# TO WHOM
# THE CROSS SPEAKS

## By Betsy Tan

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## STORY OF THE PLAY

A large, rugged cross is found standing in a messy alley. People passing by are shocked to see it. The cross speaks a message in an effort to express God's love and compassion, but what effect does it have? Reactions are split between two groups: those who think it is foolishness and those who are reminded of what happened 2,000 years ago. Some hear and live; others refuse to hear and die. A dramatic and inspirational play you won't soon forget. Appropriate for Easter as well as throughout the year.

## PROPS

Teen A - watch
Teen B - cigarettes
Rich Man - cell phone
Evangelist - Bible
Legalist - black book
Old Woman - cane

PERFORMANCE TIME: 35-40 minutes.
PLACE: Present day.

## CHARACTERS AND COSTUMING

*(7 M, 6 W)*

**TEEN A**: A fun-loving 17-year-old.
**TEEN B**: A more thoughtful 17-year-old.
**RICH MAN**: A restless 30-year-old.
**UNEMPLOYED MAN**: In his forties.
**HIS WIFE**: Wife of unemployed man. In her thirties.
**EVANGELIST**: Early thirties, flamboyant and ambitious.
**IMMATURE YOUNG WOMAN**: In early twenties. Smiles and giggles a lot. High-pitched voice.
**INTELLECTUAL**: Early forties. Walks with confident steps.
**LEGALIST**: Woman in early fifties. Her eyebrows are knit in a perpetual frown, her eyes down cast most of the time.
**THE OLD WIDOW**: Early seventies. Walks with a cane, has a gentle look in her eyes and speech.
**THE PROSTITUTE**: A fearful, child-like 17-year-old.
**SPIRIT-FILLED CHRISTIAN**: Late twenties, quiet strength flows out from him.
**NARRATOR**: (Unseen) Deep voiced, clear speech.

**SETTING**

An empty alley behind the mall. Mall's backdoor is DSR. Cast members enter from this door. A light is above the door. A cross leans against a wall SL with a garbage bin to the left of it. Some odds and ends and newspaper pages are strewn all over. Graffiti is on the wall such as "Where is God?" USR is a wall, chipped in many places. This wall curves about ten feet from the cross then splits to the left and right UPS. Graffiti on wall facing audience, USL, is a skull and words: "Dead Man's Alley." Street-lamp hangs from the wall above graffiti.

**SCENE 1**

*(AT RISE: TEEN A and TEEN B enter from SR, having exited from the mall's backdoor. Teen A walks with a strut, eyes restlessly scanning. Teen B is somewhat calmer.)*

TEEN A: *(Excited, grabs TEEN B's arm, points with the other)* Hey, look! What's that? A cross! A cross? Here? Far out, man! C'mon, let's check that one out!

*(Both half run to the cross. TEEN A immediately tries to lift it, but it's too heavy. TEEN B walks around the cross while Teen A continues his attempts.)*

TEEN B: *(Mystified, but scornful)* It's a real cross! Why here?

*(TEEN A kicks at cross and stands before it with his hands on hips.)*

TEEN A: *(Laughing)* Maybe somebody stole it from a church.

TEEN B: *(Frowning)* Yeah, that's where it belongs. You think maybe it's been put here on purpose? Just to make people think?

TEEN A: Think about a cross? Uh, forget it — I got better things to think about. Like, my date this weekend. How 'bout you? *(Looks at watch)*

TEEN B: *(HE leans against wall next to the cross on the right side. Takes out a pack of cigarettes, stops. Thoughtfully, eyes on cross)* Y'know...I'm beginning to wonder. Maybe we should think more about spiritual things. *(TEEN A makes ghostlike sounds, grins at TEEN B.)* I mean, the way things are going in this world it makes me wonder if I'll ever get to be an adult.

TEEN A: *(Laughing nervously)* You're kiddin', right? Don't scare me, old man! 'Course you'll get to be an adult; you'll live as long as you like! Hey, lighten up, man! Life's for having fun, doncha know that?

TEEN A: *(Continued.)* C'mon, let's get away from here. That cross gives me the creeps! *(TEEN A puts arm around TEEN B's neck, pulling him away from the wall. Teen B puts cigarettes back in his pocket, brushes off Teen A's arm.)*

TEEN B: *(Mumbles)* Yeah, guess you're right. Let's have fun.

TEEN A: I'll race you to the car!

*(TEEN A sprints away and TEEN B gets ready to follow. Stops at invisible NARRATOR'S voice)*

NARRATOR: *(Somber)* The harp and the strings, the tambourine, flute and wine are in their feasts, but they do not regard the work of the Lord. Nor consider the operation of His hands.

*(TEEN B looks back at the cross, puzzled. TEEN A calls out to him.)*

TEEN A: *(Impatient)* C'mon! The guys're waiting with the booze!

*(TEEN B breaks into a half-hearted trot and follows. He stops again just before turning the corner.)*

NARRATOR: *(Sighs, sad)* Therefore, hell has enlarged itself and opened its mouth beyond measure. Their glory, their multitude, their pomp, and he who is jubilant shall descend into it!

*(TEEN B slowly, reluctantly, turns the corner. Soft MUSIC is played. RICH MAN enters from mall doors. The Rich Man walks down alley looking left and right at the walls. As MUSIC stops the Rich Man mutters.)*

RICH MAN: All these decrepit buildings will have to be torn down to increase my profits. I'll build more parking arcades and that street will have to be widened.

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