

# *Apostles and Rebels*

*A story of Crucifixion and Resurrection*

A Screenplay by Jim Cleveland



## NOTES ON THIS PUBLICATION

This screenplay is fiction and available for a production contract. It is published here in order to establish the author's story as written.

Producers buy and own manuscripts and control production to fit their budget, their perceived market, their cultural sensitivities, and to maximize what they consider commercial value. This is my original version of the story.

I don't seek to conform this story to recollections published in the Judeo-Christian Bible.

I am a longtime student of The Urantia Book, published in 1955, with a claim of celestial revelation. Following its expositions on the history of the universe and our planet, the book details the life of Joshua ben Joseph, aka Jesus of Nazareth. He incarnated here as flesh and blood in supreme empathy as both a Son of God and Son of Man in One.

Overall, the book illuminates God's benevolent human ascension plan in vast numbers of time and space worlds. Part 4 is a comprehensive and detailed story of Jesus' human life and divine ministry. I urge everyone to read it for intellectual and soul growth.

In this screenplay of rebels and apostles, romans and pharisees, heroes and traitors, I allowed my imagination and flair for drama to run free. I explored many avenues of conflict.

All the while I knew that this story in its previous versions both proclaimed the emergence of the universal Prince of Peace in our world. My story should explain more about how that might have happened.

— JC

# **APOSTLES AND REBELS**

by JIM CLEVELAND

The story embraces the conflicted aftermath of a Roman crucifixion of a street preacher in Jerusalem, and the life adjustments of its survivors.

# APOSTLES AND REBELS

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## SCENE 1:

*Jerusalem streets and markets are bustling with people as theme music and credits roll. We see a sudden, burgeoning, ominous mass of dark clouds gathering overhead, a roll of thunder, the flash of lightning, black crows squawking and flying up in a flurry. The street people scurry frantically as rain begins to come pelting down around them and a powerful lightning flash electrifies the sky.*

*The massive otherworldly sky bursts open in torrents of rain, with tents blowing down and merchants in disarray. A huge mounted Roman lion sculpture is struck by a falling limb and crashes onto the street, shattering.*

*Among those scurrying to cover is Arthos, the administrative aide to the city's governor -- Pontius Pilate. He finds cover in a portal flanked by two stoic Roman soldiers, shaking his cloak awkwardly. Inside, he comes into the room from where Pilate is gazing down from his balcony. He is still shaking water from his cloak. Pilate turns to face Arthos.*

**Pilate:** He's dead?

**Arthos:** Yes, he's dead all right.

**Pilate:** You know it?

**Arthos:** I do. I waited. The hill is full of women, crying and wailing. He looked dead at one time and one of the brutes on duty ran a spear into his side to make sure. *(He pours himself a glass of wine.)*

**Pilate:** And ...

**Arthos:** Not dead, cried out in pain. Soldiers laughed.

**Pilate:** Rome has the best brutes money can buy. Arthos: They just wanted him to bleed out so they could get home. He was gone soon after that. Now I'm told that a man named Joseph, from Arimathea, is on his way up there to claim the body and I'm not sure he will get it. There is supposedly ... push back from the Sanhedrin.

**Pilate:** I gave him the authority and collected for it. He has the seal. He has a family tomb on the eastern slope, not far from here. But ... out of the city where it could become a symbol.

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**Arthos:** He paid well?

**Pilate:** Not your concern.

**Arthos:** Their so-called authorities want the body thrown into the pit with the rest of the scum so they can watch buzzards eat it ... and rejoice in triumph, I suppose.

**Pilate:** Question being, just who are the buzzards? Their malice knows no end; I should never have worked with them in the first place. I should have had the man scourged but sent him and his acolytes home to their families ... back out into the country where he can preach whatever he wants.

**Arthos:** Even after he ... 'cleansed' their temple? **Pilate:** It was in sore need. They created the stench, selling lambs for their stupid blood rituals. Filled the place with sheep shit. And converting the alms these people bring from here and there into their own currency with a generous transaction fee for themselves.

**Arthos:** Do we not ... get a cut?

**Pilate:** Again, not your concern.

**Arthos:** We are all seemingly engaged in the pursuit of wealth in our own ways. *He raises a toast.*

**Pilate:** I don't want to see that body in the pits. The man's family and followers are all here and the fact is, he didn't break a single Roman law. Get back up there and make sure they get the body and be gone with it. Out of the city ... sooner the better.

*(Arthos downs his remaining wine and re-assembles his cloak.)*

**Pilate:** And if those Jewish prelates are up there, tell them that we're done with them and make sure they disperse. Can you imagine the conflict with those vultures, a grieving family, and a pack of soldiers who have had a very ... stressful day.

**Arthos (tiredly):** So... do I need to go back up there alone? Sometimes my sword feels ... altogether too short.

**Pilate:** Take two of my men with you. See that the man from the country gets what he paid for.

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**Arthos** (*leaving*): Thank you, then. Two men. We will show up ready.

**Pilate:** Ready? Raises a bigger issue. I don't know if we're ready for what yet may come from this ill-advised execution.

**Arthos:** It's not your fault, my friend. We are bound to keep the peace first of all, and that attack at the temple might be the start of something bigger. There's a violent sect called the Zealots. You know them. They may well respond to that gauntlet the preacher laid down. That could be the first blow in a full-blown rebellion against their money-sucking hierarchy. Since they've quickly killed him, it remains to be seen ... doesn't it?

**Pilate:** (*in his thoughts*): Let them fight. But the man, Joshua, only spoke of peace ... and love. He didn't even respond to the charges they threw at him, expressionless, stood there in silence. He seemed almost in control, or thought he was, even ... confident somehow. I couldn't abide by that arrogance. He should have said something on his behalf. That was stupid. I would certainly listen to what he said. But ... anyway, how did the man persevere ... and meet his fate?

**Arthos:** He said nothing. Not a word that I heard ... some mumblings under his breath, what remained of it, I guess prayers and such.

**Pilate:** Not a word. He almost seemed disinterested. How did he die? Any fuss?

**Arthos:** No. The same way. Quiet ... he just hung there. Women started wailing; soldiers had to calm them down.

**Pilate:** (*with a sigh*) Surely easier than calming the radicals. We had best be wary if a martyr story gets any traction.

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### SCENE 2:

*Elijah Mark is rushing to get home under the thunderstorm, arrives at the door of his house, which is opened by his wife, Maria. He is nervous, agitated.*

**Elijah:** Are they here? (*his wife nods quickly*) How many are up there? All of them?

**Maria:** Most of them. The one they called Thomas, he's really aggrieved, left here crying, he's gone to his family, somewhere in the country near Antioch. They're all upset; they don't understand what has happened. They really believed in him.

**Elijah:** And he turned out to be helpless. What did they expect? I just found out about them causing a riot at the temple. Andrew wasn't very forthcoming about that.

**Maria:** I heard they turned over some tables, and ran some of the traders out, and released all the sheep out in the street. It was a real mess over there. They never got all the animals rounded up. People are too hungry.

**Elijah:** So then they blithely come over here for dinner and now they're .... back again! Like nothing happened. We've got to get them out of here.

**Maria:** Are we safe?

**Elijah:** Well ... I ... can't imagine why they don't round up his followers if he's so bad they have to scourge and crucify him. And ... they're upstairs! Oi Vey. (*anguishes, wife comforts him in her arms, then he pulls away.*)

**Elijah:** I'm going up there.

**Maria:** They are keeping it dark ... just a few candles ... and the windows are blocked.

**Elijah:** Where is Jon boy?

**Maria:** Asleep, finally. Very upset. He spent so much time with him up in the garden. He was such a good and wise man.

**Elijah:** What ... what could they have talked about? Boyish things? What was going to happen?

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**Maria:** He said nothing to me. He is .... shattered.

*(A knock at the front door. Both respond in fearful wonder. Elijah makes his way to the door, opens the peephole to look outside. He opens it. And in hurries the apostle Andrew, holding loaves of bread. Arthos confronts him.)*

**Elijah:** You, all of you, must leave -- now. They will come and kill my family!

**Andrew:** No one is coming. Please be calm.

**Elijah::** Well, they crucified the preacher and now -- what? -- you think they won't be coming for you?

**Andrew:** They came to Gethsemane, to our camp, when they took him. We were unarmed and he ordered us to make no resistance, as if he had it all in hand. We did not resist. They left us be. I don't know that they would want to come after us now. Why?

**Elijah:** Were you not there at the temple trashing?

**Andrew:** Well ... yes. But he instigated it, and he courageously ran them out with an ox whip and turned over their tables. Simon helped him most. Alas, he pushed over a man who cracked his head open, he was bleeding. And then Joshua — he turned out all the sheep. We just watched, in shock I guess.

**Elijah:** Well then, surely they want Simon ... the other hot head in this unfortunate episode. Is he upstairs?

**Andrew:** Please come up. I want you to meet the men. And we won't be here long, just until it's safe to get through the streets, to the east gate.

*Andrew and Elijah trudge up the stairs, come into a room of sullen and grieving men. Andrew introduces them around the room, bathed in candlelight.*

**Andrew:** My brothers, this is Elijah Marks, our gracious host, who will allow us to stay for a short sojourn while we plan our escape. This is John .... one of our successful fishermen from Galilee .... his brother James .... this is Phillip ... this is Matthew ...

**Elijah:** *(confronts Matthew)* You were a tax collector. I saw you once. The plight of the poor was so much camel dung to you.

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**Matthew:** I pray your forgiveness for my former self. I am a changed man, saved by grace, and hoping to share it in my remaining life.

**Elijah:** (*sarcastic*) Ah! But where are the fishermen and the tax collector, without their captain?

**Andrew:** This is Nathaniel ... and this is Simon ... and these two fellows are the Alpheus brothers, from Bethsaida, James and Jude.

**Elijah:** I've seem them do the kitchen work and the cleaning.  
Andrew: Though they are not ministers, they serve as they can, modestly, but with good hearts and our constant gratitude.

**Elijah:** You could leave now .... and make it to the gate before morning light.

**Andrew:** And we have one other ... our brother Peter. He is in the sleeping cubicle, immersed in his grief.

**Elijah:** I'm so sorry for the tragedy. I truly am. But you put my family in danger. Just get out. All of you. Please.

**Andrew:** Not safe yet ... we must stay awhile.

**Elijah:** You can't possibly stay another day -- to another nightfall.

*He turns to suddenly face a long-bladed knife in his face, held by the apostle Simon, who pushes him into a table. Items go crashing. Elijah is frightened, frozen. with the knife at his neck.*

**Simon:** You! ... are rude, and you must know that my anger exceeds my grief right now, and you are standing in front of me -- in an insulting way.

**Elijah:** I am simply worried. I have a wife and a boy, as you know. Please ... be reasonable.

**Simon:** No excuse for rudeness ... insults ... or lack of character. Do you then lick the asses of the Romans or can we count on you to be a man?

**Elijah:** My wife ... my child ...

**Simon:** Excuses. Send them away. Hide them in the cellar. Stand up! I go soon to join the Zealots. We will make them pay.

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**Elijah:** This is the Roman empire you speak of, my friend. Perhaps we should all use discretion ... that is a different thing than fear or anger or foolishness.

**Simon:** *(pushes him away)* Do you have any fruit, by chance?

**Andrew:** This is not what we do, Simon. Be gracious. We are not brutes.

**Simon:** We are fugitives ... and we had all best act like it.

**Elijah:** Not me, or my family. We have done nothing! We have broken no laws! We are innocent. It's you men. I wouldn't even have had you here if I had known ...

**Simon:** You are innocent? Innocent? Well ... you should have met our master. *(He leans forward and whispers menacingly in Elijah's ear.)* I am .... not him, however.

*He flicks the knife and cuts a slit across Elijah's ear. He recoils in pain and holds a hand to his bleeding ear, in shock and surprise.*

**Andrew:** You shame our master. Stand back!

**Simon:** I've already stood back -- and look where we are.

*(Elijah scurries from the room, down the stairs. Simon calls after him.)*

**Simon:** We'll be gone soon enough.

*Andrew looks at him in anger and frustration. Simon shrugs and grins.*

**Simon:** Did you have a better idea? Do we have any money?

**Andrew:** I brought up bread. You need to get control of yourself.

**Simon:** Money, I asked about our money. Where is it?

**Andrew:** Iscariot took it all. And he hasn't been seen since he sent the soldiers on us. He's no doubt complicit in selling us out and we won't see any money.

**Simon:** Ships sink, rats flee, and with the cheese. And so he seems to have completely disappeared — with our purse, and I say, from the last several towns we preached, it should be pretty heavy.

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**Nathaniel:** (*speaks from the side*) He has a sister in the city. Somewhere. I have been there once, to share the purse as Joshua declared, with our families back home. But I'm not sure I could find it.

**Andrew:** We need the money.

**Matthew:** I collected taxes here. I know a few people still and I think we can find her.

**Andrew:** I spent my last shekel on the bread.

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### SCENE 3:

*Rain and mist hang over a bare and muddy hillside, just down from the crosses upon Calvary hill. Joseph, a man of wealth and means, makes his way through the mud with three servants in tow. He is met at a tent by guards, and his companions are peeled away. He makes his way into the Roman commanders' tent alone and faces him and his officers.*

**Joseph:** Esteemed commander. We stand weary and drenched while awaiting our duty. Could you please have your men take down our friend?

**Commander Marcus:** There's been a storm. Did you notice?

**Joseph:** We had little cover from it. Or if we might have permission to take him down ourselves.

**Marcus:** Watch guard has to confirm death.

**Joseph:** He has done so, but now he and his comrades are engaged in a drinking contest of some kind and seem to be quite ... beside themselves. Marcus: Blowing off their miserable jobs. Do you know how disgusting this duty is?

**Joseph:** Yes, I see this clearly.

**Marcus:** Go get him down (*directed at a soldier*). And you can leave too -- provided you go get and take those several women with you. Grieving or not, I've got soldiers getting drunker and drunker around here and there's more dying criminals hanging up here than just the one. Get out of here -- all of you. Take the body and go somewhere else.

**Joseph:** I think most of these women are gone. I will see to it that they are dispersed.

*Into the tent, abruptly, walk two men in Jewish synagogue attire. They are stern and one of them focuses on Commander Marcus, with a side look of disdain at Joseph.*

**Jewish official:** We are here to claim the remains of the blasphemer. It is decreed that they be thrown into the pit so that his sentence will be carried out in full ... (*he peers over to Joseph*) and so that his stench will appropriately tell his story.

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**Marcus:** What story is that?

**Official:** Violation of countless covenants, open rebellion against the wisdom of the church, vandalizing the temple here, just the other day. He spewed his evil in the sanctuary, in a long polemic and then he and his men retreated out of the city.

**Marcus** (*walks around table to confront them*): You know ... if your dog turd of a god had any honor, then he would not have delivered such horror and suffering that we've seen on this man. You even hired the guards to brutalize him in the dungeons. I have dealt with them, and now they are behind bars. You corrupt all you touch with your arrogant vengeance.

**Official:** This man told lies. He didn't represent our Covenant with God by any means.

**Marcus:** So that justifies your .... savagery?

**Official:** It is justice. He presented a false persona. He made himself a false god. He called himself the son of God. He was bound to fall. Such arrogance.

**Joseph:** Well, he seemed to be doing well until you pushed him.

**Official:** I don't expect you to understand.

**Joseph:** And I don't expect to be fooled by your idiotic religion. Look around. Look where you are. You don't appear to be specially anointed to me, only in your arrogant minds. Rome rules the world, and you are in it.

*(A soldier looks inside, indicates that they have returned.)*

**Marcus:** (*addresses Sanhedrin representatives*) You ... you will not pile on a final indignity to these people. And Pontius Pilate himself has authorized that this man here be given custody and the body to be carried to a tomb far from here, for proper cleaning and burial. It's settled.

**Sanhedrin official:** Your allegiance is misguided. You honor evil. You disrespect the authority of our religion even as your emperor, Herrod, welcomes our collaboration and support.

**Marcus:** Well ... I am sure the emperor would speak for himself if he were here, but he isn't. So, you will just have to abide by what I say. (*he*

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*turns to his soldiers*) Please escort these two... officials from the field and allow this man here to take his ... prize.

Just outside the tent, Joseph's men take custody of a naked and bleeding body and wrap it in cloth. Joseph looks sadly at the bundle.

**Joseph:** *(to Marcus)* I am grateful.

**Marcus:** Get that poor fool out of here. Take him and go.

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### SCENE 4:

*Further down the Calvary hill, Arthos and his soldier escorts are surprised to see the two Jewish prelates, making their way laboriously down the muddy hill. Arthos smirks at them.*

**Prelate:** I saw you. You work for the governor, Pontius Pilate.

**Arthos:** I do.

**Prelate:** Your soldiers have taken the body of that blasphemer. They will no doubt set up a shrine somehow, make him a martyr.

**The Other Prelate:** That will not stand if they try. We will appeal to Herod. We have our rights.

**Arthos:** So, killing the preacher wasn't enough. You want to desecrate the body too?

**Prelate:** The Zealots have been looking for an excuse to rebel, challenge your authority for real, and now they've got their martyr to rally around – thanks to you. You need to let us finish the judgement, as it was decreed.

**Arthos:** *(chuckles)* Well ... what do I have to do with it? I am only a servant to the empire. I wash my hands, and leave it to higher powers. Be careful going down that slope, you may get muddier than you already are.

**Prelate:** You are impertinent.

**Arthos:** You are ... irrelevant. *(he and the soldiers walk on.)*

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### SCENE 5:

*A messenger boy runs through the Jerusalem streets, knocks at a door and is admitted. He is led to a back room and as he walks in, a mature woman with beauty and an air of goodness, turns to meet him.*

**Messenger:** My message is from my master, Joseph. He has taken the remains of our beloved Joshua and is on the way to the tomb he has acquired. He is asking members of the Women's Corps to come and service the body. We will have a memorial service.

**Mary of Nazareth:** Thank you, my child. *(She looks and sees tears streaming down the cheeks of the boy. She reaches out to touch his cheek affectionately, and then embraces him.)*

**Mary:** My son ... he was so loved. How ... my God ... could this happen?

### SCENE 6:

*Joseph and his men arrive at the tomb, he pays more money, and they set about to collectively move a huge stone, requiring five men to roll it sufficiently away to allow the body to be transported inside. They bring forth candles and an oil lamp to light the tomb inside and the women enter to begin cleansing and oiling the body. As the fabric is being unfolded, Joseph steps outside and walks away in the moonlight. He looks into the star-filled night sky, raises his two arms and speaks his emotions to an invisible God.*

**Joseph:** We have had a ... demonstration of ... weakness ... a lack of any power whatsoever to change this outcome ... an outcome that reveals ... our deepest delusions. He was no savior, no messiah. He couldn't even save himself. What are we to learn?

*Lightning crackles across the sky and a rumbling thunder. He flinches at the power of it.*

Are you telling me that ... that you are the real Gods, the all-powerful Gods of Rome? They have indeed made Rome the power and the glory of the world and this speaks for itself. *(a pause.)* But ... I love these innocent people and .... I will give them my service. *(He turns to go back inside.)*

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### SCENE 7:

*Pilate is drunk, he weaves about as his wife comes into the room, along with his aide, Arthos. Portia, the wife, is plainly disgusted and speaks derisively.*

**Portia:** Drunk! But no wonder. You let them crucify that man.

**Pilate:** So what? They're crucifying people damned near every day.

**Portia:** Of course, many of them are actually guilty of something. You've let those costumed cretins in their donkey-assed church make your decisions for you. There is a lot of talk about, the servants are hearing some of it.

**Arthos:** Madame, I assure you that your husband is not alone in his decisions. Keeping the peace is more important than any one man, and the Jews are always steaming and trying to foment an uprising. Leaving them alone to work their ... vengeance is not the best way. There was a danger here of sparking a full-scale siege of violence if the man and his henchman had attacked another synagogue.

**Portia:** I hear he came to the temple later, and really rubbed their noses in their corruption. Two of my friends were there.

**Arthos:** Well, that surely exasperated the whole situation. Together with the vandalism, it just became ... quickly intolerable.

**Portia:** *(eyeing her drunk husband)* I am beginning to think there is some value in ... intolerance... the time when you don't want to tolerate the shit any more. *(She strides out of the room)* Why don't you stay for dinner, Arthos, and maybe you could get him in some better shape for it.

*She leaves, Pilate squints drunkenly and grins a little at Arthos. He raises a finger in the air as if announcing a coming statement.*

**Pilate:** You know that I know .... that you are fucking my wife. *(with derisive laughter)*

**Arthos** *(surprised):* Whenever she wants me. Do you .... mind?

**Pilate:** Oh, no ... it just means that you are seriously obligated to me. I will accede to your secret. You will keep my secret in turn, and you will actually work in service to it.

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**Arthos:** I ... thought you were drunk. You ... are not drunk.

**Pilate:** I have any number of slave girls of my choosing ... just across the street. I own them and they are ... extraordinary.

**Arthos:** I would never speak of it, of course.

**Pilate:** *(looks at him closely)* Of course not. You know ... my wife and her family have much wealth. Make her happy. Distract her.

*Arthos looks confused and uncertain.*

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### SCENE 8:

*Two men rummage through a heap of bloody garments and other refuse on the Calvary hillside. They are apostles of Joshua.*

**Phillip:** I thought you said you saw it; it's not here. Let's get out of here.

**Andrew:** The soldiers took anything that was worth anything. It was a fine robe, but it was torn and had blood all over it. I thought they ... might leave it.

**Phillip:** Yes! Our symbol for the ages. Our icon. We could build our new religion around this symbol. But some Roman woman is wrapping herself in it, or tore it apart to make rags.

**Andrew:** And what do we represent then, Phillip? Who are we without it? Without a symbol?

**Phillip:** We are Goodness. Ultimate Goodness. Love between all souls. We were told this. *(He sifts through garbage.)*

**Andrew:** It's a bloodied robe. Isn't that actually just a symbol of defeat?

**Phillip:** Someone's coming They duck away in darkness. A pillager stumbles by and they grab onto him and pin him down.

**Andrew:** Scavenger!

**The Peasant:** What in hell are you doing then?

**Phillip:** We are looking for a robe, a light gray robe, worn by our Master, a good and gracious and great man whom the savages butchered on the cross.

**The Peasant:** I saw that piece, some soldier took it off. They played some kind of game and he won it, but I think it took a little help from his knife ... and he's got a big 'un. Anyway, wash it up maybe and use it right on. Who gives a shit? Jew blood, Roman blood, *(he grins with rotten teeth)* ... all the same.

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### SCENE 9:

*A roman soldier walks drunkenly from a bar and down the near deserted street, past puddles, and to his house. He clutches in one hand the robe of Joshua. Once inside his house, his wife comes to him holding a candle.*

**Indira:** You are safe. I thank the gods.

**Tyron:** And I thank you for caring. *(holds up the garment)* Here is something in fairly good shape, with some washing and a bit of stitching. They crucified a preacher today, for some reason, and he had this on .... until they ripped it off. *(he looks at it thoughtfully)* Anyway ... I thought we could use it.

*He hands it to her and stumbles off to bed. She looks at it, smells it, and takes it to the fireplace where she .... almost throws it into the fire, but then she doesn't. She puts it into a large basin of water to soak. She turns away and we see a close-up of the robe in the pan, as blood seeps out and runs through the water.*

*Indira walks into the bedroom where her husband is bathing his face in a basin of water. He is muscular, bare-chested now. She loved his power. She embraces him from behind.*

**Indira:** You made it through another day ... my love.

**Tyron:** I did.

**Indira:** How many more?

**Tyron:** I will turn up something. Just a matter of time.

**Indira:** The countryside is green. It ... must be beautiful.

*(Tyron turns his full attention to her. She is radiant in the moonlight.)*

**Tyron:** No more than you. And ... there is a fine farm in the country ... in our future.

*(As they meld into each other's arms, the garment continues to soak and the blood colors the water.)*

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### SCENE 10:

*A Sanhedrin official stares down at the two returning prelates, as his aides stand by. They sit with heads bowed, clutching their robes. He marches autocratically around them, then leans over and loudly screams in their faces.*

**Caiphas:** FOOLS! CLOWNS! *(He turns to an aide.)* Send them away, as far as you can send them. I don't want them ever seen again in Jerusalem.

*(He marches out onto the balcony of the Synagogue and looks into the sky angrily. An aide walks out behind him and speaks.)*

**Aide:** The Romans are cruel and arrogant asses.

**Caiphas:** Yes ... that's why they are running the world.

**Aide:** Is there anything else?

**Caiphas:** Yes. Go tell Imperion that I want to see that man – Judas Iscariot. He knows who I mean. We did some business with him.

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### SCENE 11:

*Sunrise (day two) in the city of Jerusalem with early morning scenes, light coming into the windows of the upper room at the Mark home, shadows falling away. Close-up of the bedraggled face and eyes of the apostle Peter on a pillow, bringing himself to a sluggish awakening. He struggles to leave the bed.*

*He walks tiredly through the room as the other apostles sleep, one of them snoring softly. He steps up to a table with leftover bread and a large knife. He picks it up, appears in utter despair. After a thoughtful moment, he cups the knife as if to plunge it into his own heart. His face reflects anguish and he moves as if to do the act. But suddenly a hand appears to grasp his wrist. It is held by John and they face each other.*

**John:** Are you crazy?

**Peter:** I am in grief, brother. There is nothing left.

**John:** We are all here ... and able bodied.

**Peter:** We are nothing compared to him, and I lied that I didn't know him. I am a coward and a fool.

**John:** You ... saved your own life. And now ... what will you do with it?

**Peter:** *(pulls away)* Where is his mother? Is she coming here?

**John:** The man who bought the tomb ... she is with them. I hardly know the man. He's wealthy, has a farm in Arimathea, and he has a place here in the city.

**Peter:** She will want to know .... how is it that we did nothing. Nothing! The women stood on the hill and we shrunk to our hiding place.

**Simon:** *(now awakened, joins the conversation as the men stir from their makeshift beds around the room)* The fact is, my dear despairing brother, that the fight has just begun. This martyrdom will ignite a revolution that you can't begin to comprehend.

**John:** The Zealots are few and are in no shape to fight the Empire.

**Simon:** There is a new way of fighting. We will strike in the night, small

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bands, we will hit them by surprise. They won't see us coming, they won't see us going.

**John:** Did you hear nothing that the Master said, Simon? That is not what we stand for. You are the old way -- the savage way.

**Simon:** Well, it has worked for generations. And if we kill enough of them, they will leave our land.

**John:** They will kill all of us and leave our land in ruins.

*Peter is now looking out the window, turns in fear.*

**Peter:** There are Roman soldiers -- coming here!

*Outside, a small contingent of soldiers marches through the street, stopping at the Mark family's house. A soldier steps up to rap hard on the door. Inside, downstairs, the Marks hold onto themselves in fear.*

**SCENE 12:**

*The home of Joseph of Arimathea, reflecting a good level of prosperity. He and two servants come inside and he makes his way to an interior garden, open to sunlight. His wife and a servant are seated there, with Mary of Nazareth. She remains in despair and withdrawn.*

**Joseph:** I bid you good morning. All is in hand. Your beloved son is cleansed and honored for his passage into the spirit world. Several women of his corps have done a splendid job. *(He is looking anxiously at Mary)* We are so blessed by their service. They adored your son so.

**Mary:** How many of these women were there ... are there?

**Joseph:** Ten or more, I think. They were his healers, his nurturers, doing those things which mothers do so well, and which men don't often do well at all. They were truly part of his ministry, given full respect and not just ... courtesy.

**Mary:** I am sure there are many sick people in Jerusalem. Such living conditions. I much prefer the countryside.

**Joseph:** The women are from all over, mostly from Galilee, I think, home terrain so to speak. I don't know how many are actually from Jerusalem, seems that everyone is from someplace else. They have been in constant attendance at any rate ... at the cross, bravely, and now they are coming from here and there to the tomb. They have put up tents just across the way.

**Mary:** The tomb ... your tomb ... is now a popular place ...

**Joseph:** The tomb belongs to your precious son and your family. It's not mine. If I am correct, it may well become a shrine.

**Mary:** A shrine? To my son ... who appears to all the world as a failure.

**Joseph:** He is now a great man. He ... practiced what he preached. He lived well ... he died well. More and more people will come to admire him.

**Mary:** Peace and love between all people. That's what he saw? How do you see that ... in what has happened?

**Joseph:** I see that he represented these values to the end. He did not

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fight them angrily. He only sought to appeal to people's honor, their higher selves. They ... didn't go that way. And ... you can't fight the Roman Empire anyway. Had he defended himself vigorously it wouldn't have mattered. They were damned to do what they did.

**Mary:** He was hated by the very religion he sought to represent.

**Joseph:** He called them to a higher standard. They didn't respond.

**SCENE 13:**

*Roman soldiers push past Elijah and into the Mark household. Commander Marcus confronts Elijah, his wife and young Jon Mark, age 11, held tightly by his parents.*

**Marcus:** How many people live here? You and her ... and who else? This is your boy?

**Elijah:** Yes, captain, the three of us, but we rent rooms to working men, upstairs.

**Marcus:** Appears there is a lot of space up there. Who is up there now?

**Elijah:** Day workers. They are out to work, most of them at the quarry, I think. You could find them down there. But ... sir ... what are you looking for, may I ask?

**Marcus:** No, you may not. We had a tip, so we will need to take a look up there.

**Marie,** *(standing by the stairs with her attempt at a bribe, a tray of fruit and wine):* Perhaps you would like to rest ... have some refreshments.

**Marcus:** *(Marcus strolls over to pick a fig from the tray):* What are you trying to hide up there, woman? Is it something big ... like these big tits here.

**Elijah:** Please sir, we are just an innocent family.

*Marcus motions soldiers to go upstairs. It is Tyron and another soldier. They go up into the empty upper room and look around. Soon, Tyron sees a rectangular portal, a covered-over portal to the roof. He orders the other soldier to remain and lifts himself up, opens the door and pulls himself onto the roof.*

*He stands there, seeing nothing, but walks across the roof and looks across to an adjoining building, and a ladder which has been spread out to connect the two buildings. He steps to the side and looks across. He sees a huddled mass of men on the other roof. One of them, Peter, looks at him plaintively. They stare at each other.*

*Tyron backs away and puts a finger to his lips, calling for silence, and walks back to the portal and slides down into the room -- not saying a word.*

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*The apostles look at themselves confused, breathing sighs of relief from the tense confrontation. Downstairs, Tyron takes the other soldier in tow and leaves the room.*

**The soldier:** Nothing?

**Tyron:** Nothing worth mentioning.

*Downstairs, the soldiers are guzzling the wine and eating Maria's proffered tray. Tyron looks at them disdainfully while the other soldier digs in.*

**Marcus:** Nothing?

**Tyron:** Bird shit.

**Marcus:** No ... quarry workers?

**Tyron:** Maybe I should keep an eye on this place, see who shows up.

**Marcus:** Do it.

*They leave. A soldier leers and leans into Marie's face with a raucous laugh as she recoils. Tyron looks up at the roofs, wondering what he just did, as they march away. Marie, in tears, buries herself in the arms of her husband. Young Jon Mark looks on from the hallway, muttering angrily, inaudibly.*

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### SCENE 14:

*Simon leaps across the roofs and makes his way to the street. Soon he joins another man at a market stall and they make their way together down a crowded alley and into a heavy wooden door. They are met by a burly ruffian, who orders them to sit and goes out. In the room enters three more men, the one in center is the cell leader of the underground rebellion against the Romans. They are armed and able.*

**Vokar:** Simon, my former associate, what brings you to us again?

**Simon:** Our man has been killed. He was ultimately ... not too smart. I want to work with your team again.

**Vokar:** We're not preachers. Did you want to preach? And didn't I tell you what would happen?

**Simon:** I've preached. I can preach. And our master was a great man, above and beyond this world, really. I would never say ill of him. But I think it's time now that we killed more Romans, and Jews, as well, since they're responsible for this atrocity.

