The background of the entire image is a stage set. It features a pair of heavy, red, pleated curtains that are pulled back to reveal a wooden floor with vertical planks. The lighting is soft and focused on the center of the stage.

THE CENTURION'S MONOLOGUE

A Good Friday
Meditation Drama

KATHRYN ROSS
A PAGEAT WAGON PRODUCTION



Family Literacy Books

The Centurion's Monologue: A Good Friday Meditation Drama

By Kathryn Ross © 2017 ARR

Pageant Wagon Publishing

A Division of Pageant Wagon Productions LLC

Vineland, NJ 08361

www.pageantwagonpublishing.com

Permission is granted to Christian church groups and Christian school students to perform this monologue waiving all royalty costs.

The Centurion's Monologue: A Good Friday Meditation Drama is excerpted from the full length original Resurrection Sunday Drama titled, *Ripened, Restive, and Risen: A Resurrection Meditation* by Kathryn Ross, Copyright 2010, Pageant Wagon Productions, LLC, All Rights Reserve

INTRODUCTION



The Centurion's Monologue: A Good Friday Meditation is an excerpt from a full-length drama, *Ripened, Restive, and Risen: A Resurrection Meditation*. It's one of many church dramas I've written and directed over my thirty years serving in Christian drama ministry. I produced this play for Calvary Chapel Vineland in the spring of 2010—a reboot from a choir cantata drama originally written and directed for First Family Church in Albuquerque, New Mexico in 1988.

A powerful piece of theatre in performance, the centurion's monologue was the centerpiece of two plays performed twenty-two years apart by two gifted gentlemen—both talented associate pastors serving their church through the worship and drama ministry, Pastor Melvin Suttle and Pastor Russell Sterger.

I'm releasing this excerpt from my stash of theatrical plays, waiving all royalties, to make it available for Christians wishing to incorporate a drama element into their Easter week services. Use freely as part of small group Bible studies, Good Friday services, Christian school chapel services, or as a personal reflection for prayerful meditation and journaling.

May God bless you as you minister His Story through dramatized storytelling.

Kathryn Ross
February 2017

CAST

Centurion

Crowd Groups:

Jews—Priests

Jews—The Poor

Jews—The Rich

Roman Citizens

The Few Disciples (John, Mary, and Weeping Women)

(Crowd is small/large choir or group of actors—non-speaking roles except for songs, if used.)

PRODUCTION NOTES

If preparing this approximately ten-minute piece for the stage, here are a few simple suggestions to enhance the performance:

- Rent a Roman Centurion's costume from a local costume supply company or [online HERE](#).
- Employ the help of creative costume designers within your church to make costumes—biblical themed costume patterns are available online and in all fabric stores.
- Enhance the performance with a red spotlight on the centurion, and thunder/lightning effects with light and sound at the opening to add dramatic tension. No set necessary.
- Choose an appropriate choir song such as, *Were You There When They Crucified My Lord*, or a traditional hymn, to be performed by the Crowd/Choir before or after the monologue—director's choice. [Here are some ideas](#).

CURTAIN-UP: THE CENTURION'S MONOLOGUE

Imagine now . . .

*Jesus has breathed His last. The sky has darkened,
the earth shifts on its foundation.*

Just who are you in the crowd surveying the cross in this moment?

Scene Opens: *Crowd is spread across the stage behind Centurion, standing center. All look up and out, over the tops of the audience heads to the "cross" shouting in the character of their "eyewitness group." Sound effect of thunder and lightning effect. Crowd screams—runs from one side of the stage to the other in a confused panic, then freeze in new positions. Centurion steps Down Center for monologue—Crowd remains frozen throughout.*

Centurion:

(To Crowd, vexed) Move along! Move along! It is finished. *(looks up at cross—over audience—wondering to himself)* That's what He said. *(looks at a weeping Jewish man nearby)* Fool! A weeping Jew! What kind of man is that? Shaking from head to foot. Wailing like all those fool women over there. Well, women weep. But men . . . *(wipes eye with back of his hand)*

(Directly to audience) You saw what just happened here. I've had to crucify many men in my service to Caesar before . . . but . . . something is . . . wrong here! Something is different! I admit. I've never felt like this before. Shaking from head to foot. Like that . . . other man. As though it were I who committed the crime and not this One I had nailed to this cross!

What kind of Man is this that when He dies, the very earth would quake as though heaving in mourning and grief . . . that the sun itself would turn away its light . . . that a man such as I . . . a Centurion of the mighty Roman Legions . . . commander of over one hundred men! A man of not small significance in Roman ranks, but educated in ways of strategy and decorum . . . whose very presence commands the respect of the common man! Who has shamelessly and without regret, crucified

hundreds of men! That such as I should now feel . . . guilt? That such as I be overcome with . . . fear?

My heart is beating faster than I've ever known in battle . . . my brow sweats. (*pause--incredulous*) I panic?

What kind of Man is this whom I have killed! A criminal? A rebel? Yes, I was there. I saw the Jews, led by those pompous, pious, self-righteous priests of theirs. I heard their accusations. "Crucify Him!" Crucify Him!" they shouted, demanding the blood of this one called, Jesus!

