orphanage of dreams.

Well, nobody wants to hear someone else's dreams, do they? Fruitless. Pointless. Like those terrible bores who try to describe in mind-numbing detail some comedy they saw at the theatre.

(She considers the decanter of wine).

Probably too early. Yes, too early. You'd think this afternoon stretched so much further than simply midday to dusk.

That one dream, though. It is that one dream that I 1  
had to speak of, that I had to act on. And that I  
shrank from. I made a gesture — no more. But what  
more could I do? A woman in my position? My mind  
goes round and round that day like the layers of an 5  
onion. Yes, it's a good image — like the layers of an  
onion. I try to find the center now. I pick and I pick.  
And as I pick, the tears. . .

(Pouring herself a drink) 10  
Not too early now.  
What it is to be married to a logical man. He was cer-  
tainly that. Military training, no doubt. Gather infor-  
mation, weigh up the possibilities, make a decision.  
Fact plus fact plus fact. That was always his way. 15  
And it was the no-nonsense part of me that appealed  
to him, so he said.

He never discovered the rest of me, but I didn't com-  
plain. He wanted that particular governorship; I didn't. 20  
He had some powerful friends on his side and he got  
it, and wives do as they're told. And sometimes hus-  
bands try. They do try.

A god! Why did they say that? What were they 25  
thinking of? How could he be a god! They must have  
been desperate to imagine we would fall for that  
one! Speaking as the granddaughter of a god. Well,  
he knew it was mere politics, and so was this. Of  
course it was. I suppose they thought we had so 30  
many gods another one wouldn't matter. There is a  
kind of logic in that. But we don't take our gods ter-  
ribly seriously. Oh we dedicate shrines and pay a  
grudging respect on feast days. And in return —  
rather like children — we expect to be given sweets 35  
now and then and then left alone.

If only this one would leave me alone. But he won't.

So, through the colonnade I went. Barefoot. The 1  
pavement was already hot, so I dipped my feet in the  
pool, and as I ran my footsteps dried and disap-  
peared behind me. You'd never know anyone had  
been there. I wasn't expecting a crowd. I knew my 5  
husband was going to interview a prisoner brought  
in by the local authorities; he'd hurried through his  
breakfast so that he could get it done and we could  
spend our weekend by the lake.

When I saw the crowd I stopped. I saw my husband  
step forward and have a few words with a young  
man. And that's when the spiders crawl. That's  
when my dream reared up and stared at me: I'd seen  
all this happen before. 15

What had happened? My husband had stepped for-  
ward out into the courtyard, and a young man had  
been pushed forward. That's all! 20

I wanted to tell someone. I needed to give a warning.  
But who should I tell? And what should I tell them?  
What had I understood? Nothing. And I still under-  
stood nothing except that there was an overpowering  
need to take hold of something, to catch it before it 25  
went. Does that make sense?

I'm an idle woman. I've been pampered and  
indulged, and I've more money than is good for me,  
but I am not stupid. That sad, slight figure in a rather 30  
grubby robe had stepped, pure, from my dream into  
such wickedness as stopped my breath. And I knew I  
must not be part of it.

Pilate and that young man went inside. I started to 35  
follow them, but how could I do that? I couldn't go  
inside the judgment hall in front of all those people  
wearing that dreadful dress. It would have provoked  
an international incident. You don't think I should

have done that? Not a woman in my position. 1  
Letting the side down. Instead, I scribbled a note. I  
don't remember exactly what I wrote. But I told him  
to have nothing to do with this young man, that he'd  
swirled and tumbled through my dreams all night, 5  
and that he was innocent! He was innocent.

What should I have done? What could I have done? I  
didn't know who I had dreamt of; I didn't know who  
the man was or where he had come from — I didn't 10  
know anything about him.

I thought that would be enough.

I knew my husband was not trained in diplomacy. 15  
But he does listen. Poor dear, I expect he thought he  
did his best, but he needed me there, actually there  
beside him — to prop him up; he's never defiant  
enough unless he can catch my eye. But I couldn't do  
that. I couldn't do that. He couldn't have expected 20  
me to. I'd have been a laughing stock. The wife who  
interfered! I'd have forfeited... I couldn't stand up  
there in front of everyone, even knowing that the  
man was innocent. It wasn't my place! I'd have lost  
all dignity. The servants would have heard about it. 25  
And the friends I'd so painstakingly cultivated, and  
all for what? Why should I look a fool for the sake of  
a silly dream? And I wasn't to blame, after all.

I didn't hand him over, 30  
I didn't trump up any charges.  
I didn't do anything.

I will not be laughed at. There is a proper way to  
behave. Let it never be said that I forgot myself, that 35  
I don't know the protocol.

I did what I could. And, after all, perhaps it was all  
in my imagination. There was a slight earthquake

later that afternoon. It cleared the air. 1

So perhaps...

But the agony of the dream comes leering at me still 5  
— sucks my memory back into the hot, orange desert  
of Judea.

A man I never knew treads through every thought,  
waking or sleeping. The sun won't dry his footprints. 10

Listen to that pond.

I'm so cold.

15

## So What Ever Happened to Pilate?

**Historical Note:** The statement of Eusebius in his fourth century *Ecclesiastical History*, contributed to the belief that Pilate committed suicide: "It is proper also, to observe, how it is asserted that this same Pilate, who was governor at our Savior's crucifixion, in the reign of Caius, whose times we are recording, fell into such calamities that he was forced to become his own murderer, and the avenger of his own wickedness. Divine justice, it seems, did not long protract his punishment."

But, Tertullian in his Apology 21, expressed his belief that Pilate was a Christian at heart. There is an apocryphal report of a prayer he is alleged to have uttered before his execution. "And the prefect struck off the head of Pilate; and behold, an angel of the Lord received it. And his wife, Procla, seeing the angel coming and receiving his head, being filled with joy herself also immediately gave up the ghost and was buried with her husband." Note: The Coptic Church reveres Pilate as a martyr with a feast day on June 25.

## For Reflection and Discussion

**Historical note:** Claudia, the wife of Pontius Pilate, was with him when he was procurator of Judaea from AD 26-36. (Josephus says until 37.) Pilate was recalled to Rome through the complaint of Vitellius, legate of Syria. Josephus tells us this was over the mishandling of a situation with the Samaritans, many of whom he ordered killed. Pilate died in Rome.

Claudia is mentioned in the Apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus three times, where she is once called "Procle." She early acquired Procula as a surname.

1. Why do you think Claudia is trying to justify her lack of more direct interference in Pilate's judgment?
2. In what way does she suffer? Can her suffering be called remorse?
3. Can you think of other dream incidents in the Bible that caused men or women to face God or make serious decisions?
4. Charlotte Bronte wrote a poem about Claudia's dream, and plays have been written about her. Why do you think Claudia's story inspires such works?
6. Her dream would not stop tormenting her. The chills it sent through her removed from her any comforts of warmth. How often does she make us aware of physical reactions, both in her bodily awareness and in the surrounding natural world? How do these connect with her spiritual struggle?
7. She met him in a dream — but where did the material come from to supply her dream? Do you think she had heard of Jesus, his words and works?

8. Her life is consumed with making excuses for what she could have done but didn't. What might she have done subsequently instead of remaining trapped in her regrets?

9. Below are lines from Charlotte Bronte's poem, *The Dream of Pilate's Wife*. How is her interpretation similar and different from the Pilate's wife we meet in this program?

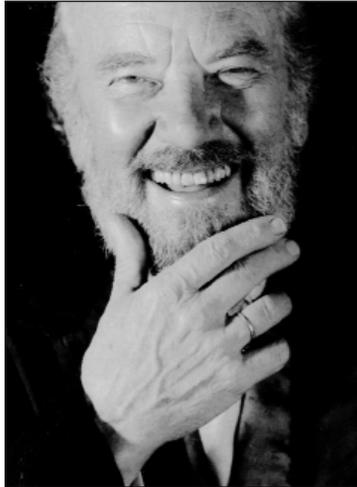
*Pilate, to judge the victim will appear,  
Pass sentence — yield him up to crucify;  
And on that cross the spotless Christ must die.*

*Dreams, then, are true — for thus my vision ran;  
Surely some oracle has been with me,  
The gods have chosen me to reveal their plan,  
To warn an unjust judge of destiny:  
I, slumbering, heard and saw; awake I know,  
Christ's coming death, and Pilate's life of woe.*

*I do not weep for Pilate — who could prove  
Regret for him whose cold and crushing sway  
No prayer can soften, no appeal can move;  
Who tramples hearts as others trample clay,  
Yet with a faltering, an uncertain tread,  
That might stir up reprisal in the dead.*

*Forced to sit by his side and see his deeds;  
Forced to behold that visage, hour by hour,  
In whose gaunt lines, the abhorrent gazer reads  
A triple lust of gold, and blood, and power;  
A soul whose motives, fierce, yet abject, urge  
Rome's servile slave, and Judah's tyrant scourge.  
How can I love, or mourn, or pity him?*

# The Rich Man



*Played by*  
Peter France

*Written by*  
Peter France

*Directed by*  
Norman Stone

*Now a man came up to Jesus and asked, "Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?" . . . Jesus replied. . . . "If you want to enter life, obey the commandments." . . . "All these I have kept," the young man said. "What do I still lack?" Jesus answered, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." When the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he had great wealth.*

Matthew 19:16-22

## The Story

He is a fine, upstanding citizen. It is unthinkable that anyone would consider him anything other than refined, religious, a good man, an educated man, a sophisticated man, a true gentleman.

He has all that most would ever want. But there's always room for more. And what if there is such a bonus extra as "eternal life"? Is it not wise to insure one's well being for whatever there may be?

And this man has one of the unique experiences of history. He gets to see Jesus in the flesh. He gets to ask his own question of Jesus. When they meet, they connect. The Gospels tell us that Jesus loved him. The immediate bond between them was deep and observable. Jesus is gentle with him. He doesn't shatter his self-delusions and religious self-congratulation. He merely takes his religious observance and shows its full implications and what it requires for this particular man to sincerely and truly serve God. And for this man, it means he needs to divest himself of his idolatry — his wealth.

This cost is too great for the rich man. He will have no such advice. He will go on living his life with a conveniently serviceable religion and a quest for all the good things that might be enjoyed. And so we find a man who follows this path of self fulfillment all the way to self-consumption. Most devastating of all is the gradual self-deception. Not only is he blind to how his self-constructed little world is closing in on himself, but he is able to build rationalizations that prevent his ever having to deal directly with the creation he has made of himself.

## Script 2: The Rich Man

Ah yes! There you are. Come in. They said you'd be 1  
arriving. You've come to learn about the "good life"?  
Well, you've come to the right place.

First of all, let me give you a toast! It's from a coun- 5  
try whose people are famous for knowing how to  
enjoy themselves.

"To Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness!" 10

Now I think you'll agree with me that there's not a  
lot of point in having the first without the other two.  
And you can't do a very much with Liberty and the  
pursuit of Happiness unless you've got lots of  
money. 15

I mean, nobody's really got liberty if he has to work  
for a living — and you can't go off pursuing happi-  
ness if you have to hold down a job. 20

So these so called 'God-given inalienable human  
rights' aren't worth a damn unless God gives you the  
cash to enjoy them.

Well, he gave me the cash, and I've been pursuing 25  
happiness for as long as I can remember.

"Happiness," somebody said, "is the accumulation  
of agreeable circumstances." I've spent my time sur-  
rounding myself with things I find agreeable. 30

I've studied art and music and philosophy and food.

You, see, I've spent as much time educating my  
palate as educating my mind. 35

And now I'll let you in on a little secret. Do you 1  
know the best company for drinking? The best com-  
pany for drinking is your own!