**Vokar:** You want to kill then ... burn down buildings?

**Simon:** Vengeance will be sweet each time we exact it. And in time, these oppressors will leave our land when their losses become too many to bear.

**Vokar:** Interesting idea, kill more of them than they kill of us. Actually, the Romans have been playing that game very well, and for a long time.

**Simon:** But you use stealth, the cover of night, surprise attacks and flee to safety. I have seen your actions. I know of the soldiers you ambushed at the canal. Several no doubt still under water with their heavy armor.

**Vokar:** Soldiers are easily replaced. What we need is a Center -- an anchor for what we believe, a great man to rally around, great ideas to pursue with the voice of reason, justice, fairness, caring for one another.

**Simon:** Strange words .... from you.

**Vokar:** Your man was what we needed but he wouldn't take up the sword. But now we can use him even more -- as a martyr, as a champion, who

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faced his death courageously and with honor. I had men there, on Calvary. He never bent an inch to them. He is the force we have been waiting for -- and I don't think being dead will make any difference.

**Simon:** He was ... not for killing. He was for peace.

**Vokar:** And so shall we be, when our oppressors are gone.

**Simon:** Killing for peace? Night raids for peace? Maybe we should call it what it is -- vengeance. Righteous vengeance!

**Vokar:** You are telling me what to do?

**Simon:** No, I'm sorry I said that. Just my ideas.

**Vokar:** We need a Golden Savior. A great man who will lead us to power. His righteousness will bring the people to us. His glory will be our example.

**Simon:** He's dead so ... won't so active ...

**Vokar:** A martyr of course. He sacrificed himself as an example of bravery, of courage, the quest for justice and respect for our people. When we rise hundreds strong with such fearlessness, we will be invincible.

**Simon:** What? Isn't that just strength in numbers?

**Vokar:** *(steps closer to Simon's ear.)* We must have the numbers too. But the will, the desire is what matters. Are you really a fighter? What can you do? What will you do?

**Simon:** I will turn to iron. I will do what's necessary.

**Vokar:** So, what do you want, other than a weapon? We'll give you one. How about the others?

**Simon:** My friends, they won't fight. But they need to be away from here, someplace safe in the country.

**Vokar:** They haven't helped us. They won't help us. Why should we help them?

**Simon:** Good will maybe. We hate the Romans too.

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**Vokar:** If you won't take up arms, I've got nothing for you. They want to run like rabbits when they could stand up and fight. There's only one way you can get any help here.

**Simon:** What, please?

**Vokar:** If you can't pay in blood, you have to pay in money.

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### SCENE 15:

*Elijah Mark storms into the upper room. The apostles are making their way down through the roof. He is agitated.*

**Elijah:** That does it. You've got to be gone. These brutes have abused my wife, taken our food and wine ...

**John:** Calm yourself. This is now the safest place in Jerusalem. You've been searched and cleared.

**James:** What about that soldier? He said nothing?

**John:** I don't know. Maybe they aren't all evil mother fuckers.

**Elijah:** They can come back. Just because the room was supposedly empty doesn't mean it won't be full of fugitives later. They'll come back this evening. I told them you were all working in the quarry.

**John:** Be reasonable. You're too easy shaken up. You have to be in control of yourself to think clearly.

**Elijah:** It wasn't exactly wise thinking you fellows marching into the city like you're something important, enraging the authorities, and now dragging my family in this with you.

John, Listen to me. We .... are ... going ... nowhere until we can do it safely. Do you hear me?

**Elijah:** I don't have enough food for you. I am short of money. Do you have money -- any at all?

**James:** Our treasurer, one Judas Iscariot, left long ago and took the bag with him.

**John:** *(suddenly looking around):* Simon? He didn't come down. Where is he?

**James:** Maybe he went to kill one Judas Iscariot, and get our money.

**John:** Or join up with his former comrades. He's pretty disgusted with the way things have turned out.

**SCENE 16:**

*Judas Iscariot paces nervously in the private quarters of Caiphas, the head Rabbi in Jerusalem. He is accompanied by two guards and is nervous and ill at ease, not making eye contact with the smoldering glare of the guards. The Rabbi walks in and looks him up and down.*

**Caiphas:** You are no cousin of mine...here by false pretense. Who are you?

**Judas:** Please, sir, just a few moments of your time. I am the loyal worshipper who delivered the blaspheming preacher to you.

**Caiphas:** Yes. I see now. I just sent men looking for you.

**Judas:** I trust this has done much to stem any possible rebellious activity against the church. I could not imagine that this man, whom I am sorry to say I followed, would embrace such evil. I am, and I want to be, a champion of our ideals, a member of your family of servants to God here in Jerusalem.

**Caiphas:** You want a position in the church? Whatever would make you think yourself qualified?

**Judas:** I have been successful in business, a skilled manager of money and resources, just what you may need to help keep up with the church's accounts, the collections, the conversions, understanding the various currencies involved.

**Caiphas:** You could work in the temple?

**Judas:** I could. I would be a true asset, and loyal.

**Caiphas:** The very temple that your man trashed.

**Judas:** I ... could not tolerate that. That's why I am here, in addition to that brazen speech he delivered, there in the temple sanctuary. You can imagine my deep concern, and that's why I had to perform this service, bring this man before you for an accounting.

**Caiphas:** We are grateful. And I am told that you were paid. But ... being an informant hardly qualifies you for a position. One must work his way toward these positions. Others would be well ahead of you.

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**Judas:** I didn't do this for these pieces of silver at any rate. I did it to bring you all together, so that you could deal with these matters and find some resolution. Joshua was a good and honorable man despite his indiscretions and ... I was hoping for a better end. You sir, in all respect, might have talked with him, reasoned with him. I had no idea really, that you would just turn him over to the Romans.

**Caiphas:** The Romans do what they will. Do you think crucifixion was ... a little harsh?

**Judas:** Indeed. He was a good and gracious man, only misguided.

**Caiphas:** Well, then, all the way around, it just seems to be a question of degree, doesn't it? The degree of vandalism ... the degree of blasphemy ... the degree of justice and of punishment. It is done at any rate, and so are you. We owe you nothing. Our spies don't usually get as much as you did. You were likely overpaid in that we would have found him up there, on the mountain side on our own.

**Judas:** *(in dismay):* I ... try to serve my religion. I try to do the right thing. I think that ... I've done the wrong thing instead, judging by your ... attitude. *(The rabbi only stares at him, showing some contempt)*

**Judas:** I will ... find no salvation here, will I?

**Caiphas:** You have done a good deed and been paid for it. Rejoice! And know that you have our sincere appreciation. But we have no openings for accountants; you should go to the guild.

**Judas:** Do ... you know what's it like to be crucified?

**Caiphas:** Our Almighty God -- Yahweh ...

**Judas:** Shut up! Shut the fuck up. You don't speak for God. You collaborate with the Romans to maintain your evil positions, sucking all the money you can from ordinary people. *(He storms out. The guards begin to stop him, but the Rabbi intervenes.)*

**Caiphas:** Let him be. Let him go ... he has a few things he needs to deal with. *(Grins perversely, then reconsiders)* On second thought, follow him in secret. Tell me everywhere he goes. I think this could lead to something. There are still some rebels to round up.

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### SCENE 17:

*John takes a large quaff of beer. The men are assembled.*

**John:** So ... we are a shrinking band. Simon has gone to join the Zealots, we think ... Thomas is secluded in fear and trembling ... and Iscariot has long ago absconded -- with the money. And ... where is Matthew? Now he's missing.

**James:** Iscariot. Such a traitor. He had been acting peculiar, like he was embarrassed or something to be around us.

**Phillip:** He was pissed about us doing the temple. He was shaking his head after Joshua told them off. He's always thought he was hot shit compared to us poor fishermen and laborers.

**Nathaniel:** He is a perfect .... asshole.

**Andrew:** If we knew where he was, we could go after our money. There should have been a good sum in that bag.

**John:** He has family in Jerusalem, but I don't know them.

**Nathaniel:** I do. I told you. A sister. Her name is Julianna.

**James:** Sure you do. I forgot. Joshua had you looking after the needs of our families. Who are they? Where are they?

**Nathaniel:** I only took money once, to a sister here in the city. She is widowed but has a job, a seamstress maybe.

**James:** And where does she live?

**Nathaniel:** I ... think I could find it, but I couldn't tell anyone how to get there.

**James:** We can go, you and I. I'll get a sword.

**Andrew:** Carry a sword and you're asking for trouble.

**James:** Trouble comes too readily upon those without swords. These are mean streets. We are not in the country any more.

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**Andrew:** Then go ... and be mean too. I've not much to say. I'm ... out, you know. I don't assume any group management responsibilities any more. You're grown men. So ... do as you will ... go find Judas and get the money! And ... you really should take two swords .. and daggers.

*Matthew abruptly opens the door and enters.*

**Matthew:** I located her section of the city. From there I can go local and find her.

**SCENE 18:**

*A short caravan crosses the desert toward the tomb, just a few hours out of the city. Mary is carried in a chariot by six men. They look across the way to see another cluster of women coming along with them, all clad in dark robes.*

*As they pass, Mary gazes to the side and comes directly face-to-face with a beautiful dark-haired woman, Mary Magdalene. They look into each other's eyes as they pass by. When the caravan stops at an oasis for rest and water, she looks over again at the women.*

**Mary:** Those are my son's women then ... the healers?

**Joseph:** *(eating a fruit):* They are nurses, essentially, comforters. They have little training in medicine.

**Mary:** And ... who is that one? That one over there. Who is she?

**Joseph:** She was a prostitute, saved by your son's grace. He did not judge them harshly. He knew they were essentially victims of circumstances, often sold off by their husbands to fill their own pockets. Horrible.

**Mary:** And this one? Was she sold by her husband?

**Joseph:** Maybe in the beginning. Who knows? But she was working for the Pagan brothels when Joshua found her.

**Mary:** Found her?

**Joseph:** She said the wrong thing to somebody and there were people about to stone her to death.

**Mary:** He saved her. For ... his own biding?

**Joseph:** Some say for himself, but what would it matter?

**Mary:** What would it matter? To ... consort with whores ... save them ... organize them into a force for healing ... for good. He was certainly one of a kind. I can't say that I understood him ... all that well.

**Joseph:** Your son never met a person that he did not .... love. I really believe that. That's what was so ... remarkable. He became ... a sacrificial

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lamb himself. He was innocent, almost pure. And they killed him. What is our lesson? I pester the Gods for that one.

**Mary:** Since he seems to have loved this woman in a special way. I would like to talk to her. Perhaps we can help her somehow.

**Joseph:** I doubt that she would be very forthcoming on her past. They are working to survive it, move on, and they all seem to be good and gentle of heart. Perhaps some permanent order, an organization, could be developed in his memory, a place to care for the sick and infirm. He was always preaching about that.

**Mary:** I will be direct. Was he having coitus with this woman. I simply want to know, that's all.

**Joseph:** Of course, I would not hear of any such ... matters. I did not, have not traveled with them in these recent months. It's just that I have been friends and my family has been friends with you and your family for a long time. I followed the young man growing up, you know. And ... I have seen his mettle. We will not see his likes again.

**Mary:** And he was a man too, I expect ... all the while ... I wonder if she's pregnant.

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### SCENE 19:

*Scene: a street and bar. Major action sequence.*

*Roman soldiers are lured into a bar with promises of free drinks and sluts. They get seated and are attacked by Zealot fighters who kill them off after a one-sided battle. Among the killers are Vokar and Simon, who acquit themselves well. Closing scene is the three soldier's heads mounted on the pikes of a fence. Written in blood on the wall is a huge letter: J ... for Joshua ben Joseph.*

*Scene fades, and re-emerges in the sunlight of the new day, still in close-up of the Roman soldiers' heads on pikes, now covered with flies and a lizard. The lizard flees as they are being taken down by a squad headed by Marcus.*

**Soldier:** Where are ... the rest of these men?

**Marcus:** The sewer likely or ... some cannibal's pot.

*Soldier growls in disgust.*

**Marcus:** (*turns to Tyron*): This will not stand. We need some serious pay-back -- now.

**Tyron:** Wait to find the guilty or make a demonstration? There are plenty of low-life wretches around to dispose of.

**Marcus:** That might help, but it won't avenge this. Where could these men be hiding? There is a cell here, underground, in this very quarter, from where this is all hatched. We have to find the nest of rats and destroy it. (*He paces about.*) The Zealots have a headquarters right here in this vicinity. I can feel it.

**Tyron:** And ... so what's the first step?

**Marcus:** Or .... maybe we look beyond the Zealots. Maybe there is a new force in action. Maybe these killers have come in from Galilee ... even from Nazareth. That town is renowned for hoodlums and thieves.

**Tyron:** Of course ... so is Jerusalem.

**Marcus:** (*glaring at him in good humor*): Point well taken, but we need to

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double the security at the gates, all of them. We've got well enough killers in Jerusalem. And we don't need the rabid followers of this preacher we crucified teaming up with the radicals we are already dealing with.

**Tyron:** We'll put in additional screenings at all the gates. We can strip search if necessary, get into their carts. Size them up, keep out anything that might be a weapon. We will get on it.

**Marcus:** Cookware is okay. Don't get carried away. Be subtle, don't appear panicked. And ... dispatch most of your men and then go back to that Mark house, like you suggested.

**Tyron:** Yes. Will do. For what purpose? We searched it.

**Marcus:** Yes, but we didn't find anything, just a lot of space being wasted at the time. See who's sleeping there for sure. Show the man a little muscle if you have to. He needs to be scared shitless and ... more importantly, we may have need of that space ourselves. I will have a plan perhaps to lure these cretins out for a massacre of our own.

*Tyron saluted and was off.*

**SCENE 20:**

*Close-up of sandaled feet, men and women's, trudging over the rough desert terrain, from the walker's point of view toward and ever closer to the tomb. A giant rock door, cut to near circular. From Mary's POV we see her hand reaching up to touch the giant boulder and fondle it.*

**Mary:** My son's body is safe and secure. I am so grateful and so indebted to you my dear friend. The women did such a wonderful job. The oils smell most ... extravagant.

**Joseph:** Well worth the price. Feel his presence here, in this beautiful place. This is how it had to be. He is safe out here, not in the city.

*Stepping up for the first time, we see Joshua's brother James, a gangly and kind of awkward young man, as well as sister Ruth, who appears pious and in mourning, her husband, Cirillo, and younger brother Jude, a slender young man of 15, with a face that exudes alienation and sarcasm. He is the family's dark sheep, and has already been into trouble with authorities.*

**Mary:** May we kneel please and pray for our universal God to share his grace. We will worship today in the new way that my Son has proposed for the world. Speak to your eternal upholder, the Universal Father of all mortal man, a God of peace and love who radiates light to us from mansions on high. Thank the Father and request his guidance.

*The prayer circle comes together in reverence beneath the colorful and massive desert sky. We see that Jude is distracted and is eyeing a young girl carrying a pitcher of water. She looks at him with a tiny glimmer of a smile, and quickly turns and walks away, then turns again to flirt with him. Even though they are at prayer, he nudges James to ask ...*

**Jude:** How long will we be here?

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### SCENE 21:

*James, Nathaniel and Matthew make their way through narrow and perhaps treacherous streets, deep into the Turkish quarter.*

**Nathaniel:** I ... just don't know. It's somewhere around here, but they've re-worked the streets, I think. Well ... damned! I got us close.

**James:** And so we brought you along, Matthew, so you can go to the tax office. You can talk their language; you can find out.

**Matthew:** The office is on the river, down the way, several blocks.

**James:** Do you know anybody there? Can you get the address numbers?

**Nathaniel:** It's Julianna. Her name is Julianna and .... she's kind of ... more than a little blind.

**James:** Good. Maybe she won't be able to identify who lifted her purse.

**Nathaniel:** We are here to talk to her.

**James:** The money is ours, if she has it. I am hoping the weasel himself is there. We need to approach with stealth.

*(We see Matthew leaving the tax office, shaking hands from a friend from older days, saying his goodbyes, then returning to the other two.)*

**Matthew:** She is just down the way here. And she is up to date with her taxes. Actually ... she sucks the dick of the tax collector. *(He bursts into laughter.)*

**James:** Did you ever get any of that pussy, Nathaniel?

**Nathaniel:** Perverts.

**James:** No, actually, you were bringing her money, loyally from the coffers at our meetings. I don't know that she deserved it.

**Nathaniel:** I saw after the families. It was good work. They could always use some help.

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**James:** Too bad the Zebedees could not get a bit. They died with the fever. I don't know why we kids didn't.

**Nathaniel:** You were out to sea .. fishing much of that time.

**James:** We came back and the whole family was sick. We had just as soon stayed at sea -- except to bury them.

**Matthew:** We are here, we should turn into this alley.

*They soon came to a bedraggled door in a squalid cul de sac of modest dwellings. Matthew knocks and a woman calls out from inside.*

**Julianna:** Who is it?

**Matthew:** I am from the tax office. I have a refund. You have overpaid your taxes.

*(From inside the door a loud cackle)*

**Julianna:** Never heard anything that crazy and I been living a long time.

*Matthew had no patience. He slammed into the makeshift door and broke it open, and the men scurried past her and stormed inside.*

**Nathaniel:** We are not here to hurt you.

**Matthew:** We are looking for Judas. I trust he is here?

**Julianna:** My brother. Why would he be here?

**Nathaniel:** Where else would he be in Jerusalem?

**Julianna:** My brother has friends. He has his own life. I rarely see him -- nor do I need to.

**Matthew:** He did not bring you the money we sent him? We are with the ministry, of course, and we have collected enough to share while in the city.

**Julianna:** Well, no, and I certainly could use just a little bit of support. *(points at Nathaniel)* I don't see well but I know you. You brought me money before, which helped greatly with my plight. Perhaps you could just help me a little bit today. Is that why you came?

## APOSTLES AND REBELS

**Nathaniel:** Judas has money that belongs to all of us. We need to find him. It's important that we find him ... before someone else does.

**Julianna:** Someone .... else?

**Matthew:** The ones who slit throats and take money.

**Julianna:** I ... see.

**Nathaniel:** If he comes here, tell him to contact us, at the Arthos Mark house, Bennon courtyard. We can ... work things out.

**Julianna:** Yes! Why not?

*(The men leave, conversing over where to go next and what to do, making their way down the street. Inside the apartment, from behind a false compartment wall, Judas Iscariot climbs out and into the room.)*

**Julianna:** What money? *(Her tone is different, harder.)*

**Judas:** You don't want to know.

**Julianna:** You stole it from the ministry. You left and took their purse?

**Judas:** Of course not. I am no thief. I am an honorable man.

**Julianna:** You were once an honorable man, but then you started hanging out with street preachers. How is that business going anyway?

**Judas:** It's not a business. People give freely. Joshua ... is a great man. He has many admirers and he is generous ... to a fault. The money that Nathaniel brought to you .... came from his preaching. He could draw a crowd and hold it.

**Julianna:** Could?

**Judas:** The purse is in a safe place and I will take it to the other apostles. I am bound to do this but I hope to wait until daylight when the streets are safer. I have even added to the purse — 30 pieces of silver that I fortuitously came into.

**Julianna:** Sleep here, my brother. I am forever lonely.

## APOSTLES AND REBELS

**Judas:** Yes, I am incredibly tired.

**Julianna:** And certainly leave me a few shekels when you go.

*(Camera leaves room and pans outside. We see a spy from the Sanhedrin lurking below.)*

## APOSTLES AND REBELS

### SCENE 22:

*The apostles are feasting on wine and roasted meat and are in a generally brighter mood than in past days. The upper room is lit with lamplight and just a little bit too much noise for the Mark family, who are dining at their table on the main floor. Finally, Elijah gets up and walks upstairs hurriedly.*

**Elijah:** They're too loud ... they're getting a little bit too loud.

*His wife and young Jon Mark remain at the table. Elijah goes to the door to confront the apostles.*

**Arthos:** You're too loud. Tone it down.

*(John says nothing but grabs Arthos by the collar and pulls him inside roughly.)*

**John:** Sit down, brother.

*(Someone hands Elijah a glass of wine and he is ushered to a seat.)*

**Elijah:** I am at family dinner!

**John:** You are here. Listen to me. We have a plan.

**Elijah:** Where did you get all this food, this wine?

*(Simon steps out of the shadows.)*

**Simon:** Hello old friend. I had a sudden stroke of good fortune so ... I hit the market. Seems some Roman soldiers had a bit more money than they needed, so we relieved them of it.

**Elijah:** You are all going mad!

**John:** We just have a plan to get out of the city. Simon brings it from his friends in the political opposition. They sent us money. They will help us get out of here. They appreciate Joshua. They loved what he was doing.

**Elijah:** They're killers. Did you hear they killed three soldiers last night, in a bar on the Glenbarry. There will be hades to pay.

## APOSTLES AND REBELS

**John:** Soldiers ... killed? We didn't kill any soldiers. *(with sudden realization, turning to Simon.)*

**Simon:** Camel shit! Don't look this way. Do I look like I would attack soldiers? With what? It's ridiculous to think I was involved with it.

**John:** You just talked to us about relieving Roman soldiers of their money. Are you duping us? Are you feeding us with blood money?

**Simon:** I killed no one. They did it. So ... well .... They did it all right. But they were going to do it anyway. I took no part but ... we can use the money. The Zealots are our friends; the Romans are our enemies.

**Andrew:** We're not soldiers, Simon. We want to be ministers -- of love and peace and brotherhood. Have you joined the Zealots? They accomplish nothing. They kill a few Romans, they kill more of us in turn. That's what they do. That's not what we do.

**John:** Who here wants to be ministers, and not killers?

**James:** I do. We must rally ourselves. Things are getting out of hand. Who else?

**Phillip:** I intend to be a minister, not here, but somewhere. We have learned so much. We can be connected to a higher power and if we die, we just go up to a greater goodness.

**Nathaniel:** I'm a minister, and Joshua advised us to teach in our own way.

**James Alpheus:** We are in.

**Judas Alpheus:** Yes. Not kill people. We want to love people and help them.

**Simon:** Listen ... listen to me. I hear you. And I can preach the good news as well as you can, but we have to be practical. We have to work with whomever we can for support -- and to get out of this city. It may get a lot hotter around here.

**John:** I'm sure of it. And those who killed the soldiers are completely to blame. *(He walks up to confront Simon face to face.)*

**Simon:** *(lying)* They ... do their own thing. I was not involved.

## APOSTLES AND REBELS

**John:** If we don't support what they do, then why should they support what we want to do? It's not anything the same.

**Simon:** It's just mutual admiration. They are already using the slave caravan to smuggle in weapons and get their own people out of the city. We blend into what they're already doing, just pose as slaves -- and they are paying off officials, you can bet on it. They have people positioned all across the city.

**John:** We aren't revolutionaries, Simon. We need to get back to Galilee and our families. We can regroup there, and see what we need to do to carry forward the work.

**James:** I don't like the idea of posing as slaves, all shackled and helpless.

**Simon:** We'll be released as soon as we get clear of the city. Of course, we will. We are their allies.

**John:** I don't support them.

**Simon:** You can't blabber that about. Keep your mouth, shut. Keep your feelings down, go along with the plan. We can use them to get out and then we're free. We're going to wind up dead if we stay in the city -- and the slave caravan on Monday morning is the only way we can get out.

**James:** Okay, fuck it! Strike a bargain with the devil. We're no good to anybody dead and we're right in the middle of it here.

**John:** Why would they release us later?

**Simon:** I told you. We are both fighting Roman oppression. They are setting up our Master as an ideal of Goodness, peace on earth when we can achieve it. But we must fight for it.

**John:** We are worthy slaves on our own, you know, once they got us chained up. They would sell us out, maybe. How do you think we would like quarry?

**Andrew:** The Romans would like to put us in their slave quarries too, you know.

**Simon:** The Zealots want us to be free -- free men, free from Roman oppression. That's exactly what we want -- right? How can we go wrong? They want Joshua to be their icon.

## APOSTLES AND REBELS

**Peter:** Well, I wonder how Joshua would feel about that. May we never see the day that soldiers or anyone is killed in his name

Simon: Too late to wish that.

### SCENE 23:

*An action sequence. Roman soldiers march up to the busy bar where their comrades were killed. Marcus is in command. Upon signal, they plow their way through people at the door, brutalizing patrons, leaving wreck and ruin. They drag out two men from behind the bar and haul them outside, line them up against the wall to face a line of Roman soldiers. They are giddy with delight. The fear-stricken men are motioned together a little closer by the spears of soldiers.*

**Marcus:** By command of the Jerusalem authorities, I am now taking control of this establishment to be confiscated and sold at public auction. The proprietors are guilty of a heinous crime, allowing the usage of their place of business and even aiding and abetting in the murder of three of our brave and honorable soldiers -- keepers of the peace. The penalty for this atrocity is death by execution ... at the hands of those fellow soldiers whom you have deeply aggrieved. Are you ready?

*The soldiers revel in celebration. They are aligned each with a spear, and the first one goes flying, striking one of the men in his stomach. Cheers. Spears fly one by one in their competition, to horribly kill the men and pin them against the wall. Cheering, cries of pain, incredible violence. In the end, the bodies are filled with spears and stuck on the wall.*

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### SCENE 24:

*(Tyron is down in the dark street, looking up at the upper room. There is conversation, loud voices but he can't make out the words. He is alone, having dismissed his fellow soldiers. He closes his eyes and leans against the wall.*

*His mind fades into a surrealistic memory -- the point of view is from up on the cross, of one who was hanging there. Leering and antagonistic soldiers are all about, and eyes turn right to see a huddled mass of mourners kept under control by the soldiers.*

*One soldier is drunk, some garbled words .... 'hey, you still with us?' ... he jabs his spear into us. Still POV from cross, we see Tyron wrap his arms around the soldier's neck, jerking his head back, wresting away his spear and bashing him to the ground viciously. Bloodied himself, he rises up and looks again up at the cross. Camera descends from the higher view and down close-up into Tyron's pained face.)*

*(Abruptly, a slamming door brings Tyron back to reality, in time to see one of the men, Simon, slipping out of the Mark dwelling and walking hurriedly down the street. Tyron slips from his hiding place to follow.)*

### SCENE 25:

*The encampment near the tomb with tents, a fire, torches on poles. Joseph walks about, surveying his domain. He looks up at the star-studded sky. A comet streams by, splitting the sky, and is gone. Joseph looks askance, in wonder of what it might mean.*

**Joseph:** What? ..... what! I am simply not able to read the signs.

### SCENE 26:

*Jude and a women's ministry girl, naked in tent, passionate coitus.*

**SCENE 27:**

*Mary of Nazareth, lying awake outside by the fire, looks across the way to see the women from her son's service corps, cooking by the fire, some chanting a prayer of reverence. Mary Magdalene is seen carrying a water jug. The two find each other's eyes again.*

**SCENE 28:**

*Marcus and Tyron walk together inside the soldier encampment, to a table-top display that roughly outlines the city of Jerusalem.*

**Marcus:** Now ... show me where it is. You say it's along the east canal, but that area is clean. We patrol it.

**Tyron:** There is an opening here, somewhere along this sea wall. The man disappeared inside, then later three other men came out. I didn't follow them. The man I followed never left.

**Marcus:** And he was ... who? Why did you follow him?

**Tyron:** He came from the Mark house. I wouldn't have believed it, but I think his followers, the preacher's men, may be joining the radicals.

*(Marcus was thoughtful and Tyron continued.)*

**Tyron:** How could you blame them after having their leader hung up like that, making him suffer even before his demise? There was so much cruelty shown ... toward the families, the mourners. Vengeance can make even a good man go bad.

**Marcus:** His men weren't on the hill, afraid to show their faces. Mostly women up there.

**Tyron:** Guess they might have felt safe enough. They're just women.

**Marcus:** Common people, nothing special. The man didn't have any shred of authority on his side.

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**Tyron:** We need to get him out of people's heads. You saw the "J" symbol, same as I did.

**Marcus:** Too early to tell what that might mean, or what they want us to think it means. There must be another way out of there. Where does all of this go?

**Tyron:** Well, there are people living in there, believe it or not. Living like rats, no doubt, and maybe off them. There's lots of poor and afflicted in this sorry city.

**Marcus:** And where had you rather be? There's no wealth at all out in the country. You wind up farming and eating roots to survive.

**Tyron:** So they are nestled in there in some off-shoot, and surrounded by the masses of the poor. So how do we get at them? We can't take an army in there.

**Marcus:** We have to bring them out to meet us. Cheese for the trap. We must find ... cheese.

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### SCENE 29:

*At the encampment, Jude and the women's corps girl are leaving before sunrise, with a passionate kiss. As he turns, he suddenly faces Mary Magdalene flush in the face. She looks him in the eye and delivers a slap across his cheek. He is flustered, and promptly runs away, leaving Mary to gaze into the eyes of the frightened girl.*

### SCENE 30:

*Pontius Pilate is having a busy day at his offices. He turns from one task to another, signs two declarations, and now faces someone who has been granted entrance.*

**The Man:** So you see, the bar and the brothel ... it did not actually belong to the two unfortunate miscreants you brought to justice so ... decisively. It's just that my family has owned this building for some years and yet they say they are going to confiscate it, they say, like take it away. But we have done nothing wrong and only applaud your call to justice. We are strong supporters of our government, our whole stability, and so --

**Pilate:** Quiet! We have a provision for you to regain possession of your building. There is a special fund set up to collect whatever damages have been incurred and maintain the security system. Go downstairs, with this person, and you can settle your accounts down there.

**The Man:** I have ... so little money.

**Pilate:** Why, sir, you had a thriving business there. We have an expedient plan to have it returned to you. Thank you.

*(Pilate's aide pushes his way through a clot of people and into the office.)*

**Pilate:** You are racked with urgency.

**Arthos:** A man downstairs is part of the preacher's band, name of Judas Iscariot, he says. The rest of them have all disappeared as you know. He wants to speak with you .... has some kind of grievance with the Jewish authorities.

**Pilate:** Then why not take it up with them?

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**Arthos:** He says the Jewish unfairly and unjustly bade the Roman authorities to do their bidding. The man deserved a reprimand but nothing like what was dealt. He is kind of raving.

**Pilate:** I will come down. Bring him to the private office in the basement.

### SCENE 31:

*(A somber, window-lit office in the basement, secluded from the bustle of public business. Judas Iscariot is seated, flanked by Arthos and an armed guard. Pontius Pilate dissects his face with a menacing stare. Judas, nervous, avoids much eye contact. He is agitated and uncertain but determined to speak his cause.)*

**Judas:** Sir, may I plead to you my case?

**Pilate:** Speak ... succinctly.

**Judas:** The man, Joshua, that you crucified. I had arranged for the Sanhedrin to come and talk to him, work out their differences. I had no idea they would carry him forthright to a dungeon for torture and murder. I swear to you that I did not know, in any measure, how venomous these people can be. I was the broker. I was the one who could help bridge the gap -- between his ... twisted sincerity, and the laws of the church, which must be followed.

**Pilate:** Slow down. You didn't know they were going to just kill him.

**Judas:** No, of course not. And when I confronted them about it, they treated me like a serf. They insisted I take thirty silver pieces here in return for my service. I have it here ... I don't want it. I can turn it over to you as evidence of my sincerity, and my good will. I only want justice.

**Pilate:** What might that be? *(He motions for Arthos to take the proffered bag of coins. Judas watches sadly as the purse goes away)*

**Judas:** What sir?

**Pilate:** Justice. What is that?

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**Judas:** They killed him! He will be a martyr. Mark my words. He will be a martyr.

**Pilate:** If they're going to rally around a rebel leader, I had just soon he be dead.

**Judas:** I'm sorry that .... you have seen nothing of the effect he has on people, all across the country. You can't imagine. We have been to Antioch, Philadelphia, Capernaum several times ... but, somehow, he turned wrong.

