

THE CARPENTER

by Scott Crain

GENRE: Dramatic Monologue

SYNOPSIS: A Jewish craftsman recounts the death of a fellow carpenter and one-time friend, Jesus of Nazareth.

DIRECTOR'S TIP: This monologue can be used either alone, or as the second of three monologues, alongside "The Servant" and "The Gardener".

TIME: Under 5 minutes

CAST BREAKDOWN: 1

TOPIC: Easter

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: John 19:16-37

CHURCH YEAR SEASON: Easter

SUGGESTED USE: Worship Service, Sermon Starter

CHARACTERS: ASA

PROPS: A hammer

COSTUMES: Biblical

SOUND: General

LIGHTING: General stage

SETTING: Calvary

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THE CARPENTER *by Scott Crain*

Lights up on ASA, a Jewish carpenter.

ASA: I am a man of no great talent. *(He runs his hand along the iron head of the hammer)* There was a time when I would have considered myself a master craftsman—an artisan of great skill—until I met a true master and realized that these callused hands are clumsy and inadequate at best.

Pause.

He was from Nazareth, and his name was Jesus. I apprenticed alongside him for six months, but this man needed no instruction. He could look at a piece of lumber and know what it was meant to be. ‘This stack of cedar will be a doorpost.’ ‘This length of cypress will be a stool.’ And then he would begin to shape it with his tools, calling the shape forth from the wood, until it was plain that he was right. Perfectly right. Every time. Seeing this man Jesus at work made my own efforts seem foolish by comparison. I knew I would never achieve the level of skill this man had, and in time, I gave up trying.

Beat.

I began to work for the Romans, making instruments of death. Hewing out crude lengths of wood for the construction of crosses. My job now is to stand and wait at the place of execution. Stand and wait for the condemned men to come, bearing their crossbeams, then I nail the beams into place, watch as the prisoners are nailed to their surface, then help the guards hoist them into position. *(Pause)* I take no pleasure in this work, but it feeds my family.

Beat.

Today I stood here on Mount Calvary in the growing heat of the morning sun, as three condemned men crested the hill. I watched as they dropped their crossbeams to the ground, exhausted, and as I stooped to begin my work, the third man raised his eyes to look in mine. For a time, everything stopped, as I looked in the eyes of Jesus.

Beat.

I was frozen. Powerless before that gaze. I couldn’t imagine what he might have done—a man of his skill—to deserve such a death. I stood so long that the Romans grew angry and impatient. They shoved me aside and nailed his crossbeam into place, then took those long iron nails and drove them deep into the hands of my friend. Into the wood that my hands had cut.

I watched, helpless, as he suffered. Watched as he died. And as the Roman guard thrust a spear into my dead friend’s side, I began to weep.