Oh, I know people will say, "It's sad to drink alone. 5  
It's dangerous. The first sign of the problem drinker."  
Don't you believe it. It's the only way.

You know why? A fine wine deserves concentration.  
First of all, your eyes must take in its colour. All 10  
wines must be limpid — absolutely transparent.  
Then you have to allow its bouquet to charm your  
nose for a while. . . . Well, you know the ritual.

Great wines are God-given, and I thank God for them. 15

We have a duty, you know, to thank God for the  
pleasures of life. But did you know we have a duty  
— a religious duty — to enjoy them? Did you know  
that? 20

It was one of our Rabbis who said that when you die  
you will have to account to God for every permissi-  
ble pleasure we have left untasted. I think of his  
words every day. I drink to him. 25

There was, of course, that other Rabbi — the one that  
turned me into something of a celebrity. . .

I was young when I met him. Full of life. Keen to try 30  
everything. Enthusiastic — *en theos-tic*. God inspired.

And he could see that. I know because when he saw  
me, he loved me. And I, I felt drawn to him for a  
time. 35

He came along the road that morning — with a great  
crowd — a rabble around him screaming and shout-  
ing and looking for conjuring tricks.

I let them pass. 1

And then suddenly I thought of something I wanted to ask him. So I ran after him and pushed my way through the crowd. Now, I was a bit different. I wasn't blind or deaf or one of your lepers or cripples. 5

I didn't want to be cured of anything. Just the reverse. 10

I was healthy and happy and loving life, and I just wanted it to go on. Forever. So I asked him: "What can I do to make it go on, to be sure of eternal life?"

And he gave me the answer I was expecting from a Rabbi — "Keep the Commandments!" 15

Well, I was overjoyed. Just what I'd always hoped. I was fireproof. 20

"Thank you very much," I said, "That's fine. I've always managed to stay on the right side of them." And then, you know what happened? You wouldn't believe this. He moved the goalposts. He looked me straight in the eye and he said, "Sell all you have, and give to the poor." Well, I was stunned. I mean it wasn't fair. You can't teach children a set of rules to live by and then, when they've managed to keep them all, you tack on a few extra at the end! 25 30

And this business of giving to the poor. What difference would that make to anything at all? "The poor," he said, "are always with you." And they'd still be with us after they'd spent whatever I could give them. And we all know, don't we, what they'd spend it on? Cheap beer and gambling. 35

So I left him and I went back to the good life. And I studied hard how to make it even better.

He wasn't the only Rabbi — I soon found myself another one. Well, he was Greek, and the Greeks taught the world how to live. What he said — his name was Aristippus, and he'd studied with Plato in Athens, so he knew a thing or two about philosophy — what he said was, "Pleasure is good." 1 5

Well, I think we'd all agree with that. But he went on. Logically. The Greeks love logic. He said since pleasure is good, the best life is the one with the most pleasure in it. Which is just what I'd always thought. 10

And then he went on to talk about the importance of sensations. This is fascinating. You see, if you think about it, what we feel is all we really know. You see, I know what this wine tastes like — to me. But I don't know, and I can never know, what it tastes like to you. You see, we're isolated from each other. However much we pretend otherwise. 15 20

And once we come to accept that, we are free to live our lives as individuals and live them more intensely!

(He accidentally spills his wine) 25

Ah yes. . . . The followers of that first Rabbi, the one from Nazareth. I met some of them once, you know, no long after. They formed some sort of commune in Jerusalem to give each other courage, I suppose. And they were trying to do what he told me to do then — selling their goods and giving them to the poor. In fact, most of them were poor, so they were just dividing things among themselves. And they were. . . they were happy. "From each according to his abilities to each according to his needs." 30 35

Of course, when I saw they were happy, I knew they were insane. What a way to found a new world!

Flying in the face of the most basic human instinct. 1

We — all of us — know, don't we, that human beings are animals, and that the basic instinct of any animal is self-preservation. It's in our genes. We can't help it. 5  
 We're genetically programmed to look after number one. We've known that as long as we've known anything. From the very first moment that human beings acquired knowledge. . . . 10

Ah, yes, I was. . . I was going to tell you about food. Food is the same as drink. If you really want to appreciate it, if you really want to do it justice, you must always eat alone. 15

I like to start with a little caviar — just half a teaspoonful on rye bread with a touch of unsalted butter. 20

And with the caviar, a chilled vodka: Stolichnaya, Moskovskaya, Zoubrouvka — depending on your mood. A good stiff shot. Ice cold and inspiring. To Life! 25

I love Life! I love the world! 30

My world!

God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but shall inherit eternal life. He said that. That rabbi from Nazareth. Inherit eternal life. But that's what I asked him for. Is that what I have? 35

My life here seems to go on forever. . . . Did I believe in him, do I believe in him? Can you believe, without knowing you believe. . . ?

To be rich. To be rich. All that matters is to be rich.

Because then you cannot only afford all the things you want, but, more importantly, you can enjoy them without the distractions of other people — alone. To be alone is the only sure way to real self-fulfilment. 1  
 5

And after a time alone you slowly come to realize the most important truth of all.

Now this is a secret from most people because they don't have the money to make the discovery. But I know. And I'm going to tell you about it now. You'll be amazed. 10

First, let me ask you a question. Have you ever dreamed that you were listening to someone speak and you suddenly wake up and find yourself alone? Well, how do you know that when you think you're awake that you're not actually dreaming? 15

You can never know for certain, can you? In fact, remember, you can never know anything for certain except your sensations. 20

And what I have to tell you now, after centuries of concentrating on the one thing that I really know — myself. . . . 25

The great secret is that you don't exist!

That's it! 30

After ages of concentration I have come to realize that the world and all it seems to contain is an illusion, and. . .that  
 I am all there is. 35  
 I am the Singer and the Song.  
 I am the Teller and the Tale.  
 I am the Dreamer and the Dream.  
 I am the Gourmet — and the Feast.

## For Reflection and Discussion

1. He speaks at the beginning of a place where they exalt “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” Does this suggest that the author intends his story as a commentary on American culture?
2. Like Oscar Wilde, he has simple tastes: he is satisfied with nothing but the best. How has the best become for him the worst?
3. He is quick to speak of God. He even speaks with gratitude. But how would you describe what God really means to him? Does he have any interest whatsoever in serving God?
4. Is there any flaw in this man’s idea that we will be judged for not enjoying each permissible pleasure?
5. Why does he prefer to be alone?
8. Notice the changes that take place through the course of the video. Compare the gradual changes that occur on the table, in the countenance and appearance. Contrast where he began with where he ended both physically and philosophically.
9. Samuel Johnson once said, “He who makes a beast of himself gets rid of the pain of being a man.” Does that observation have any relation to this story?
10. How has he seen everyone, everything, including God and others as there for him to use, to advance his pleasure? To what degree has our materialistic and consumer culture shielded us from the awareness of the larger world in need, hunger and pain?
11. In his encounter with Jesus, he did grasp that Jesus loved him (29/34; see Mark 10:22), but he doesn’t tell

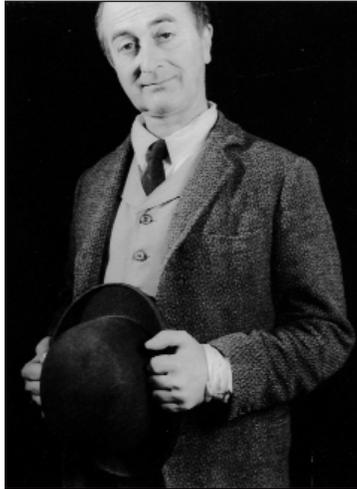
us one additional important detail of what Jesus said. See what he missed at the end of Mark 10:22. (“Then come follow me.”)

### About Peter France

This episode was both written and acted by popular British journalist Peter France. His personal pilgrimage is amazing and helps us see what he brought to the project.

A Yorkshire lad of working class background, he had some Christian training as a boy. In fact, his Sunday School teacher, Ada Hopper, told him that she had claimed him for God. But Peter went on to study at Oxford, where his Christian faith was left behind, and he became a convinced humanist and hedonist. There was nothing beyond this life in his view, so he kept a little suicide kit handy, should he ever feel he’d had enough and wanted to end it all. “Hop the twig” was his strange description of suicide. That time did come. He would go out in grand style. He booked into a London hotel. He would enjoy the best wine, have a final sumptuous meal. First he would go out for a walk. Unexpectedly he bumped into Bill Nicolson, writer of the *Shadowlands* film, who invited Peter to join him for a film preview. He went. Whatever it was he saw — he cannot remember — but it prompted him to put off the suicide. He went home and told his wife. She had become a Christian and pled with him regarding eternity. Peter retorted that she had “moved the goalposts.” (See 30/24). This good woman took action. She persuaded him to accompany her to the island of Patmos (where the Apostle John wrote the book of Revelation). There through study, prayer and reflection, Peter France became a Christian believer.

# The Best Friend



*Played by*  
Tony Robinson

*Written by*  
Tony Robinson

*Directed by*  
Norman Stone

*When Judas, who had betrayed him, saw that Jesus was condemned, he was seized with remorse and returned the thirty silver coins to the chief priests and the elders. "I have sinned," he said, "for I have betrayed innocent blood." "What is that to us?" they replied. "That's your responsibility." So Judas threw the money into the temple and left. Then he went away and hanged himself.*

Matthew 27:3-5

## The Story

It is so easy to think of Judas as the vile traitor who sold out Jesus. Yet it is important to remember that Judas was indeed the one trusted with the treasury of the group and that at the Last Supper he was able to leave without raising suspicions on the part of the other disciples. So have we misunderstood him? Instead of being a betrayer, did he think of himself as saving Jesus from an unwise strategy? Did Judas think he was providing the way for the greatest potential of Jesus to be revealed, where his leadership for national liberation could be set loose?

The script makes some assumptions that may or may not be true, such as Judas' being the nephew of the high priest Caiphias and that he was a spy planted within the Jesus movement. Such suppositions are not necessarily farfetched when we consider that Judas did have contact within the highest level of the Jerusalem religious establishment and was trusted as an agent in bringing about the capture of Jesus. Thus the program explores this man as at one level an organizational operative and at another level an arrogant usurper, confident of his superior insight in shaping the destiny of Jesus and history itself. He expected his true greatness one day would be recognized. He also knew how to survive within the organization. And he was smart enough to recognize when he could no longer survive there. He who was so eager to make the arrangements for Jesus now has to make arrangements for himself. We listen in on his final preparations as the organizational man tidies up all the details.

## Script 3: The Best Friend

There are times when a swift, if slightly shambolic, exit is the most appropriate course of action. That's certainly true. 1

If one hasn't learned that lesson after twenty-seven years in the department, one has learnt remarkably little. Lesson Two — when the going becomes unpleasant, they'll deny all knowledge of you. So hold onto the paperwork. 5

Lesson Three — Paperwork? What paperwork? I dunno wot you're talking about, guv! 10

The department, eh. Had I known then what I know now, would I still have embarked on the same course of action? Who can tell? 15

Their first epistle to me: From the Department of Internal Affairs. . . . Blah! Blah! Blah! "Your uncle has recommended you to us as a patriotic and bright young man." How thoughtful of you, uncle. "Should you be interested in applying for a vacancy. . . ." 20

Oh yes, m'lords, I'm very patriotic. 25

And yes, my lords, I will sacrifice my career and, if necessary, my life for you. I will tear my personality to shreds and scatter the pieces to the four winds for you, and I'll betray my comrades without the slightest scruple for you. . . . 30

. . . because although I'm utterly loyal to my country, m'lords, I would rather wait til the day after tomorrow to see a free state through the ballot box than have it set back a thousand years by a handful of knife-weilding zealot fanatics, m'lords. 35

All said with a completely straight face. I was good. . . 1  
even way back then. I was very, very good.