**Pilate:** Dead wrong! Listen to me. I want you to know. I met with the Jewish authorities. I tried to reason with them. They were adamant. They said he was rallying the ignorant masses into open rebellion against the church. His violence at the temple ... that fire-breathing speech at the temple. Marched out of town arrogantly after stirring up people all over the city.

**Judas:** Yes, he was charismatic, a leader, praise be his name.

**Pilate:** He should have used a lot more sense. I didn't think I could buck the entire Jewish hierarchy. I didn't know a single street preacher could matter that much.

**Judas:** He was not .... just another preacher. *(A tear rolled down his cheek, not unnoticed by Pilate and Arthos)*

**Pilate:** So you want someone punished? Shall we torch the temple?

**Judas:** If only the faith had new leadership, a new vision that could well benefit from including some of Joshua's ideas. He had great insight.

**Pilate:** Kind words for someone who set him up.

**Judas:** It .... arggh! ... was not supposed to happen that way.

**Pilate:** So what was supposed to happen then? Perhaps a public debate in the city square of your traditional values and his new ones? A kind-hearted search for a common bond where the two views can be blended into one precious doctrine? Or .... maybe just drag him off to prison and execute him.

**Judas:** They are reprehensible.

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**Pilate:** I want you to stay overnight until I can make some decisions about this. There is a bedroom down the hall -- with a mirror. *(He looks derisively at Judas.)*

*(Arthos and a guard usher Judas into his new quarters and as he looks them over, they close the door behind them. Judas notes that there are bars over the window. There is a bowl of fruit and pitcher of water. Outside he can only see the backside of another building. They had left. He walked to the door and tried to open it -- locked! He wrenches and pushes on it -- in vain.)*

**SCENE 32:**

*Mary of Magdalene makes her way through the camp and fills a container of water at the oasis spring. She turns to see a woman standing nearby in the moonlight. Appearing dramatically is Mary of Nazareth, Joshua's mother, facing her son's woman, in whatever role.*

**Mother Mary of Nazareth:** May I talk to you, please, for just a moment?

**Magdalene:** I .... have nothing to say about my personal life with your son, only that he was precious to me, as I am sure he was to you.

**Mother:** Why did he come to Jerusalem ... and instigate his own death? Why would he do that? Did he over-estimate the number of people who would gather around him?

**Magdalene:** He was not a revolutionary. He wanted to fight no one.

**Mother:** But he must have known what would happen. Did he ...want to die? Did he want to become a martyr? That thought has occurred to me.

**Magdalene:** He did not want to die. He had to. It was his mission. He was incarnated in empathy with man and he had to die like a man, like the rest of us must.

*She starts to walk away from the spring, hauling the water, with Joshua's mother following along.*

**Mother:** How can it be one's mission to be humiliated, disgraced, mocked, tortured, crucified — by one's own religion?

**Magdalene:** And so he illuminated what he came to oppose — corruption of our Father God's guidance. And he showed the future of a better way, a higher way. A way of peace. They believe they have killed him and ended his mission, but ... it remains to be seen if they have been successful. Don't you think? We carry his higher wisdom of human and spiritual reality with us.

**Mother:** I can't imagine where we can go from here ... to carry on for him. He will not be easily replaced if you are thinking of carrying on the preaching, somewhere else, where it's safer. Peter is a good preacher, maybe one or two others in their own way ... but they don't get along all that well sometimes.

## APOSTLES AND REBELS

**Magdalene:** We are sapped of energy and purpose. It remains for Joshua to send one whom he promised.

**Mother:** Who?

**Magdalene:** He called it the Spirit of Truth He said it will come soon.

**Mother:** Are we to be imbued suddenly with some great wisdom then ... to know why all of this has happened ... the truth of it?

**Magdalene:** Shall we just .... wait and see?

**Mother:** Wait? Until when? Will the Spirit take form? Such a mystery ... it is .... unfathomable.

**Magdalene:** Joshua always emphasized ..... Faith. I must take the water to the kitchen. We are ... friends. *(She turns and hurries away.)*

**Mother:** In what? Faith in what?

**Magdalene:** *(she stops and looks back, anxiously)* In the Universal Father. Since we are so ignorant in the ways of his Spirits ... faith is all we have.  
*(She leaves Joshua's mother standing and wondering.)*

## APOSTLES AND REBELS

### SCENE 33:

*Scene: Zealot headquarters. A member ambles through a squalid underground slum to a large iron door, knocks, and it is opened, into a spacious interior encircled with sleeping bunks and filled with muscular men and weaponry. They are hidden deeply into the slum and protected by it. Vokar greets the messenger and brings him forward to whisper the message into his ear. He listens and turns to the room. Simon is there, flirting with one of the several women and drinking an ale.*

**Vokar:** The passage is booked, but how many men -- exactly? And no women.

**Simon:** No. No. There will be ten men ... maybe eleven.

**Vokar:** Give me a number.

**Simon:** Say eleven ... Thomas may return ... can't say.

**Vokar:** You will pay for eleven then.

**Simon:** But ... you want a big fee? We don't have any money. We had a purse; it was stolen by one .... rotten member of our band. He left with it, even as he turned over our leader to the authorities.

**Vokar:** It's not me wants the money, it's the caravan people. Any way you can come up with a hundred shekels a head?

**Simon:** I told the men that it was set. I didn't think it would be so ...

**Vokar:** Go out and do some preaching. Pass the hat.

**Simon:** I thought we were allies -- comrades in arms -- that you would help us through this, and we would regroup and help you later, like I promised.

**Vokar:** The caravan is a business. It ain't mine but it is a business. You can hang here with us because you represent the Man, the noble man who died for us.

*Simon, distressed, makes his amends and leaves, pausing to kiss and whisper in the ear of the woman he had sat with. He slips outside into the turmoil of the squalor and makes his way out. In a corner, cloaked and*

## APOSTLES AND REBELS

*disguised, a man opens his hood near the iron door. It is Tyron. Now the Romans have found the portal.*

### **SCENE 34:**

*A messenger comes into the Rabbi's court, comes forward and whispers in his ear. There is a short quiet conversation. The Rabbi and head of the Jerusalem then calls together his aides.*

**Caiphaz:** That man, Iscariot, has now called upon Pontius Pilate himself. Alas, he went into the magistrate's offices and did not come out. He remains there, under our surveillance outside, and presumably in custody. He will be making harsh judgments of us.

**Aide:** Pilate himself was the authority. It was his decision in the end, not ours. The man was guilty as sin, by law.

**Caiphaz:** Perhaps not in the re-telling. I want Iscariot's sister picked up. Bring her here, and scour the apartment for any money her swine of a brother may have left there.

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### SCENE 35:

*Julianna comes to the door, answering a rap. She is rude and disdainful and they tear down the door, grab her up violently, striking her flush in the face and hauling her away. Outside, they hold her against the wall while they ransack the dwelling. A neighbor comes over to complain mildly and is shouted away.*

**First thug:** Didn't find no money to amount to anything. A few coins ...

**Second thug:** Didn't think you would.

**Thug:** Want her dead? Can we fuck her first?

**Second thug:** No. Not yet. Maybe not at all. The boss wants her. (*Julianna is bloodied and bowed.*)

**Thug:** Get up! Stand up! You got to walk.

*Julianna spits at them with saliva and blood from her bruised lip. The man recoils, draws his short roman sword.*

**Second thug:** No! You may as well cut your own throat while you're at it. You stupid piece of shit. They have use for her. They want to make a bargain.

*(The man reluctantly sheaths his sword and shoves her off in front of him, down the street.)*

**SCENE 36:**

*Upper room: Simon and the apostles meet.*

**John:** So now they want a lot of money -- and we still have none.

**Simon:** Not them. It's the caravan people.

**John:** So you said.

**James:** I say we blow it away. I didn't trust them much anyway, and I sure don't want to go out as a slave in chains. That just never did smell right.

**Simon:** I trust these men, James. They are brave and they are actually doing something where most everyone else just shuts up and subjects to being brutalized, and their money taxed away, everywhere they turn.

**James:** Okay, they're brave. They'll wind up dead anyway. We need to be out of this forsaken city and back out on the sea, where we belong.

**Andrew:** I'm no fisherman.

**James:** Just out of the fucking city! What about our hosts downstairs? Do they have money?

**Andrew:** Not that I see.

**James:** Maybe they could get some money. Does he have a business? Where does he work?

**Andrew:** He's a cook -- works a meat stand down near the quarry. I don't think he makes that much.

**John:** Maybe they could loan us some money. We could pay it back. They do want to get rid of us.

**James:** They could get rid of us by calling the Romans. They would likely get a reward.

**John:** I don't think --

**James:** You don't know.

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**Phillip:** They are very tired of us being here. I don't think we can trust them not to snap at some point.

**Andrew:** One usually has to pay -- to have a hideout -- and all we've got is Simon and -- where is he?

*Simon has sneaked away and is downstairs already, confronting Maria in the kitchen. She backs away from his aggressive approach.*

**Simon:** I don't want to alarm you but do you have any money? We have got to get out of here and we've got to have money to do it -- to get out of your way. Can we borrow from you? Then -- we can be gone and ... you will get it back, I assure you.

He is pressing her and she is nervous, John and the apostles are crowding down the stairwell and into the kitchen. The force of them frightens her; she fumbles in fear to grab up a kitchen knife.

**Simon:** We mean no harm. It's a loan.

*She swings the knife wildly, drawing a slit of blood across his cheek. He struggles with her and James grabs her also, to pull her to the floor. She protests loudly. He stuffs a rag in her mouth.*

*Simon staggers away, holding the cut in his cheek, blood trickling down his face. Turmoil! Elijah breaks it up my crying for a halt and waving a bag of money.*

**Elijah:** I will pay. I will pay. Please release my wife.

*Phillip pulls in all the coins while the apostles cluster around, some horrified.*

**Simon:** We are a disgrace to Joshua, but we will stay alive to spread the message. *(He dabs his bloody cheek.)*

**Peter:** This is not justified, my brother. It is too far out of hand. I go to be alone. I am not part of this elaborate escape plan. There must be a better way. *(He stumbles up the stairs.)*

**Andrew:** We must stay together, Brother, don't run away. Face our plight with us.

**James:** He's gone. He can't handle it any more.

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### SCENE 37:

*Scene: Julianna, bedraggled and shackled stands before the Rabbi. He sidles up to her without a word, eying her nervousness, noting her eyes.*

**Caiphias:** Can you see, my dear? Do you see who I am?

**Julianna:** I see you. You are a little fuzzy.

**Caiphias:** We just need to make sure you are being identified correctly. Do you understand? ... What then is the name of your parents and where do they live?

**Julianna:** My mother died years ago. My father retired from the mines and he has died too.

**Caiphias:** And their names?

**Julianna:** Artemus ... Iscariot ... and my mother Isabelle.

**Caiphias:** Thank you. *(He motions for her to be hustled away. He turns to an aide)* Now they will know we have her.

**Julianna:** *(being dragged away):* Please don't kill me. I've done nothing. I'm not involved in my brother's activities. I hardly know him any more, since he joined that renegade preacher.

**Caiphias:** She seems ... pliable enough. She might be useful. Feed her and don't abuse her. Period.

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### SCENE 38:

*Mary of Nazareth at night, moonlight, at the tomb. She is reflective, thinks of something in time, gets up with determination and strides back into camp. She walks to the tent of Joseph, past two servants and into his sitting area. He is there, nude with two servant girls providing him with sexual favors.*

**Joseph:** (*scrambling to cover himself*): What? What in the --

**Mary:** I must see my son.

### SCENE 39:

*SCENE: In the squalid underground by the canal, the looming muscular Vokar cuts through the poor hovels, his two henchmen on either side, pushing people away. A haggard, white bearded man in a weird hat gets Vokar's attention.*

**Beggar:** Oh, master, we starve at your door, all around you, even as we shroud you and protect you, all the while dying of hunger and thirst.

*With a motion, Vokar has the two men throw an array of coins on either side, sending the beggars into a scramble. They open the iron door and go inside, walking soon up to Simon, sitting at a table. His slashed cheek is being treated by one of the paid women.*

**Vokar:** You took a hit.

**Simon:** A scratch, a nuisance. But I dispatched his ass into the spirit world. Cut off his balls and stuffed them in his mouth, I did.

**Vokar:** Well, well.

**Simon:** I don't take any shit off people.

**Vokar:** And where, may I ask, did this epic battle take place? We've got eyes and ears in all the bars and alleyways and saw no such thing.

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**Simon:** Well, surely you don't cover every nook and granny. At any rate, it shouldn't be talked about. I am here to report -- they can't come up with the money ... well, they managed to get six hundred from our gracious ... ummm, not so gracious hosts.

**Vokar:** Six hundred then. Ten men. Have them at the south gate bridge at daybreak. Each head will be counted.

**Simon:** Damned. Strict.

**Vokar:** Business. And I don't have time to fuck with them. Do your business and best ... from now on .. no need to risk being followed here. Stay away until Monday daybreak. I will be there to see you off at the pier.

**Simon:** You don't need my help in any way?

**Vokar:** You had best look over your numb-skulled friends. They should have been out of this city as soon as they lost the man. I didn't see any of their cowardly asses up on Calvary at any rate, only the women went up there, and then you fellows got holed up with no resources, but, anyway, there's a few coins that can be made off you.

*Simon looks pissed, stunned. He peers at his scarred face in a mirror held by the girl.*

**Simon:** Six hundred ... to be exact.

*He looks up from the mirror into the girl's face. She winks at him. He looks then into Vokar's amused face. Vokar winks too. His face is sarcastic, menacing. Simon leaves.*

**SCENE 40:**

*Close-up to two glasses of wine being poured by Joseph, pull back to see that he is now clothed in a lavish robe. He completes his task and turns to face Mary of Nazareth and hand her one.*

**Joseph:** I .... must apologize again.

**Mary:** No. No. I am the intruder. Entirely my fault. I apologize.

**Joseph:** And I remain at your service. What then ... is the problem?

**Mary:** I ... just wanted to see his face, one more time.

**Joseph:** We have spared no expense, no effort to preserve him in this heat. You saw .... and I know you helped ... we should not ...

**Mary:** No, you're right. It is done. I am stupid. His face must now live in my memory. And ... I remember him in repose. He looked at peace. In no pain, almost with some kind of confidence. He ... that's how he looked. *(She looks up at Joseph.)*

**Joseph:** How could he not be revered, by those who knew him?

**Mary:** And killed so young, so obscenely, for all to ridicule, stripped naked and mocked with a horrible sign. How could one so just, so beautiful, be so desecrated. How could this be? Did the gods decree this? Was he punished?

**Joseph:** I have long paid homage to the gods of the pantheon, those Roman institutions, one for every reason and season. I have never read that any of them would strike down a righteous man.

**Mary:** Even ... a disloyal one? One who professed to serving another god.

**Joseph:** I believe they might always find room for another god.

**Mary:** And what of the Jewish hierarchy? Does his death fall at their door? Did they avenge his ... disloyalty?

**Joseph:** He came into Jerusalem and caused an uproar in the temple, blasphemy, I suppose, and then he spake boldly when he returned later. It would be his last discourse, and it was powerful. I was there.

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**Mary:** It seems I never knew him fully. I never knew his mind that well, but I felt and I knew of his good heart, his many talents, his ... nobility.

**Joseph:** His name will endure, long after we have gone.

**Mary:** And yet the Jewish faith ...well, they are not worthy of him.

### SCENE 41:

*Office of Pontius Pilate, Governor of Jerusalem. Inside, sitting stolidly and waiting for Pilate is Rabbi Caiphas and a male servant. Administrative assistant Arthos and a young messenger boy stand nearby at the ready. Pilate strides in and goes behind his desk to face them. They have stood when he walked in and he bides them to sit.*

**Pilate:** I am surprised to see you, Rabbi, on such short notice. I am making you some time because you say you have a serious complaint.

**Caiphas:** The complaint is from the sister of one Judas Iscariot, whom I believe is in your custody.

**Pilate:** You believe?

**Caiphas:** He came into this building and, to our knowledge, he remains here.

**Pilate:** So you were following him.

**Caiphas:** We simply had to pursue him. He left my place in an angry rage, full of threats, and now his sister, Julianna, comes to us in tears, saying that he has become dangerous to himself and others. He wrecked her home, struck her down, and she came to us for protection.

**Pilate:** Pissed off, he is. For what reason, I wonder.

**Caiphas:** He blames us, alas, for the justice that was served with the angry preacher. He was severely stricken by the man, his mind has gone.

**Pilate:** Crazy then?

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**Caiphas:** Crazy. You must know. You have him here.

**Pilate:** He is, at present, our guest. In fact, he has been very forth coming about some of his ... agreements with you ... and the ways you have violated them.

**Caiphas:** We only paid him to spy on the preacher. It was a matter of security. And when he sacked the temple, our concerns were validated. And, of course, this Judas Iscariot was part of that vandalism too...and surely you will want him also brought to justice. I don't mean...crucifixion or the like. I believe we could just be given custody and, together with his sister, we can work out this family mess, and...this religious matter. No hassles for you.

**Pilate:** No hassle. In fact, I have rather enjoyed his company. I've heard the followers of that Joshua were uneducated men, fishermen and the like, but this Iscariot is well-educated, shrewd, has an inquisitive mind. Seems to have high ideals.

**Caiphas:** Just the opposite. These men, wherever they are, in hiding, represent no less than a conspiracy against Rome. They are, in fact, clandestinely aligned with the Zealots, I am sure of it, and they blaspheme even their own religion. They have pursued a fraudulent faker and lost their connection to the true God.

**Pilate:** Maybe you will hold a place for them. I think redemption might be better than any more killing. They are only rallying around our ill-advised action at any rate, making our supposed victim into a martyr, perhaps even strengthening the Zealot opposition -- they've just killed three soldiers -- and now we have no idea where his other men are, gone from the city, I suppose, because of our porous -- very porous security.

And now, when we manage to get custody of at least one man we want to talk with extensively, then here ... here you are ... wanting custody yourself for reasons that are not altogether clear. We are the authorities, not you, and you can trust us to deal with it. Go back to your temples and things and leave the justice to us. Stay in the religion business.

**Caiphas:** It is indeed a religious matter, a family matter, and I see no jurisdiction that you would have over it.

**Pilate:** But .... I thought it was a conspiracy against Rome. Is that not what you said?

**Caiphas:** You give us no respect. We are men of God. These men are Jews, after all.

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**Pilate:** But ... you have but one god. We Romans have a grand selection. In fact, I am being advised from the higher realms right now ... that we should be the absolute authority in this matter. Disagree? Maybe your god could come after ours with your sword of righteousness, but we have so many ... one for any purpose. It wouldn't really be a fair fight, would it?

**Caiphas:** I don't know how you expect to use this ... Judas Iscariot. But he is a reprehensible cretin, a liar, and I don't see that he has any value at all.

**Pilate:** On the contrary, he handled all of the business affairs of this religious band, was literally the brains of the ministry, kept the money, had all the connections to get things done. Quite a fellow.

**Caiphas:** He sold out his man for 30 pieces of silver. Maybe you had best be wary of him.

**Pilate:** And you.

*(Caiphas and associates storm out dramatically. He looks back.)*

**Caiphas:** He's a worthless wretch, no more. You will find no rationality within this motley gang of insurrectionists ... disguised as evangelists. The head of this snake has been severed, leaving only the flailing muscles in the death knell.

**Pilate:** I am sure this man, this Joshua ben Joseph, will hardly be remembered as venomous, but rather as a deliverer, a man of high values and strong demeanor. Maybe that .... great deliverer you all seem to be yearning for .... one to deliver you from this horrid Roman oppression.

**Caiphas:** We only yearn for our own land, a piece of earth, free of your domination.

**Pilate:** Good luck, regarding all that.

*He looks after them wryly and hoists a glass of wine as Caiphas and retinue leave the room.*

**Scene 42:**

*(Nathaniel rushes down the street and to the Mark house, he sees little Jon Mark in the dining area, greets and hugs him, grabs a date from a basket and bounds up the stairs. He confronts the other apostles who are conferring and pulling together coins on the table.)*

**Nathaniel:** She's gone. Iscariot's sister, and the neighbors say some men took her away.

**John:** What men?

**Nathaniel:** They weren't soldiers. Just looked like brigands.

**Peter:** The Sanhedrins. The rabbi they call Caiphas; he has spoken against us. That is my idea.

**Nathaniel:** Why would they want her?

**James:** Maybe they're looking for Iscariot too.

**Nathaniel:** Why? I thought the son of a bitch was with them.

**Peter:** Maybe they think she will lead them to us -- and, of course, the Zealots, now that Simon has so indelibly linked us to them and their violent excursions. The Romans likely now consider us to be .... one.

**Simon:** You will be happy to acknowledge our new friends and protectors, Peter, when they save our asses from the Romans. We need all the help we can get, even if they manage to give the Romans a dose of their own shit now and then.

**Peter:** Shit stinks. You smell like it.

**Simon:** And you're a cowardly sight. You showed what you are back a way, or don't you remember your lying and whimpering when the soldiers got in your face?

**Peter:** Sometimes you have to live to fight another day, Simon. Self-sacrifice is not what it's touted to be, when you can survive and go on.

**James:** No sacrifice here. We will have to fight to survive. I'm sure of it. The road out of here won't be easy.

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**Andrew:** I don't see that we would have any protection out there, other than the disguise of a caravan and the word of some self-serving rebels. We will wind up slaves ourselves. I don't know that they really want to help us since we won't stay and fight with them. How can they possibly respect us?

**Simon:** We're going to have to trust somebody to get us out of here. The Zealots support our man; they have taken up his cause.

**Peter:** As if he wanted it. That's crazy. You are co-opting us with Satan. They are killers. There has to be another way.

**John:** And so what is it?

**Peter:** I'm not going anywhere at all. True spirit has come into my mind now. We will stay here, we will form a powerful prayer circle, put our energy together. We will call upon the power of the Universal Father, the power that we alone know as his first ministers. We will be protected by the Spirit and we will be empowered.

**Phillip:** And how will it deter the Romans from killing us?

**Peter:** Faith. Where is your faith, Phillip? What did the Master tell us about the power of faith?

**Phillip:** Faith in resurrection from death. That's what he said. He didn't say we wouldn't be killed -- and tortured first. He said we could endure it and go to mansions in the sky, but I want to just get out of the city instead. I'm just an ordinary man, and I have a family and I want to live for awhile longer.

**Peter:** So if we stay here, we die. That's your offering? You have no higher thought except your own hide?

**Andrew:** I think we should get out of the city, somehow, and go preach the good news about Joshua in other places, where they have already accepted us. We just preach all of the fine qualities he stood for, that's the best we can do. That's what we must do. He invested a lot of time and effort in us, this motley band. We need to come through for him somehow. The longer we can live the longer we can preach the good news.

**Phillip:** So yes, that means staying alive first, or we can't do anything. We have a martyr -- a great and noble martyr. We need to go spread the joy and the love that he represented -- and he never failed to represent it.

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**John:** Well, we need to get ourselves out of the city or we are doomed and forgotten. We can't represent him and glorify his name if we're dead.

**Peter:** I am staying.

**John:** The Marks don't want you here, or none of us. You'd best think about that.

**Peter:** I'm going to find his family, his mother, wherever they are. I need to talk to his mother.

**Nathaniel:** She will want to know where we've all been.

**Simon:** They didn't want us. Or they would have taken us. It's not our fault we're still alive.

**Andrew:** We have been asked, urged, begged by the Master to carry on the work. Let us stay alive and do it!

**Peter:** I'm doing it here, where he left us --in Jerusalem. I will be .... empowered. It is within my power to live for him. It is within my power to die.

**Simon:** We have our martyr, Peter. You need to stay alive and preach. You've got a gift that I don't have, nor I think the rest of us. You must be our voice — not hanging from a cross.

**Andrew:** Okay. We must get out and preach in other places.

**Peter:** I must stay here ... and redeem myself.

*The room breaks in more arguing as the camera moves and fades out.  
The apostles are still in conflict.*

**SCENE 43:**

*Mary Magdalene sits alone by the remains of a fire. It is late at night. The young girl, Mira, walks up silently to stand in front of her in the firelight. She has had sexual relations with Jude.*

**Mira:** You called for me.

**Magdalene:** And you certainly know the reason. It is unseemly that you have coitus with a member of the Nazareth family. How could you -- how could he ... have a mind for such things in the face of this grievous time?

**Mira:** We were attracted to one another.

**Magdalene:** Mira, the old ways, the ways of the Pagan temple, are over. We have a new God now, and one that requires a level of self-responsibility that leads to greater stability. You well know some of the excesses of the old ways, turning our great gift of sensuality into ... vulgarity. Human beings have even been killed, sacrificed, for the old ways when they displeased the wrong people.

**Mira:** Corruption, yes. But that's an entirely different matter than sharing your love with someone, your intimate affection for a fellow personality. It's personal; I don't mean to conjure up all the hypocrisy of religion.

**Magdalene:** Nor do I. But sharing love means sharing responsibility if you were to be with child. You are not ready for that, and neither is the young man.

**Mira:** I suppose we would have to take that responsibility, if it were thrust upon us. *(she giggles)*

**Magdalene:** Perhaps I should speak to the young man's mother, and see if he is ready -- and willing -- to take on parental responsibilities. Or perhaps you would like to do so.

**Mira:** Well, no. I don't think it's anyone's responsibility except ours.

**Magdalene:** I am responsible for the women's corps and who serves in it.

**Mira:** Dear Mary ... I may not have slept in his tent. But .... I love Joshua as much as you do.

## APOSTLES AND REBELS

**Magdalene:** I ... really don't think so .... just get some sleep, and consider your responsibilities. You're not a girl. You are a woman.

*(In her mind, she recalls hazy images of shadowy sensuality, the amber light of candles, a desert breeze stirring up silky curtains, the figure of a man coming to her ... Joshua. He is not seen but his presence is strong. We see her eyes in close-up.)*

### SCENE 44:

*Morning sun across the desert, and the rocky cliffs which hold Joshua's tomb. Joseph and his few workers struggle to move the huge stone from affront the tomb, and the cluster of other rocks that fortify it, and have settled into the earth. He is sweating, frustrating, as he sees Mary of Nazareth and two women making their way to the site.*

**Mary:** is there some success?

**Joseph:** None. And my lady, I would like to apologize again for yesterday evening ...

**Mary:** No need. I understand the ways of the flesh. I was altogether too intrusive and I wish not to speak of it again.

**Joseph:** Of course. And ... I'm afraid when the most of my workers left, we frankly don't have enough muscle to move this as you wished. It just .... can't be done. The earth has shifted a little and it has become even more seated under there, and a tremendous weight. You see it.

**Mary:** I see.

**Joseph:** Yes, well, this was meant to be permanent, never to be violated, and so, that's working against us. Do you really ...

**Mary:** It is gnawing at me, Joseph, gnawing at my heart and mind. I am uneasy, I can't rest.

**Joseph:** I'm so sorry. Grief is a horrible thing.

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**Mary:** Something is wrong. Do you know Lazarus, of the Hector family, in Bethsaida.

**Joseph:** I know of the family.

**Mary:** He was taken ill, unconscious, his family thought him dead. They wrapped him and had him ready for the grave.

**Joseph:** Some kind of fever?

**Mary:** Something ... but no more. Somehow, my son was able to bring him back, his family and friends proclaimed it a miracle. There was such a commotion that the Sanhedrin sent their mercenaries out to investigate. They claimed it was the devil's doings.

**Joseph:** My dear one, I assure you that Joshua was dead. There was no doubt; there was a lot of bleeding. He did not survive.

**Mary:** He is gone. Of course.

**Joseph:** Yes.

**Mary:** I just suddenly wanted to be in his presence one last time. I .... did not, in fact, want the tomb sealed so securely As grateful as we are ...

**Joseph:** I will make an effort at building a harness. We have several camels and they have some pulling ability. Give me a few hours and ... we will try.

**Mary:** I will be so grateful.

### SCENE 45:

*Mary of Nazareth greets her family for a meal in their family tent. This includes daughter Ruth, age 22, and her husband, Corliss, a utensils merchant, as well as sons James, 20, and Jude, 16.*

**Ruth:** So are we leaving soon? My husband needs to be about his work.

**Mary:** Soon, Joseph is trying one last time to move that boulder ... for one last farewell.

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**Corliss:** I have a strong urgency to go, and leave this wicked and dangerous place.

**James:** It needs a massive purging.

**Jude:** I'm enjoying it on the other hand. You should go meet the women, dear brother, put in some service with the women's corps. Aren't you impressed with the quality of your late brother's ... service corps?

**Mary:** These women are healers, servants. Don't sully their name with your implied lechery, my son.

**Jude:** They are ... women ... after all.

**Ruth:** Good women. I'm proud to work with them. What do you do in service, brother, except service to yourself.

**Jude:** Well, I always start there. Never know where it will lead.

**Mary:** Try to be civil and remain grateful for Joseph's hospitality. We will be gone soon enough and back to the dreary life of Nazareth, where some of the cretins will laugh at us for what has happened to Joshua. They will think he had it coming. Perhaps ... we will move.

**Ruth:** Corliss has a good job there, a partner in the business. He will stand up to them.

**Corliss:** I've got my investment there. But dear Mother, you are always welcome to live with us. You don't have to maintain the old place, the carpentry shop. It's just bad memories.

**Mary:** No, they're good memories. I couldn't imagine living without them.

*Hazy visions of the house and carpentry shop, the noise of a family growing up, a boat being carved outside, a pet dog running about, the sound of a lyre being played — by Joshua.*

**SCENE 46:**

*In the morning, the Mark family is in the kitchen, preparing food. Peter comes clamoring down the stairs. Marie shrinks back to a counter and slips a knife into her hand, not without notice by Peter as he comes into the room. He raises a finger and smirks.*

**Peter:** You've done that scene. Let's move on.

**Marie:** We don't have any more money. You've drained us.

**Peter:** Yes, I apologize for that. I don't know what got into us. Maybe fear of getting crucified.

**Marie:** None of you are half the man he was.

**Peter:** We're not trying to measure up ... just get by. Here ... *(he tosses her a bag; she catches it and the knife falls clattering)* ... here's your money back. We reconsidered. We've decided to stay.

**Marie:** Not here.

**Peter:** Yes, right here. We will come up with some rent money. There is nothing to connect us to Joshua. We will start to meet with people of good heart in this sinful city, and develop a core of believers that would make Joshua proud.

**Marie:** A sect? What? A splinter of the Jews? If his own theocracy didn't support him, who will?

**Peter:** Those of us who understood what he was talking about. There is no better way than his. And .... if he showed us one thing, it was this. He was fearless. And he remained fearless, even to the end. Living in fear is slavery; living in faith is liberation. Dying is just a passageway.

**Marie:** Go preach it then. When you're gone, I can rent out the room.

**Peter:** This will be our meeting place -- the center of our being.

**Marie:** Oh, no! That's the last thing that will happen.

**Peter:** Actually, we want you to move.

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**Marie:** Oh, no!

**Peter:** Or .... join the ministry! Better idea. *(he grins)*

*She is taken aback. Jon Mark, the boy, hearing it all from his seat in a corner, comes into close view. He breaks into a smile.*

**Jon Mark:** Yes!

*The adults stare at him.*

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### SCENE 47:

*Julianna Iscariot sits bowed and miserable in a small chair. She is flanked by several members of the Sanhedrin. Caiphas, the awaited arrival, strides in to take command of the room. He stares down at her.*

**Caiphas:** My dear, you don't look well. Are you ready to go home?

**Julianna:** *(tiredly)*: Of course.

**Caiphas:** Well, you have been very helpful. I must thank the persuasive powers of my staff for urging you to do the right thing.

**Julianna:** They are ... empowered, all right.

**Caiphas:** And with your remembrance about the tax man, we were able to find through those offices one Matthew of Poulous, a former tax collector more recently affiliated with the renegade preacher we had executed.