I stood by and listened when Pilate questioned Him. He didn't speak. He didn't defend Himself at all! There seemed no crime in Him worthy of death, and, to be sure, I don't know that I saw any great criminal either. So what if He claimed to be a King. So what if He broke some obscure Jewish religious law. At worst, He was an ignorant madman . . . at best He was . . . He was . . . (*shakes head, pauses, looks about at Crowd*)

What kind of Man was this that these very people whom moments ago, laughed at Him, and mocked Him, as He hung breathing His last, now cower in fear! Ha! Look at their faces . . . they know. Perhaps they feel guilt, too. They felt the earth shake and saw the sky grow dark. They can see there's clearly something different about this Jesus they've killed—so unlike any other hung on a cross. But, does it touch them? Will it matter?

Does anything matter?

They will, more than likely, return to their cozy existence. The merchants will resume their buying and selling . . . the women to their weaving, milling, and grape treading. Tomorrow, all will be merry again . . . all will be, as it was. Except, that tomorrow, this man Jesus . . . as they demanded . . . will be dead.

And where are those men of faith who were His followers? His disciples? Have all His friends forsaken Him and left? Perhaps this man's only crime was that He chose His companions poorly. Look at Him, hanging up there . . . what is there about Him that one would want to follow.

(Notices women, weeping Jew, and John) But, these women and the one they call John. And that fellow with him. Pacing back and forth below the cross the whole time. Pleading with Him to save Himself. What a spectacle that one fellow made, babbling on about faith . . . His body . . . blood . . . and something about . . . new life. Humph. Not after you die like that.

Yet, here they've stayed . . . through it all. They watched as I had my men beat Him and whip Him, and as He dragged His cross to this . . . place. They cried out as I drove the spikes into His hands and feet . . . shamelessly prostrating themselves before this dying mass of flesh. And still they called Him . . . Lord. Lord?

What kind of Man was this!? I stand in awe of this one that I killed! The earth beneath my feet shook with pain when He said, "It is finished."

Try as I might, can I believe otherwise? Certainly, this was a righteous man! And I, a great and mighty Roman! A much-feared Centurion . . .

I . . . am more the criminal.

Cling to His cross, you who mourn your Lord. And let the stench of indifference consume these who condemned Him. As for me, something I don't understand has pierced my armor and cut my flesh . . . to my soul. Do I have the faith to believe that . . . truly . . . this man was the Son of God?

(Crowd hums 'Were You There When They Crucified My Lord' as they slowly exit the stage; the Centurion is last to go off stage right, lingering with a solemn look at the 'cross' . . . BLACKOUT)

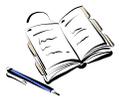
Scene.

***The audience remains hushed in silence
but for the whisper of stifled weeping.***

FOR ACTOR STUDY and REFLECTIVE JOURNALING



Review the gospel accounts of the crucifixion: Matthew 27, Mark 15, Luke 23, John 19. Note the different groups of people mentioned who were eyewitnesses. What characteristics do you notice about each group? Create a graph for each group and list their distinguishing character qualities—interior and exterior—and find additional Scripture to support your character sketches.



Were you there? What part did you play on this momentous day in His Story? Which group of eyewitnesses do you fall into and why? Write your thoughts and site examples from your life that make you a good fit for the group you chose.



Read the quote on page nine. In what ways have you learned to “die to self” so you might take on the character of Christ? In performing this skit, how did you learn to “decrease” so Christ could “increase” in your performance? What must you do to slip out of your skin, and zip into the skin of the character you portray? Write your thoughts.



In theatre of old, the actor wore white face make-up to set him apart from the audience.

This was called the "death mask."

It symbolized the actor "dying" to who he was so he might better put on the character of whomever he was portraying.

As a Christian, I too, must wear a death mask, dying to myself so that I might better put on the character of Christ.

I must decrease so that Christ can increase.
John 3:30

But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.
Romans 13:14

About the Author

Kathryn Ross is a writer, speaker, and dramatist, filtering her love of history, classic literature, drama, and the arts through God's Word, to inform her words. In addition to an extensive resume of writing, directing, and producing theatricals for schools, churches, and community theatre, she ministers literacy and Christian living principles in a variety of venues. Her works inspire young and old to pursue God's truths, goodness, and beauty in their lives.

Trained in Principle Approach® Education through the Foundation for American Christian Education, Miss Kathy previously taught in Christian and home school settings, including a four-year middle school/high school level curriculum detailing the History of Drama. In 2004 she founded Pageant Wagon Productions, LLC, establishing the Pageant Wagon Players Melodrama Summer Family Theatre for high school and college aged youth, in addition to the Pageant Wagon Parable Players Homeschool Theatre for elementary aged homeschool students.

Miss Kathy owns Pageant Wagon Publishing, where in addition to publishing devotional works, homeschool enrichment for language arts, and theatrical scripts, she designs story worlds spanning the likes of an idyllic English country village in *Fable Springs Parables* picture books and study guides, to the Wild West gold rush town of the *Clementine Jones Drama and Derring-Do Books* for Christian family discipleship. Miss Kathy blogs weekly and podcasts monthly at TheWritersReverie.com and PageantWagonPublishing.com.

More from Pageant Wagon Publishing



Fable Springs Parables

High-concept Picture Books and Study Guides

Homeschool Enrichment and Theatrical Scripts

for Home, Schools, and Churches

Inspirational Christian Living

Devotionals for Journaling

Pageant Wagon Publishing provides biblically based storybooks, study guides, drama scripts, homeschool enrichment, and devotional works to promote a Family Literacy Lifestyle through Christian discipleship for home, church, and classroom.



Visit us online to order books and learn more:

www.pageantwagonpublishing.com

Blogging at www.thewritersreverie.com