So they swallowed it hook, line and sinker. "A well-oiled machine," it said in my staff appraisal. "Loyal, solitary, and ruthless," which is how I found myself in the Golan. 5

"From the Department of Internal Affairs.  
To Yehuda Bar-simon. 10  
Mission — Information and strategic analysis of  
zealot insurrectionists.  
Cover — A dissident theological student from  
Jerusalem" (which I was anyway, so that didn't  
require a great deal of imagination). 15

And it was there that I acquired the name  
"Daggerhand." I have to admit, at first I found it a  
little embarrassing. I'd not eliminated a single living  
creature in those days. Still, I earned the appellation 20  
soon enough.

Attacks on army outposts, punishment beatings. I  
told my new comrades I was working for Rome, of  
course. They weren't unduly surprised. Half the free- 25  
dom fighters in Palestine were double agents in those  
days. We used to lie awake at night dreaming up the  
next piece of intelligence to feed the Romans —  
which I duly did. Along with the occasional minor  
betrayal of a genuine nature in order to maintain my 30  
credibility. They'd no strategy of course. They were  
hopelessly, theatrically violent. No leadership. And  
eventually the inevitable occurred. The department  
decided they should be closed down. I made the nec-  
essary arrangements and. . . . Listening to the curses 35  
of one's crucified comrades as one rides past them in  
a Roman column is not an experience I'd recommend.

"Mission — Information and assessment of threat

posed by Rabbi Jesus Bar-Joseph, a.k.a. Jesus Christ. 1  
Cover — An accounting clerk from Hebron.”  
Just another gaggle of losers to infiltrate. As usual it  
was child’s play. Put my hand up at my first meet-  
ing, and they made me treasurer. What a bunch of 5  
dunderheads! — all shouting, squabbling, doing each  
other down. What in God’s name am I doing here I  
thought. Then I heard his voice behind me. “Yehuda  
Daggerhand!” he said. Except, of course, he said it in  
Aramaic. “Judas Iscariot!” It was the voice of a coun- 10  
try bumpkin — but. . .

. . .when I turned around. . . .

I saw him. I mean, I saw him. Not Daggerhand the 15  
revolutionary, not Iscariot the accountant, nor any of  
the other countless masks I’d worn so effortlessly for  
the last twenty whatever years until there was noth-  
ing left but mask. I mean, I saw him. I saw him  
because he saw me. He threw a lifeline into the cen- 20  
ter of my being, and I swallowed it hook, line, sinker,  
fishing rod, and fishing-boat.

I’d only ever seen one man like him. My uncle —  
he’s brilliant, believe me, quite brilliant! But this man 25  
shone. I knew we could turn him (and still it takes  
my breath away to say it) into the leader every Jew  
had dreamt about since the exile in Babylon. United  
under this beautiful, intelligent, profound. . . beauti-  
ful man, I knew we could drive the Romans into the 30  
sea and out of our country forever. This man was my  
dream made flesh.

And not only did I know it, I knew he knew it, too.  
And he smiled at me — and we kissed each other,  
we did! We’d met, what, two minutes previously, but 35  
already we loved each other so much.

And what a time we had. I tightened up security, of  
course, built up a propaganda machine, put financial

systems in place. We were generating so much 1  
money! Some days I was feeding five thousand peo-  
ple!

And him? He was magnificent. The most splendid 5  
concepts of our greatest philosophers came pouring  
out of him as folksy little stories even the village  
idiot would understand. Everything about him  
seemed so new! — New kingdom! New life! New  
beginning! Word even went round he could heal the 10  
sick and the dead! — a story I refused, of course,  
either to confirm or deny. The crowds flocked to him.

Naturally I informed my uncle. I wrote to him week-  
ly anyway — in code. That was the whole point, of 15  
course. That’s why he’d had me placed in the depart-  
ment in the first place. So our leadership in  
Jerusalem would know what every Roman and  
zealot and every hedge-preacher in Palestine was  
thinking. But now I wrote to him daily. Twice daily. 20  
If I could convince him, if I could persuade him to  
persuade our faint-hearted politicians in Jerusalem  
that with this man we had the chance of a lifetime to  
mobilise our people against the Romans; if I could  
do that. . . . 25

I noticed it before anyone else — the change in him.  
The first time he went away I thought, Fine, he’s tired;  
let him rest for a few days. But then he disappeared 30  
again. And again. And when he came back he’d  
become self-obsessed, morbid — so morbid.  
Consumed by images of his own death. Soon there  
weren’t crowds anymore. Just a handful of the old  
die-hards. Thomas, Simon Peter, John (God, he hated  
me). 35

Then he left again, and we all agreed, which was a  
triumph in itself, that we must confront him. I knew  
where he was of course. The moment his behavior

had become questionable I'd had him put under surveillance. In Bethany. A small ultra-religious sect. Mostly women. Bees to the honeypot. 1

The moment we got there everything fell into place. One of the women was pouring perfume — expensive perfume — over him, anointing him. He wasn't just their leader. To them, he was a god! In Bethany of all places. Some of us upbraided him for the expense, and idolatry. But it was no use. We were suddenly two factions. Him, the women, John of course, and the rest of us. 5 10

Then things got worse. He rode into Jerusalem like a revolutionary general. He started a riot at the temple. Good populist stuff. But it was too soon. He got no support. He was signing his death warrant. The Romans tolerate a degree of dissidence. But there is a line — and he crossed it. When the department sent notification that he had to be closed down, I felt nothing. It was all too predictable. 15 20

And yet, for the first time in my entire career, this loyal, ruthless, well-oiled machine failed to obey the department's orders. New instructions arrived every day. Still I ignored them. And all the time he was goading them — talking quite openly about destroying the temple. Blatant sedition. I wouldn't let him engineer his own death. I would not. I had to let him meet with his own kind. Brilliant nationalist thinkers who'd refocus him. I'd arrange a meeting between him and my uncle. But would he attend? He had to attend! 25 30

We were having supper, when suddenly out of the blue he said, "You know, one of you will hand me over." They went berserk, of course, swearing undying loyalty. 35

And in the midst of this cacophony, he told me what to do. I said "Is it me?" And he smiled at me and answered, "You said it!" He wanted me, the only one of his monkeys he truly trusted, to take control of his destiny. 1 5

So I went to my uncle Caiphas and put it to him. And he said, "Fine. I'll lock myself in a room with him and hammer something out." I said "Good! Start the revolution. Get him out of the country. Whatever you think's best. You'll love him. You're two of a kind." 10

And the next evening we took him in. There was a little foolishness from the diehards, but nothing we couldn't handle. And I was so happy for him. At last things were going to start moving for him. My uncle's people must have thought we were fanatics. There he was being pulled off the street by a plain-clothes hit squad, and we were both smiling and tears were running down our faces, and we kissed just as we had on the first day we met. God, I loved him! 15 20

I'm ready now. 25

I was betrayed, of course. Profoundly betrayed. Who knows whether God can ever forgive such a betrayal.

I went to my uncle. He wouldn't see me. His people told me he'd handed him over to the Roman security police. 30

I went to the diehards. They wouldn't see me either..

So now I'm alone. 35

Did I do the right thing? If he'd been a god, he could have told me. He could have risen from the dead and said "Judas Iscariot, my best friend, you did

what I wanted." But as it is. . . 1

I've resigned from the department, but of course you can't resign. Their rumor machine will lumber into action. I'm a thief and a coward, they'll say. A thief. I did it for the money. I dare say John'll say much the same thing. Then I'll be the subject of a beautifully engineered accident. . . . Frankly I'd rather not give them the satisfaction. I think I'll go now. 5

10

There are times when a swift if slightly shambolic exit is the most appropriate course of action.

### For Reflection and Discussion

**Historical note:** At 39/18 there is a reference to Judas as "daggerhand." The Encyclopedia Britannica says Iscariot was probably a corruption of the Latin *sicarius* ("murderer" or "assassin") rather than a family name, "suggesting that he would have belonged to the Sicarii, the most radical Jewish group," some of whom were terrorists. Judas is the Greek form of Judah, and Iscariot means that this member of the original twelve Apostles was from Kerioth .

1. Judas Iscariot, talks to us as if he were a bureaucratic scoundrel. He is a very aware of his ability to fit his morals to a situation. Do you think the real Judas was anything like this character?
2. Does he realize the tremendous consequence of his actions on anything beyond himself?
3. Consider the paradox. In the script Judas sought to move things along to effect the great revolution. How did his actions actually help toward those very ends but in a very different way than he could have ever imagined?

4. Judas himself felt betrayed. (43/26-27) He wondered if the sin against him could be forgiven. Do you sense any note of repentance in him? What about remorse? What is the difference? Discuss betrayal. When it comes to our own convenience and interests are we ever tempted to bypass the needs of even a best friend for our own interests.

5. Dorothy L. Sayers wrote a poem in which the Judas walks to Hades spurned by other deceased souls until Jesus appears and takes him by the hand to the gates. Could Jesus have even forgiven Judas?

6. If Jesus had only listened to him. Judas knew what should be done. He worked with the big guys, brought them what they wanted, but then somehow things went wrong. From both sides. He had cooperated but that wouldn't matter. He could fix things but neither side would see. So there was only one choice ahead that Judas could see. Where was he wrong in his analysis?

7. He is convinced John hates him? (See 41/35; 44/7) Why do you think? Note references to Judas in the Gospel of John. (John 12:4-6; 13:26-27) Was John the one disciple who perhaps most clearly saw through him?

8. He saw Jesus as a savior, but what kind of savior? What is the difference between the savior Judas sought and the one set forth in the New Testament?

9. He was a man with many masks, he acknowledges it. So does that have anything to do with his use of the strange word "shambolic?" 38/1; 44/11

# The Mourner



*Played by*  
Eileen Atkins

*Written by*  
Murray Watts

*Directed by*  
Norman Stone

*Soon afterward, Jesus went to a town called Nain. . . . As he approached the town gate, a dead person was being carried out—the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the town was with her. When the Lord saw her, his heart went out to her and he said, “Don’t cry.” Then he went up and touched the coffin, and those carrying it stood still. He said, “Young man, I say to you, get up!” The dead man sat up and began to talk, and Jesus gave him back to his mother.*

Luke 7:11-15

## The Story

This can be a difficult program in terms of the content itself and how we respond to it. First, about the content: the beautiful story of the widow of Nain is extended and this same woman is seen progressing through a bitter deterioration. This is one program where we had strong disagreement on the co-production team. Frankly, we were not keen on this one. (Hey, you don’t win them all in that other madhouse called TV co-production.) But the interest was strong by some to give a voice to those who had been religious, thought they had followed God, yet felt utterly betrayed by God when tragedy struck and shattered their world through the loss of a loved one. How could a loving God do such a thing to them?

The widow of Nain did receive a dead son back to life. But presumably he died sometime later, and the conjecture that he died during the mother’s lifetime, not long after he was revived, offers the opportunity to explore the bitterness that grief can produce. In this story we meet a woman determined to inflict her sorrow on others. The joy of her life has been taken, so now her only pleasure is in inflicting pain. For her seething is her only soothing. The center of her world is dislodged. She will do all she can to dislodge the tranquillity of everyone else’s world with whom she comes in contact. Most of all she seeks revenge on the man who set her up so cruelly by raising her dead son, only to let him die later. So she finds Jesus in Jerusalem at the cross. Ah, it is clear that he is no good. He is a criminal! And she can only bemoan the fact that there is nothing he can do for her now.