**Julianna:** He's just a man to me. He was as rude and brutish as yours.

**Caiphas:** And the other man, called Nathaniel. You know nothing of him.

**Julianna:** As I told you, he was appointed by the preacher as one to look after the families of his retinue, if they were in need.

**Caiphas:** As were you?

**Julianna:** Always.

**Caiphas:** We are going to allow you to go free, and you will carry with you an opportunity.

**Julianna:** Opportunity is ... hard to find.

**Caiphas:** Thirty coins of real silver. We just need to find your brother, and protect him from the Romans who want to crucify him just as they did his ... so-called leader.

**Julianna:** You want to save him ... from the Romans?

**Caiphas:** There has been enough bloodshed. Had we been able to intervene, things would have worked out much differently, but ... how can one

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reason with these decadent savages from Rome. They consider themselves the civilized empire, the high and bright glory of the eagle, but they are butchers and pillagers.

**Julianna:** If ... we could only get rid of the Romans. *(She speaks sardonically and wipes her bloodied lip.)*

**Caiphas:** We happen to know that he is in their custody. They question him even now.

**Julianna:** What does he know? Nothing. Why do they want to hold him? Can't imagine.

**Caiphas:** They think he is connected to the Zealots. Do you think so?

**Julianna:** No.

**Caiphas:** No?

**Julianna:** He's a coward at heart. Why don't you let me go? I'll let you know if he shows up. You are probably just the ones to talk some sense into him.

**Caiphas:** Of course.

**Julianna:** Can I get a little money for these services? Your people wrecked my place.

*(Caiphas is amused. He sidles up to her before answering, in her ear.)*

**Caiphas:** You seem determined to walk upon .... the brink of destruction. Go ... and tread lightly. We will escort you home.

**SCENE 48:**

*From the balcony, Pilate watches the bustle in the afternoon streets below. He turns to face Arthos and react to the news.*

**Pilate:** And so the missing sister is missing no more.

**Arthos:** Dumped on her stoop by two men who quickly left. They threw a handful of coins at her and she scrambled to pick them all up.

**Pilate:** And so she is being paid, but by whom and for what?

**Arthos:** It's the Jew police. This Iscariot went and caused a disturbance right after the crucifixion and they've been fixated on him, and her, ever since.

**Pilate:** Well, they know we've got Iscariot here.

**Arthos:** She is simply in their employ. Either she agrees to that or she's dead. So, if her brother shows up again, they'll want to know. And ... if we turn him loose, that's likely where he'll go.

**Pilate:** I don't know why the Sanhedrin think they want him. I think they're just irritated that we've got him ... and they wonder why.

**Arthos:** So do I.

**Pilate:** Well, he just showed up.

**Arthos:** How can we use him? He's a traitor to his own cause. Not someone you would invite to dinner.

**Pilate:** On the contrary, let's invite him to dinner tonight, a formal dinner, and we want his sister there too.

**Arthos:** Whatever for?

**Pilate:** We shall see, won't we?

**Arthos:** I can't imagine they're worth anything to us.

**Pilate:** But certainly a means to aggravate the opposition. I owe those cock suckers a little payback.

**SCENE 49:**

*Vokar and a provocative, bare-breasted woman sits across from Simon at a table. Scene is the Zealot's hideout-headquarters, embedded into a poverty-ridden and violent slum of the city.*

**Vokar:** So you're saying no one wants to go. It's been a waste of my time.

**Simon:** I know you've tried to help. It just got down to loyalties. These men are friends from way back when, and they just didn't want to be split up. Peter, the loudmouth, is running things. They decided maybe we could find another way, stay together, strength in numbers, you know.

**Vokar:** Power in numbers. More the better. If they're good numbers. If they're people who can step up and do what's needed. You, on the other hand want to run. And then you can't pay your way to do it.

**Simon:** Actually, there's talk of setting up just a small secret circle of friends to carry on Joshua's teachings, talk about how to spread them. They represent, I tell you, the ... highest of ideals. It will resonant. And this is where the audience should be, the most vital city in the world.

**Vokar:** Teachings. You call them teachings. That implies they're true.

**Simon:** Truths about spirit, about our lives here. We are all worthy. We are all children of the one God. Sounds good, yes?

**Vokar:** You can't live as a child. You have to live as a man, or you probably won't live at all. And if you do...just exist, you are just a slave to the powers.

**Simon:** Surely, the strength of your cause lies within you. The Power of your God.

**Vokar:** It is my experience that hatred grows stronger. and faster than anything. And at some point, hatred becomes all that is. And ... plunder, of course. *(He grins.)*

**Simon:** My friends are dedicated to their cause. Joshua asked us to be wise as serpents but gentle as doves. If we can achieve a balance...who knows?

**Vokar:** Be gentle in responding to the fact that they will stamp you out like a pit of snakes.

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**Simon:** My friends each have their own mission, what it is ... exactly what it is ... is inside each of their heads yet. We'll all trying to come to grips. We never expected to have our leader suddenly ... gone. So I am not saying I want to continue being a part of ... whatever it becomes. It's unrealistic, I suppose. We would get nowhere, and likely get ourselves killed by preaching peace and love.

**Vokar:** Peace and love? If I were you I wouldn't get .... hung up over it? *(He laughs loudly, a cue for the woman to break out laughing too.)*

**Woman:** I'll drink to that!

**Vokar:** *(still laughing)* You'll drink to anything.

*(Simon makes an effort at laughter, but his heart isn't in it.)*

**Simon:** Your party, the Zealots, our party, was once just a political instrument. You have turned it into an open rebellion. It's a dangerous path.

**Vokar:** Where is your head, Simon the misinformed? They killed your leader and yet you are not angry, and will not strike back at them.

**Simon:** That just wasn't Joshua's way. He knew that violence just begets more violence. We should make a bold stand for peace. And ... the enemy is not the Romans. They did the bidding of the Jewish prelates. They're trying to get along with them, co-exist, hold the truce, and if they wanted a street preacher crucified for his bold attack of the faith ... well what do they care? You should care that you are seeking to put these people in greater control, and stand off against the Roman Empire instead.

**Vokar:** *(pushes the woman away.)* I don't like your tone, Simon. Not at all. We are what we have to be, to survive, not to conquer. And we see what you see, our own corruption. We need new and better leadership within. We are trying to impress a more aggressive strategy on Rabbi Caiphas. They could put a lot more pressure on the Romans in any number of ways.

**Simon:** Violence, acrimony. It's all around us. We use those things to fight for ... righteousness. How does that actually work?

**Vokar:** It doesn't unless you do. You should get off your asses and fight. Preaching won't do it.

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**Simon:** I'm sure you're right. I go back to discuss many things with these men. *(He turns and leaves)*

### **SCENE 50:**

*Simon makes his way from the Zealot headquarters through the squalid streets of Jerusalem. He feels he is being followed but sees nothing. Wary, he begins to take side streets, sensing some presence. Looking back and walking he suddenly runs literally into a muscular man with a menacing stare -- Tyron.*

**SCENE 51:**

*Camels in harness struggle in vain to move the large boulder blocking the tomb's entrance. The work team is bogged down, can't make it budge. Joseph steps forward to halt the effort, wiping his sweaty brow from the stifling desert heat. Mary of Nazareth and a handmaiden stand by, as does Ruth, and James.*

**Joseph:** It's just ... no use. Somehow, the sand has shifted. Did you feel an earth tremor last night? Was it my imagination?

**James:** There was a tremor. I felt it.

**Joseph:** Well, gravity helped us in the first place but now it works against us. Anyway, this rock is so deep, so embedded now, that it's impossible to move. Perhaps ... we are not intended to move it.

**Mary:** I guess ... I will never forget the joy of Lazarus' family, pure joy, and sheer surprise, at seeing him literally ... rise from the dead. (She pauses for a moment) May my pure and perfect son then rest in peace. We are very grateful for your efforts and forever in your debt. (*She turns and walks away.*)

*As she and the family walk back toward the tent area, they see the familiar presence of Mary Magdalene and several of the women's corps members, saying their prayers at the tomb. They have constructed a small tribute monument of rock and wood and colorful baubles. In the ground, someone has constructed a tiny cross from two sticks. Others have fortified it with a mound of rocks.*

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### SCENE 52:

*Scene: Close-up of hot Armenian coffee rising from the cup. Camera pulls away to finally reveal Simon, fondling the cup. Panning across, we see Tyron at the table. The men are inside a coffee house.*

**Simon:** We've talked about the coffee and admired the decor. Why are we here? I recognize you. You're the soldier, who didn't report us, on the rooftops.

**Tyron:** I am the very one. I didn't want to see you executed. I've seen enough of that.

**Simon:** You work for them.

**Tyron:** I do. And you shouldn't forget it. We can wipe you out at any time. We know where you are all huddled up.

**Simon:** I hope we can avoid that. We mean no one any harm. And we don't stand with the preacher. He's not standing any more.

**Tyron:** No, you're standing with that bunch of renegades down by the river.

**Simon:** They can help us get out of the city. It's not safe here, and we just want peace, believe me. We're ready to leave. We want no trouble with the authorities. None. Leave with our hands clean.

**Tyron:** Then I am right. You are good and honest men.

**Simon:** And not rebels. Just trying to get out of the city. We need any help we can from anywhere. The gates are being watched. Aren't they? Aren't your people at all the gates?

**Tyron:** My people are ... always at the gates. Our rule is absolute. And, yes, you had best get out of the city. But there's a better way than working with sewer vermin who are about to be destroyed. Thanks to you. You led us to them.

**Simon:** (*dumbstruck*): I had nothing to do with that. I'm very careful ...

**Tyron:** I found you. You left the Mark house. It was easy. And I found them.

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**Simon:** So ... what is your plan?

**Tyron:** We'll attack them and wipe them out, very soon. And, meantime, you should concentrate on leaving. Do you have any money? Did you give it to the Zealots?

**Simon:** *(lying again, money was returned to the Marks)* I .... did. They are supposed to smuggle us out, in some kind of caravan.

**Tyron:** How much did you give them? And when?

**Simon:** *(continues his lying)* A hundred for each of us, eleven ... eleven hundred. We were to leave very early Monday morning.

*(Tyron is contemplative, determining his options.)*

**Simon:** They've got the money, all of it. When ... when are you going to hit them?

**Tyron:** Soon after you go, to get your money back.

**Simon:** They won't give it back. I'm sure of it.

**Tyron:** Listen to me. I can get you out of the city, easy enough, but it takes money. I will have you escorted out of the city by my soldiers. It will be swift, safe and sure.

**Simon:** But ... we have no resources. They have our money. Why .... why not just take it? You're going to attack them. That's the money ... isn't it?

**Tyron:** I have no control over plunder. I only need money for myself -- and for my family. If you could get it back now, I could give you safe passage. I need the money, all of it, and I will retire far away from this squalor, to a farm.

**Simon:** So ... you are not loyal to Rome then? Why not just help us escape? We will be out of Rome and out of your way. We just want to go back to our families, in Galilee. Haven't you taken enough blood from us? You destroyed our ministry, and very unjustly. We were simply a force for good in the faith. We were working towards purification, cleansing, a new and higher meaning for our religion. Not a bunch of slick-handed money changers and sheep salesmen. They had turned the temple into a disgraceful mockery of our supposed ideals. They were the blasphemers -- not our leader.

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**Tyron:** I don't expect your religion is any more wicked than ours.

**Simon:** So ... no god at all then. Just a business deal. Is it agreed?

**Tyron:** I need to get out of Rome too, and my wife, but it will require money to do so. I need yours. It's a win for both of us.

**Simon:** Alas .....

**Tyron:** You must go and get this money first. And ... I have a plan to talk them out of it.

### SCENE 53:

*Julianna walks tiredly from the kitchen, a steaming cup in hand. She stares straight at Pilate's two men who suddenly appear, standing just inside her front door with the shattered lock. One of them speaks:*

**Man:** The Governor of Jerusalem invites you to dinner. We will take you there.

*She looks bewildered, as she is being relieved of her tea cup, fitted with her cape and rustled out the door by the three men. She delivers a comment before she is hustled onto a carriage.*

**Julianna:** I suppose I can .... cancel my other social engagements. (*She is tucked into the carriage.*)

### SCENE 54:

*Judas Iscariot looks down on his sleeping cot at the fancy clothes laid out for the dinner. He pulls up the pieces to determine just how to don these items. He is not accustomed to the formal wear that was usual at a dinner in Pilate's lavish living quarters.*

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### SCENE 55:

*Julianna Iscariot is in her underclothes, holding a dress up to the mirror. She is bedraggled as usual and has some work to do before dinner. She looks in the mirror, critically.*

### SCENE 56:

*The quarters of Pontius Pilate and his wife, Portia. Her face is seen in extreme close-up, a hand-held mirror. Her head is jostling slightly as she attempts to put on lipstick. She struggles with it, between lustful sighs of ecstasy. Finally, the camera pulls away to see that she is being serviced between her thighs by a naked man with a busy tongue. She finally pulls him away with a satisfying sigh and concentrates on the lip gloss.*

**Portia:** Oh, my. Oh, my. Oh, my. I have to do this ...

**Arthos:** *(rising up to reveal himself)* I admit it. I am an overly horny dog. Just look at this. *(He strolls across the floor, dons a robe to cover his prized member, and accepts a proffered glass of wine from a maid.)*

**Portia:** You have to wear more than that to dinner.

**Arthos:** You taste like that oil that you got from Egypt.

**Portia:** Do you like it?

**Arthos:** This wine is good to ... wash it away.

**Portia:** And you really don't know why he is inviting these people? And why couldn't you find out?

**Arthos:** They are ... his toy.

**Portia:** Meaning?

**Arthos:** He toys with them, knowing the Jewish prelates are interested in them -- for some reason. Why is that? And how can they be of some use to us? Maybe ... they can draw a straight line to the Zealots who just slaughtered three good soldiers -- and they will perhaps answer the

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question as to whether these people will rally around the dead preacher man whom they are trying to make into a martyr. But what do the self-serving Iscariots think of all this? We shall see.

**Portia:** My ... the intrigue.

**Arthos:** I am not sure they will be living much longer.

**Portia:** Oh, my. (*She is fixing an ear ring*) Depending on what?

**Arthos:** Oh ..... depending what they say and do.

**Portia:** I am only counting on dinner. Any of that other you mention being for another time and in another place. That is the watchword of most Roman women of stature. Stay out of men's sordid affairs.

**SCENE 57:**

Mira and Jude have stolen away to a dark corner and are involved in passionate kissing, until the covering is pulled away. Mary Magdalene stares at them. He shrinks back, squeezes her hand and slips out under a tent flap. Mira stands to face her anticipated accuser.

**Magdalene:** And so you persist in risking our peace and our respectability in this ongoing ... lust?

**Mira:** Freedom of sexual expression. I learned it at the temple.

**Magdalene:** We are not at the temple any more. Haven't you noticed?

**Mira:** And why aren't we? This dedication to this ... man, fine as he was, has gotten us nowhere. Now we are abandoned to our lonesome prayers, with no place to go. There is no order any more. Who would dare carry it on? Do you expect us to do that?

**Magdalene:** We had best make and keep friends as we can, such as this fine man who supports us, but for only a limited time, I am sure.

**Mira:** We can serve him. He will be good to us as we are good to him. We're good at cooking, cleaning, looking after the sick. We can be sexual; we have that power. We only need a sponsor.

**Magdalene:** I'm going back to the temple, to seek some advice, as soon as we get back to Jerusalem. Princess Oris ... she will have some advice. I am conflicted -- but I do know that you must use every discretion now, here. This is a critical time and we are beholden to our supporters here. This woman from Nazareth would not like this, I assure you.

**Mira:** Is she not sexual? She has a family.

**Magdalene:** Their sexuality is mostly ... a private matter. And there is much to be said for that kind of .... discretion.

**Mira:** I think the human body is beautiful. I think that loving one another is a beautiful thing. I am invigorated and spiritually energizing by our amazing celebrations and festivals. I miss that. We have become ... a somber bunch.

**Magdalene:** Death can do that to you. Especially ... the death of everything.

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**Mira:** There are other men out there, and they will want you ... and need you. And you can be provided for, if you use your ... tools effectively. *(She hoists her small breasts with both hands.)*

**Magdalene:** Love is not a calculated thing, Mira. There is a magic that you can feel ... deep inside ... but then the sense of loss is much greater. I will never be whole again. That's why ... I have questions.

**Mira:** *(reaches to take her hand)* The temple ... Oris will make you whole again. She will help you recapture life ... zest ... joy in yourself.

**Magdalene:** She can only celebrate in the flesh, and it only goes so deep. There is deeper meanings under the skin, and they touch your very soul.

**Mira:** *(laughing)* Okay, let's do that.

**SCENE 58:**

*Sanhedrin meeting room, expectant men awaiting the arrival of Caiphas, who comes in with a flourish and takes the floor.*

**Caiphas:** There is too much gossip about. Too much speculation. I bring you together so that we can dispel this and tell you exactly where we are. You ask me .... what are we doing with the Iscariots? He threatened us, first of all, here in the synagogue. And now he is in the custody of the Roman Governor -- for some reason. Why? They may think, as we do, that he could be a link to the Zealots.

If this man is so disgruntled, that may well be where he goes, and so others, we or the Romans, might go there and find them too. We believe that the rest of the preacher band is still in the city, somewhere. And so are the Zealots.

Make no mistake, the Zealots threaten to destroy the relative peace and tranquility that we enjoy, our co-dependence on the Romans, for order and not chaos. If we work with Rome and not agitate them, we will get all that we need in time, we will maintain the faith, we will rally the people around it, and we will endure ... we will not only survive but, in time, our culture, our traditions will live long past this Roman empire, which is flawed to the core and will not stand the test of history. Our culture will. You know it and I know it.

We have weakened Pilate in the past with our demands and Rome itself, Herrod, has stood by us to keep the peace. He knew they would stand by us again if he refused to bring justice to the heretic preacher. So why now are Pilate and Iscariot working together. Aren't they? To what end?

Given that the Iscariot man is a guest ... or captive ... in the home of one Pontius Pilate should tell us something, should it not? It tells us that the house of Pilate is somehow scheming against us, and this Iscariot is some part of their scheme.

**Questioner:** Aren't the Romans trying to get to the Zealots? Aren't they a common enemy?

**Caiphas:** I am concerned that the Romans might incite the Zealots to commit self-serving atrocities in order to blame our religion and set the stage for harder oppression, even in league with this Iscariot, even to putting him and a new so-called Jewish sect in power. The man, Pilate,

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has a personal hatred of me. This Iscariot is angry and feels he has been cheated.

**Questioner:** Surely we aren't seeing this level of conspiracy. What have we done?

**Caiphas:** Pilate seems angry that we somehow set him up for that .... damned crucifixion. He seems to respect that dead man more than us.

**Questioner:** The man is dead .... but he's not really dead.

**Caiphas:** The Zealots. They put a huge J -- for Joshua, no doubt, written in blood on the wall. I will, of course, assure the Romans we have no part in such horrors. I will strive to hold the peace.

*(An aide rushes in to report.)*

**Aide:** The Iscariot woman! She has been taken by Pilate.

**Caiphas:** We had her under guard!

**Aide:** Guard is ... deceased.

*The room descends into tumult. Caiphas, face flushed with anger, throws his drinking cup against the wall, water flying.*

**SCENE 59:**

*Marcus surveys some 50 Roman Legionnaires, an assembled force to attack the Zealot's quarters. Tyron rushes onto the scene.*

**Marcus:** You are late.

**Tyron:** I've been with one of the preacher's men, the one who has been in contact with the Zealots.

**Marcus:** And?

**Tyron:** They just want to get out of the city. They don't want to be part of any rebellion, or violence. They are either devoutly for peace, or just cowards.

**Marcus:** So why is he talking to the Zealots?

**Angiin:** They think the rebels can get them out of the city. They've already given them money and been guaranteed secret passage.

**Marcus:** No matter. We'll end all that. We will attack tonight, after midnight.

**Tyron:** You've decided then. The man ... he said they are alert and may well be ready for it.

**Marcus:** I suppose they actually live in anticipation that we will strike them. They can't stand up to us, and we will have surprise on our side.

**Tyron:** I need to get back to that portal on the river. If we attack from the street, that's their escape path -- must be a tunnel leading out, maybe through the drainage system.

**Marcus:** Underground, maybe, but that passage that we all know about ... it goes nowhere but into the sewers.

**Tyron:** Well, we have been watching. And there are men who went in the front, on the street, many hours ago, and did not come out, and then ... we observed them going in again. That tells me it was a ... circular trip.

*Marcus is thoughtful. He walks back to the crude model of the area they have assembled on a tabletop. He looks closely. Tyron comes forward and points to a place.*

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**Tyron:** This here .... is a rocky cliff. Correct?

**Marcus:** An old quarry of some kind, covered over with boulders and rocks, a landslide came down there.

**Tyron:** There are always fishermen on the banks there. There are lanterns there, day and night.

**Marcus:** You ... and a few other false fishermen. Go and check it out, before sundown.

**Tyron:** The objective is ... to close it?

**Marcus:** Actually, if it is an escape route, let's make sure it stays open ... and isn't that at all. We can lure them there with some semblance of an attack and leave them first to the archers — then the usual follow-up.

**Tyron:** Yes, sir.

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### SCENE 60:

*Vokar strides into the room to face Simon, who has returned, and is quaffing an ale and flirting with his woman friend.*

**Vokar:** And so you have returned.

**Simon:** A new opportunity, for both of us.

**Vokar:** Speak.

**Simon:** A Roman soldier has approached me, a captain, a man of rank. He wants money to get us out of the city. He is, of course, corrupt. And so ... if you can allow me the temporary use of 1200 coins, I can deliver to you a force of several Roman soldiers, all crooked and working toward their own ends and ... including the corrupt Captain himself.

**Vokar:** Such a proposition.

**Simon:** You have simply to ambush them.

**Vokar:** And for you?

**Simon:** We will all continue to leave the city and with half of the coins to help us do so efficiently.

**Vokar:** We give you 1200 of our own hard-earned money for the bait? You then tell us where to be and when? How many men ... in your doomed escort?

**Simon:** I don't know. Shouldn't be many, just a score or two. Since we ourselves offer no resistance. We're anxious to get out of here.

**Vokar:** We want the Captain ... alive.

**SCENE 61:**

*Julianna, dressed in fancy clothes, is ushered into a waiting room with Judas, who has already been brought there. She looks around to see that they're alone, rushes to him and they embrace.*

**Julianna:** What are we doing here? What is their plan?

**Judas:** It is an opportunity. I've come here with my grievances against the Sanhedrin. He has listened to me. I've come to know that he is just as aggrieved about the crucifixion as I am. He is remorseful ... regretful ... and I think he sees a means by which I, myself, and others can reform the faith, give me an opportunity to weed out these unworthy despots who have come to rule it. Just as the Master said, he was wise to their corruptions. That's why we cleansed the temple. Now I can go to the apostles, make amends, and we will become the new guiding force for the faith.

**Julianna:** What did you do? The preacher you followed ... he's dead?

**Judas:** *(exasperated at the level of her ignorance):* Never mind. Yes. But it's an opportunity, believe me. We are being treated as guests, that's more than symbolic. They ... Pilate and his family ... want to see if we're worthy, if we're sophisticated enough, to be leaders in a new church, where Joshua's ideas will be considered ... and accepted. He was ... so pure. And the church has become so wicked.

**Julianna:** How can you get anywhere calling the church wicked?

**Judas:** We can cleanse it. Joshua took the first step. We can continue to take steps. Listen to me ... Caiphas and his people. They manipulate the faith, control the faith, to their own ends, their own self-centered, self-serving ends. We must, with Pilate's help, put new leadership in place. I will contact the men again. All will be well between me and them when they, too, see the opportunity.

**Julianna:** I don't know.

**Judas:** I can make a place for all of us but we have to make the finest of impressions on Pilate and his family tonight. We are being evaluated. We will be judged. We must show the character that they wish to see, the potential to take this tragedy, this horrible tragedy, and make something good out of it.

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**Julianna:** Overthrowing the Sanhedrin.

**Judas:** We can't, of course. But the Romans can.

### SCENE 62:

*Simon returns to the upper room, amid greetings, questions. He takes a container of wine and sits down among them. It is nearing sundown.*

**Simon:** I am working on another arrangement to get us out of the city. It's a better plan and it will cost us nothing.

**John:** What? Another scheme with slum trash? What will you get us this time, an armed military escort?

**Simon:** Yes, how did you know?

**Peter:** We're not going anywhere. The power of the Light fills my soul ... and ours.

**Simon:** You look the same to me. Maybe you've had a bit too much wine.

**Peter:** I am preaching tomorrow. I am speaking to the people ... up on Gethsemane ... where our master left us .... where he will return.

*(Simon is dumbfounded)*

**Simon:** Why preach in a place where they want to kill us? It's mad. I have worked hard to get us out of the city and safe, and now you want to pis it away. We can preach anywhere, not just in this sorry pit of vipers.

**Peter:** Well, they are the very ones who need it.

**Simon:** Did you not notice what is involved in a crucifixion? Did you not feel some of it yourself? And how long do you think they will let you live. The Sanhedrin want to kill us and the Romans as well.

**Peter:** Death is only a passageway. *(The men stand confused and divided.)*

**SCENE 63:**

*The sun is sinking and the river and its banks are covered in amber light. Tyron and three men make their way across the banks and rocks. They are soon confronted by a large, grizzly man, and two other men behind him, ostensibly fishermen but hardly attentive to the task.*

**The Man:** This is as far as you go. This is our fishing place, and there's nothing beyond it.

**Tyron:** Are you catching anything?

**The Man:** No, not recently.

**Tyron:** Looks like a nice shelter up there, in the rocks. Is that a light inside?

**The Man:** It's an old mining shaft, all filled up. It's our shelter at any rate.

**Tyron:** Must be room for a lot of men in there ... and women.

**The Man:** Enough.

**Tyron:** How many you think?

**The Man:** You are wearing out your welcome here. What's your concern with it?

*(Another man walks up beside him, points at the soldiers in supposed disguise.)*

**2nd Man:** Them boots. Look! They're Roman soldiers.

*(Tyron backs up several steps and he and his men step warily away. The large man pulls a sword with a flourish. Tyron lifts a hand in the air. The man stares at him.)*

**The Man:** What's that, fisher boy? You want to ask a question?

*(Tyron swings his hand down. A torrent of arrows fly. The man is struck in the neck, shoulder, chest, and then again.)*

**Tyron:** No questions. How about you?

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*(The man falls and his comrades flee back across the rocks. One of them trips over a boulder and falls. An arrow strikes him in the back. Tyron looks up the hill and sees several more men. He and his men turn and take rapid leave.)*

### **SCENE 64:**

*Marcus and Tyron confer. Soldiers are on call, but at ease.*

**Marcus:** So then we will let them escape that way and kill them when they emerge at the river. Is that your best idea then? We have them through their front door and out their back.

**Tyron:** It seems so, but they are forewarned now.

**Marcus:** Do you have men overlooking that passage then?

**Tyron:** Of course. They are rats in a trap if we show force. Both front entrance and back exit are under surveillance, like you said. How can we go wrong?

**Marcus:** I don't want too many casualties. Looks bad. Maybe none.

**Tyron:** We can seal that place by the river. That can be done. Or we can get through and attack from that direction and the front entrance at the same time.

**Marcus:** I would like to kill them all, and not lose a man. That would look .... very good.

**Tyron:** That's ... well, that's not the usual way we do things, is it?

**Marcus:** Maybe warfare is changing. Maybe we fight differently when we are fighting ghosts.

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### SCENE 65:

*Caiphas is called away from his personal quarters and he follows his aides outside. There, in a cart, is the lifeless body of the man killed in the street at Julianna's. Most clothes have been stripped away. Caiphas looks at the corpse, horrified. He turns and storms back inside. His aides follow him.*

**Caiphas:** Pilate, this wicked man .... this wicked, wicked man. (*A tumult of murmured approval*)

**Caiphas:** He will suffer ... he will suffer. I will go and see the Emperor.

### SCENE 66:

*Judas and Julianna Iscariot walk uneasily into the room. There is Pilate and his wife, his aide Arthos, and servants.*

**Pilate:** Our guests have arrived.

**Judas:** (*anxious*): I am so glad we can talk ... and plan the future.

**Pilate:** The future can wait ... for dinner. Small talk only ..... (*he smirks*) ... if you please.

**Judas:** Yes, of course, but just know that I have a good plan, moving forward.

**Pilate:** The Gods are so amused by .... plans.

**SCENE 67:**

*Zealot headquarters. Vokar and men storm through the tunnel, into the main room of their headquarters, where Simon awaits.*

**Vokar:** I have your money (*he throws a purse to Simon*) That ... is your life ... in that bag. Do you understand me?

**Simon:** I do, of course.

**Vokar:** That money belongs to me, personally.

**Simon:** My life depends on this working. I know that. I'm off to do my duty, steadfast. The sooner you take this Roman ball of slime ... and the rest of them, the better. I need the money. We need the money to be gone.

**Vokar:** Half the money back to me, and passage for you. But the rest of your band best not be hiding anything from us. We have a lot of expenses to meet. We'll root it out from each one before you get out of here.

**Simon:** The six hundred will be quite enough for all of us if you just let us out the north gate. We'll be ready to flee and soon be gone.

**Vokar:** Another thing ... the Romans have discovered our back entrance.

**Simon:** How ... how do you know?

**Vokar:** Roman archers, very obvious. They will likely be back to attack us -- from the back side.

**Simon:** Or from both front and back.

**Vokar:** If they can get past all the squalor out there. These tunnels can lead to several places other than here. Maybe we can trap them into going in there.

**Simon:** You ... already have them in a trap at the Fountain Square. Must you ... stay here? We are set for just after midnight.

**Vokar:** (*aside, giving orders*): Leave the cliff entrance. Let them into the tunnels if they are fool enough to go. And you, Simon, you wanted enough men to kill up to 20 soldiers. Correct?

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**Simon:** This is what I'm told.

**Vokar:** So we will provide a bonus. We need to desert this place now, so ... we can make a special deal.

**Simon:** Well ...

**Vokar:** You get all of us, more than seventy men in all. Does that work for you?

**Simon:** Maybe a bit overkill but ...

**Vokar:** We are flushed from here. We may as well start with your traitorous pieces of Roman shit and then go ahead and attack the north gate. We can take that major passageway into and out of the city and control it with this force, and let them come try to take it back once we are on the wall.

**Simon:** Good ... it works for me. Seventy something men ...

**Vokar:** Maybe 80 or more, and others will come up from the bowels of the street to stand with us. We are putting out the call.

**Simon:** Sounds very serious. Are we ready for this?

**Vokar:** Well, you've opened the way. You have made the crack in the door. Now we just need to take advantage of it.

*(Simon looks bewildered.)*

**SCENE 68:**

*A campfire. Mary of Nazareth comes into the women's corps encampment and speaks to Mary Magdalene.*

**Mother Mary:** We need to talk.

**Magdalene:** Yes. Of course we do.

**Mary:** I never really understood my son. I ... envisioned great and glorious things for him. He was so special in so many ways. I expected his rapid ascension in the world, in the church and in the business of boat-building.

**Magdalene:** He was very gifted.

**Mary:** And yet his every purpose was thwarted. The Rabbis gave short shrift to his ideas. They even came to me about what he saying. It didn't serve the interests of the ... vested few, the ones who have been strong for the church. They are perverted in some measure, I'm sure, by Roman rule. But they virtually spat on my son when his ... when his Love reached down to the common people.

**Magdalene:** Surely, the churches all work for the wealthy. But the Universal Father is above them all.

**Mary:** Father ... yes, he spoke of God as a father. He did. I could only think that they are two different things. God is much more than a father figure.

