

The Tavern

By Hilary Mackelden

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DEDICATION

To Jo Evans, a wonderful lady who not only taught me much about theatre, but also helped deepen my faith.

STORY OF THE PLAY

What happened immediately after Jesus' death and resurrection? What was the crucifixion like for the townspeople? Set in a run-down tavern on Good Friday through Easter Sunday, we see how five different people were affected: a barmaid, the widow of one of the accused, the soldier who pronounced Jesus dead, Barabbas, and a young teen. Rage, guilt, confusion, regret and doubt—their feelings are overpowering. But at some point, will these emotions lead to understanding, peace and even belief?

Jesus' death and resurrection touches everyone, whether we choose to believe in Him or not. From the worst criminal to the most upright citizen, everyone's life can be changed by Him, and everyone has need of that change, because even the best of us is not perfect.

A minimal unit set makes this show perfect for any venue, and perfect for touring.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(2 M, 3 W, optional extras as Roman soldiers)

RUTH: Hard-working, practical and kind barmaid. She is pretty, in a used sort of way.

BARABBAS: In his thirties; he is a survivor. His clothes are the worse for wear and he is grubby.

HANNAH: In her thirties; her life has not been easy, and now suddenly a widow, she is devastated. She was attractive once, but those days are gone.

SAMUEL: In his thirties; an officer in the guards.

LYDIA: A young teen girl but mature for her age.

Optional: 3 or 4 Roman soldiers.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT I

Scene 1: Good Friday evening.

Scene 2: The next day.

Scene 3: That night.

***Optional Scene:** Soldiers destroying the tavern.*

ACT II

Scene 1: The next morning, Sunday.

Scene 2: That afternoon.

Scene 3: Later that day.

***Optional Scene:** Soldiers searching roughly again, but much quicker and with less damage.*

Scene 4: Later still.

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SETTING

A tavern on Good Friday evening and Easter Sunday morning. The tavern is in a seedy part of town. The bar, tables, etc., are scuffed and have seen better days. There is a big sign on the wall that reads, "*Everyone welcome. No fighting. Leave your differences at the door.*" Doors lead to the street, the kitchens, and the rest of the inn.

PROPS

Rag to wipe tables
Cups
Jug
Bundle (Hannah's belongings)
Broken chairs
Broken bottles
Broom
Bag of bread and vegetables

ACT I
Scene 1

(AT RISE: It is Good Friday evening in the run-down tavern. RUTH, the barmaid, clears tables and wipes down surfaces. In the corner, BARABBAS sits at a table, nursing a drink. He is deep in thought and seems troubled. At another table, in the other corner, sits HANNAH. She sits with a drink and holds herself erect, propped up by her dignity. Ruth glances over at Hannah several times but cleans all the other tables before approaching.)

RUTH: Everything all right for you? *(HANNAH nods and gives a sad smile.)* I'm sorry. That was insensitive of me, wasn't it?

HANNAH: No. It's fine. I'm fine.

RUTH: *(Sits and studies HANNAH. Ruth has an air of practiced sympathy which seems sincere.)* What are you going to do now? How will you live?

HANNAH: I don't know. Reuben always took care of everything. I never had to... I'll have to fend for myself now, won't I?

RUTH: Won't you go home to your family? *(HANNAH shakes her head, emphatically.)* Then you're going to need a job.

HANNAH: Who's going to employ me? A bandit's widow who never worked before. Nobody's going to want me.

RUTH: I do. This place is getting busier. I could do with some help. It doesn't pay too much, but it comes with a room and meals.

HANNAH: You mean it? Thank you. I'll get started.

(SHE begins to stand. RUTH stops her.)

RUTH: Not today. Today you rest. Give yourself time to grieve. You can start after the Sabbath.

HANNAH: Thank you.

(THEY sit in silence for a few moments, each lost in their thoughts.)

End of Freeview

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