## Script 4: The Mourner

In winter, the flowers are violet. Have you seen them  
shivering on their stalks in the cold like bells? 1

Perhaps you're not interested in flowers. You know,  
the flowers. . .of the mandrake. 5

My husband was so patient. He did not shout at me  
or accuse me, or say, "Why?" even. After all those  
years, the long, the long years, the emptiness, he  
would still say, "Let's hope. Let's hope. Let's love  
with expectation." That was his word. But there was  
no baby. 10

Oh. . .I ate the powdered root of the mandrake. I had  
the roots. . .like they did, in those days, in the coun-  
try, in my village, oh, I had. . .potions. . . 15

. . .everything that was on offer. And then. . .the time  
came. . .the day. . .the monthly time and. . . 20

One winter, I went out in the morning, early, half-  
light, mist, a sort of dawn that wouldn't come. And I  
knelt down, and I prayed to God, to let me have  
just. . .one. . .I only wanted one. . .one little. . .one  
baby. . . . 25

Then I saw the flowers, the mandrake flowers, shift-  
ing in the wind, in the darkness, above the cold  
earth...so light, on their long stalks. They were rid-  
ing over the earth and ringing out joy. Bells ringing. I  
felt such peace. I felt such peace that morning, in the  
blueness, and the cold. It was not potions I needed; it  
was peace. I came home and my husband was still in  
bed. . .and. . .we made love, in expectation, and. . .I  
was with child. . .he was given to me. . . . 35

This is his picture. We kept it in here. This tiny one,  
in the round frame, because it made my husband  
laugh and he knew it made me happy. 1

My husband. He died. When. . .the little one. . .was  
five. 5

He died. So suddenly. Peaceful, sudden.

Do they go together? 10

He died the day before the boy's birthday, his fifth  
birthday.

Memories. 15

It was a fever, 12 years later. My son, he came home,  
and in one day, one day, in one hour it was, he came  
home and in one single hour. 20

Well that's how it is. He didn't suffer. He didn't suf-  
fer. . . . He's at peace — isn't that what you would  
say? At peace? They were all saying that, even as  
they cried with me, and they wept, all the village,  
they knew what this meant. . .what he was. . .to  
me. . .what he was. . .and. . . . 25

They lifted him. . .and placed him. . .so gently, into  
the coffin. It was made of acacia wood, best I could  
afford. . . . 30

Well, I wanted the best.

I could tell you something. Sit down. I could tell you  
something you would not believe. Something that  
could not happen. But it happened. It happened. 35

I was walking, they were carrying him in the coffin,  
all the way out of the city gates. They were all there,

the village, and the weeping was like. . .howling. No 1  
one was being strong or brave or sensible, thank  
God, dear God, no one was pretending. Tears were  
flowing down my face, all down my dress, down on  
my shoes. And as we came out of the gates, the bur- 5  
ial place. . .a man. . .this. . .great, powerful looking  
man. . .like some, I don't know. . .he looked like a  
builder. I hadn't seen him before. . .his face, his  
face. . .he looked at me. He looked at me. He said,  
"Don't cry." He said. . .Oh. He was weeping too. 10  
That was the thing, he. . .the stranger from. . .down  
the hills. . .we'd never seen him before, until that  
day. . .and there he was, gazing at me in tears. . .  
Ohhh. . . the way he said that. . ."Don't cry. . ."

And then he turned and he touched the coffin...and  
said in a loud voice, "Young man, I tell you. Rise."

"Rise," he said. "Rise." And the boy breathed.

Yes! The boy breathed. All the region, the whole vil- 20  
lage, all of Nain, everywhere for miles, and miles,  
around they spoke of this. They called him a  
prophet. A man from God. Some called him. . .His  
followers. . .he had many. . .they called him. . ."the 25  
chosen one."

My son followed. Yes, he went, along with the  
crowd. My son, eighteen years old. . .my man. . .he 30  
went, like the fishermen and the labourers, went  
back to school at the feet of. . .the master.

He kept saying he heard music in that man. He  
heard the song. I sat and listened and I heard it too.  
He touched hearts. He raised souls, spirits that were 35  
dead, hearts that were cold, old, young, sad, broken,  
cruelly disappointed, forsaken, lost souls. . .he raised  
them. . .he gave them. . .he gave hope, with every  
word, and touch, and laugh.

We stood on the edge. It really. . .you know, I really. . . 1  
I came to believe. . .I was utterly convinced we stood  
on the edge of. . .paradise. We saw things.

I think. . .we saw. . .love, a greater love than we'd 5  
ever known. Oh my son was on fire with love. . .that  
man's love. God's love.

And that was when. . .the rock. . .fell down, from the  
ledge, the highest ledge in the quarry. 10

It fell, it cracked off the ledge, and brought down the  
roots of trees, clods of earth, birds scattering, and the  
huge rough whiteness, that buried him completely.

Buried him. 15

My son died twice in the space of one year.

At night I wandered through the streets looking for 20  
the man, the chosen one. I kept imagining that he  
would step out of the shadows, step out of some  
archway, and his voice would sing out. . ."Go home.  
Your son. . .is well. . .he is, it is. . .well."

Yes, I had my crazy dream. You can allow me that. I  
think it was understandable. . . . 25

Haven't you stood at windows? Haven't you lis- 30  
tened, impossibly, for the footfall, the cry, the laugh,  
the tone of voice? Haven't you looked at crowds and  
seen a face? Haven't you behaved ridiculously and  
fraudulently with your own soul and said "No" to  
death? No! Oh, I can see. . .you have.

Oh, now you are weeping. Forgive me. I can be heart- 35  
less. I can be cruel. It's infectious — cruelty — did  
you know that? Oh, I can stir up such sorrow if I  
want to.

And I do, I do want to. 1

I went to Jerusalem looking for him, but I didn't go looking for miracles. I searched him out because I wanted to accuse him, rail at him. I wanted to hurt him so badly. I wanted to make him bleed this time. I wanted to break that man. I wanted to smash him down, down. I wanted to break his bones. I wanted to hit, hit, hit, bite, and scratch him. I wanted to scream and spit in his face. Was that bad? Was that bad? Do we have to be meek? Do we have to smile in our torment? Is that it? 10

I found him on the Friday. He was . . . high up, on the rubbish tip. He was hanging up there smashed on a cross. You could not recognize his face from the beating. He was a criminal, you see. A fraud. They judged him to be. . . a fraud, after all. Dangerous. A deceiver. 15

What could he do up there? Nothing. Nothing at all. He could do nothing. . . for me. Nothing. 20

I came back, immediately, that very night. I set off and stayed in some old filthy. . . backwater. . . somewhere, some old. . . inn in the hills. . . and in the darkness of that. . . dump of a place, where camels were snorting, and there were soldiers. . . oh, swearing and spitting into the fire. . . in the darkness, in the chaos. . . I could. . . I don't know. . . something like, just a thought, not an actual sound, just a whisper of something said, "Wait. Wait and see." 25

Wait. 30

I didn't go out there. No, I didn't go. You can't blame me, can you? Would you have gone running after such a dream? No, I don't think so. 35

We've done our running, haven't we? Chasing the wind, I think we've done that. 1

Flowers on the wind, like bells, violet flowers on their thin stalks waving. Promising what? You tell me, you tell me. 5

## For Reflection and Discussion

1. The author has taken the liberty of pretending that the grateful widow of Nain has turned against Jesus because her boy is later killed in an accident. Producer Norman Stone offers his comments on page 12. Consider his explanation of those who believe in a "Magician god."
2. We are led to believe that this is a very selfish woman. Does she want her son restored for his sake or for hers?
3. Trace the several stages of development in the woman's relationship with God. What kind of God do you think she imagines? What kind of God will she accept and what kind will she refuse?
4. The woman was overcome with joy when her son was restored to her. She claimed to have experienced love firsthand — "God's love" (51/5-7). So how could she have turned so vehemently against Jesus when her boy later was taken from her?
5. Can you think of cases in which God has given a special blessing and then later, when things go wrong, we forget His goodness?
6. Compare the Mourner's reaction to the loss of her son, with the agonizing struggle of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22:41-43).

7. The widow is clearly angry (52/5-12). What is a healthy expression of anger? When does it become self-consuming?

8. Do you feel manipulated by her as a viewer?

9. One of the most revealing lines is “he could do nothing for me” (52/22). The irony is that in terms of Jesus self understanding and the teaching of his followers ever since, he was doing the greatest thing that could be done for her and everyone at that very time. (See for example 2 Corinthians 3:5; 5:18-19; Ephesians 5:2; Hebrews 10:10.)

10. Here are some lines in the script that did make the final edit. Do these words of the widow shed any further light on how she looked at Jesus? (Note: They appeared after line 52/10.) She says: *I wanted to seize him and tell him that, and tell him that his sorrow and gentle face, his laughter and his touch, were so cruel, and so empty, now, now. . . so empty and so. . . its dangerous to have. . . trust. Don't you agree? Trust is a murderer!*

11. What do you think she meant by “trust is a murderer”?

12. Did you catch any echoes of Mary the mother of Jesus, and Bethlehem at 52/26-28?

13. If this woman was your friend or neighbor, how would you seek to go about comforting her?

## Special Madhouse Trivia Quiz

(answers below)

1. One of the programs in this series was filmed using only one camera shot for the entire program. Which program was it?

2. This series reunited a team that made another co-production with the BBC back in the 1980's. It was called *Shadowlands* and was based on the life of C. S. Lewis. It was also directed by Norman Stone and co-produced by American company Gateway Films/Vision Video. This TV drama inspired a stage play and a full length feature film. That production won a first prize International Emmy as Best Drama in 1986. Two of the Madhouse actors were the leads in the BBC *Shadowlands*.

• Playing the role of C. S. Lewis in that production was

- a. Peter France (The Rich Man)
- b. Tony Robinson (The Best Friend)
- c. Joss Ackland (Barabbas)
- d. James Cosmo (The Centurion)
- d. Jonathan Pryce (The Thief)

• Playing the role of Joy Davidman, the wife of Lewis, was

- a. Claire Bloom (Pilate's Wife)
- b. Eileen Atkins (The Mourner)
- c. Helen Baxendale (The Servant Girl)

3. The Madhouse location for filming was

- a. The Presidential Retreat at Camp David
- b. Atherton House, Dumbarton
- c. House of Bedlam in England
- d. Library at Wheaton College, Illinois

**Answers**  
(1) The Servant Girl, with Helen Baxendale is one continuous camera shot.  
(2) Joss Ackland and Claire Bloom  
(3) b — See credits. The location is near Glasgow, Scotland.

# The Servant Girl



*Played by*  
Helen Baxendale

*Written by*  
Anne Marie de Mambro

*Directed by*  
David Hayman

*A servant girl saw him seated there in the fire-light. She looked closely at him and said, "This man was with him." But he denied it. "Woman, I don't know him," he said. . . . About an hour later another asserted, "Certainly this fellow was with him, for he is a Galilean." Peter replied, "Man, I don't know what you're talking about!" Just as he was speaking, the rooster crowed. The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him: "Before the rooster crows today, you will disown me three times." And he went outside and wept bitterly.*

Luke 22:56-62

## The Story

She never had much. She didn't expect much. She worked hard. Her young beauty made her a likely target to be taken advantage of. She was. She just assumed that "that's the way men are."