**Magdalene:** The Father concept of God is the wisest concept that mankind can know.

**Mary:** Fathers are not all-powerful. They ...

**Magdalene:** Your concept of power is limited within the human experience.

**Mary:** Isn't everything?

**Magdalene:** Your son was a spiritual being in a human body. His death is only a transition.

**Mary:** They beat him down to ... nothing. He had nothing left when they were through with him.

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**Magdalene:** Flesh and blood and bone are subject to death. But spirit is everlasting.

**Mary:** Well ... didn't God forsake him in the end? Didn't the God father of our conception ... let him down?

**Magdalene:** He just lived and died as we do. It's called empathy. His experience showed the greatest empathy for us that could possibly have been shown.

**Mary:** Should Father God not stand by his children though ... not like the old days when they were prone to sacrifice them, of course. I thought we had a new way, of love. What is a person to believe, really? Do you think you can explain it in terms of an invisible empire, one with no power to change things, and just shrugging off our tragedies. I just don't see much semblance of success in my poor son's life.

**Magdalene:** There will be ... a great legacy.

*Mary looks into the woman's earnest face, then shakes her head and with a sigh, puts her face in her hands. Mary Magdalene comes to comfort her.*

**Magdalene:** I ... thought at first that you had come to me about your other son, the young one.

**Mary:** Yes? Is he all right?

**Magdalene:** One of my women seems to think so.

**Mary:** Coitus?

**Magdalene:** Mira loves it.

**Mary:** I'm sure Jude doesn't mind either.

**Magdalene:** My girl is not long removed from the lustful indulgences of the temple, the liquors, the smoking herbs, the nudity, so-called naked gods. Such an excuse for ...

**Mary:** Being human.

**Magdalene:** Altogether too human sometimes. We must have higher aspirations. Your son knew this higher way .... so well. He has charted a strong course, through suffering and to spiritual, eternal salvation.

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**Mary:** Life beyond death. Yes, he said so.

**Magdalene:** It isn't a new concept either. There are other paths which have strongly suggested ... a resurrection from the tomb.

**Mary:** We can't even get into the tomb.

**Magdalene:** Perhaps his Spirit will rise above it.

**SCENE 69:**

*A crowded tavern. Simon makes his way through the building to a table in the back. Tyron is there, and two other men standing by. Simon sits with him.*

**Simon:** Here it is. (He pulls a purse and hands it to Tyron) There's 1200 in there and I'm a dead man if something happens to it.

**Tyron:** I will have a platoon of 50 soldiers surrounding us, and the element of surprise.

**Simon:** No. Sorry to report. Vokar is bringing 70 men, maybe 80, he talks of more. He now intends to follow up with an attack at the north gate and to actually hold it. They have been discovered at the river-- by your soldiers -- and they are clearing out of their place for good.

**Tyron:** That's a lot of men. How can they move that many men, at one time?

**Simon:** They are already leaving in small groups, slipping out to join up later, somewhere near the gate. They want to kill your men at the Square, take you prisoner -- alive -- and then take the wall.

**Tyron:** Ambitious.

**Simon:** Can they do it?

**Tyron:** We have far more than 80 men. I will call up another 100. We just have to put them where we need them, and do it fast.

**Simon:** And there is another complication.

**Tyron:** Yet another?

**Simon:** (*finally confessing*): The men, the apostles, they've decided to not leave the city. Peter, one of our number, convinced them to stay and carry on the ministry, here in Jerusalem. He calls it the most evil place on earth.

**Tyron:** So you don't need the 600. This is fine. I need it.

**Simon:** I ... don't know that I want to stay with them. It's kind of ... madness. Peter is going up to Gethsemane tomorrow. He's going to preach

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there, the place of our last encampment. There are still a few supporters up there.

**Tyron:** Tomorrow will be a long time coming.

### SCENE 70:

*Pilate's dinner table. The meal is finished and Pilate offers a toast.*

**Pilate:** I drink to our new friendship with the Iscariots. No matter that you are Jewish, no matter that we are occupiers. What is important is ... friendship. *(He drinks, and the guests join him.)*

**Judas:** I believe that we can find unity beyond this great tragedy. The Sanhedrins proved completely dishonest in their treatment of Joshua. There was to be a conference, a discussion, a meeting of the minds, perhaps a compromise to allow this fine teacher to remain a part of the hierarchy. He was a better man than any of them. And ... so they killed him. I am in deep remorse because of their lies and treachery, but we can turn this situation into progress if we can simply clean out these despots who truly blaspheme our faith.

**Pilate:** And they led me to think that he was a heinous blasphemer in order to effect his execution. They gave testimony that made him far worse than he was, and they showed up to denounce him loudly at every stage in my investigation. Had he only cooperated with me, it might have been different, but he refused to speak up on his behalf. Why was that?

**Judas:** I can't imagine. His cause was just. He had a new and grander vision of the faith. He knew how to express himself.

**Pilate:** Yet he did not. And do you also have that vision? What is it? And aren't you empowered to speak up? Your man...he did not make it easy for me.

**Judas:** All men are equal in the sight of God. The actual presence of God, the spirit of God, is inside each of us. We don't need pompous prelates to give us religion. Spirit lives inside us.

**Pilate:** Then you don't need to pay homage and tithes to these ... institutional people then.

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**Judas:** Precisely. They actually get between an individual and God. They impose themselves in between and collect a fee at every turn.

**Julianna:** I have no money for them. I am poor and yet they don't care. They want it anyway. I am done with them.

**Portia:** My, my, I can feel the aura of disillusionment. We are human flesh and blood and surely we can see that this is what we must embrace. It is real. It isn't some invisible fabrication of a god that we should worship -- with our money and our subservience to idiotic and unreal concepts.

**Pilate:** My lady has strong opinions -- and sound ones, I confess. (*He tips his glass to her.*) And so our usual and familiar gods might be more to your liking. They are grounded in reality, not an imagined love and brotherhood that doesn't exist in the real world.

**Julianna:** The Jews call it ... debauchery. They are stubbornly dedicated to the fantasy that they are something like God's chosen people and will sometime be delivered by a brilliant and powerful new Messiah, a champion for their people, who will restore the Kingdom of Israel.

**Pilate:** If they are not careful, they will become enemies of the state. They will wind up in the arenas, dying for sport.

**Judas:** No ... it wouldn't be right. Joshua did not speak against the empire. He said we should render unto Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's. His faith would co-exist with the Roman Empire. He was no revolutionary. He was not violent in any sense. He urged peace and would be pleased to be part of the Empire.

**Portia:** I doubt that he would appreciate our Gods. He seems to have discovered another one, an invisible entity which doesn't have much to do with anything down here. He certainly didn't save this ... prince of peace.

**Judas:** He wasn't afraid of death. And he saw it coming. He told us. And yet he walked right into it, as if he were to be some example. I still don't understand a strategy that leads to ... absolute ruin. Why did he put forth all of his high ideas only to have them destroyed? That .... is something I don't understand. I'm sure there was a better way, and he would still be here. We didn't have to trash the temple. I don't even know if that was planned, and just what precipitated it all. And then that inflammatory rhetoric at the temple. That was surely unwise. He ... just didn't have the common sense, the earthly sense that he needed. It's like his head was up in the clouds, beholden to some other false reality.

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**Pilate:** There is no God for Joshua, then. Is that the lesson? Is that the reason for the ignominious defeat? Or did the God of the Jews prove more powerful and true because ... they are still in power and he is disgraced ?

**Judas:** He was .... full of grace. He could not be disgraced. They disgrace themselves by killing such a noble, caring man.

**Pilate:** And you turned him over to them. Don't you feel some guilt for that? How can you lay it all on them? You must have had some inkling that they wanted to kill him?

**Judas:** I ... was ignorant.

**Pilate:** And guilty as sin.

**Judas:** I'm .... sorry. But now I want his death to mean something. I want to destroy those who killed him, those who dared to do that on behalf of our faith.

**Portia:** Shall we put the esteemed Judas Iscariot in power, then?

**Judas:** I would purify the church, end the corruption, relieve the shackles of the common people, the ones that Joshua loved, who live in slave-like subservience to the church and are not rewarded in any real sense.

**Pilate:** I have no power against the Sanhedrin. You should come to your senses and realize that. The empire and your religion have an agreement with Rome and it maintains the peace. The real enemy is the Zealots organization, and you are here tonight because of, first, my curiosity, and secondly to determine if you are affiliated with the Zealots.

**Judas:** No. In fact, Joshua took the swords from several of our number who had expressed sympathy for the rebels. He forbade any violence of any kind, and I'm sure he was opposed to their atrocities.

**Pilate:** Sounds as if he was a reasonable man, open to compromise. The Zealots, on the other hand, are thugs and killers. I wonder if you can help us bring them to justice.

**Judas:** Well, how could we do that? We don't know them. We have no power to do anything.

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**Pilate:** Why don't we talk to them ... you and the rest of your band ... and just see what they know and what they can do? If they can help us get rid of these Sanhedrin vermin, then perhaps we can work together more cohesively.

**Judas:** You want to meet with the rest of our band.

**Pilate:** Do you know where they are?

**Judas:** Yes, I think so. But ...

**Pilate:** Then we will go see them tomorrow and investigate.

**Judas:** They are incensed that I've betrayed Joshua. I even have the funds that I was empowered to hold.

**Pilate:** How much?

**Judas:** I have only had to use a little of it. Maybe a little less than a thousand shekels left.

**Pilate:** We will need that for our new partnership ... operating expenses.

**Judas:** We have a partnership then? To do what?

**Pilate:** Talk to the rest of the men. Make sure they know who is in charge of the city and that they are beholden to me. Find and destroy the Zealots. And I will give you a position on my staff.

**Judas:** But they would never talk to me.

**Pilate:** Arthos and I will do the talking. *(He turns to Julianna)*

**Pilate:** And when they held you in custody, what did they want? What were their questions? And why did they let you free?

**Julianna:** My brother had insulted them. They wanted to know if he is with the Zealots? And they wanted to know why my brother was being held by you. I .... didn't know.

**Pilate:** And so they release you and follow you, with another of their men ... why, I'm sure he is just outside. I wonder ... should I kill him as well. I killed one poor fellow in front of your house. Did you see? Were you impressed?

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**Judas:** My, no. I did not. No! There's too much killing.

**Pilate:** And there remains a too-high level of interest in the Iscariots ... such a charming couple. *(He lifts his glass, almost sarcastically. and they drink.)*

### SCENE 71:

*Marcus and aides pore over a tabletop replica of the Jerusalem streets and sewers. Tyron comes in.*

**Marcus:** Just in time. The rebels appear to be leaving their compound in small groups, a few at a time, but they are leaving and not coming back.

**Tyron:** We have a new opportunity. They are going to mass up again and attack the north gate.

**Marcus:** You know this?

**Tyron:** I have this confidante in their midst. I owe him a purse. I promised he would be paid.

**Marcus:** What does he know? And how?

**Tyron:** He has long sympathized with the Zealots, Now, with their leader's death, he was again drawn to them. Now, he's disillusioned and wants money. He's out for himself.

**Marcus:** So we need to quickly fortify the wall.

**Tyron:** I think from beyond the walls. We can bring our men in from outside the gate, unobserved. We will have three to four times the force they are expecting. From the east gate, we can get to the north gate without being detected. With a detachment of men, I can go to the rest of the preacher's men and make sure they stay out of the way.

**Marcus:** Why not kill them too?

**Tyron:** They can be useful. And they are benign, just preachers. They have no weapons at all and wouldn't know how to use them effectively.

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And one of them, a man named Peter I am told plans to go preach up in the Gethsemane gardens tomorrow.

**Marcus:** Tomorrow. How bold. Does he have a death wish?

**Tyron:** Perhaps we should go and listen to him, get some insights on what they are saying?

**Marcus:** Well ... it looks like a long night ahead.

### SCENE 72:

*The desert encampment. Jude slips out of his bed and out of the tent. He is abruptly encountered by a muscular guard, one of Joseph's men, who blocks his way.*

**Jude:** Who are you? Can you get out of the way?

**Guard:** I am here for your mother. She wishes that you stay here. *(Jude is frustrated but nothing to do about it.)*

### SCENE 73:

*The quarters of Mary Magdalene. Mira comes in hurriedly, in a twit. A guard follows right behind her.*

**Mira:** So do you think you have authority over me, that you can keep me from my man. How dare you?

**Magdalene:** As long as you are part of Joshua's family, you will behave responsibly.

**Mira:** How dare you use Joshua's name? You don't speak for him.

**Magdalene:** Actually ... I do.

**SCENE 74:**

*Zealot headquarters. Vokar girds for battle with his remaining men, some 20 or more.*

**Vokar:** *(to an aide):* Are they in place?

**Aide:** Yes, ready to strike.

*Vokar turns to a commotion and watches as two of his men bring Simon into the enclosure.*

**Vokar:** Why are you back here again?

**Simon:** They relented. They don't want to leave any more. They want to stay in Jerusalem and preach their message. They won't come.

**Vokar:** And my money.

**Simon:** The Roman captain took it. I couldn't do anything to stop them. They left and took it with them. The men ... they are still holed up ... obstinate.

**Vokar:** *(angry, he comes forward menacingly):* What did I tell you about the money?

**Simon:** I was helpless. These are soldiers. I am one man, not even armed. What could I do?

**Vokar::** Pay the price. Simple as that.

*He slaps Simon across the cheek viciously, and proceeds to collaborate with his henchman to beat him brutally. Simon is on the floor, bloodied and almost unconscious.*

**Vokar:** Make sure he doesn't leave. We have to get out of here and strike first!

*The men depart. The woman Simon has befriended is seen in the background, horrified at the beating.*

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### SCENE 75:

*Inside the tunnel, Vokar and a mass of men stand together, under torch light. We take POV of Vokar and the men as they begin to run through the tunnel, faster, and louder as they charge out of the cave entrance. Roman guards on the river are surprised, attacked and killed and a fierce battle ensues between the Roman soldiers, camped in the area, and the storm of screaming Zealots, coming down upon them.*

*The battle finally ebbs as the remaining soldiers try to make their retreat over the rocks, finally only a few managing to get to the streets and escape. Vokar and his men roar in triumph.*

**Vokar:** *(waving his bloody sword):* To the wall, champions! Go take the gate. *(The Zealots surge from the riverfront and up an avenue.)*

### SCENE 76:

*The North Gate. Tyron and his escort welcome a large contingent of Roman soldiers into the gates and up the walls to take their places in hiding, to wait for the Zealot's attack. Others cluster inside nearby houses, commandeered for the battle. Soon, a bloodied soldier, a survivor of the river attack, struggles up the street. Tyron confronts him.*

**Soldier:** They attacked us at the river. There was a swarm of them, too many. We couldn't fight them off.

**Tyron:** Are they coming here? Do you know? *(The soldier shakes his bloodied head, and tries to stay erect.)*

**Marcus:** *(stepping into the scene, addressing Tyron):* You said they were coming here.

**Tyron::** I know that they are coming.

**Marcus:** They killed our men at the river instead. It's a horror.

**Tyron:** They are coming now. I know it.

*(Noises are heard. The soldiers get ready, including the large number*

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*in hiding along the wall. The Zealots are roaring down the street. Citizens scramble to get out of their way. They are coming, waving swords, spears, torches and sweeping down the street toward the gate, unaware of the heavy influx of additional Roman soldiers, who lie in waiting.)*

### **SCENE 77:**

*Pilate and wife in their bedroom, he downs another glass of wine. She is disrobing.*

**Portia:** Why are you humoring these people? They are obviously lower class and have little to offer. I am certain that you're not so interested in the Zealots.

**Pilate:** We could well put them out of business. Rome would like that.

**Portia:** But they are a thorn in the side of the Sanhedrin. Don't you like that?

**Pilate:** I only like the fact that we have them, this pair, and they don't.

**Portia:** And what will you do with them? They seem worthless to me. They have nothing to do with the Zealots and the rest of the preacher's men don't want anything to do with them. He's a traitorous self-serving pig.

**Pilate:** Perhaps the Sanhedrin would like to see his head on a platter, after my curiosity has been sated. But we would have to get something in return.

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### SCENE 78:

*An epic battle at the north gate. The Zealots attack and fight to take the wall. Suddenly, from above, a line of Roman archers step up to turn the tide, firing a torrent of arrows down onto the Zealots. Other Roman soldiers come out of nearby houses to put the Zealots in a ring, fighting desperately to survive.*

*Vokar himself and a few men make it atop the wall, in hand-to-hand combat. As the Zealot ranks are thinned and defeat appears imminent, Vokar desperately fights a soldier, kills him and makes his way across the wall, finally making a desperate leap off the wall and out of the city, as his men go down to defeat behind him. Three other Zealots escape with him and they are in flight across the landscape outside the city. Tyron, fighting atop the wall, sees their retreat.*

*Roman soldiers march past and subdue a few men to get into the nearly deserted Zealot headquarters. As they break in, Simon's woman friend sneaks to him, cuts the rope that ties him and leads him, still groggy, into the tunnel to escape. The Romans command the scene. An aide to Vokar, an old man, steps up to protest.*

**Man:** Why are you here? We have no quarrel with Rome, or anyone.

*(A soldier steps up and rams him with a sword, he falls dead. Simon and the girl manage to get into the tunnel and escape.)*

### SCENE 79:

*Caiphas's headquarters. A messenger arrives, panting hard.*

**Messenger:** There is a battle at the north gate. The Romans are killing a lot of people, I think.

*Caiphas goes outside. The battle noise can be heard.*

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### SCENE 80:

*In the upper room, the apostles are praying together, and hear the battle. They peer from the window.*

### SCENE 81:

*Simon and the girl make it up into the streets. Simon, in pain, has to sit, leans against a wall. She is with him.*

**Girl:** Where can we go? Where?

**Simon:** I have friends ... nearby. I ... think I have broken ribs. I .... can't go any further.

**Girl:** Hide. Hide in here. Where are they? I will go get them.

*Roman soldiers gather again, outside the city gate, Tyron in command. Marcus arrives, bleeding from a sword thrust into his side.*

**Marcus:** Sixty-three of them dead at least. There is no leader among the wounded, so we are finishing them too.

**Tyron:** How many lost?

**Marcus:** Twenty-three maybe, more wounded. We are counting every bloody carcass.

**Tyron:** A handful escaped. I've sent a score of soldiers to track them.

**Marcus:** A long night .... and into the morning.

*(He pulls back his armor to reveal the bloody slash wound across his side. A soldier rushes up to catch him as he wavers. Another soldier rushes onto the scene.)*

**Soldier:** Seven of them wounded and in custody.

**Marcus:** Finish the worst; interrogate the rest, then kill them too.

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**Tyron:** So ... the Sanhedrin should be pleased, cleaning up their rats for them, fellow Jews that they've always disavowed.

**Marcus:** *(leaning onto the soldier, losing strength.)* I think we may just deliver to them what they've been wanting.

**Tyron:** What do they want? Other than collecting tithes at 10 percent and paying alms at 1?

**Marcus:** What would you say to the world's largest funeral pyre?

### SCENE 82:

*The desert at moonlight. Mary Magdalene walks near the tomb, she bends over to tend the small monument of rocks and baubles they have made, surrounding a crucifixion cross of sticks tied together. She goes to the front of the tomb and kneels to pray. A noise stirs her attention. Coming up the path, lit by the moon as Jude and Mira, laughing and playful. They stop short when they see Mary.*

**Mary:** Perhaps you can entertain your fleshly passions at some other place than here.

*The young couple say nothing, but momentarily Jude steps forward to the cross monument and pulls out a nice crystal. He places it on the shrine, says a short prayer and steps back. Mira comes forward and adds a colored rock to the collection, and also steps away.*

**Mary:** *(sighing at her mistake):* I am sorry.

**Jude:** We must go, mother. Mira and I are going back to Jerusalem, now, tonight.

**Mary:** So you have both slipped your bonds. What did you do to Bronn?

**Jude:** He's asleep. He loved the wine I fetched for him.

**Mary:** You had wine with which to ply him.

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**Jude:** From Joseph's caste. *(He almost smiles)* Sorry.

**Mary:** Will Joseph ever be rid of us? And so where will you go in Jerusalem, and why should I allow it?

**Jude:** Why wouldn't you allow it? We're in love. We will find a way.

**Mary:** Jerusalem can be a wicked place.

**Mira:** My cousin, she is prominent in the temple. She is a Priestess in the Temple of Athena. She will help us get settled safely.

**Mary:** And you're both going back into that corrupt system from Rome. Your religion has become so corrupt that the citizens are turning away, steadily, day by day. It is eroding along with their morals, their decency.

**Mira:** We have festivals. Yes! But they are not wicked. They can be very beautiful. And we're not sacrificing people, killing people. That's a pile of dung and shit in it.

**Mary:** Debauchery.

**Mira:** Sexuality is not debauchery. Our bodies are not unclean. We are who we are -- flesh and blood and bone, and we celebrate it. Your new sect is just boring. All you want to do is sit in silence and tax your minds thinking and trying to communicate with ... nothing. What is there? What can your religion show me?

**Mary:** Love and beauty and goodness. These are the things the world has lost.

**Mira:** You really ... should come to the temple. When you return to Jerusalem, we will be there to host you. The Gods of Roman are all-powerful; they are the foundation of the empire. Is there any doubt ... the power of Rome ... the power of these Gods? It is one.

**Mary:** Power without goodness brings nothing of value to the people.

**Jude:** Mother, it's better to be in power than out of it. I'm sure my brother's example of love and brotherhood can be championed in many ways, and especially with these people of Rome who have a core of religion in their hearts already.

**Mary:** You want to convert Pagans? Tell them that their gods are all

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invented, constructed from myth and imagination. That's the truth of it, you know. The Kingdom of Heaven is ... within. There is one God and the potential of that God lives within each of us. My ... son said that.

*Scene fades to an early morning sunrise. Jude and Mira are on the trail back to Jerusalem before the encampment awakens. They both wave to Mary who watches them until they are gone from sight in the glare of the morning sun.*

### SCENE 83:

*Judas Iscariot is restless in his bed, hears noises, people talking, being boisterous. What could it be? He pulls on a housecoat and goes to the door, opens it to a torchlit hallway. He makes his way down the hallway and from his POV sees a gathering of men, Pilate at the center. They seem to be celebrating. Pilate is talking and then takes notice of him.*

**Pilate:** I think those snakes secretly support the Zealots and use them to plague us. How I would like to see Caiphas's scowling face right now? Oh, and look who has arrived. Come in here .... this, my friends, is Judas Iscariot, a house guest and a valuable contributor to this victory with the information he has provided.

*The gathering includes:*

*Commander Marcus, Tyron and several other military and city officials. Servants are coming and going with sweet breads and hot coffee. Judas shakes hands with Tyron and Marcus, who is bandaged with his wound.*

**Portia:** I raise a toast of this hot sweet elixir of energy to our brave champions who have persevered through the night to destroy the vermin of the city. *(All cheer.)*

Judas manages to get Pilate aside.

**Judas:** I...didn't...I...What did I do? I'm not responsible for all this blood.

**Pilate:** *(sarcastically)* Well, you managed to get the preacher crucified. The Zealots, obviously incensed, were foolish enough to kill our soldiers. We retaliated. They retaliated. We retaliated. And now their corpses are

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piled up like fire wood. You launched it all. You made an opportunity for us to strike a mighty blow. One of your men led us right to the Zealots and helped to plan the attack.

**Judas:** One of -- who? One of his apostles. Do you know his name?

**Pilate:** No. But he set them up after pretending to work with them.

**Judas:** We had no connection to that band of rebels. They just did little atrocities and it brought down bigger ones upon us, in retaliation. Foolish. Simon? Perhaps Simon. He was a firebrand sometimes and knew some men in the party. He has a temper. But he hated -- I'm sorry -- he hated the empire. More apt he would be on the other side. He wouldn't betray them.

**Pilate:** Well ... Judas .... may I call you Judas ... we never can tell about that, can we?

**Judas:** *(still pondering)* Meaning?

**Pilate:** There are always various ... incentives to consider ... and they make certain choices ... inevitable.

**SCENE 84:**

*Caiphas's headquarters. He follows his aides outside, in the early, brightening day. In the front of the building, they are confronted by a contingent of Roman soldiers. A commander comes forward and rolls out a proclamation scroll. Behind him are scores of corpses, stacked like wood. Roman soldiers are dousing them thoroughly with oil. He reads:*

**Soldier:** His Excellency, Pontius Pilate, governor of Jerusalem, is pleased to report to you the destruction of 79 enemies of the state, who carried out an unprovoked attack of the north gate last evening. He wishes that you will join the gallant and heroic Roman Legion in the celebration of this victory -- with the immolation of these rebellious cretins. We present them to you as a gift and as solemn recognition of the great alliance of shared government that keeps us in peace and prosperity in this glorious city.

*With a hand signal, the torches are applied, and the entire mass of death goes up in roaring flames and black smoke. Caiphas looks on in horror, shielding his nose from the stench and his eyes from the smoke. He is extremely angry. His retinue is horrified, even as Roman soldiers strut about offering wine. It is a hellish scene of flaming flesh and phantasmagora.*

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### SCENE 85:

*Simon lies in an alleyway, battered, ribs aching. The girl comes back to him and offers a cup of water which he sips. She supports the cup and caresses his head. A burly man comes to them in a menacing way, leaning into the alleyway as if to pee, but doesn't.*

**Man:** Well, ain't you a fuckin' mess? You folks got a few coins for a hungry man. If you ain't I'm gonna pis on you. *(He cackles in laughter.)*

**Girl:** No. We got nothing.

**Man:** Well, you got a pretty little ass. I got something make you feel real good. *(The girl is silent, still giving Simon sips of water.)*

**Man:** You want some of it? *(He steps closer)*

**Girl:** *(lets Simon's head rest on the wall and eases away. The man leers at her. She pulls her loose dress over her head to reveal herself naked in front of him)* Is this .... something you think you want?

*The man moves closer. She lays back and fondles the wispy hair around her vagina and pulls it open a bit for him.*

**Girl:** Looks like pretty good stuff, huh? Want to take a lick?

*The man makes his way to her, hands on her legs, kissing her leg and thigh and burying his face between her legs. She obviously enjoys it. Simon looks on, incredulous. She soon climaxes with a long satisfying rigor, then suddenly turns cold, reaches a dagger nearby and with two hands brings it down hard into the back of the man. He struggles for a moment, loudly groaning and falls away dead. She has blood on her, and on her knife. She doesn't seem to mind.*

**Simon:** *(still stunned):* Damnation.

## APOSTLES AND REBELS

### SCENE 86:

*Indira waits impatiently in the street by her house, with two of her friends. Tyron comes into view along with a neighboring soldier, soiled and bloodied from battle. She sees him and runs to greet him, joyous that he has survived and looks well. They embrace lovingly and make their way back to his house. Inside, he removes his armor with her help and he tosses a purse on the table.*

**Tyron:** Compliments of the Zealots, an investment in their own demise. *(She picks up the purse.)*

**Tyron:** 1200 in there. *(He pulls another purse)* And 600 in here, compliments of our illustrious military, investing in the same battle. *(He tosses it on the table too.)*

**Indira:** So wonderful. Can we make our plans then? To the country -- our farm!

**Tyron:** Commander Marcus. He's wounded. Maybe not serious. I'm in charge for the moment. I have to go back on duty soon. There may be more trouble.

**Indira:** My darling. *(She hugs him)* I can almost smell the green of the valley. And .... *(she pulls away)* I only smell blood on you.

**Tyron:** There is much of it about.

**SCENE 87:**

*There is a cacophony of madness around the funeral pyre, dancing street urchins, laughter, someone waving a severed arm and cackling. A man is trying to eat a piece of a corpse and a soldier swings hard and decapitates him. The Roman soldiers are passing out wine for the masses gathered in the square. Caiphas looks from an upstairs window, in utter disgust.*

**Caiphas:** Pilate .... he is an evil, vulgar, blasphemous pile of stinking shit for doing this! He will die. I promise it. He will die!

*Across the room, surprisingly, is Vokar. Their longtime collaboration is revealed.*

**Vokar:** We didn't have a chance. They knew we were coming. They had soldiers everywhere. They came out of every door, every crevice. They filled the wall with archers.

**Caiphas:** You are missing the spectacle below. The naked remains of your force going up in flames while the city celebrates.

**Vokar:** I saw enough last night. And ... I do know who betrayed us. It was one of that preacher's men. I've known him a long time and I thought we could trust him, especially after what happened to the preacher, but ... it must have been him .... and his ... fucking lies! I left him in bondage. I will go back and kill him ... and not mercifully.

**Caiphas:** The preacher's men? They're involved in it?

**Vokar:** I only know the one. He's called Simon.

**Caiphas:** Well, I expect if you find him, you will find the others. And then you'll know.

**Vokar:** I have five men left, others have scattered. But maybe not for long. They need more money.

**Caiphas:** You will get it.

**Vokar:** And we will get them.

**SCENE 88:**

*The girl struggles to help Simon move forward on the street. They stop and lean on a brick wall.*

**Girl:** How much further?

**Simon:** Just three more blocks, maybe four.

**Girl:** No, gotta rest here. I know this man here, across the street. I'm hungry. I'm dying of thirst.

**Simon:** What do I call you?

**Girl:** What?"

**Simon:** Your name.

**Girl:** What name do you like?

**Simon:** Whatever it is.

**Girl:** Zena. Call me Zena. I like that.

**Simon:** Ze .... na.

**Girl:** Here, across the street. Hold up.

*(They make their way to a tavern across the way. He leans on the wall and she bangs on the door.)*

**Zena:** Portis! ... Portis!

*He eventually comes down the stairs and to the doorway, opens it to see Zena and Simon, who is doubled up in pain.*

**Portis:** My best girl, and inexplicably conscious here in the morning, just after the cock has crowed.

**Zena:** We need to tie this guy's ribs up. He's hurting and bent over. Maybe some coffee.

**Portis:** Maybe some of your good pussy too.

**Zena:** You got it.

**SCENE 89:**

*Judas hurriedly dresses himself, returns to the hallway and goes down to knock on Julianna's door. No answer. He opens it a peek and looks inside. No one has slept there. He is in a quandry. Where is she? He makes his way down the hall to the hospitality area of Pilate's lush home. A servant comes forward with a tray with coffee and breads. He takes the coffee and looks about the room, no one there as yet. But he hears Portia coming into the room, with two maids in tow.*

**Portia:** So .... you are off to the market then. Off you go. *(Both girls scurry away. She turns her attention to Judas.)* I trust you slept well, then, flushed with victory and celebration. That coffee is quite good, isn't it? It's imported from the mountains, you know, in some land close to here. I don't know where exactly.

**Judas:** I was looking for Julianna.

**Portia:** Ah, yes, she is in my sleeping room, there, go and see. *(She motions to a room on her left).*

**Judas:** Well, she is likely still asleep then.

**Portia:** Well, I think you should go and see.

**Judas:** Go and see?

**Portia:** Of course. I think you should. I really do. *(She is smirking.)*

**Judas:** I'm sure she appreciates her privacy. She will be up soon enough.

**Portia:** Well, let's just see, shall we? *(She goes forthright to the door and pulls it open.)* Anton ... boys ... get up ... come here. Yes! Come here. Out! Yes, out and gone.

*(Judas stands amazed as one young man, naked, and then another, come scurrying out of the room, pulling on their robes, in good humor, and making their way out of the room. He makes his way to the threshold.)*

**Judas:** What's that smell?

**Portia:** Herbals, of course. Sensuous oils. Are you so sheltered from the pleasures of life? Do you know hashish?

## APOSTLES AND REBELS

*(Judas stares at sister Julianna, naked in the bed, pulling up a spread around her, and still appearing dazed, light-headed. As she comes to consciousness, she breaks into a smile and yawns widely)* Brother, dear. You look a little ... weird. Not that you didn't always look a little .... weird. *(She points an uncertain finger at him.)* Weird ... that's you all right.