So even though she was used, and many might say even "abused," she was a survivor and knew how to make the most of it. She happened to be a bystander at one of history's greatest moments, and the role and comments of this unnamed working girl were even preserved for posterity in Scripture. For she who knew men so well, was able to spot one who was clearly out of place that cold night in the courtyard when they were warming their hands by the fire while Jesus was being tried. She accused Peter of being one of his associates. He denied it. She saw the reaction when he denied the third time and the cock crowed. The Gospels tell us the eyes of Jesus locked with Peter's, so it is conceivable his eyes also met hers that night and in one look told her things that she had never heard before, nor dared to believe. She encourages us to explore a mystery few dare touch — what was this attractiveness of Jesus to women that led some to even fall at his feet and wash them in public with their hair? Biblical studies in recent years have discovered the incredible role of women in the Gospels and the dignity given to them by Jesus that transcended the cultural norms of the day. This program and this simple girl help us consider why countless women have so willingly given their lives in the service of the man from Galilee. The one in our story didn't, but she never stopped wondering if she should have.

## Script 5: The Servant Girl

Come on, light. Always was good at lighting fires, 1  
me.

There's a good wind up today. I like the wind up, 5  
me.

When I say I like the wind up me, I don't mean I like 10  
the wind up ME. I mean. . .you know. . .me, myself,  
personally speaking, I like the wind up. . .oh, never  
mind. Just me, having a bit of a joke. Not a lot to  
laugh about in here I can tell you. Nothing to beat it.  
Sharing a joke with your mates, all laughing together  
at the same thing. Laughing till your belly hurts and  
the tears stream down your face. I miss that.  
The wind up me. That's a good one. 15  
All right?

Some poor souls in here. Oh I could tell you some 20  
stories. See that man over there. With the watch.  
Well, hey. . . . No, it's not fair. They might be nutters,  
but they deserve their privacy, don't they?

I'll put it this way. I found this in one of the men's 25  
bedrooms. Under his pillow. Sheets rumped up like  
they've been going at it all night. Thing is, it's not  
allowed. Not in here. But then, where's the harm in  
it, eh? I mean, all men have their appetites. I should  
know.

Not as if I haven't had me moments. When I was 30  
younger. Before I came in here.

Like that first time with Malchy. I'd just started work 35  
at this posh house. Not a job exactly. Just sort of  
hung around, making myself useful, and they sort of

got used to me. Gave me things to do. There were 1  
always a lot of men about — servants, stablehands,  
and soldiers sometimes, coming and going. Malchy  
was just a casual labourer, but he had these aspira- 5  
tions — aspirations — to be a bodyguard. Had the  
build for it too. Anyway, this day the boss was hav-  
ing some big dinner for his lawyer pals, and the cook  
wanted someone to kill one of the cockerels. I got in  
quick; I said, "I'll do it." Thing was, I'd never done it  
before. You're supposed to wring their necks. 10

But you got to catch them first. Well, that bleeding 15  
cockerel gave me a run for my money, I can tell you.  
Screeching and squawking, scattering all the hens. I  
tripped over one of them, knocked over this big bar-  
rel of water and landed right in it. And I could hear  
this man laughing. Watching me. Slipping and slid-  
ing, the mud between my toes, splashing up my  
dress. So I jumps up, grabs the cockerel round the  
throat. But it's struggling for its life, scratching me, 20  
ripping my dress with its claws. And then I hear this  
laughing in my ear and Malchy's there. He takes the  
bird. A quick *crrkkk*, and it's over. "Thanks," I said. I  
could feel his eyes on me. On my feet, my legs, my  
ripped dress. "You're all wet," he said. And I smiled. 25  
He nods to behind the henhouse, "It won't take min-  
utes." And he was right.

When it was over he slapped my bum and said, 30  
"Good girl." I liked that. "Good Girl."

We used to meet regular behind the henhouse after  
that. But this day I'm waiting and waiting and no  
Malchy. Then I hear these footsteps crunching on the  
corn I'd just thrown down for the hens. But it wasn't 35  
him. Turns out it was his cousin, Josh. He gives me  
the once-over with his eyes and he says, "Malchy  
sent me, says you'd be nice to me." He seemed like a  
decent enough bloke. So I thought, why not. . . .

He had a lot of cousins, did Malchy. 1

But he was always my favorite — Malchus. I used to listen out for anything that was going on. Like the High Priest is having dinner with so-and-so tonight. Sometimes he'd thank me and say, "Good girl." 5

I could have seen us together. Me and Malchy. Me washing his shirts, cooking his dinner, cleaning his boots. . . . 10

But I think maybe he was married.

Because after a while he started to stay away from me. Couldn't look me in the eye — not that he ever really did. If I could just find a way to get back in with him. Be his good girl again. 15

So I really kept my eyes open, hanging round the kitchens, listening in. And from what I could gather there was some bloke, some troublemaker from up North, calling himself a prophet or something. And Caiaphas, the high priest, he was just waiting for him to put a foot wrong so he could arrest him. 20

Now this day, I'm walking home from the fruit market when I see this big crowd gathered. I tried to squeeze in best I could, but nobody was giving an inch. I could just make out this man, sitting on a pile of stones, talking. Picking up some dust and letting it run through his fingers. And there were these men standing beside him, watching, sort of protective. I reckon it must have been him, the one Caiaphas was after. If I could just manage to hear what he was saying, I really would have something to pass on to Malchy. But I was too far away. Pity that. 25 30 35

Then this night. . . it all happened very fast. There had been some big commotion earlier on. Men riding

out with swords and torches — all Caiaphas' men — even Malchy. I hung about, lighting the fires in the courtyard. Always was good at lighting fires, me. Then I heard them — the horses' hooves and the yells. 1 5

They'd picked him up, the Prophet-guy, bringing him to the High Priest for questioning. I never saw the courtyard so full of people. The horses were sweating. The men were angry. Someone had been hurt. Not Malchy. Please, not Malchy. I'm looking round, trying to find him, searching the men's faces. Then I saw this man, a big fellow, wild-looking, warming his hands by the fire. Big red hands. Cuts and calluses. Like a fisherman's. There was something about him. . . . "Hold on," I said, "Didn't I see you the other day. With that prophet-guy?" "Not me," he mumbles. And he moves away. I was getting more coals for the fires, and I saw him again. I goes right up to him. I says, "It's you, definitely. You're one of them." 10 15 20

He shuffles about. "I don't know what you're talking about. I've never seen him before tonight." I could feel my heart beating. It was his accent. Not from round here. From up north, I'd say. Now this was exciting. Someone would thank me for this, surely. But I was missing my chance. By now other people had heard me, and the word was going round. 25

Then I saw Josh, standing over by the trough, splashing water on his head. I had to tell him before he heard it from someone else. "Josh," I said, "that man over there. . . ." 30

Josh says, "Yeh, he's one of them all right." "Did I do well, Josh?" I says. But he shoves me away, heads for the guy. "You!" he shouts. The man turns away, tries to cover his face with his hand. But by now, Josh is right up to him. "You're one of them, aren't you?" 35

The man shakes his head. "Liar! You were with him tonight when we picked him up. In fact I'm sure it was you that —" 1

"I wasn't there. As God is my witness I don't even know him." 5

And then. . .and then. . .it went all quiet. Maybe because the man screamed so loud, all that could follow was silence. And in the silence a cockerel 10  
crowed. And the man's whole body tenses up, and the saddest look comes over his face. The saddest look you've ever seen.

I glanced at Josh; his face was black with anger. I saw him pull out a knife — I grab his arm, he drops the knife. "No, Josh!" He pushes me away so roughly I fall to the ground, and he kicks me. "Whore!" he says. 15

And then the noise goes up again. The crowd outside, banging and yelling. I'm lying on the ground, and I see these feet — a man's feet — bare, bleeding, chained, the hem of his gown, dirty and tattered. I looks up, and I see his hands tied behind his back. A guard on either side. But he stopped in front of the fisherman. I couldn't see his face but I could see the fisherman's. And the fisherman, he looks at the man, with all that terrible sadness in his big rough face, and then the cock crowed again and. . .he's crying, 20  
tears running down his face. And he runs, pushing his way through the crowd, and he disappears. Maybe Josh tried to chase him, I don't know, because. . .because the strangest thing happened next. Everything seemed to go silent. I thought I felt a hand helping me off the ground, gentle-like, and I found myself looking into the eyes of the prisoner. 25  
And he didn't look away. Never before — or since — has any man looked into my eyes — I mean, right 30

into my eyes. I couldn't even tell you what he looked like — but those eyes — the clearest eyes you ever saw. Looking into mine. And it was as if he knew me. Everything about me. Things I didn't know myself or couldn't bear to remember. And it was all all right. Somehow it was all all right. He was looking in my eyes, and it was like his voice was strumming at my soul. And it said, "You are beautiful. In my eyes you are precious." 1  
5  
10

Well, I felt a shiver going through me. My insides shaking. You know when the hairs on the back of your neck stand up. . . . 10

Like he was looking into some dark little cage and saying "Be free. Leave. . . Live." I could walk away. Away from all the mess and rubbish I had made of my life. I could fly. But I didn't. Maybe it was safer in the cage, I don't know. All I know is. . .I looked away. 15  
20

Then the noise starts up again and they're shoving him. "Call yourself a prophet! Well, prophesy now, idiot!" And they're pulling him away. But I couldn't move. I'm standing there, looking round for something. . .anything. . . . And then I saw him. 25

Malchus. Sitting at the side of the road, clutching the side of his head with his hand, his fingers covered in blood. 30

Right state he was in, too. Said someone had cut off his ear when they were arresting that prophet guy. I says, "No, Malchy you've got two ears. Look, one, two." But there was no getting through to him. 35  
Stupid beggar.

But it was never the same with me and Malchy after that.

They crucified him, you know. Not Malchy. Him. 1  
The prophet-guy. Him. A lot of people went to look,  
but not me. Nothing to do with me, was it?

I sometimes think I imagined that look. I probably 5  
did. But sometimes I think — what if I didn't? What if  
I could have been beautiful. . .precious. . .to someone.

No good thinking like that, eh? Go mad if you think 10  
like that. I should know.

### For Reflection and Discussion

1. First of all, did you notice anything unusual or interesting about the way this episode was shot? (It was all filmed in one continuous shot.)
2. The servant girl is a “downstairs” resident. She is not one of the privileged who live “upstairs,” but her life, too, was touched by Jesus. What do we see in the Gospels about the special attention given by Jesus to both “the poor” and the “poor in spirit.” Was his approach to the rich and powerful any different?
3. The servant girl certainly liked the attention of men, but she remembers vividly the look of Jesus into her eyes that seemed to say “Be free” (63/16). She thinks it may be “safer in the cage” (63/19). What did she mean? What was her cage? What did she miss?
4. There is a hint that this girl may have witnessed another event in the life of Jesus that involved another woman. See lines at 60/26-36. The suggestion is that the event alluded to may have been the woman taken in adultery in John 8:3-11. If she had witnessed this event, even if she had not heard all the words, what would she have taken away from it, and what would she have thought of Jesus?

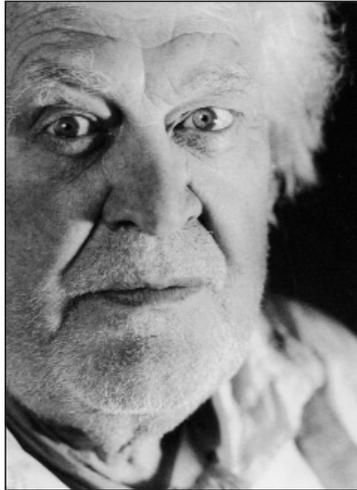
5. Sure she had many men in her life. There wasn't much of a future for a servant girl. She got to meet so many men and so intimately, that she was sure that she knew what they were really like. But then in that moment one looked at her, and she knew instantly he was different — so different that the moment seem to promise that she could be different, too. She wondered later if it was all in her imagination. What would you say to her?

6. She often refers to Malchi. That would be Malchus, servant to High Priest. He did have his ear cut off as is said at 63/32. All four gospels refer to the event (Matthew 26:53-54; Mark 14:47; Luke 22:49-51; and the one that specifically names Peter as culprit is John 18:10). The ear was restored. One scholar suggests that it may have been just one last attempt for Jesus to reach out to the high priest. Why do you think things were never the same afterwards between the girl and Malchi? (63/38)

7. Jesus had a profound impact upon women repeatedly in the Gospels. See, for example, the incidents in Luke 8:37-45; 9:43-48; John 4:7-39; John 12:1-3). How did these various women see Jesus? How did he make them feel? How does your answer to the preceding question differ from how men typically saw and responded to him?

8. What was it that made her feel beautiful, accepted? (63/8-16)

# Barabbas



*Played by*  
Joss Ackland

*Written by*  
Arnold Wesker

*Directed by*  
Guy Slater

*With one voice they cried out, "Away with this man! Release Barabbas to us!" (Barabbas had been thrown into prison for an insurrection in the city and for murder.) Wanting to release Jesus, Pilate appealed to them again. . . . But with loud shouts they insistently demanded that he be crucified, and their shouts prevailed. So Pilate decided to grant their demand. He released the man who had been thrown into prison for insurrection and murder, the one they asked for, and surrendered Jesus to their will.*

Luke 23:18-25

## The Story

He was one of the radicals. They come and go. They are the moral ones, the gifted ones, those who can see the injustice in the world. They give a voice for the downtrodden and oppressed. They feel their pain. And they know what needs to be done. And they know that those in power are incapable of doing what needs to be done, and they need to be removed. They are sustained by an unshakable spirit of self-righteousness. They have no doubts. There are no ambiguities. They are right. Nothing should stand in the way of achieving their goals. The good they will bring is so desirable they may even be justified in doing bad things to bring it about. Barabbas was such a radical. But he was eventually caught by the establishment he sought to undermine. Earlier, though, his number was up. His execution scheduled. But he was set free and another took his place. Who was that man? Why did he not resist? Was he really ready to die? Did he really catch the eye of Barabbas and mouth the words "thank you"? Barabbas grew old with his theories and could never figure out what went wrong, why things didn't go according to his script. But he is still ready to go, his beloved shoes polished and in hand. But in the end we see how he is not going anywhere.

## Program 6: Barabbas

**This is the one program in the series for which rights were not cleared to provide you the program script in this supplement. However we were given permission to provide you excerpts, so you will find a summary of the progression of the program with selected excerpts from the actual script *in italics*.**

When we meet Barabbas he is a tired old revolutionary, but still with plenty of spark, still defined by his political aspirations, as full of passion as ever. But we are aware that his world has shrunk. He is obsessed with his old shoes, makes too much of them, spends too much time talking to us about them. We quickly get the feeling that he doesn't have that much left to hang onto. He is aware that his grasp is slipping, that he doesn't remember so well any more, but what memories he does retain are vivid, and his identity as a rebel still defines him.

But he seems also aware that he is in some way defined by another rebel. He and the other were both Jewish rebels. But they were not the same.

*Jewish rebels. Oh, yes. Not different rebels but rebels against different things. . . . He rebelled against the Jewish community, and me — I rebelled against the oppressors of the Jewish community. Goners. Both of us.*

But despite their differences both ended before the Roman governor Pontius Pilate. Pilate was a politician to the core. He knew how to work the crowd. And working the crowd is one skill you have to master — whether you are in control or trying to wrest the power away from those who are in control.

*Endowed with wisdom they're supposed to be, but you tell me one war, political or religious, one war that didn't have the people whooping for joy and rushing to arms.*

Then the familiar refrain. We hear him revert to it over and over:

*Ollymollycollywolly OUT OUT OUT! Thingymeejig and wadjamacallim OUT OUT OUT!*

The words themselves mean nothing in particular. He could just as well be shouting, "Boo, hoo, muck a moo," or anything else. It is sloganeering. Barabbas knows the power of slogans.

Well Barabbas got caught. They had the goods on him. He was doomed. But fate determined otherwise. There was that other rebel also slated to die. Because of a religious holiday, and because the politician Pilate wants to look like a nice guy, a beneficent ruler, he is willing to let one of the condemned men go free. He will even let the crowd pick the one to be spared. That will please the crowd and will probably enable Pilate to irritate the Jewish leaders he has to deal with.

And can you believe it? Who is the one who gets off? Barabbas! The one who was the real threat. The one who had the connections, who could really do something. He gets off! It would be almost insulting to think they thought so little of his potential. But after all, it is his life he is getting back! He will take it.

We have to wonder, does Barabbas think the crowd really saw his potential, that they were identifying with him. Or were they just embracing him so they could condemn the other?

Just look at the other guy, the one that got it.

*The other one? A nonentity, a crank, spoke in riddles, confused the people, they didn't understand him. And when he died? Forgotten! I mean... "the hungry shall be fed"? What with? Dreams? Hopes? I mean... "the poor will go to heaven"? When you're dead?*

This other guy offered nothing that mattered. But Barabbas knew what needed to be done.

*Cant! Cant! The air was full of cant. The world had to be brought down, we had to start again, from scratch.*

But now time has passed. The big talk didn't get the job done. Their dreams faded. Now all their talk about how they were going to make the world a better place and the way they were going about it seems stupid and looks ugly. The camera does not pick it up so that we can discern it clearly, but the red background behind Barabbas has the hammer and cycle symbol — a reminder of more recent revolutionary promises and failures.

Barabbas grasps for a moment of reason. He cannot help but ask,

*So what went wrong? We had weapons, we had language, we were organised, our cause was just. Lives were lost, true. Sacrifices, but... I mean... you can't have scrambled eggs without cracking a few shells. Made sense, didn't it?*

*Problem is — not everyone likes scrambled eggs. . .*

And he can only lament that:

*It was beautiful. . . once. . . like these shoes.*

So what does he make of the man who literally took his place?

*A definite loser. I felt sorry for him. And to make it worse, he spoke. Well, not spoke, or if he did he was too far away for me to hear. But I saw. His lips. They moved. And a little tongue poked out. Made a "th" shape. I could read the shape. "Th... Thank you."*

*To me they gave freedom and to him they gave — God knows what they gave — but he said, "Thank you." I mean... two Jew boys... had it in for both of us. . . .*

*Had it in for both of us. Always will. For one reason or another. "And the poor will go to heaven and the hungry shall be fed." Huh! Loser. Born loser.*

*Then left right left then left right left. There's a place comrade for you. March with us in the ranks of the working class. For you are a worker, too.*

*Can't get rid of them. I'm at home in these shoes. Made in heaven, specially for me. Need to keep polishing though, keep them bright and ready. May need them one day — tatters or not — you never know. I mean . . . .*

CAMERA PULLS BACK, AND WE SEE FOR THE FIRST TIME THAT BARABBAS IS CONFINED IN A WHEELCHAIR.

## For Reflection and Discussion

### Historical Note:

Barabbas appears twice in the Apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus. Pilate says, "I have one condemned man in prison, a murderer named Barabbas." This is repeated with a slight change of wording in the second reference. In each he is called a murderer.

Hitchcock's Bible Names Dictionary says the name Barabbas means "son of shame."

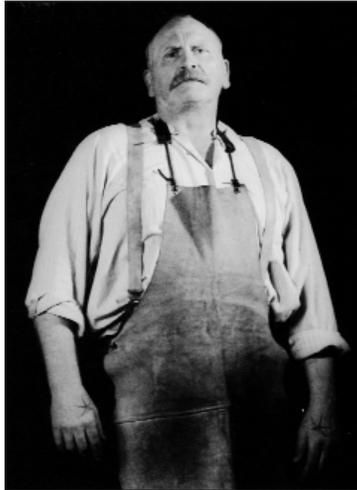
Smith's Bible Dictionary says, "(son of Abba), a robber, (John 18:40) who had committed murder in an insurrection (Mark 15:7; Luke 28:18) in Jerusalem and was lying in prison the time of the trial of Jesus before Pilate."

1. Do you think this Barabbas is surprised that he was released instead of Jesus?
2. It is not clear from viewing the film, but the curtain behind Barabbas has the communist hammer and cycle. In what ways is the revolutionary Barabbas like such twentieth-century revolutionaries?
3. Detail the similarities and differences between Barabbas and Jesus?
4. The script has Barabbas see Jesus look at him and mouth the words, "Thank you" (see line 71/7). What is suggested here? If Barabbas had the opportunity to talk with Jesus, what do you think he would have said?
5. Discuss the shoes, particularly with regard to what we learn only at the end when we discover that he is in a wheelchair and is not going to be walking any-

where. How does this symbolize things we clutch from the past that have outlived their usefulness? Why did he have such an emotional attachment to those shoes?

6. What is it about stuff we cannot throw away? Does it in any way reflect baggage of the heart and mind that we refuse to unload?
7. Both rebels, both "goners." How did each look on the mob?
8. Why is the message of Jesus so strange, unacceptable to the run of mill "would be" revolutionary?
9. "What went wrong?" Barabbas asked. What does go wrong with most secular ideologies?
10. He says, "They all say the same" — Jesus, Buddha. Do they? If not, how is this a convenient dodge?
11. He thought of Jesus as a "loser." Was he, by the standards of Barabbas?
12. Barabbas desperately wanted political change. Jesus also came to bring change into the world. Barabbas wrote off Jesus as naive. How would Jesus look at the approach of Barabbas?
13. Any thoughts about ambitious ideologies circulating today that in twenty years will be as fruitless as that of Barabbas?

# The Centurion



*Played by*  
James Cosmo

*Written by*  
Sergio Casci

*Directed by*  
Denny Lawrence

*When Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, asking for help. "Lord," he said, "my servant lies at home paralyzed and in terrible suffering." Jesus said to him, "I will go and heal him." The centurion replied, "Lord, I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed. . . ." When Jesus heard this, he was astonished and said to those following him, "I tell you the truth, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith. . . ." Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go! It will be done just as you believed it would." And his servant was healed at that very hour.*

Matthew 8:5-13

*(Later, after the crucifixion of Jesus )  
When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed, "Surely he was the Son of God!"*

Matthew 27:54

## The Story

He was a true soldier. His loyalty could never be questioned. He played by the rules. He knew his role. You could count on him, but he was not just some kind of rigid legalist or self-seeking climber in the organization. He cared about his men. One day one of them was close to death, and our soldier took a big risk in seeking help from the healer Jesus. The occupying force did not pay such respect to the subjects. And he knew the risk he exposed Jesus to, for the people did not look kindly upon those who collaborated with, or in any way assisted, the oppressor. But a young man's life was at stake. Two leaders meet and see something in each other that immediately binds them together. The boy becomes the beneficiary and is healed. The story as told here assumes this centurion was put out to pasture by superiors because he consorted with the subjects. It further assumes that he was assigned duty at the cross when that same healer was crucified. It further conjectures that the healed young man went on to follow the healer and was himself later sentenced to crucifixion for transferring loyalty from Rome to this now discredited one. The centurion has one last job to do. It won't make a big difference in the way the world works, but at least it is a small kindness that might make his boy's pain a little less.

## Script 7: The Centurion

One for the daddy. . . . 1

One for the mummy. . . .

One for the lady. . . . 5

And one for the baby.

And the smoothest one of all. . . . 10

. . .for the regimental sergeant major.

Army carpenter. That's how I got started. Three years making tables and chairs. And don't think that business about the sergeant major's a piece of non-sense either. Old man had done some carpentry. He knew what was what. 15

Sometimes he'd ask if a piece was finished, and you'd say, "Aye Sir." An' he'd say, "Are you sure?" 20  
That was the warning. Cause then he'd shut his eyes, an' lay his cheek on the piece of wood.

Then he'd RIP his face across it. . . . 25

You didn't want to leave splinters.