*(She breaks into laughter. Judas shakes his head, looks disdainfully at Portia and rushes out of the room. Her laughter rings in his ears as he marches down the hall.)*

**SCENE 90:**

*Elijah Mark, horrified by the funeral pyre and mad death celebration, makes his way toward home. He senses that he is being followed, and soon indeed spots a man stealthily pursuing him. He grips his knife inside his robe and takes a position to confront his follower, who soon comes into view. Elijah accosts him, wielding the knife.*

**Elijah:** Who are you? What do you want?

**Thomas:** *(opening his hood)* It is I, Thomas Didious. I was one of Joshua's men. And you are Arthos Mark, are you not? You hosted us, before the tragedy.

**Elijah:** I did. And where have you been?

**Thomas:** My sister's farm, out of the city, near Bethsaida. It has been safe there. Where are the men? Are they alive? Are they safe? I haven't been able to find your house again.

**Elijah:** They are fine. We will go there.

**Thomas:** I have been scared. I have been scared to death.

**Elijah:** For good reason.

**Thomas:** I was paralyzed with fear. I have been deep in prayer. I am now ... scared no more. I want to serve our master. I feel empowered. I feel he is alive, that he is risen, that somehow he was not of this world and now is above and beyond this world. He was here only on a sojourn, a mission, to show us a greater God, a God who loves us and has a home for us.

**Elijah:** A home? *(He is thinking that Thomas is a little carried away.)*

**Thomas:** Up there, in the sky. I have looked within. I see within. I see the truth. The Kingdom of Heaven is within, and it points to a home on high.... as our master said.

**Elijah:** It certainly isn't here.

**SCENE 91:**

*Judas pulls on the humble clothes in which he arrived, preparing to leave Pilate's quarters. Julianna comes into his bedroom to confront him.*

**Judas:** And so have you come down from your drunken revelry, perhaps to come to your senses.

**Julianna:** My senses have been stimulated, not abused. Portia ... she has given me a position in the temple. I am part of the organization now. I will be taken care of.

**Judas:** For what price?

**Julianna:** None, really. I will enjoy the work. Pleasure given is pleasure received. No harm in it and plenty of ecstasy. You really should liberate yourself, dear brother.

**Judas:** Liberation you call it? Wallowing with dirty men, subjecting yourself to their desires.

**Julianna:** My desires as well. You really should make an effort to see reality.

**Judas:** There is no good purpose to it. We all need a mate to live with, a family to raise. Children, living in faithfulness and goodness. You should have known Joshua. He would have inspired you to higher purpose.

**Julianna:** I have now achieved higher purpose, as you call it. I will be supported, taken care of. What about you? He is going to give you a position, isn't he?

**Judas:** I'm leaving. I have caused enough death, enough misery. I can hardly abide what I have done at all. The weight I carry is ... enormous.

**Julianna:** Let it go. There is pleasure to be had. We know the right people here. We will be fine.

**Judas:** Poor innocent, ignorant sister. You have no guilt to bear. Just ... do as you wish.

*(Judas makes his way to the door but is confronted by two Roman soldiers. They stand resolutely in his path. Arthos comes down the hallway to face them.)*

## APOSTLES AND REBELS

**Judas:** I must leave. I have things to do.

**Arthos:** You are not safe. You will need an armed escort.

**Judas:** Why am I not safe? The Sanhedrin?

**Arthos:** I expect you are roundly despised. So you could add Joshua, the preacher's men too. Do they perhaps have any killers among them? Do they believe in vengeance?

**Judas:** We were most often taught forgiveness, compassion, caring about one another. I will make it right with them again. I did not know that wickedness would hold sway, that the Sanhedrin are hopelessly corrupt, would not even reason with him, and that you ... that you would be so quick to kill him, without good reason. In a sense, I am blameless, just a pawn in their corrupt game. It was all supposed to be entirely different -- except for the corruption, the utterly incomprehensible level of corruption. I will give them the purse too; it's rightfully theirs. I must get it to them. I know where they must be.

**Arthos:** The purse then .... we will go and get it.

**Judas:** Oh, no. No. The purse must go to Joshua's loyal men. It is theirs. It isn't mine. It isn't Pilate's. It isn't Rome's.

**Arthos:** And so ... we will deliver it to them. You know where they are?

**Judas:** No ... no. What .... what would you do to them? Surely you can give them some peace. They are innocent of anything, they've only preached the good news, love for everyman, peace on earth. Can you just ..... let them out of the city? If you want them gone, they will leave, I'm sure. Can you allow them, please?

**Arthos:** *(a long pause)* We are advised that they don't want to leave.

**Judas:** I can't imagine ...

**Arthos:** They wish to remain in this wicked city. Such opportunity ... to rise above it .. to show the true way to the variously misguided.

**Judas:** *(in some despair):* Death then .... more death to come. I have to warn them and get this money to them so they can make their way.

**Arthos:** Yes. Let's do that. You ... and me

**SCENE 92:**

*Pilate's office. Arthos comes in.*

**Arthos:** He wants to go get the purse.

**Pilate:** So take him.

**Arthos:** And then he wants it to go to his former comrades, give it to them. He knows where they are, he says.

**Pilate:** So take him.

**Arthos:** And then?

**Pilate:** They are thorns in the tender sides of the Sanhedrins.

**Arthos:** They are that. I am sure they wish them destroyed.

**Pilate:** Then we manage the thorns, make them gouge a little deeper. Support them in their efforts to aggravate the shit out of those pompous bastards. But we must make sure they are not a threat themselves.

**Arthos:** Will they really take a stand and speak? Or will they flee the city at the first opportunity?

**Pilate:** Why don't you go with Iscariot, alone? No soldiers. You can discover their motives. Get the purse, find the men, and thank them for their help in putting down the insurgency.

**Arthos:** Their help, you say?

**Pilate:** We know only the one, we don't know the others, but we shall.

**SCENE 93:**

*The desert encampment, tents are being dismantled as the party begins in early morning to depart for Jerusalem. Mary of Nazareth makes her way to the tents of the Women's Corps. She comes up to Mary Magdalene tending the remains of a campfire. She stands up to face Mary and they look into each other's eyes. There is affection in both faces.*

**Mary:** And so they left. Will they be all right, in the temple?

**Magdalene:** There is no violence there. The wickedness is quite exaggerated.

**Mary:** There is wickedness all over Jerusalem, and in the camps around it.

**Magdalene:** Our priestess ... our friend ... is of high standing. She will take care of them.

**Mary:** I couldn't persuade them. I felt helpless.

**Magdalene:** To impose your will on them. Yes, I understand.

**Mary:** Have you been a mother?

**Magdalene:** That would depend on whatever sense you mean.

*(Joseph comes to them, workers in tow.)*

**Joseph:** And so to Jerusalem then, my ladies, where I have accounts to manage. But ... I want to show you something.

*He leads them across the sand to a better view of the line of boulders and rocks along the cliff. There, in the midst of the rocks, he has mounted a large wooden cross made of two timbers. It is a dramatic reveal in the morning light.*

**Joseph:** I had them bring in the wood from Agora, just across the river. Two magnificent timbers. A monument of adoration to our Joshua. An empty cross. Totally bare. Our glorious Redeemer is much greater than that. He is risen to glory. Do you .... like it?

**Mary:** *(tears are streaming)* I ... think so.

## APOSTLES AND REBELS

**Magdalene:** *(also tearful)* He is risen to glory. He was never a part of this wicked world.

**Joseph:** And ... we are not pompous here. He was a man of the people, a champion of the common man, the man who suffers, and the woman. It isn't a monument of marble and grandeur, which is ultimately meaningless in terms of everlasting being, our souls saved to God.

**Mary:** Joseph ... have you had an awakening to the new faith, then? You had been a bit torn, I believe.

**Joseph:** Well, I would never say a bad word against the grand old gods either. *(He laughs.)*

*(He sees that Magdalene is suppressing a smile, but not very well.)*

**Joseph:** *(resolutely but in good humor)* You never can tell, you know. No need to offend any Gods at all. That's the sensible approach. I see no reason at all why Joshua ben Joseph doesn't deserve a place in the pantheon of Gods. All Mighty forever!

**SCENE 94:**

*Judas pulls out boards from the floor in Julianna's apartment. He retrieves the hidden apostle's purse under the watchful eye of Arthos. He clutches it and they make their way downstairs. Arthos reaches for the purse and Judas pulls away.*

**Arthos:** Aren't you going to count it?

**Judas:** I know the amount. And remember that I have Pilate's word that it will go to the men, his apostles.

**Arthos:** Yes, I heard him say it. Put it safely away and let's go take care of that.

*(They make their way through the crowded street. Judas soon motions to a public privy, holding his crotch, signalling that he must go inside. Arthos signals it okay and stands in front of the privy. He begins to play with street urchins, throwing a coin and watching them scurry for it, again and again, as he pulls one then another watching them overpower their fellows and take the coin. He makes it sport.)*

*(Inside the privy, Judas accosts an old man in a monk's hood. He pushes coins on him, shucks him naked and swaps clothing with him. Outside, now in a hood, Judas manages to escape Arthos and slip away down the street. Arthos stirs himself when the coins are gone and turns to go inside, scouring through the stinking place but not finding Judas, only an old man trying to get inside Judas' clothes. He storms outside into the crowded street again, and Judas has vanished.)*

**SCENE 95:**

*Elijah Mark makes his way up the stairs to the upper room. The apostles are praying, chanting, and John arises to usher him back into the stairwell. Thomas is seen, having rejoined them.*

**Elijah:** Is he still preaching today? The city is in a bloody uproar. The Romans killed many Zealots last night and they're burning the corpses, right in front of the Sanhedrin. It's dangerous out there.

**John:** No matter to Peter. He is in the throes of some kind of ecstasy. I think he's connected to Spirit somehow. Laughter .... tears. I'm sure we'll be going to Gethsemane.

**Elijah:** May be unwise. Things should be allowed to cool down a little.

**John:** I don't see that he's going to seem a threat to the Romans. Our subject is God --a universal Father to all -- and Joshua his righteous messenger of hope and faith and everlasting joy in heaven.

**Elijah:** All good. But that's not what's in the streets right now.

**John:** We will bring a great message of spirit to the streets, and on to Gethsemane. We will sing his praises all the day and night. We will make an impact! For all to see and hear.

**Elijah:** Well .... just .... remember to say something good about Caesar while you're about it.

**SCENE 96:**

*The desert encampment. The women are saying a prayer in front of the tomb and the large wooden cross. James, Mary's son, comes toward them. Close behind is daughter Ruth and her husband, Corliss. Mary arises to stand before them.*

**James:** Jude is gone, then. You let him go? And with a servant girl.

**Mary:** She is one of Joshua's corps of women, not a servant.

**James:** This is no time for the family to break apart. We need to stand together.

**Mary:** I can't tell Jude what to do any more. He resists it, and I can't enforce it. He has a mind of his own, as you do. And your sister. I can't be her mind any more. You all must use your own.

**James:** We need to go back to Jerusalem. I need to talk to Jude. I didn't have that opportunity.

**Mary:** I would have given it to you, had it been mine to give.

**James:** We need to find his apostles. They may still be hiding in the city. Perhaps they can help.

**Mary:** They do well to help themselves. How many of them did you see at the cross?

**James:** They were scared to death. I can't blame them for hiding out for awhile. I don't know why they didn't crucify all of them.

**Mary:** Well, I'm sure goodness had nothing to do with it.

**James:** We need to make some kind of accommodation with the Romans. There is no point in this .... animosity. My brother offered them no threat at all. There is altogether too much unreasoned fear running rampant through our lives. Joshua talked of another kingdom; they must have thought he was trying to overthrow their evil empire.

**Mary:** Just ... don't count on his apostles too much. They are common people and I don't think your brother was able to change that.

## APOSTLES AND REBELS

**James:** It's just for Jude. We need to save my other brother. He's young and foolish and under the power of his genitals.

**Mary:** (*looks about*): All of my children ... so different from one another. Such a mystery of life.

**James:** I must do much more than I have done. I understand my new responsibilities, to the family and also to Joshua's work.

**Mary:** Would you be a preacher then? I'm not sure there is much potential with these street people who surrounded him. He was not well connected with the wealthy.

**James:** No wonder. He asked them to share their money in order to save their souls to heaven. They didn't like what he had to say. When you have earned a station in life, you can't just give it away, to the people in the streets. Perhaps there could have been some compromise. Perhaps we can gain more public acceptance; the message is up-lifting.

**Mary:** Well, I think perhaps we have too many religions as it is. More than one and they tend to fight.

**SCENE 97:**

*Tyron embraces Indira and leaves his home, soon to surprisingly confront Arthos, looking haggard and tired, on the street. He stands in front of Tyron.*

**Arthos:** The preacher's apostles. Do you know where they are?

**Tyron:** You are the governor's man. Is that why you ask?

**Arthos:** The man who betrayed the preacher. We had him in custody but he has slipped away. He is going there, I know it. Do you know where they are? I was sent to you from the legion office. They said Marcus is still recovering from his wounds, that you are in charge.

**Tyron:** What do you want with these men?

**Arthos:** This man, Judas Iscariot, has stolen money from the Governor, and we want it back -- and him with it.

**Tyron:** Why would he go back with them?

**Arthos:** To make amends .... with money, of course.

**Tyron:** Money? To instigate a crucifixion? And then more money .... to make amends?

**Arthos:** I will catch much fire. I let him get away. I even let him hold the purse. I'm in deep shit.

**Tyron:** As would be Joshua's men if I revealed their whereabouts to you. You work for one who doesn't hesitate to kill, and cheat and lie. He wrestles constantly with the Sanhedrin and I would have none of it. None of it. I'm leaving the city.

**Arthos:** He is the Governor. I work for him. So that's the truth. Yes. But I don't think he wants to kill or imprison these men. He might well help them aggravate his common enemy, the pompous and corrupt Jews.

**Tyron:** So let them be. I truly appreciate their idealism ... and their cause. I've seen the corruption of the Sanhedrin and the Romans first hand. I've killed more than once. I'm resigning the military and I am done with it.

## APOSTLES AND REBELS

**Arthos:** I just need the purse ... Judas' purse. We got it from his sister's house. I thought he honestly wanted to work with Pilate. They planned to establish some new church. And then .... he went running.

**Tyron:** Seems like he wanted the purse. And seems like Pilate wants the purse. Is it ever about anything but the money? Have you ever seen such a case?

**Arthos:** *(pauses to think)* Not that I recall.

### SCENE 98:

*Noon in Jerusalem, a sunny day. From the Upper Room steps Peter, radiant in a clean robe and clear-eyed, looking into the blue sky in a sense of joy. He breathes deeply, looks out over people walking in the street below. From behind him comes a voice.*

**Elijah:** Just a word with you ... just a word. *(Peter turns to him.)*

**Peter:** Speak it then.

**Elijah:** There has been much death out there. The streets are black with wailing women and drunken soldiers. Be wary of drunken soldiers swinging drunken swords

**Peter:** They must be sated and hung over by now. We must bring some joy into the streets then.

**Elijah:** Hung over? Foul moods are endemic.

**Peter:** On the other hand, everyone seeks love and joy and peace and harmony and comfort and security, my dear man. We shall bring it to them.

*Peter brushes past him to enjoy the sun and the wafting breeze. In a moment, he turns to go back inside. Elijah has done all he can do, standing in sad resignation of Peter's decision. But he sees something intriguing about Peter's demeanor.*

## APOSTLES AND REBELS

*Peter goes back inside to a room full of seeming joy and revelry, the apostles girding themselves to go out into the afternoon sun.*

**Peter:** *(loudly to the room)* We go in joyful service to the people of Jerusalem, to share the good news of our Savior's eternal Love. *(The men shout hosannas and joyful noise)*

### **SCENE 99:**

*Joseph's caravan is beginning to make its way out of the camp near the tomb, camels pulling their loads and each walking toward Jerusalem. He is astride a camel, and checking on Mary and her family, walking along together.*

**Ruth:** How far? When will we arrive?

**Joseph:** Before nightfall should our loads and our carriers hold together. The sand is packed nicely.

*The earth rumbles. From overhead, a panoramic view comes up, to the land far north of their location, a rumbling volcano in the land of the Turks, flaming spurts coming from inside and streaking the air. And at the caravan, the earth trembles, and the people are alarmed.*

**Joseph:** They call it Vesuvius, named for a vengeful fallen god, I think. A volcano. It is known to erupt and spew smoke and ash. You can perhaps see it -- the smoke -- off to the northeast there.

**Ruth:** What is likely to happen?

**Joseph:** Just some tremors. I wouldn't expect anything else. It isn't completely unusual here.

*We see volcanic ash rolling down a hillside, a wall of red heat.*

## APOSTLES AND REBELS

### SCENE 100:

*Peter steps resolutely from the Mark dwelling, the apostles right behind him, chanting a hymn of joy. There is John, James, Andrew, Phillip, Thomas, Nathaniel, Matthew, and the Alpheus twins. These men singing in harmony is unusual and attracts listeners, people in the street, others opening their windows, some children run alongside.*

*Peter and the men make it to a plaza where women are filling their jugs at a fountain. The men, and Peter, take the scene.*

*This scene and others during the day will feature POV with Peter and following with him as he preaches and greets the people, other apostles around him.*

**Peter:** Here we are brothers and sisters, in this beautiful plaza where we share the living water of life. Here, may we now for a few moments share together this full, joyful expression of life. What is it? Each and every one of us, caring for each other, building love for one another, expressing it with sharing and building together -- a community built of Love.

I don't mean the love for man and woman, though the Universal One God, has given you that. I don't mean only the profound love for parent and child, the opportunity to co-create life with our Maker and live in family. Though that, that too, is a great and grand gift of our Universal Father God.

I mean a Spiritual Love that transcends .... rises far above these mortal, human flesh and blood loves. I mean a love of Goodness so enriching that it fills our lives, the clear-headed, clean of heart wisdom that God lives inside each of us.

Go inside! The answers to your earthly woes, only temporary to this life, are all inside you. The voice of your Father speaks to you in a small, still voice. My dear fallen brother, Joshua, showed me that voice, and that voice lives for each and every one of you.

God the father is not violent and vengeful, not jealous, prone to anger. The true Father God is full of love and empathy for each of you, God's children, as he is God's child, who laid down his life for you just the other day, right here, to show you the way. He was never broken, never beaten. His courage will be a legacy of history.

## APOSTLES AND REBELS

Death is a passageway, only a passageway, and it is perfectly safe. And on the other side, his son Joshua waits to embrace you and call you to your heavenly home. We will go there -- and in the meantime, in order to make this wicked city just a little more tolerable, join us, me and Joshua's men, in a trek to Gethsemane gardens -- the last place our beloved leader slept in peace. There, I will preach to you the joy and we will share together in the joy of resurrection -- A Son of God who will live forever and will first breathe life tonight, in our celebration.

Bring me your ears. Bring us your children to be blessed. Bring food and drink and come share the Spirit. Prepare to stay the night and greet the morning sun.

*The band departs the plaza and makes its way up the avenue amid much joyous tumult. Tyron and Arthos pull away from the growing caravan. They have heard it all.*

**Arthos:** Bold and brave they are. What's to be done about it?

**Tyron:** This is not a military problem. Maybe not a problem at all. Let them stir the people. He preaches only ... Love. (*ha!*) How is that supposed to work?

**Arthos:** They're mystics, I think. They had just as soon gather and sit and meditate about some better life out there. Chant and sing. They're not the kind to carry arms. And you've dealt with such as these people, rather decisively. How many thousands have we Romans crucified in the various uprisings, most of them Jewish.

**Tyron:** There are always more to rise up — and be killed. All we ever seem to do is stir up vengeance, an endemic demand for revenge.

**Arthos:** So shall we follow along then? I think they're headed to the temple now.

**Tyron:** And what of your man, Iscariot?

**Arthos:** He is bound to show up there, I think.

**Tyron:** And when he does?

**Arthos:** (*holds open cloak to reveal a long knife*) We want the purse. Then we're done with him. Pilate has gotten all the information from them that he needs.

## APOSTLES AND REBELS

**Tyron:** They're certainly no threat to the peace, for we have none.

**Arthos:** Yet, they have a martyr in Joshua ben Joseph, poignant evidence of injustice. And now the Zealots are going to claim part of that martyrdom for their cause too. Ridiculous, of course! They knew nothing of him.

**Tyron:** Iscariot knew him quite well, and look what he did.

**Arthos:** I ... suppose I should go ahead and kill him. That was pretty scurrilous.

## APOSTLES AND REBELS

### SCENE 101:

*Peter and the entourage walk down the avenue. From POV Peter, we see Simon, ribs tied up tight, leaning on a doorway. Peter, flanked by John and James and the others come up to him. The girl, Zena, is at his arm.*

**Peter:** (holding him, close to his face.) We are glad to see you alive brother, though not well, we see.

**Simon:** (lying) We were sorely outnumbered. We fought as best we could but they beat us badly.

**Peter:** Meaning who... the Zealots? Do you fight for them?

**Simon:** Of course, the champions of our freedom, but now, like Joshua, martyrs to the cause of freedom from Roman oppression. We would join you in this march for freedom but ... I can barely stand.

**John:** (*stepping up*) We are marching for Joshua's message, not some cockeyed revolution.

**Peter:** The Kingdom of Heaven is within, Simon. Not in Jerusalem. We are proclaiming it here today.

**Simon:** I can't walk. But ... I am repenting of the old ways. I've seen the face of evil, with the Romans, with the Zealots. It is all madness. I would repent and take refuge in the kingdom of the spirit. Joshua's message rings true ... truer than it ever has for me.

**Peter:** (*seeming doubtful, as does John, turns to the young woman.*) And who are you?

**Zena:** I am Zena (*she appears humble*)

**Simon:** A kind and gentle woman -- of good heart. She has suffered. She has been scarred by hard times.

**Peter:** That is the way of it for most. You are both welcome to our circle of light, of course.

**Simon:** Blessings to all of you, my brothers. I salute your courage and will be with you in spirit.

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**Peter:** Get well. Feel the light, Simon. Feel the light.

*The entourage has walked on. Peter and John rush to catch up. In the back, Zena, playfully, accosts one of the Alpheus twins. She slaps him on the backside and shows him her tongue. They are surprised, tickled, laughing, and moving on. Simon looks hard at Zena, as they leave. She looks in his concerned eyes, is eating a date. She spits out the seed, couples it in her hands and puts it away.*

**Simon:** I owe you my life. I'm not forgetting that.

**Zena:** But what?

**Simon:** I .... don't know. *(They look into each other's eyes, both faces seeming to be filled with questions.)*

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### SCENE 102:

*Caiphias and his aides are clearing out the temple of the merchants. The sacrificial animals are being led below. The money changers are putting away their scales and paraphernalia. The large door to the temple is pulled together and barred just in front of the apostles and their caravan to Gethsemane. Peter leads them to a stop in front of the temple door.*

**Peter:** Here we stand, where the money merchants and the goat killers lie in wait for your money. They have fled before us, fearful that we might do exactly what my beloved Joshua did to them before he was martyred. He was fearless and we remain fearless at this place, where we stand to create a new and greater religion that celebrates the dignity of all life, be it rich or poor, well stationed or with none at all. We stand here -- free men and women of the eternal spirit.

*(Three aides to Caiphias step forward, one of them speaks.)*

**Aide:** The temple is closed, grieving the deaths of our brave soldiers and the death of those misguided patriots. The city is in mourning and you would do well ... in the spirit, as you say ... to show some respect for the dead as well. You might well, for decency, shut down your loud exposition.

**Peter:** We rejoice in the One God, our Universal Father, and the perfect way in which our leader showed his love on all of us, you included. You killed his body; you did not and cannot kill his spirit -- which is alive in all of us and in all of this land. *(The crowd erupts, in support.)*

**Aide:** We leave to mourn the dead and won't be drawn into your blasphemy. Your carnival of fools is a disgrace before the temple.

*(A rock whizzes by and strikes the man flush on his head. The mass swirls in shock and surprise. The aides step back. Peter steps forward with a hand in the air to quell the group. Another rock flies past.)*

**Peter:** Stand! Stand firm. No violence. *(He and the fellow apostles quiet down the clamor as Caiphias's men disappear inside.)* What does it tell us, brothers and sisters, when the Temple of Jerusalem quakes and closes to our mighty force? What does it say about them? What does it say about us? To the gardens .... and a celebration!

*(Tyron is seen. He watches unnoticed as the group moves on up the avenue. He then comes to knock on the temple door, vigorously. They finally*

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*come to open it and Tyron comes inside. Caiphas is conferring with his aides. The man's bloodied forehead is being tended.)*

**Caiphas:** You ... where are your soldiers? Can you not stop this madness. The city is insane, and you are the main instigators.

**Tyron:** I only watch in amusement. It seems to be an ... internal squabble.

**Caiphas:** We will file a complaint, a formal complaint. This attack, on this man, is violence. It is insurrection.

**Tyron:** It's just a rock ... thrown by a peasant. Would you like him brought to justice? Would you like a platoon of my soldiers to become, like, a protection service? We might be able to come to some arrangement or other.

**Caiphas:** The Emperor himself has already decreed that we will be protected, our temple, our high standing with the people of Jerusalem. Your ... Emperor!

**Tyron:** The Emperor? Oh, yes, I haven't seen that fellow in quite some time, have you? Where do you suppose he might be?

**Caiphas:** He maintains a great interest in Jerusalem from his palace, I assure you.

**Tyron:** And so does his Governor ... that being your worthy superior who actually sent me here to see you.

**Caiphas:** Pilate sent you ... to see me.

**Tyron:** He is hoping for a contribution from your faith so that we may put to work additional soldiers to protect you, see to your security, in these tumultuous times.

**Caiphas:** Absurd. We will see the Emperor.

**Tyron:** Then ... we will leave you to your task.

*(He has tried to extort money, now leaves the room.)*

**SCENE 103:**

*Mary Magdalene runs forward in the caravan to the family of Joshua, comes to confront Mary of Nazareth.*

**Magdalene:** I am going back. The earth is speaking to me. Joshua is speaking to me.

**Mary:** There is a volcano, up in the north. These are tremors. I don't think it has a ... voice.

**Magdalene:** No. No. The feelings are inside. I am going back, and three of the women are coming too. We will be keeping vigil at the tomb.

**Mary:** For what? What do you expect from it?

**Magdalene:** We don't know. But we feel it.

**Mary:** You feel something ... like what?

**Magdalene:** If we only knew ... goodbye. May you and your family be blessed.

**Mary:** And may you. We must visit. We must be friends. We have much to share.

**Magdalene:** Go see your son, and give Mira and Jude my love if you see them.

**Ruth:** We will see you soon.

**Magdalene:** *(a little sadly)* Goodbye.

*She stands in the sand, left behind, as the caravan moves along.*

**SCENE 104:**

*Peter's entourage moves along. Judas is following along down the street, hidden by the crowd. He comes to a place just ahead of the marching men. He pulls the purse from his cloak and stands ready to confront Peter, to give all of this money to the cause and to stand in reverence and praise.*

*He begins to step from the shadows but his neck is suddenly caught in a noose. Arthos has sneaked behind him and holds him in a strangulation grip. The purse dangles from his fingers, attracting the attention of others. A man grabs for it, then another, and Arthos is forced to relinquish his grip on Judas to grab for it in vain.*

*He pursues the man who has the pouch, forces him down and takes it from him. The man tries to fight back but Arthos stabs him in the shoulder. He recoils. Arthos backs up, away from the melee, then turns and runs with the purse.*

*Judas stands in despair, empty-handed, his cloak torn. A ruffian turns attention to him but sees that he has nothing. He spits in Judas' face and leaves. The surging parade continues up the avenue as Judas sinks to the pavement, alone, face splatted with spittle. Arthos strides down the street and disappears.*

*In subsequent scenes, all comes to a climax with severe tremors that shake the earth in and around Jerusalem, and their effects on the major characters.*

*We first see more volcanic activity scores of miles away. Then we turn to a scene in Gethsemane Gardens, Peter the apostles and nearly 100 persons who have followed them to the top of the hill. Some have torches to light the night. They stand bathed in torchlight and a full moon.*

**Peter:** My beautiful sons and daughters of the Universal Father. I speak to your souls. I speak to the indwelling spirit of the one true God who lives inside you. This great father forever shows you the path to righteousness, to worthiness, to call yourself a son and daughter.

No longer should you swallow the lie that God is a tyrant, or some assemblage of false and fanciful gods that the Romans have laid out before you. And no longer must you tolerate the corruption that fills your temple, extracting money from you at every turn, contributing to your poverty, fattening their calves and eating them behind their high, hard walls of exclusion.

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They, the wealthy who hoard their money and trickle it down to the chosen few who are subservient and meek. They keep from you a level of prosperity that could bring us all to joy, in the sharing of goodness, the sharing of our labors, the building of a community of loving souls.

This kingdom of true joy is within you. The oppressions of human evil cannot touch you there, for you have a higher calling, a greater reality, one that my dear martyred brother told you.

He has gone from this evil world, carrying your sins and sufferings with him, taking them upon himself. And he is there, now, up in the heavens preparing a place for you, his children, his brothers and sisters in the flesh.

*(Peter makes his way about the area, touching and holding hands with the people.)*

And this means you ... you are beloved ... and you .... and you ....and you. *(The crowd swells in joyful response.)* Each of you will have a mansion in the spirit world. Our Joshua, Son of God and also Son of Man decreed it, and showed us the way to leave this world with courage and faith and a true vision of a greater reality. By joining us in the flesh, he gave us great empathy, and it shows us a loving God who honors us with his own son, an incarnation of spirit into flesh that tells us of a greater love than any of us could ever have imagined. May all the earth rejoice in God's splendor, his saving grace.

*Peter turns to see standing before him the young boy, Jon Mark, and surprisingly he is holding out to him the clean and neatly folded robe that Joshua wore at his crucifixion.*

*Peter is overcome with emotion, as are the apostles who gather around to touch the robe, cry out in joy, clutching it to them, hugging themselves in ecstatic emotion.*

*Tyron and Indira are now seen standing nearby, and they are standing with Jon's parents, Arthos and Marie. It is a joyous moment, but soon interrupted.*

*The whole earth shakes violently. People are frightened. They hold each other tight, swaying with the earth's rigors.*

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**Peter:** Behold! A mighty sign. Our savior is arisen. God is grand and glorious and good. God shows us his benevolent power!

*The camera pulls away as the mountain trembles. Our view rises up into the sky, finally showing the entire blue planet.*

*Short scenes that follow trace the violent tremors shaking the area, in the various locations.*

### **SCENE 105:**

*Caiphas's fancy dinner table. The walls and ceiling shake, and to the diners' dismay, a large chandelier comes crashing down on their sumptuous dinner table. A fancy-dressed woman is seen picking plaster out of her hair.*

### **SCENE 106:**

*Vokar, down below, gathers with his men to eat. The stone wall cracks around them, and the ripple rips across the roof above their table. Their food is covered with shards of falling plaster and dust.*

*Vokar grabs the wall to hold steady, holding a glass of wine that sloshes. He looks at it intently and scoffs it all down. Red wine streams from his mouth as he screams defiantly.*

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### SCENE 107:

*Pilate and Arthos are being offered wine by a servant girl.*

**Pilate:** *(holding the purse taken from Judas)* So now we just find his worthless ass and finish him. Too bad he got away.

*The room begins to shake, the girl drops the tray with the wine, which shatters on the hard floor. She flees. Pilate, with an empty glass, holds onto a pillar. Portia grabs onto a table and screams at the servant.*

**Portia:** Be damned, silly girl! That wine came all the way from Greece!

### SCENE 108:

*Priestess Oris speaks to a short row of women, dressed for their new roles in the temple. Julianna is among them.*

**Priestess Oris:** You will become learned in all the ways of the Spirit. You will become joyous purveyors in the temple. People come here for the experience of religion, to live it, and you will be part of that experience.

*In walks an escort and the young couple -- Mira and Jude. The Priestess turns.*

**Priestess Oris:** Ah! A grand arrival. My cousin Mira.

*Tremors shake the room. Mira is embraced by the Priestess. Jude stands awkwardly and the Priestess motions him into her arms as well.*

**Priestess Oris:** Joy! The Gods speak loudly. We listen and rejoice!

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### SCENE 109:

*Joseph's caravan is at the gates of the city when the tremors strike. The east wall rips apart as the earth splits, a soldier falls from the wall. Mary and James hold together.*

**Mary:** This wicked city It is cursed. We must take care of our business and be gone.

*A larger tremor comes and Joseph gathers Mary in his arms. They hold each other tightly.*

### SCENE 110:

*Judas is atop a nearby hill, out of the city. He is fitting a noose around his neck, affixed to a large dead tree. The earth shakes, the cliff collapses, with it the tree, and Judas as well. He falls hard down the rock embankment and onto the rocks below.*

*Bloodied, with the noose still around his neck, he tries to get up, but with broken bones no doubt. He is unable to move himself as the earth tremors shake more violently, and the rocky cliff collapses again and falls upon him.*

### SCENE 111:

*Mary Magdalene is at the tomb clutching to her a vial of poison. Her friends lie sleeping across the way.*

**Magdalene:** My beloved. I must decide. Do I come to join you in paradise?

*The earth shakes violently and she drops the vial. The earth trembles all around her. The girls are awake and crying in fear. The earth splits wide apart and she is almost swallowed in the gash. It splits open up to*

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*the tomb, where the largest boulder falls away, revealing a gaping hole. Several boulders crash down the hill before, finally, the earth settles and is quiet.*

*One of the girls is whimpering. Magdalene picks up the vial and it is empty. She looks to the tomb and sees a light inside. One of the girls rushes up beside her, in a frantic whisper.*

**Girl:** A light. Look. The workers left a lamp inside there.

**Magdalene:** I ... don't think so.

*She gets up and leads the others toward the new tomb entrance. There is full moon light. From her POV, she makes it to the portal and looks inside. She sees the flame of an oil lamp. It sits on the surface where the burial shroud should have been. It is missing and the flat rock is clean. Camera moves forward to an extreme close-up of the flame. We hear the noise of the women, amazed.*

### **SCENE 112:**

*Close-up of Mary's eyes. She is still clutching Joseph to her and wondering why. He is holding her securely, tightly, she believes affectionately, something more. She pulls herself up in the carriage. Joseph is looking outside.*

**Joseph:** We must go ... my property ...

**Mary:** Yes *(pulling herself together)*

*They are seen going into Joseph's courtyard, seeing the cracked wall, a contingent of scared servants pulling themselves into the reality of what has happened. He sees one of his finest olive trees uprooted. A servant comes out, his head in a bloodied cloth.*

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### SCENE 113:

*On Gethsemane, the worshipping flock is disheveled, but some still feeling the power of the event, some kind of wondrous spiritual awakening. Peter looks among the recovering throng as he walks with arms upward, in wonder. But suddenly he becomes aware of a reality. In the city below, there is fire! Wide-eyed he begins to scream.*

**Peter:** Fire! Fire! The city is burning. Run! We must run to save the city, save the people. Run! Run!

*The crowd clamors down the hill.*

### SCENE 114:

*Buildings are afire and the city is panicked, swarming with citizens and Roman soldiers, battling hard to quench the flames and stop the spread. Then, there comes a horde of helpers from Gethsemani. Amazingly, they work together hand in hand in the battle.*

*There comes onto the scene a horse-drawn water wagon, Joseph and his household moving it along. The draft horse panics and rears high, breaking the harness, and running. The men fight to rescue the huge water cask and employ it to fight the blaze.*

*In another location nearby, Peter, James and John help others push down a plaster wall to smother the flames and protect the adjacent structure. Men rush forward with water.*

*In the end, Roman soldiers, Jewish citizens and Joshua's apostles have worked together to stop the certain destruction of the city. It is like a celebration, including the apostles, Joseph and Mary, united together and now united in victory.*

**SCENE 115:**

*Evening has passed and there is early morning sun. Pilate steps cautiously onto the balcony of his Jerusalem offices and resident. He is holding coffee and examining the walls.*

**Pilate:** Sturdy, no cracks. This place is built like a fortress.

*Arthos steps out cautiously to join him. They observe the near chaotic streets below, citizens and merchants scrambling about to safeguard their merchandise, reconstruct their premises.*

**Arthos:** So you survived the night. There was quite a fire. It took a lot of hands and heart to save the damned place.

**Pilate:** Have you heard from Herrod's palace? Any trouble up there?

**Arthos:** The devil himself couldn't crack those walls.

**Pilate:** Maybe he wouldn't. The son of a bitch lives there.

*A messenger arrives with paper. The young man, wide-eyed, is ushered in to deliver it personally to the Governor. It is from Herrod, the ruler of Palestine province. Pilate reads it intently. We see Portia donning a robe and coming into the room.*

**Portia:** The servant quarters are a mess. The ceiling came down. It's a wonder they weren't killed.

**Pilate:** *(paying no mind to that)* I'm being transferred. He is taking me out of the city and sending me to Lusanne — the armpit of the kingdom.

**Portia:** Even after you put down the Zealot revolt, crippled their movement for a long time? What's that about?

**Pilate:** They blame me for what they call a disgraceful and provocative funeral pyre. Remember our little demonstration for the assholes in the Sanhedrin?

**Arthos:** They have ... weight with Herrod. What will we do?

**Portia:** I'm not going to Lusanne. You can carve that in stone.

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**Pilate:** Neither am I. Bring me Marcus, the man who did the deed.

**Arthos:** You laughed about it. Didn't you order it done?

**Pilate:** It was his idea. I went along. But now ... who's to pay? What do you think, Arthos, and dear, dear Portia. Maybe you would like me out of the way so you can enjoy the city without the numerous nuisances of managing it. I'm sure you can win favor with the new governor, whatever ass-kisser he happens to be.

**Arthos:** You ... have my loyalty, as does Portia. I'm still at your command.

**Pilate:** *(walking up to Arthos's face)* I will have a counter-offer for his Excellency. And find that man, second in command, his name ...?

**Arthos:** Tyron Amadon. I know him.

**Pilate:** He is able, is he not? And loyal?

**Arthos:** He has ... been loyal to Marcus, that much we know.

**Pilate:** He would surely like a promotion ... and a seat at the big table. Send for him.

**Arthos:** *(bowing slightly)* Per your wishes.

**Pilate:** My husband ... and will his conspiracies never end. Will our mighty Herrod accept a scapegoat. *(She leaves the room.)*

**Pilate:** Don't be haughty. Your fate is tied up in all this. *(He turns to Arthos)* And yours as well.

**SCENE 116:**

*Joseph and his servants look with dismay at a collapsed wall and the tunnels underneath, a huge clot of stone and mortar. He shakes his head sorrowfully, and makes his way out of the crypt, the tombs of his family hopelessly buried.*

*He climbs up into the courtyard, where servants are struggling to erect the fallen olive tree, and removing fractured pieces of plaster fallen from the roof. From there, we follow him on camera as he leaves this scene and goes into his quarters. Abruptly, he comes face to face with Mary of Nazareth. She stands, confronting him, with her son James.*

**Mary:** Where is my son? The tomb is empty, the quake opened it. What have you done? What has happened?

**Joseph:** (*hesitates*) May we ... speak alone?

**Mary:** We are family. James is a man. Where is his brother's body?

**Joseph:** Safe. In my family's tomb. Safe and secure from all that might threaten his remains.

**Mary:** Who? Who would do that?

**Joseph:** Too many people knew of our caravan, the location. The Sanhedrin wanted to find it and take the body and parade his skull in the streets, beat drums with his bones. And they would do that. Peter has now preached that he is risen, he is on high somewhere, resurrected. He has raved on about a kingdom not of this world. The Sanhedrin are concerned.

**Mary:** He has preached what? What does Peter know? He is carried away. He was always a little ... excitable.

**Joseph:** He mesmerized the flock. They were led up to Gethsemane to hear his ... bold oration. When the earthquake struck, they took it for a sign, an omen. They all had to rush down the hill to help put out the fires ... his men, Joshua's men. They all pitched in, you saw it.

**Mary:** You have taken a lot on yourself to do this, Joseph.

**Joseph:** I love you deeply. I want to marry you and take care of you forever.

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**James:** Damned you! (*he leans forward*)

**Mary:** Quiet! (*she puts a hand on her son to restrain him*)

**Joseph:** How can I be less than honest about my feelings? You will be well provided for, and all of your family. I have businesses, here and in Arimathea. We make tents and ...

**Mary:** I don't care about your businesses. I don't have to be cared for. I have a home in Nazareth. We do carpentry, build and repair boats. It's all in the family. We are not paupers.

**Joseph:** James seems mature enough to run the business.

**James:** (*interjects*) I plan to be in Jerusalem. I want to work with Andrew, and Joshua's men. We have a new spiritual vision.

**Joseph:** As you wish. I only want to serve your mother. She will live well in the city. I am well connected with important people. You would ride high, on your own gaily decorated camel.

**Mary:** I can't ride those things.

**Joseph:** We can modify the frame, the seat. I have an idea.

**Mary:** No camel, I had soon walk.

**Joseph:** There is something better. Yes, there is. I know ...

**Mary:** Can we go to your tombs? They are close-by?

**Joseph:** (*shakes his head, hesitates*) I've just been there. Alas, the quake ... this cosmic event ... it broke open this very old foundation and the building fell down upon it, the tunnel, the crypt, it's all buried, I fear forever ... my family, your son ... It's just too ... but maybe we can ...

**Mary:** This empty tomb. It can never be explained then. This can't be rectified.

**Joseph:** He is risen. Believe the legend and it will grow. You will go back to Nazareth, not in disgrace, your son disgraced. No! You will be the proud mother, of a risen Savior, a martyr, who served in a mission of empathy to the people, assuring them of a Kingdom of the heavens, well

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beyond the evil of the day, waiting for them. It is a new message of hope. He is not a body. He was magnetic. He will be a legend.

**Mary:** I always thought he would be the messiah. He was so blessed. And then ... he went wrong. He ran afoul of the faith in Nazareth. He was a rebel, he turned things to his own views. They were exasperated with him, and then he organized some men, fishermen, working men, and they set out to preach in the streets. They went here and there. But he was not sanctioned by anyone in the Judaic faith. And finally he angered them and they killed him. They got the Romans to do it, anyway. They're used to atrocities, natural killers, demons — and in bed with the Sanhedrin. They are a band of scoundrels and I think I want to be home, and rid of them. Leave them to fester here in their evil.

**Joseph:** Your son is here. Safely entombed. Resting in peace. They can't touch us. We can stand up to them. Look ... I have something for you.  
*(He turns and leaves)*

**James:** *(sees an opportunity to interject.)* Andrew wants to mentor me. I want to be one of his men, an apostle. We are rebel apostles.

**Mary:** Joshua ... he was ... a contradiction.

*(Joseph returns, carrying a large cloth, mostly hidden.)*

**Joseph:** We oiled his beautiful body, treated his wounds, the finest oils and here ... *(unfolds the cloth to reveal the oil pressed image of Joshua in his funeral shroud, likened to the Shroud of Turin. This is a shocker.)*

*(Mary, face in frustration, breaks into a loud anguished scream! Covers her face. Joseph tries to come to her and she pulls away, grabs son James by the arm and flees the room. Joseph stands alone, with the shroud, chagrined.)*

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### SCENE 117:

*Marcus, the Roman commander, limping from his wound, makes his way into Pilate's quarters. Arthos meets him and escorts him down the hall.*

**Marcus:** What does he want? Do you know?

**Arthos:** I think your funeral pyre stunt in front of the Sanhedrin has drawn a bit of Herrod's ire.

**Marcus:** Too much, huh? Can we weather it?

**Arthos:** He ... has a plan. *(they walk into a room to confront Pilate. He is alone and the room is empty.)*

**Marcus:** My men are busy recovering the city. We'll be back in operation soon, in all respects.

**Pilate:** Good. Is this ... Tyron Amadon helping them, taking some control?

**Marcus:** He's a good man. Is there ... some problem?

**Pilate:** Like I said, Herrod didn't appreciate our torching the dead zealots in front of the eternally complaining and bitching jews.

**Marcus:** Well, that's a fact. They never shut up.

**Pilate:** I can shut them up. They want my head on a platter, but I think they might be happy with yours. Up there. *(motions to the ceiling, and points)*

*(Marcus strains to look up as Arthos's sword comes across and cleanly decapitates him. Pilate has stepped back a step but still gets some splattered blood.)*

**Pilate:** Damned, I'll have to have clean clothes. Get Miriam. And box this up for Herrod.

*(Arthos looks with disgust at the corpse, still in death rigors. Pilate storms out)*

**Pilate:** This Tyron man. Get him over here.

**SCENE 118:**

*Fountain Square is busy with activity. The apostles and citizens and roman soldiers are cleaning and restoring the area. Andrew looks up to see in front of him, Mary of Nazareth and her son, James.*

**Andrew:** Praise God, it is Mother Mary. Peter come see. John ...

*(They come forward to embrace Mary joyously.)*

**Peter:** We are in the streets. We are praising and serving your son, our great inspiration for a new era. There is a pilgrimage. Many are on the way to the tomb. It will be a sacred site.

**Mary:** He is ... not there.

**James:** He is risen! *(loudly)* He is risen, Your savior is risen. His tomb is empty. He is risen into the heavens, into the kingdom of spirit. *(Joyful noises erupt among the surrounding listeners.)*

*(Mary listens, incredulously, as the crowd stirs. A woman wails loudly. Peter looks amazed. A new tumult shakes the people. The pilgrimage is returning, a stream of people coming from the tomb. We hear the recurring call, "He is risen.")*

*(Mary looks intently, disapprovingly, at her son. He looks joyful. She is confused and concerned. There is a lie here. Peter takes the scene and begins to preach. She can barely hear his words through the conflicted issues roiling in her mind.)*

*(Someone grabs her arm. She turns to surprisingly confront her Son Jude, and with him, Mira. They have left the Pagan temple to be here.)*

**SCENE 119:**

*Tyron strides the street to Pilate's quarters, in full battle gear, and flanked by two well-armed legionnaires. They approach the front door of Pilate's quarters. Tyron returns a salute. The soldier faces him sourly, holding a box.*

**Legionnaire:** They killed him, commander. They fuckin' killed him.

*(opens box to reveal Marcus' severed head. Tyron looks grimly.)*

**Tyron:** Who gets the prize?

**Legionnaire:** The man with the black beard. Who else? This is in order to save Pilate's own miserable ass.

**Tyron:** Maybe I'm next.

**2nd Legionnaire:** Watch the tall one with the light hair, big sword, comes at you from behind.

**Tyron:** Maybe they'll offer me the job.

**Legionnaire:** I hear Pilate is gone unless this works. They're sending him to the bushes.

**Tyron:** Maybe he's not going peacefully. *(girds up his armor)* Guess we'll know soon enough. *(He orders his soldiers to stay and walks inside.)*

*(Up the stairs, he walks cautiously forward, escorted by one of Pilate's servants, and into the room where Pilate and Arthos are drinking wine.)*

**Pilate:** *(raising his glass):* A toast to the new Commander of the Roman Legions in this ... problematic city.

**Tyron:** *(fingering his sword, so does Arthos, standing nearby. It is tense):* You murdered Commander Marcus to make this happen?

**Pilate:** For your good fortune. He was incompetent. His corpse-burning spectacle was just too much. We had to depose him.

**Tyron:** He could have retired.

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**Pilate:** Herrod wanted my head on a platter. I believe he will settle for another one.

**Tyron:** You approved it all. But apparently are too cowardly to deal with the results of your actions.

**Pilate:** Not if I can substitute the man behind it all. It was the commander's venomous idea and he should rightfully pay for it. I simply acquiesced.

**Tyron:** The real rat escapes the trap and throws Herrod the cheese.

**Pilate:** Do you want to be commander of the Roman Guard in Jerusalem? *(he pauses dramatically)* Or do you not?

*(Tyron and Arthos make eye contact, assessing the situation, what must be done.)*

**Tyron:** I want to be released and receive my pension. I will be into ... agriculture, far less stressful.

**Pilate:** You will succeed to Marcus' quarters. He was widowed as you know, and was well into horticulture, with botanicals, potatoes, some new kinds of peas, vegetables.

**Tyron:** I inherit the dead man's garden.

**Pilate:** So, he doesn't need it anymore. And you can command all of our forces in this city. But ... you must be loyal.

**Tyron:** Do you really think this ... scapegoat head will influence Herrod?

**Pilate:** If it doesn't, then I'm off to Lausanne. Ha! There's nothing up there but agriculture. Maybe I'll get into it.

*(Arthos captures Tyron's eyes, they look at each other as if communicating on another level.)*

**Arthos:** Given the realities of the moment, I'm sure that Tyron will see this as an opportunity and the past as nothing that can be changed and ... let us all see what happens.

*(Tyron seems to get the message. Pilate observes with a wary hand. His fate hangs in the balance with Emperor Herrod.)*

## APOSTLES AND REBELS

### SCENE 120:

*Jude and Mira have found a secluded corner away from the bustle of Fountain Square. They share a loaf of bread and some water. Mary of Nazareth comes upon them, greets them lovingly, and sits.*

**Mary:** Can you tell what has happened at the temple. Have you left them them?

**Jude:** They are not what they appear.

**Mira:** These goddesses of fertility ... they are pimps to a harem of whores, selling their sensuality to serve the temple's financial needs.

**Jude:** They want to defile my precious woman. Pass her around to ugly, dirty old men who represent the temple — with their funding.

**Mira:** Our sexuality is ... sacred. And they defile it with excess and abuse and drunkenness. They cheapen it, vulgarize it, and you with it.

**Jude:** Not any more (*they embrace deeply*).

**Mary:** Joshua ... he spoke often of this matter. I so much ... misunderstood him in the beginning.

*(Scene dissolves into a dream sequence flashback. We hear the call. Mother! Mother! The voice is James, Joshua's younger brother. We see the visage of Mary, much younger, and then turn to assume her point of view and focus upon James and his earnest face, more sharply, staring at her. Dream scene continues.)*

**James:** He is leaving, on John's boat. Are you just ... staying here?

**Mary:** Your brother is deserting us to the fates, we need him, and he chases a mad dream.

**James:** I only know he's leaving. We may never see him again. There is danger out there.

**Mary:** I have spoken with him at length. I can say no more.

*Mary hears the door slam, is thoughtful for a moment. She looks at the lyre that Joshua has crafted for her. As she sees it, she hears the string music from some other day, laughter as the tune fills the air.*

## APOSTLES AND REBELS

*And then suddenly, Mary jerks around and runs from the house. We see close-up of her bare feet tearing through the sand, running hard and out of breath. She finally falls in the sand, struggles to get up and walk on.*

*From her POV, we come upon Jude and Ruth, standing at the shore. John's boat can be seen leaving the bay. The children look at her as she stands, puffing for breath, and watching the boat departing.*

**Mary:** I ... am sorry.

**Jude:** He said ... I don't have a mother any more.

**Ruth:** He was hurt.

*In despair. She looks at her children. James comes back, out of the surf and they are together. Mary falls to her knees in the sand and the camera pulls away as mother and children hug each other in a cluster on the beach. The camera continues to pull away to make them smaller.*

*Mary comes back to the reality of sitting with Jude and Mira near the Square. James walks in. So does Ruth and husband. She reaches to take their hand and they all embrace now, in the current time while Peter is heard preaching outside.*

**Peter:** The power of God is Love. The only essential message: Love one another. *(The words reverberate.)*

*(Camera pulls away from family embrace, through the roof and up into the sky, far above the city.)*

**SCENE 121:**

*Caiphas stands arrogantly on his balcony, overlooking his plush private garden. An aide reports behind him.*

**Aide:** They're all over the city. Mostly surrounding Fountain Square. They literally have taken it over, and the Roman soldiers are there supporting them.

**Caiphas:** No surprise. And where is Pilate? What does our esteemed governor have to say?

**Aide:** No word. Gossip says, and our informers ... that he has replaced his military commander. Your complaint has borne fruit.

**Caiphas:** Pilate needs to be gone, not some scapegoat.

**Aide:** Respectfully ... he can't do anything about this movement, this Joshua fixation. They believe he has risen from the grave. It seems out of anybody's control.

**Caiphas:** I don't think so. Where is Vokar? Call him.

**Aide:** In the basement, I think. He has broken a cask of your finest wine.

*(Caiphas is silent.)*

**Aide:** So what do you think about that?

**Caiphas:** Worn out his welcome, hasn't he? Such trash to waste good wine. But I have work for him. Do you know their plans for the evening?

**Aide:** No, we don't.

**Caiphas:** Then get down to the square and bring me information.

*(Aide leaves.)*

## APOSTLES AND REBELS

### SCENE 122:

*Elijah is running home, Marie opens the door for him.*

**Elijah:** The apostles. They are commanding the square, John is preaching now. And there is music! They have brought forth strings and drums and flutes. It is unheard of. It is a wonderful turn for faith, the spirit. They are rejoicing in spirit — and with music!

**Marie:** And they are still coming here tonight?

**Elijah:** Of course. How is the food coming? The bread? The lambs, are they on the fire?

**Marie:** Outside, in the back. The neighbors, they're helping.

**Elijah:** Peter says it will be a cohesion of energy. We will worship — and make music — together, as one, and there will be an outpouring of energy, of spiritual energy, and we will feel it — the power — together.

**Marie:** *(laughing)* We had best be prepared.

**Elijah:** He called it ... the Spirit of Truth.

*(Jon Mark, standing nearby, takes it all in.)*

### SCENE 123:

*The Emperor Herrod, in his palace on the hill, fondles the box with the grisly remains and reads the paper from Pilate, walking around the room. An anxious circle of men await his reaction.*

**Herrod:** Pilate seems to believe that we — and the Sanhedrin — will be satisfied with this ... sacrifice. I don't even know this man, Marcus, who was the Roman commander. Are we to believe he wasn't apprised of this funeral pyre spectacle? This man did it?

**Aide:** I suppose so.

## APOSTLES AND REBELS

**Herrod:** No responsible governor would let that happen. And he would surely know about it.

**Aide:** Pilate is said to drink a lot. And his wife, Portia, talks too much, and says the wrong things.

**Herrod:** I've had enough. And this (*points to the box*) speaks loudly to his honor.

**Aide:** Sir, he doesn't have much. He has a muddy record of service.

**Herrod:** Send him to Lausanne. And who is this Tyron Amadon, whom he would appoint as commander.

**Aide:** Excellent record of service. He is reported to be the link that led to the Zealots routing at the north wall. They killed scores of them and he was an able leader. This ... Marcus was wounded early on.

**Herrod:** Perhaps we should stay with him. I have an ... ironic mission for him.

**Aide:** There is one thing

**Herrod:** Yes.

**Aide:** When they hung up that street preacher and stirred up all this shit. He attacked and mauled two other soldiers on the scene. Seems one of them abused the criminal with a spear thrust. He broke the arm of one or them.

**Herrod:** He was angry?

**Aide:** He was apparently dying slowly, very slowly, suffering. They were just trying to bleed him out faster, so he would go and they could get home.

**Herrod:** Is Tyron a family man?

**Aide:** I believe so. Wife ... no children.

**Herrod:** Make his appointment official and I will prepare his first orders.

*(The aide rustles away. We see a close-up of Herrod's face, breaking into an ironic smile.)*

**SCENE 124:**

*Princess Oris, striding confidently and flanked by two female assistants, approaches an open porch of the temple. Slumped in her seat there is Julianna, sister of Judas.*

*She walks up and faces her resolutely. Julianna raises her head, noticeably tipsy from wine imbibing. She holds a glass uncertainly, but it is empty.*

**Oris:** And so Mira has left, and Jude, and you did not inform me. Instead, you lie here early in the day in a drunken squalor. You are sloven, lazy, and not long for this temple unless you clean up.

**Julianna:** I'm not staying here anyway. My brother Judas is coming for me. He is a man of standing in the community, educated and the like, and he will be coming for me soon to join his estate.

**Oris:** He had best be coming soon. I'm putting you on notice. Clean up! *(she pauses and looks around, disgusted)* She was so beautiful. She could have been the face of the temple, and connected to the holy man they say has risen from the grave, this Joshua. He's dead but larger than life. The streets are alive with his worshippers. They seem to be celebrating, if that makes any sense.

**Julianna:** My brother ... he was a follower, an advisor, a close friend of Joshua's. That's true. Did you know that?

**Oris:** So where is he now? I would like to meet him.

*(Julianna shrugs negatively, drunkenly, her eyes rolling from here and there, and doesn't answer.)*

**Oris:** That's enough. Get rid of her. She's too ugly to be of service. Throw her out the back door with a few rags. She demeans the temple. I need worshippers, supporters, benefactors, men who want and need holy sensuality in their lives, and they don't want it with drunken slobs like this.

**Assistant:** What of ... her brother?

**Oris:** According to my reports, there is one Judas Iscariot, Joshua's betrayer. His name will likely live in infamy. And so we're throwing his sister out in the street.

## APOSTLES AND REBELS

### SCENE 125:

*Tyron and his wife are at home, he has spoken to her of his fortune and she has slipped away, facing the wall and her colorful cactus garden. We see them in a moment of silence as she assimilates their fates.*

**Alicia:** I wanted to grow olives. I have learned a lot about how to do it.

**Tyron:** But I will be commander of the legion here in Jerusalem. We will have prestige, money, an estate with a large and beautiful garden, I'm told, up the main boulevard ...

**Alicia:** Marcus. His estate.

**Tyron:** He's passed. He no longer needs it.

**Alicia:** Did Pilate kill him? Did the governor just kill him? Why not just depose him? Why is there blood all over this?

**Tyron:** Not my doing. I must only respond in the way that's best for us. We must survive. We want to prosper. And so we must act wisely, for our best interests.

**Alicia:** Will you even get the post? Didn't you say Pilate may be on his way out too? This whole affair must be exceptionally...precarious for him.

**Tyron:** *(shakes his head in doubt)* We await impatiently ... for none other than Herrod himself.

*(A messenger arrives and is escorted inside. He carries a scroll from Herrod and plops it into Tyron's outstretched hand, then stands back to wait for a reply. Tyron opens it slowly and reads. He then looks up to Alicia.)*

**Tyron:** Long story short ... Commander Tyron Amadon is ordered to the city square to be sworn in at 3 p.m. Former Commander Anthony Marcus died ... of his wounds.

**Alicia:** May the gods be with us.

**Tyron:** Tell the emperor I will be there. *(messenger runs away.)*

**Alicia:** Will Governor Pilate be there, at the square?

**Tyron:** No word on that.

**SCENE 126:**

*Pilate reads the order from Herrod as Arthos and Portia look on, in his quarters. He angrily rips apart the scroll and reaches for the wine pitcher.*

**Pilate:** I'm off to fuckin' Lausanne. He didn't buy it. He says we have been a festering sore in this office. What a low ... dastardly blow! After all I've done here. Damned, killing those 79 fuckin' Zealots should have been my triumph.

**Portia:** (*distressed*) I will not go there. Like I said. I'm not leaving the city for farmlands and wild animals. We will get a divorce then.

**Pilate:** Good riddance.

**Arthos:** Such a sorry turn of events. A great ... injustice.

*(Pilate stares at Arthos for a moment, gets up and goes to a cabinet, pulling out a bound ledger book of accounts. He brings it back and throws it down in front of Arthos.)*

**Pilate:** I have been reviewing all of our accounts yesterday and this morning and it seems there is a great deal of missing money. Timothy helped with this, and Adrian, and apparently all the arrows point to you.

**Arthos:** Are you accusing me of stealing from the accounts then?

**Pilate:** It's all here, man, in front of you. First, you start fucking my wife. That's okay. She's only here because of her family's money. But now this, well, it's surprising.

**Arthos:** I needed the money to pay the Emperor for your position — the Governorship.

**Pilate:** My money!

**Arthos:** Herrod's money now.

**Pilate:** You sold me out!

**Arthos:** Herrod bought it. You haven't acted very competently lately.

## APOSTLES AND REBELS

*(The group turns at the noise of people arriving. Through the door in battle gear comes Tyron and a contingent of soldiers.)*

**Tyron:** I have just been sworn in by Herrod's ... functionaries, at the City Square. And ... guess what my first duty is?

**Pilate:** *(with a steely, angry expression)* More treason, I suppose.

**Arthos:** I hope that you will enjoy rural life.

### SCENE 127:

*Mary and a caravan travel to the mysterious empty tomb. She is walking. Joseph rides up to her, with a camel on leash. It carries a colorful seat that he has custom-made. She is noticeably tired, but looks to Joseph with some interest and wonder. He obviously still pursues her romantically; she looks disdainfully at the beast.*

**Mary:** They don't smell any better.

**Joseph:** *(shrugging in humor)* The nature of the beast. I made you a seat.

**Mary:** So I see.

**Joseph:** These animals move right along. We will be there much sooner. Where is your family?

**Mary:** They are already there, I suppose. They left awhile back. I lingered at the square. They are planning a big celebration of some kind, with wine and music. I must return there. Can you believe it?

**Joseph:** Peter ... he is a man possessed. The rest of them follow him. Please ... get on this beast. The tomb site is bristling with people.

*Mary gives him a look and climbs aboard. She jostles herself awkwardly getting into the seat. She takes the leash and with Joseph's help, they are quickly under control and running ahead of the pack.*

*Camera pulls away from the two riders and carries forward to the tomb, where people are congregated, looking inside, praying on their knees. A large wooden cross is the center of the worship.*

## APOSTLES AND REBELS

*Mary and Joseph ride onto the scene. Coming forward to greet them is Mary Magdalene and several women from the ministry. Their faces are full of joy. The two women hug one another and clutch each other's hands.*

**Magdalene:** I saw him. I saw him. He was all in light, he was surrounded in light. He was embraced in light. His face ... it was divine ... He spoke to me.

**Mary:** What ... did he say?

**Magdalene:** He said he loved me. He said love is all there is. And ... he is preparing a place for me. He is, like, going ahead. And I immediately knew it ... the power of his voice, his conviction. I knew it. I know it. He said he will bring to us the Spirit of Truth ... conviction, and we will be empowered to serve. He said he will appearing to others in the days ahead.

**Mary:** Are you empowered then? What is to happen?

**Magdalene:** I don't know. I ... only know what did.

**Mary:** We must go see. Lead me there.

*They walk hastily toward the tomb. There is an altercation ahead. A man is emerging from inside, cursing, arguing with others. We hear the words: fraud! dupes! a lie .... a damned lie. The man is shouted down and is leaving with two associates amid the outcries.*

**Mary:** *(turns to Mary)* People will not agree about this.

**Magdalene:** Never.

*(We see James, Ruth and her husband at the tomb, in wonder at what their brother has wrought.)*

**Ruth:** What does this mean?

**James:** It seems like ... a great opportunity.

Mary beckons them and they join her, while Joseph holds the animals.

**James:** You are riding that damned thing again?

## APOSTLES AND REBELS

**Mary:** I feel like it's riding me. We are off to the Mark home. There will be an outpouring of spirit tonight and we are holding a suitable feast. Food, and wine and music.

**James:** I'm in.

**Ruth:** Must we walk?

**Mary:** Joseph brings a carriage. We will ride ahead.

*As she scurries about, Magdalene only observes. Mary turns to her.*

**Mary:** We must go. Will you and the ministry women be coming then? Soon?

**Magdalene:** Not at all. I have no interest in Jerusalem. I am going home for a spell, to Peoria. I was born there long ago, and left some unfinished family business when I ... left.

**Mary:** Surely time for that. But you must join us in celebrating his spirit, honoring his life. You were such an important part of it.