No' even little ones. . . .

That lesson saved my life more than once. Details, you see. Get them wrong with a piece of wood, you get a splinter. Get them wrong with a plan of attack. . . . 30

One man makes the call, the others obey. Anything else is anarchy, and that's a nightmare I've seen 35

more'n once. That's the place where babies are ripped from their mothers' bellies an' girls are raped for the sport of it. No, I obeyed orders, and I did it willingly. I wasn't one to hide behind rules and regulations. When a decision had to be made, I made it. 5

Young adjutant. Name of Anthony. Nice boy. I served with his father out in Africa. Not that that would earned him any favours. I'd've done the same for anyone. Army doctor said it was palsy. . .damned 10  
butcher. . .man could've lost a leg an' he'd call it palsy. No. . .if the boy was gonna die he was gonna die, but there was no way that sawbones was getting his hands on him.

Then I heard some talk among the men about this... 15  
Jew boy faith healer. Causing quite a stink by all accounts.

No surprise there, of course. There were plenty 20  
around in those days stirring things up. But this lad seemed to be the real thing. . . .

Does that surprise you? It shouldn't. You see I served in Egypt. Tunisia. Seen things, heard things you 25  
wouldn't believe. A good soldier soon learns how little he knows. They said this Jew could heal, an' I had a man that needed healing. So I went.

And what a show THAT was. You'd have thought 30  
the circus was in town, 'cept most of the crowd were lepers or cripples of one kind or another. All crowd-ing round the Jew like flies around honey.

I hung back while the crowd cleared. Then he spots me, nods, like he knows my thoughts. . . . That's an 35  
OLD trick. Used it myself. Lad would have made a good officer. . . .

Trick or no, I wander over. He smiles and holds out his hands. Crowds holding back wondering what's going to happen. Well, what did they THINK was going to happen? I was there on my own to ARREST him, huh?

1  
5

He wasn't scared. An' he wasn't laughing at me either. So I tell him about the sick boy an' he says he'll come straight over. Just like that. He's gonna come straight over, march into the barracks as bold as day an' minister to a dying soldier.

10

How was he gonna explain to the people in town that a dyin' soldier wasn't best left to die?

15

I told him no. I told him I'd watched all afternoon, while the lepers an' the cripples wandered up to him full of fear an' expectation and walked away with their lives back, and that what he was giving didn't need hands to give. He liked that. An' then he gave me a smile like I don't think I've ever seen, an' he told me Anthony would be well. That he'd live, and I wouldn't have to write that letter to his father.

20

My superiors weren't pleased. Oh, they were happy enough the boy was cured, but they weren't about to credit a Jew. And if I hadn't broken any laws, I certainly hadn't behaved in a manner befitting an officer. Sign of weakness, you see, turning to the locals for help. Thin end of the wedge.

30

So my star began to wane. Nothing definite, but the message was clear enough. Pointless jobs. Bad postings.

35

But I wasn't out for good. Oh, no. There was one final job with my name written on it. A junior officer told me the Jew had been convicted of something or other. No surprise there.

Suppose I was the obvious choice. Any. . .reluctance on my part would be the final nail. The excuse they needed to pension me off. Do the job properly. . . . Well, that sends a message.

1  
5

I did my duty.

They took me off active service. "Health reasons," they said. Moved me to this place. Said I was lucky to have my carpentry. . .most old soldiers spend the day playing cards or scratching their stumps. Anthony used to visit from time to time. News from the front.

10

He'd ask about the Jew... what he'd said, what he looked like. I didn't like talking about it much. He was a good soldier. Didn't strut, didn't boast. But he knew his strengths. He'd make general one day. . . . I knew it.

20

Then the visits stopped. I asked around. But no one knew. It was like he'd vanished. Then one day a soldier comes by. Says a trial's coming up. Former officer who'd been stirring up trouble.

25

I didn't even ask his name. Didn't have to. Damn fool. The army's a good wife. She'll feed you. . .she'll clothe you. But she's a jealous one. Betray her an' there's no' a beast in hell to match her fury. Anthony betrayed her. Walked off his post one day an' never turned back. Joined a bunch of travellers who'd been with the Jew in the early days and spent their time spreading propaganda.

30

I can see why a man would be seduced. But Anthony, was an officer. He'd sworn his oaths. Peace and prosperity don't come from fine words. They come from order... discipline... the security of the law. Anthony KNEW that. I taught him.

35

I saw the Jew die in agony with every sinew of my  
being crying out to cut him down. . .to save his life. I  
wanted to rant and scream at anyone who'd listen. . .  
WHY must we slaughter him? He's a GOOD man, a  
GENTLE man. . . .

1  
5

But the price of peace is the blood of innocent men. . .  
and I did my duty. I didn't go to Anthony's trial. No  
point. It's a well-ordered system we live under.  
Verdicts don't catch you by surprise. Army carpenter.  
It's how I started, it's how I'll finish.

10

But I did want to do this. See, I knew I'd make it  
straight. Make it strong. I've seen them collapse  
under the weight of a man. That's one agony he'll be  
spared. I can't save his life. Not this time. But I can  
do THIS. . . .

15

So here I am. A useless old fool sanding splinters off  
this abomination. This piece of wood they'll nail my  
boy to. . .my good boy. . . .

20

I think about the Jew. About the time we spoke.  
Wishing I could. . .speak to him again. Ask him.

25

Of all the people, I think he's the one who'd under-  
stand. . . .

## For Reflection and Discussion

### HISTORICAL NOTE:

#### Occupied Israel

They were like slaves in their own land. The Jews in  
Jesus' day had been under foreign domination for 500  
years, going back to the Babylonian captivity. Then the  
Persians, the Greeks and the Syrians ruled them. At the  
time of our story it is the Romans. The Jews detested  
living under the foreign rule of pagans and longed for  
delivery from the oppression.

#### Centurion

The Mercer Bible Dictionary says that "the centurion  
was probably the most important soldier in the Roman  
army." The centurion was in charge of 100 men, and at  
the time of Christ it was required that he be of Italian  
birth and a Roman citizen. Thus, the centurion who  
went to Jesus would be clearly a foreigner and visible  
representative of the despised military occupation  
force.

1. The author has combined two Gospel characters to create this one. He has taken the centurion whose servant Jesus healed with the centurion who stood at the foot of the cross (Matthew 27:54). In the Bible, the centurion showed great faith in Jesus. How does this centurion explain his belief in Jesus? (See 78/16-20.)
2. Why was it such a difficult thing for the centurion to go to Jesus to seek help?
3. Why was it such a scandalous thing for Jesus to be willing to accept the invitation of the centurion?
4. What can we surmise about the relationship of these two men, from two different cultures, two different ways of life?

5. How did they connect so deeply, and so quickly? (77/35-38)
6. What about the centurion's response to Jesus. See especially 78/19 where he says, "What he was giving didn't need hands to give." What does this tell us about his perception of Jesus?
7. Do you sense that both are aware of the price to be paid for their respect for and association with each other? Where and how does the system try to prescribe for us today those who are politically correct, and approved for contact, and those that must be avoided?
8. The centurion sees how the system used him and then set him aside. What would be a present day example of people being treated the same way? How did the centurion look at his experience? What do you think of his response?
9. The program places the centurion at a second event with Jesus, that is, the crucifixion. The Bible reports that there was a centurion there. But note the response of the centurion in the Gospels (Matthew 27:54) compared to what is said in the script.
10. What about the young man that was healed? His story is embedded in the narrative. What became of him? Construct as best you can the biographical outline of Anthony. How did he fit into the centurion's "retirement" activities?
11. How did Anthony and his centurion superior respond similarly and differently to Jesus?

### Varied Reactions So Far to the Unseen Center

But I told him to have nothing to do with this young man, that he'd swirled and tumbled through my dreams all night, and that he was innocent! He was innocent. (Pilate's Wife)

You wouldn't believe this. He moved the goalposts. He looked me straight in the eye and he said, "Sell all you have — and give to the poor." Well, I was stunned. I mean it wasn't fair. (The Rich Man)

And him? He was magnificent. Everything about him seemed so new! New kingdom! New life! New beginning! Word even went round he could heal the sick and the dead! (The Best Friend)

We stood on the edge. It really. . .you know, I really. . .I came to believe. . .I was utterly convinced we stood on the edge of. . .paradise. We saw things. I think. . .we saw. . .love, a greater love than we'd ever known. . .oh, my son was on fire with love. . .that man's love. God's love. (The Mourner)

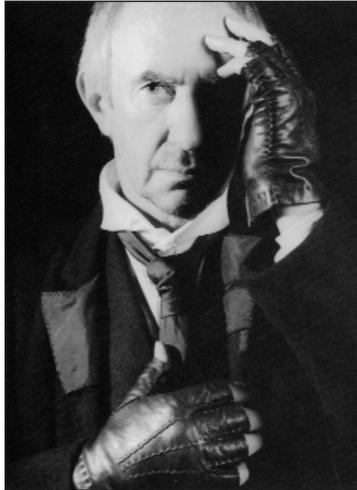
Somehow it was all all right. He was looking in my eyes, and it was like his voice was strumming at my soul. And it said, "You're beautiful. In my eyes you are precious." (The Servant Girl)

His lips. They moved. And a little tongue poked out. Made a "th" shape. I could read the shape. "Th...Thank you." To me they gave freedom and to him they gave — God knows what they gave — but he said, "Thank you." (Barabbas)

HE wasn't scared. An' he wasn't laughing at me either. So I tell him about the sick boy, an' he says he'll come straight over. Just like that. He's gonna come straight over, march into the barracks as bold as day an' minister to a dying soldier. (The Centurion)

**Now on to one who could leave.**

# The Thief



*Played by*  
Jonathan Pryce

*Written by*  
Nigel Forde

*Directed by*  
Norman Stone

*When they came to the place called the Skull, there they crucified him, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left. . . . One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: “Aren’t you the Christ? Save yourself and us!” But the other criminal rebuked him. “Don’t you fear God,” he said, “since you are under the same sentence? We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong.” Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” Jesus answered him, “I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise.”*

Luke 23:33-43

## The Story

This was perhaps the most difficult of the stories to deal with because the thief met Jesus while both were being crucified. So our storyteller allows that the thief may have come across the path of Jesus earlier and wondered how Jesus did what he did. Our madhouse world provides us room in the imagination to see what might have happened had he lived longer. And so he becomes for us an enigmatic figure. In his encounter with Jesus he did not have the time to sit under teaching and grow in faith and the knowledge of basic religious truths. But there are some things the program suggests he did grasp, for we discover that this is the one inhabitant we meet at the madhouse who is there because he wants to be, who is there because there is something he needs to do there, and who can leave whenever he wants. He never talks to us about it, but we see that he is there ministering to others, providing comfort in their last moments, just like the one who reached out to him.

Our thief, we discover, is an intelligent man who chose an anti-social way of life. In the end he was brought next to another man whose popularity, love and goodness provoked angry men to torture and kill him. How does one react in the face of such a grim and horrible truth. This thief had seen Jesus earlier, wondered about him, written him off as a charlatan. Now in the crucible together he can only confess, “He won!” All former certainties evaporate. He is left only with a person who can whisper in his ear a word of promise that can give a vile creature a new life and restored innocence and promise of paradise.

## Script 8: The Thief

Well, well, well! An unfamiliar face is always a pleasant surprise. Delighted! I will give you one of my rare smiles. 1

You're not stopping, I daresay? No, this is. . . 5

. . . a dreadful place. Full of the bitter, cold smell of old iron. It isn't iron, it's sweat, unwashed bodies, damp stones, or — to be more abstract — fear and hunger and long, long, disappointments. Just as lasting as iron, just as unbreakable. You'd think it was impossible to endure a place like this, wouldn't you? But to become accustomed to it! To think of it as home? Not that there is a place like this; there's only this place. But then, of course — 15

That's what we're supposed to think. This is it; nothing more, nothing beyond; just this — that people like us so richly deserve. What an expression — "Richly deserve"! 20

What do you think you deserve? What you're used to and a little bit more? But, not this?