**Magdalene:** That is...the greatest reward in itself. I don't need anything else.

**Mary:** The apostles will be there. Peter has really taken hold, you should hear him preach.

**Magdalene:** Peter (*shakes her head*)...I've heard him. Quite a man with words, with a dramatic flair. He elevates exposition almost to theater...an art.

**Mary:** Surely a strong voice.

**Magdalene:** But I saw him nowhere around the cross. My women and I were there, in the storm and rain, in our grief and misery, and with no man in sight. watching the life leave our beloved one. We saw the blood, we felt the pain of his humiliation that they heaped upon him. Peter wasn't there, and I hear he denied even knowing him when the Roman soldiers made their rounds.

**Mary:** They were surely scared for their lives. They are ... men.

**Magdalene:** And they don't kill grieving women do they? They save them to cook and clean and service their recurring lust. We are only utilitarian, tools for their satisfaction. There will come a day in history when women will be redeemed and living as equals.

## APOSTLES AND REBELS

**Mary:** A blessed day it will be. Come to Jerusalem, one last time. The men have rallied, they mean well, despite their frequent disagreements, and we are asserting our presence in the city.

*Magdalene looks uncertain.*

**Mary:** There will be wine. There will be joy.

*Magdalene remains uncommitted but is thinking it over.*

**Mary:** There will be music, much music.

**Magdalene:** I will ... bring my flute. She bursts into a smile we haven't seen.

**SCENE 128:**

*The Mark house and immediate premises are covered with laughing and rejoicing people, musicians play lyres, flutes, and a zither. Peter works through the crowd, and the other apostles, hugging the people intimately.*

**Peter:** Loving you, my brother ... my brother as was Joshua, our Savior, our prince of grace. We are all brothers — and sisters. (reaching out to embrace the women seeming to relish the attention.)

*Apostles mingle with the crowd, and the camera follows as the evening takes shape here at sundown, with torches beginning to be lighted. There is wine. The musicians play. Elijah and friends discuss the lamb roasting on a spit in his modest garden.*

*We see Julianna, trudging into the gathering, dodging around some dancers, finally speaking to someone. Nathaniel, summoned, comes to greet her with unheard conversation, which leads to their embracing. She has now left the pagan Temple of Athena and is now under the influence of this new cult.*

*We see Mira and Jude, being intimate.*

*Simon is having his wound examined and salve applied by a hooded woman, likely with an apothecary in her satchel, while others observe. Zena observes too, showing little immediate interest, eating from a bowl of apricots and likely eyeing things she can steal. She seems a little angry-eyed and a bit out-of-place.*

*We see Portia Pilate weaving through the people to greet Marie Mark. She is introduced to Elijah, who offers her a bite of roasted lamb, fresh off the spit. They laugh and partake. Elijah lifts a wineskin and offers a toast.*

*James, the younger brother of Joshua, talks to a young woman and we speculate upon their physical interests.*

*We see Tyron's wife, Alicia, arriving. She is greeted by Portia and they go together to meet Elijah and Marie Mark. We see the youngster, Jon Mark, age 11, devouring a sweet cake.*

*Finally, Peter comes to the forefront and gives the signal. Several trumpets play loudly and everyone laughs and cheers and gives him their attention.*

## APOSTLES AND REBELS

**Peter:** There is food in the courtyard. In one hour, when the clock strikes nine, we will go inside for an intense worship experience. We will gather and mobilize and spread our energy, as one and all, and call upon the spirit of Joshua to fill the room ... empower us in our coming mighty mission ahead. When we combine our energies as one, amazing things will happen. Joshua's Spirit of Truth, of conviction, will come to embrace us all. Amen!

*We hear many calls of amen. At Peter's signal, the musicians ring out again.*

*A short block away, Tyron calls a group of seven soldiers to a halt. Four of them have bows.*

*Arthos steps forward from the shadows and joins them in the walk.*

**Tyron:** Hold. *(The soldiers halt. He speaks to Arthos)* So Portia Pilate has been seen there, at this house, and with these people Is this why you're here?

**Arthos:** She is. She's fascinated by them.

**Tyron:** Tonight, they're just a target. Can you imagine? All conveniently in one place and not ready in any way for an attack. Helpless they are.

**Arthos:** Attack from who? The Sanhedrins? Would they dare?

**Tyron:** Why not? These people have no money, no estates. They're blasphemers to them and a major thorn in their side.

**Arthos:** They have no army, no soldiers.

**Tyron:** The Sanhedrin, under Caiphaz, work with the Zealots. It's clandestine, of course, but we've known it for some time. They're brazen hypocrites. They decry the violence while fomenting it. They claim righteousness and sponsor terror. As Governor of the city, you are hereby apprised.

**Arthos:** So ... what will we do about it?

**Tyron:** Stand ready ... but out of sight.

**Arthos:** Can a new Governor perhaps unleash the blade — one more time? *(He grips it.)*

## APOSTLES AND REBELS

**Tyron:** The people might find it ... refreshing. And ... I believe they will come.

*There is more noise. Tyron and Arthos peer around the corner to see Mary of Nazareth and her entourage arriving to join the gathering. There is much adoration shown as she works her work through the crowd.*

*Mary Magdalene and her ministry sisters, who are unknown, walk in the background, attentive and interested in the lavish attention Joshua's mother is receiving. One of Magdalene's women draws her close and whispers to her.*

**Girl:** So must we now see .... Worship for the mother?

### SCENE 129:

*The upper room is filled with candlelight and packed with people. We hear a beautiful flute, played by guest star Alanis Morissette, and it blends into the harp music of guest star Andres Vollenweider. We see the faces of the many worshippers as Peter speaks softly.*

**Peter:** We have no more words. We need no words. In silence, we stand ready for the Holy Spirit to enter our lives. We invite Joshua's spirit to enter our being, where we wait for salvation from this cruel world, and entrance into the eternal universe.

*The room is bathed in silence, an imposing silence that permeates all. We hear people laugh and cry in tiny bursts. The people are feeling it, and it pervades, controls the room.*

**Peter:** Oh, Joshua. You are here! Feel the spirit! Feel the spirit!

*The people stir to the words and laugh in joy. Reams of rainbow light sweep the room. Ohhhhhhh ..... Ummmmmmmmmm is heard as the room, seemingly in unison, descending ... or ascending into a higher, inner reality.*

*The camera finds young Jon Mark's face. He seems to hear a slight noise and moves to the curtained window, opens the drape and looks outside.*

## APOSTLES AND REBELS

*There stands Vokar, a muscular menace in armor and sword. He is flanked by more than 20 armed men, holding torches and carrying swords. He watches wide-eyed. He sees the bulk of Tyron from behind as he emerges to block his eyes and face the danger.*

*Camera moves around to front. Tyron and Volker have unfinished business from the battle at the north wall and confront each other face-to-face.*

**Volker:** So there is the lone warrior, the hero of Jerusalem, the esteemed champion who steps up to save a sorry lot of preachers and street trash.

*Arthos steps from the shadows to join Tyron. They both unleash swords to face Volker and his men, three of them now brandishing blades.*

**Volker:** Another foolish man. I ... know you ... You're Pilate's man, and so he stands with these blasphemers and mystics.

**Arthos:** He stands no more. I'm the new Governor of Jerusalem, appointed by the Emperor Herrod, and antagonist to the corrupt Sandhedrin, who are no doubt paying you and your hapless rebel scum. Prepare to lose your fucking head! *(lifting his sword high.)*

*Volker eyes them defiantly, motions a man to come forward. He hurls a flaming torch high and onto the roof of the Mark house. All stand tense.*

*The torch re-emerges in the hands of James ben Joseph. He hurls it back to them and one of the men has to dodge it. Another man comes forward, as Volker grins derisively, and hurls another torch onto the roof. It also comes flying back in a moment, from the arm of young Jude ben Joseph, Joshua's other brother.*

The torch strikes one of the men directly this time, and bursts into flames. He screams and runs around in a death stagger, flailing at the flames engulfing him. An arrow strikes him in the chest and he falls in a rigor. Volker jerks around. Another arrow comes flying and nails him in the chest. He looks down at the arrow, dumbfounded.

**Tyron:** I never go anywhere without my archers.

*The men with torches back away, but some stand with determination. Two have swords out still. They watch in dismay as Volker slumps to the street.*

## APOSTLES AND REBELS

*Suddenly the room upstairs bursts out with a trumpet blast and many voices begin to ring out with joyous music. People are singing with joy. Strings resound, woodwinds are soaring. Mary Magdalene is seen playing the flute.*

*Volker's men are stunned by the outburst, they look around, confused. Such a joyful noise. Arthos and Tyron step forward. Volker's men drop their torches, holster their swords and run.*

*Watching them flee, Tyron and Arthos salute the young men on the roof, and listen to the joyous music pealing through the night air.*

**Arthos:** So we've beaten their ass.

**Tyron:** Not quite. One more job to do. Or we'll never get any peace.

### **SCENE 130:**

*Caiphas's headquarters, it is very early in the morning and very dark. He is sitting by a lamp, waiting impatiently for a report from Vokar, using a reed pen to craft a document onto a sheet of parchment.*

*Arthos and Tyron are ushered in by servants and Caiphas, in a night robe, comes in to meet them.*

**Caiphas:** So late at night. What is it that you want?

**Arthos:** I wanted to introduce myself, Arthos ... Arthos, from Tiberia, your new Governor of this city. Pontius Pilate has been ...transferred.

**Caiphas:** Yes, well, he was certainly incompetent.

**Arthos:** And you gave him quite a push. I actually owe you some thanks for my new position.

**Caiphas:** I trust you will be more just, more competent. I expect that we can begin by respecting one as another as true equals, and starting with a clean parchment. I have my authority, and you have yours. Let's live within that.

## APOSTLES AND REBELS

**Arthos:** I'm afraid yours has been diminished significantly. Your big muscular man, the Zealot, has been dispatched by my soldiers, and his men have been dissuaded from committing what would have been ... a horrific tragedy, a fire.

**Caiphas:** We don't work with those radicals and you know that. They damage our cause with their scurrilous attacks. Ours is a great religion and entitled to your unqualified respect. Your emperor, in fact, demands it.

**Arthos:** He only requires that we tolerate you, not respect you. There may be honor somewhere in your religion, but you don't show any of it.

**Caiphas:** Yet ... we will be tolerated. Herod commands it. So, perhaps you and your soldier ....

**Tyron:** I am Tyron Amadon, new commander of the Roman Guard in the city ... enforcer of the law — the Roman law.

**Caiphas:** Then perhaps you and our esteemed new Governor, can leave my quarters now and begin planning your new regime. You will certainly need my support, from this highest Sanhedrin in all of Palestine. Even now *(motions to the writing desk)* I write extensive orders to the many surrounding Sanhedrins, to stamp out this blasphemous new religious cult whenever and wherever they show up. My messenger corps is standing by.

*(Tyron fingers his sheathed sword, shows some anger, which Caiphas notices.)*

**Caiphas:** So you want to kill me right here in front of my household, my servants, my assistants? That does not seem wise does it? Are you not stuck with me? And now ... get out! Get out! *(Caiphas's anger and acrimony rises.)*

*Tyron steps over to the desk, picks up the parchment document and holds it over the candle flame. It catches fire as the room tenses, and burns to ash, which Tyron drops it to the floor and stomps out. Caiphas is incensed. Arthos steps up to face him, up close.*

**Arthos:** We will make this new religion official. Herod wants peace and he will incorporate it in his pantheon of gods. He wants peace and he will be seriously impressed with the zeal of these people, who see their man as the anointed and resurrected Christic symbol, a Christ, the savior they've been waiting for. Maybe they will be called Christians.

## APOSTLES AND REBELS

**Caiphas:** Ha! Many of them will die. Neither Jews nor Romans will accept them. Neither will the various cults with which we are already plagued.

**Arthos:** Blood will flow, I'm sure. It always has. Make sure it isn't yours.  
*(He and Tyron take their leave.)*

### SCENE 131:

*Sunrise, and the last guests are making their way from the Mark house. Peter bids a young couple goodbye, turns to see Mary Magdalene standing and facing him. Peter appears ill at ease. They have not left each other on good terms.*

**Magdalene:** Peter.

**Peter:** Dear Mary ... I wanted to come greet you ... the crowd, so crowded but ... Welcome.

**Magdalene:** You have done well. Such an amazing recovery. Such golden words, such an impressive delivery.

**Peter:** No, no. I deserve no praise. I only try to ... make amends ... to assure his glory. I still feel ... guilt, remorse, doubt. I am ... just a man.

**Magdalene:** Well, I'm glad you're here, all of you, and not occupying a row of crosses on the hill.

**Peter:** Praise be, that we can live and carry on the work. At least, that is my wish. The men, though, are not of one mind. We are going to the home of Thomas' parents later today, to talk all of this through, get re-organized, make some decisions. Where do we go? What do we do? James, the younger brother of Jesus, wants to stay and work with us.

**Magdalene:** His mother says he is going to Nazareth. They have responsibilities there.

**Peter:** Well, he hopes to return at some point. I know that mother Mary is returning to Nazareth, this very day perhaps after some sleep and rest.

## APOSTLES AND REBELS

**Magdalene:** I am staying in the city for a spell. Portia, the wife of Pilate, of all persons, wants my help in establishing a center for healing, for sick women, pregnancy problems, saving them from prostitution, which ... cheapens the whole concept of intimacy .... love ... finding a soul mate for life.

**Peter:** Such great work. I want to go to Rome.

**Magdalene:** Heart of the beast.

**Peter:** I may perish. May I be the man who can die like he did.

**Magdalene:** Think of life, Peter, not death. Spread the good news that Joshua spread. Honor him with your emulation, just emulate the empathy of his incarnation here, in the flesh, and seeking to save all humankind, Romans and Jews and street beggars alike.

**Peter:** You ... should be preaching. *(They laugh and embrace.)*

**Magdalene:** You do well enough.

### SCENE 132:

*It is mid-morning in Jerusalem in the scenes that follow. Pilate, under military escort, emerges from his threshold. His short caravan to Tyre awaits. He is saluted by a Roman captain.*

**Pilate:** *(sardonically)* The new Governor of Lausanne is ready for his grand departure. *(looks up at the empty balcony)* And where is the Lady of the house? Is she not here? And the new Governor? Why ... you would think I'm going into exile?

**Soldier:** Well, have you been to Lausanne?

**Pilate:** How's the wine?

**Soldier:** Harvest has been short ... and limited.

**Pilate:** Are there brothels, I wonder.

## APOSTLES AND REBELS

**Soldier:** Yes.

**Pilate:** Ah!

**Soldier:** There's been some disease about.

*(Pilate shakes his head negatively as he climbs into the carriage. He turns for one more question.)*

**Pilate:** Food. What about that?

**Soldier:** Seasonings and spices are pretty scarce up there.

*(Pilate shakes his head in more dismay, goes inside, but emerges one more time.)*

**Pilate:** My predecessor. A man named Cato. Did he retire?

**Soldier:** Assassinated.

**Pilate:** Killed?

**Soldier:** Don't worry. The perpetrators were quickly hacked to pieces.

**Pilate:** Well ... that's a relief. *(facetiously, closes the carriage door and it heads out.)*

### SCENE 133:

*Apostles are leaving together, in a walking caravan, across the rugged plain west of Jerusalem. POV of a runner, panting tiredly, and she comes upon the last man in the caravan. It is Simon. Camera turns to reveal Zena.*

**Zena:** *(still winded):* You left me. You sent me to market and you left behind my back. Why? I saved your fuckin' life and you run off without me.

**Simon:** We are ... apostles ... to Joshua. We have work to do, serious ministry, and have no time for relationships. Some of these men have

## APOSTLES AND REBELS

wives and children that they are leaving. We have important issues to work through.

**Zena:** I have nothing but the streets of the city. And you're leaving me there. I have no one.

**Simon:** We must meet, at Thomas' home. We'll be there tomorrow, but we must be alone, in conference. We have no time ...

**Zena:** No time to be merciful, no time to take in a lost child. I can clean. I can cook. I don't eat much. I can walk. I can keep up. I have good footwear. *(lifts her foot to show a sturdy sandal.)*

*(Simon anxiously stares after the apostles, shrinking from view. He is undecided.)*

**Simon:** You must quit ... antagonizing ... arousing the Alpheus brothers. They are susceptible ...

**Zena:** They both enjoy a good massage. And I get extra food.

**Simon:** No more!

**Zena:** No thought of it. Only ...

**Simon:** Goodness!

**Zena:** Goodness!

**Simon:** Yes, goodness. In all things.

**Zena:** Let's do it!

*(Simon sits bewildered for a moment, his first ministerial challenge, perhaps. He shrugs and takes her chin.)*

**Simon:** I saw you kill a man.

**Zena:** *(staring back, pulls a short blade from her smock and throws it into the rocks.)* Can you vouch for my safety?

## APOSTLES AND REBELS

**Simon:** *(thoughtful, anxious, the apostle band is disappearing. He finally takes her hands in his and squeezes, looking into her eyes, hungry to understand her. But understanding was not forthcoming. He speaks simply.)*  
Run.

*They chase after the apostles.*

### SCENE 134:

*Mary's carriage, drawn by two large donkeys, leaves the city with an entourage of well-wishers and sojourners following along. Ruth and husband Cirillo sit atop, driving the wagon. Mary and son James are inside and he sits in melancholy, moping.*

**Mary:** Get yourself together, son. I know you want to stay. You want to be one of your brother's ... apostles. You don't want to take over the family business. You want to be crucified as a street preacher, railing against reality. Well, your brother did it, and he pulled the family together after your father's death. We can pull it together again.

**James:** You never really supported his ministry, did you?

**Mary:** Well ... my mistake ... in the beginning. I wanted him to be the grand messiah of our faith. And ... turns out he really did. He just ... did it his way.

**Cirillo:** *(from above):* Somebody is blocking the road.

*Mary peers from the carriage to see a formidable obstruction. Dramatically appearing is Joseph of Arithema, atop a large stallion. On a leash, he holds a small and beautiful spotted mare. It is wondrous. Such horses are a rare sight.*

*She steps out of the carriage, James lurking close behind her. He mutters some kind of comment of amazement. Mary walks toward Joseph and comes upon him and the two horses.*

**Joseph:** Your new carrier I promised my lady, as gentle and beautiful as you, almost.

## APOSTLES AND REBELS

**Mary:** Flattery. What is it called? This is like a horse, isn't it? *(She comes forth cautiously and touches the horse's head, then rubs the mane.)*

**Joseph:** She likes you. Yes. These are finely bred horses, from Arabia. I have a new corral near here. I think you will enjoy seeing it.

**Mary:** As you see, I am off to Nazareth. You surely know of my responsibilities.

**Joseph:** You will have none in Jerusalem, as the lady of my household. I implore you to stay. *(He motions to her companions)* They don't need you. They have their own lives. We will provide for them as they need it.

**Mary:** Did you ... want a son from me then?

**Joseph:** I have not thought that far ahead.

**Mary:** Of course you have. He would be ... Joshua's brother. The man you turned into a legend, an icon for a new age. In fact, I really need to thank you. This has been quite an experience ... from utter grief and shame to something I don't yet understand.

**Joseph:** No need. It's just the way it worked out. And in retrospect, I see that he had a good organization. He had enclaves of followers in towns up and down the country-side. All that John the Baptist had and more. He leaves a legacy. In fact, I believe it may have been his final deliberate act — to march into Jerusalem and become a martyr. A martyr and one who only showed love to all will be remembered forever. He may even have birthed a new church.

**Mary:** What is the one thing he has offered us all? Everyone?

**Joseph:** (thoughtful) Hope. I think it's hope.

**Mary:** A good name for you. *(She kisses the forehead of the horse and slips around to get aboard. Once mounted, she speaks to Joseph.)*

**Mary:** Hope is a good word for us too. *(looks to James, standing by)* Go to Nazareth and tend business. We will prepare a place for you, in the ministry.

*(Waves of goodbye, Joseph and Mary gallop away as the followers all cheer.)*

**SCENE 135:**

*Copy on the Screen: Three Days Later*

*It is sunset. Peter, James, John toil with their fishing boat, pulling it ashore, standing, winded. Peter wipes his brow and see Phillip running up to them.*

**Phillip:** There's news from Antioch (*gasping for breath*). Abner, and the congregation up there. They saw him. He appeared in the sanctuary, all bathed in light, they said, and he said there would be more appearances. He said his spirit will always live inside us, the Spirit of Truth, and he is .. like preparing a mansion for everyone. It was ... amazing, they said.

**John:** He will come again? Is that what he said?

**James:** We are surely without a rudder. We could really use his direction. I'm not sure we will be able to —

**Peter:** What ... is that? (*peering in the distance, down the beach. Some kind of light is coming, looking like a lighted figure, walking in their direction. The apostles strain to see.*)

*(Camera pulls away to show the overall scene. The apostles waiting in wonder to see who is coming.)*

# APOSTLES AND REBELS

## ON THE SCREEN AT THE END

(1)

James, brother of Joshua, joined Peter and the apostles in their ministry in Rome. He became the first Pope, by blood kin, the recognized leader of the first Christian cult in Rome.

(2)

Most of Joshua's men preached the new message of the Kingdom Within across the region. During the religious oppression, Peter was crucified in Rome and his wife, Petra, was thrown to the arena beasts.

(3)

The Romans executed James, Andrew, Matthew, Phillip, and Thomas. Nathaniel preached in India and died there. Simon migrated to Africa and preached into old age. Unequipped for ministry, the Alpheus twins went back to their families. Jon Mark was a loyal follower and wrote an epistle.

(4)

The apostle John lived to a ripe age of 101. He died as an honored elder in the new Christian church. In his last feeble days, he required help to reach the pulpit to speak and he always said simply the words:

(5)

Brothers and sisters ... Love One Another.

*end*

APOSTLES AND REBELS

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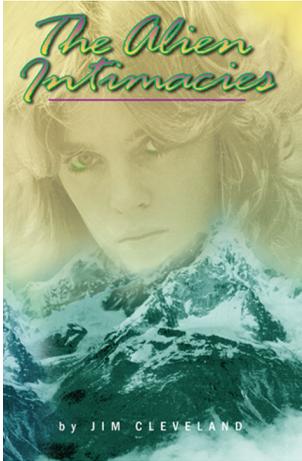
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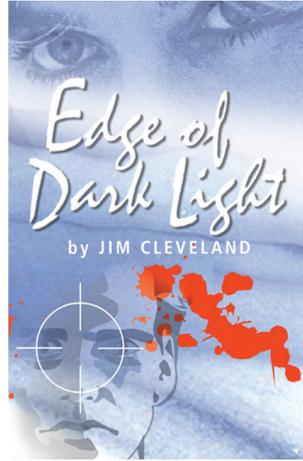
# APOSTLES AND REBELS

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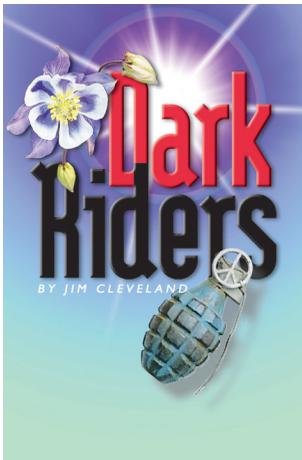
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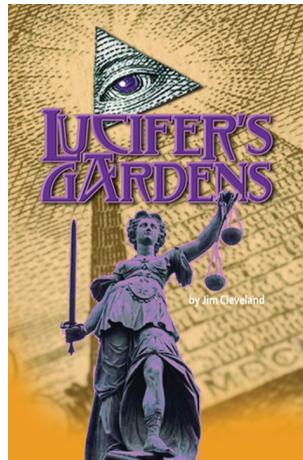
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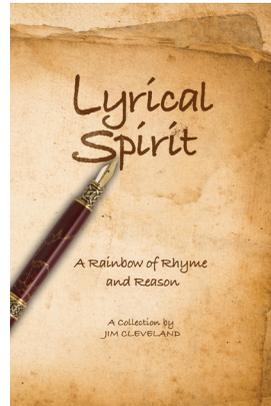
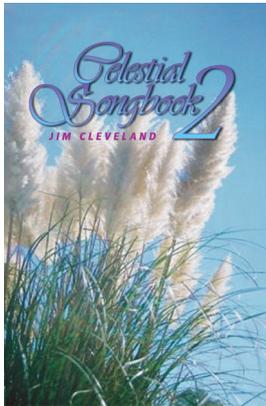
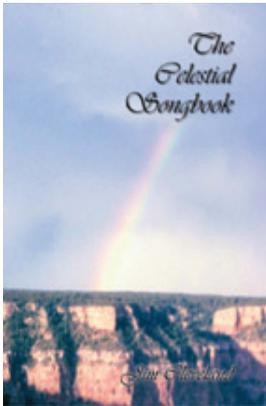


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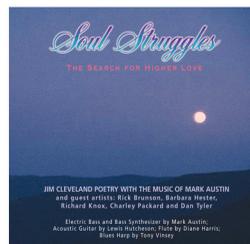
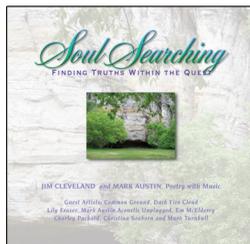
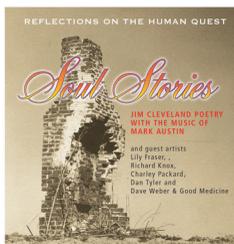
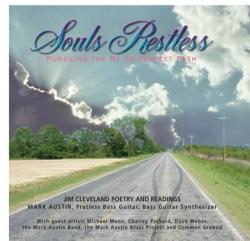
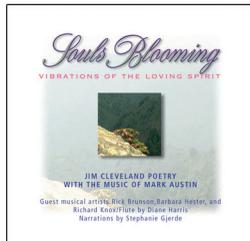
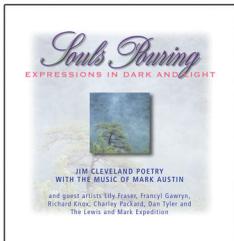
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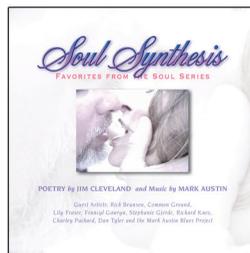


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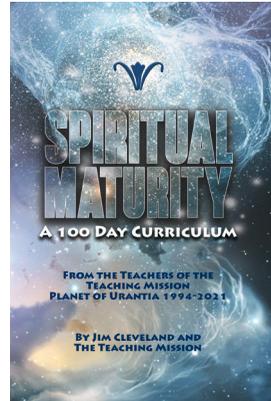
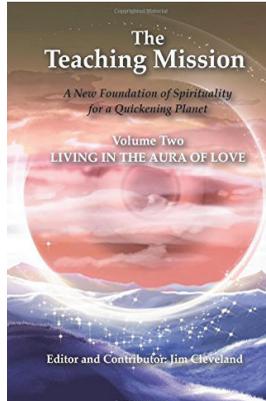
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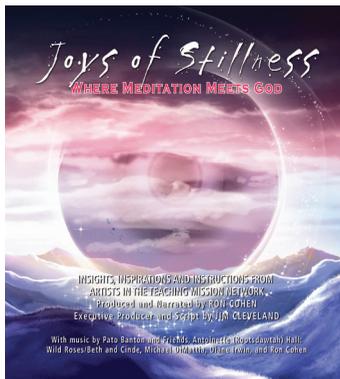


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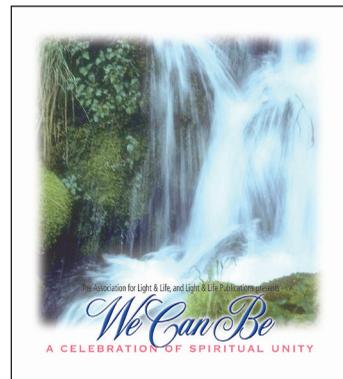


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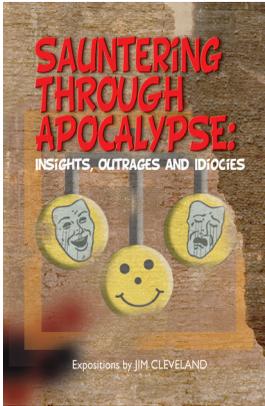


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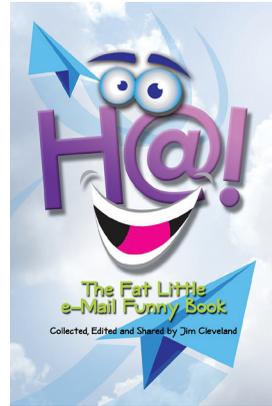
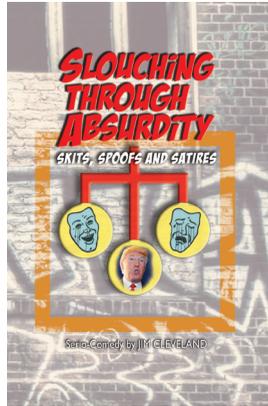


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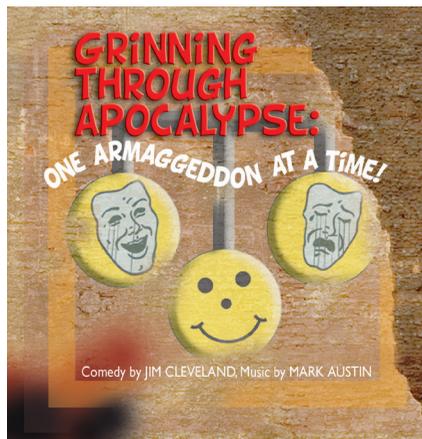
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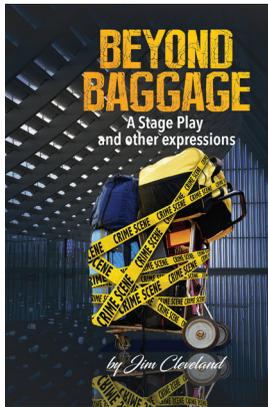


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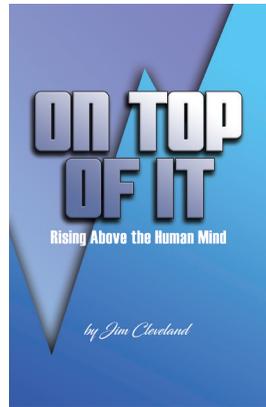
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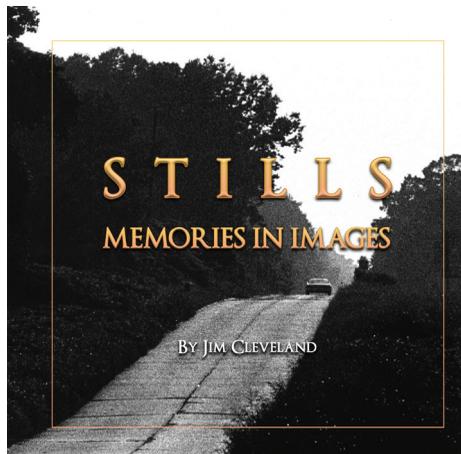
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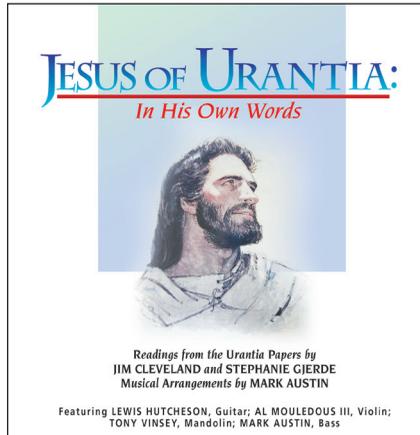
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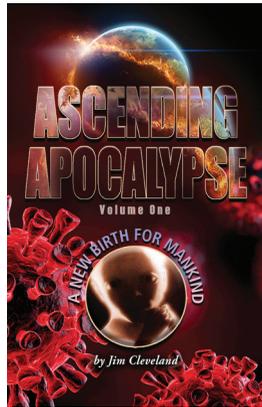
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