Well.... Come with me. 25

I know what you're thinking. For a start, you're thinking, "Oh, no, Mr. Clever, you don't know what I'm thinking!" But I do, you see? How? And why? Well — when you're born with the proverbial silver spoon lodged in some orifice or another, you don't have to bother about knowing anything. You can always pay somebody to do that for you. But when your only advantage in life is this. . . . Well, you don't neglect it. 35

No, you take it on lots of dangerous journeys; you give it some exercise and fill it with dangerous knowledge; you give it discipline and more discipline; you keep it under control so that when you do let it off the leash it comes back with something worth having. 5

So you were thinking — here's a fellow, someone who has spent his days mixing with the lowest life a man dares think of, and he talks, as my mother would have said, like a book. He looks like a shopkeeper or an assistant librarian. And you wonder. Mmmmm? 10

Be careful. I can do the gamut; the knife at the throat in the dark alley, or the worst thing you dare imagine. . . . 15

Or I can do amusing foreign gentleman — no speak too good this particular language with so many wiggly verbs for me to learn, eh? 20

No — I'm sure you want more than that. But I've had to learn camouflage, you see. I have to be whatever is going to inspire trust. 25

And have I been successful? I'm not sure how to answer that. I started with a few stolen coins, three cups and a pebble in the market place, and I finished with a fortune that would have lasted a large and extravagant family for generations. Unfortunately I also finished with eight very sturdy guardsmen stepping out of the shadows and taking it all from me. It was a trap. I was a fool, but I deserved it, but who could resist selling the entire Temple precincts to an Egyptian merchant with dandruff? I couldn't. 35

I was the best. That's not pride; it's simply fact. I was the best. Unrecognized, of course. That's the para-

dox. People couldn't admire me because there must be no "me." Like a good spy, my success depended on simply remaining Mr. X. 1

But pride — that's dangerous. You must never believe your own legend, never believe you're as magical as the rest of the world says you are. If you do that you're finished. 5

There was another fellow doing scary things, one that everyone was talking about. 10

Well he was scary to me, a meticulous craftsman, a planner like me. I kept my distance, of course. I stayed at the back of the crowd — and he knew how to draw a crowd. He'd learned that trick all right! He did the wildest things, he made people believe. . . I don't know what. I couldn't work out how he did it. Some sort of mind over matter. That's the usual trick of the charlatans. You mess with their heads enough and they'll do anything. 15 20

He wasn't much of a threat to my business, but I had to keep an eye on things. I even had a grudging admiration for him. He'd messed up the lives of two tax collectors, and anyone who can do that deserves acknowledgement. I went to see one of them — a professional acquaintance, you understand. He was a broken man. He was pathetic. And he was fooling himself that he was happy. He'd given up working and was tramping round the countryside with other wretched creatures — following this charlatan — living on the offerings of gullible old ladies, I daresay. 25 30

Anyway, when I saw him, all he could say was, "The Master this and the Master that" — a dribble of rusty platitudes. Revolting. That's what I told myself. It's repellant. Actually quite sad. 35

Where was I? Oh yes, my arrest. That's when the really interesting part of my life began. I was thrown into what I was told was the usual insanitary hovel. I wouldn't know; I've never been caught before. I don't know if you know, but in prison, amongst all the sores and fevers and excrement, there is an extraordinary capacity for sensing things. Perhaps it's the equivalent of the drowning man seeing his life pass before him; or perhaps when you are reduced to nothing more than sheer animal nature you rediscover an animal's faculties; you can suddenly sense things, smell things from a distance. It's a useless, compelling kind of knowledge. But it's real enough. 1 5 10 15

That prison was alive, crawling with dreadful anticipation. Can you imagine a worse anticipation than your own death? Difficult, isn't it? But there is something worse, and when it crackles on the air or fizzes through the channels of your wrists or lifts your scalp like a sea wind, there is no help for it, none at all. Like a thirst that no amount of water will quench; like a howling dream that you wake from and find yourself still dreaming, and wake again and find the dream again. 15 20 25

I think I had never been afraid before. It was a strange, gray silence all night; the clink of chains, the flutter of other men's breathing, the consciousness of your own. It's all but unbearable. 30

Sleep was impossible. In the morning I was hollow, empty, tunneled out. Glad that I'd been picked to die that afternoon. Anything, anything, including death, was better than another night. 35

There was a third prisoner to be executed that day. We didn't see him until he joined us on the way to the hill through the smoking rubbish dumps of the

the crowd were throwing stones. You don't think of 1  
much but yourself at a time like that.

Then, like a smack in the face, I saw who it was. . .it 5  
was the charlatan, the quack, the bloody miracle-  
worker! The one who'd messed with too many  
minds, dangled too many false hopes. Well, I was  
glad! Now we'd see what he really was — every- 10  
body would. You can keep up and act so far, just so  
far — and he was doing well I'll give him that — but  
now we'd see what spilt out. Now, when there was  
nothing left to lose.

He won! 15

When iron rips through flesh there is nowhere to  
hide. Pain strips you to whatever you are. I  
screamed, I cursed, I opened my bowels.

He cried out once — for his murderers to be forgiven 20  
— and I knew, then, with terrifying certainty, that I  
had no certainties. That I had never really under-  
stood anything. My greatest confidence trick had  
been on myself.

Good, isn't it? Fitting! I was the gull. I was the stool 25  
pigeon all the time. I wanted to speak out, then, to  
pour out a lifetime's delights as well as a lifetime's  
mistakes. Falsehood, yes, and duplicity, but longing,  
too, gratitude and wonder and fearful love. I wanted 30  
to own up to my experience — to shout "Yes!" And  
all I could do was curse my cellmate when he abused  
the man. I couldn't tell him what I wanted to say.

But then — I don't want to think of the agony it 35  
caused him — he leant round to me and he whis-  
pered to me. . .but that was for me. It's for me.

I'm going now. I'm leaving. I can, you see, I do.

I'll leave these for someone. I always leave something. 1  
It's to do with innocence and responsibility. But it's  
not random.

Don't believe the nonsense people tell about children 5  
being born innocent. We are born guilty, born cor-  
rupt; ready to take our thoughtless place at the  
world's mad banquet.

But we can grow back into innocence. 10

It's possible.

## For Reflection and Discussion

1. There were two criminals crucified with Jesus. One taunted Christ. The other rebuked the taunter and asked Jesus to remember him. This video is based on the second thief, the one who sought acceptance from Jesus.
2. This program takes liberties because of the very limited information about him and his encounter with Jesus recorded in the Gospels. See the verses given from Luke 23 on page 84.
3. It makes the assumption that the thief had seen Jesus at work earlier in his ministry. From the reaction of the thief to Jesus from the cross, do you think it is likely that he had seen Jesus earlier or at least known of his ministry?
4. The program does not reveal the words of Jesus to the thief, perhaps as a way of suggesting to us that Jesus may have said more to him than the few words that were overheard and preserved in the Gospel record (Luke 23.43).

5. But the words spoken to the thief in Luke 23:43 that we do know about are startling: "This day you shall be with me in paradise." How can it be that a criminal would receive such an assurance from Jesus? Does it offend you that he would receive such a promise from Jesus at the last minute, despite all the wrong he most likely did in his life?

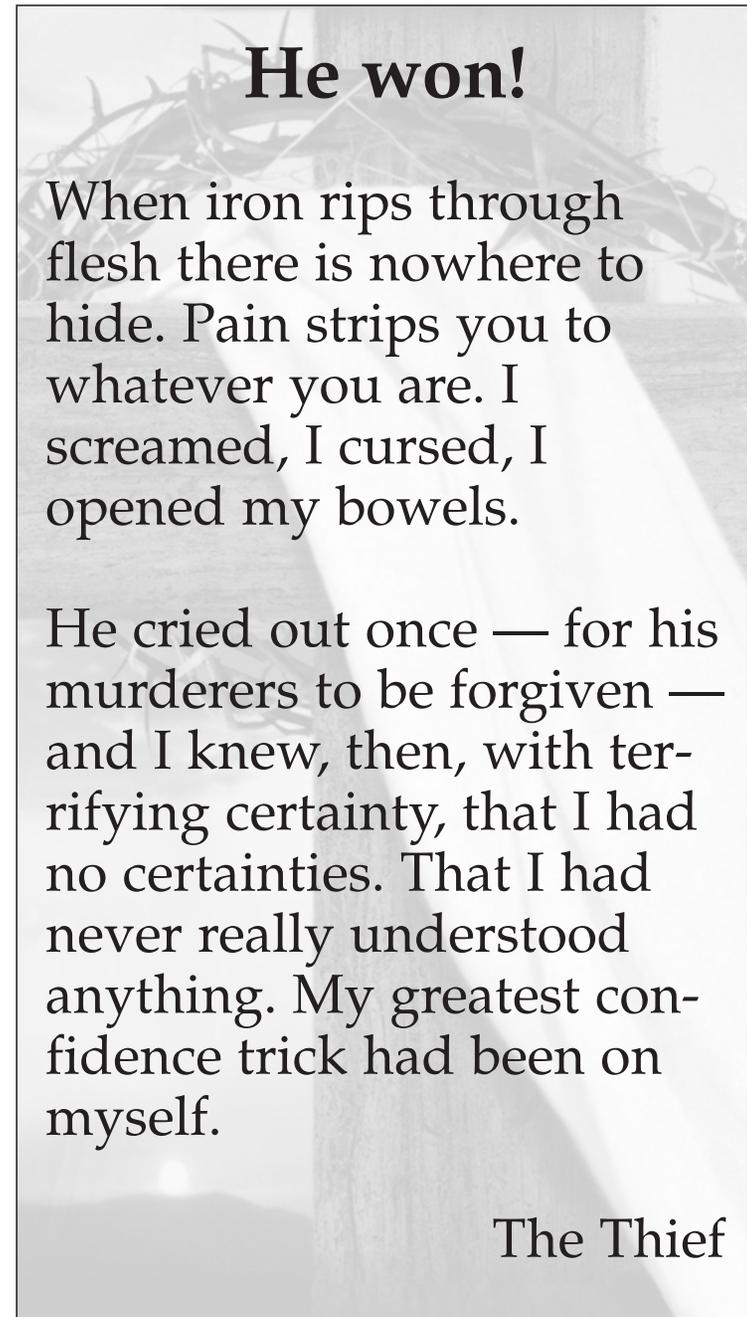
6. Someone pointed out that this was the beginning of the church. The first member of the church Jesus died to redeem was a crucified rebel who repented at the end of his life and was given the word of forgiveness. Discuss how this ties into the last words of the thief in the program regarding innocence. What is he talking about?

7. Note the difference in this story from all the others that we have met at the madhouse. What is it? Of course, it is the fact that he could leave whenever he wanted. So in the way the story is told, what are we to conclude about what he was doing there in the first place? What acts do we see him performing? Why?

8. See how many in your group noticed the crucifixion scar on his wrist when he took off his gloves to leave them at the front desk when he was departing. What is that trying to suggest? (See Galatians 6:17)

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**He won!**

When iron rips through flesh there is nowhere to hide. Pain strips you to whatever you are. I screamed, I cursed, I opened my bowels.

He cried out once — for his murderers to be forgiven — and I knew, then, with terrifying certainty, that I had no certainties. That I had never really understood anything. My greatest confidence trick had been on myself.

The Thief